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The New Bazaar: The Strange Past and Unsettled Future of Money

The New Bazaar podcast with Cardiff hosting Jacob Goldstein touches on many aspects of money including the history and future of money. They open the discussion with topics from Goldstein's book, "Money: The True Story of a Made-Up Thing." It is interesting to think about what money actually is and that it's fictional, made up, social, yet grounded in ways, and all of these things. Although people made up the concept of money, it is a functional system because it's universal and everyone agrees that it is money. With historic exchange systems, goods and services have always been assigned value, hence why trading worked. China then starting using iron coins with IOU paper receipts in exchange, and paper money was born. The introduction of money helped drive growth and money is able to facilitate the economic activity we care about. As people gain money and purchasing power, trade, specialization, and wealth also increase. Another interesting point that was brought up in the podcast is that money is a kind of democratizing force. When people have their own money, they can gain access to the goods and services they need and can express their own wishes. It creates a drive for individualization and therefore democratization.

In the second half of the podcast, the two discuss Goldstein's podcast and the future of money and technology. They touch on cryptocurrency and how it was introduced as a "trustless" system to counteract holding so much trust in big corporations and governments to manage money. Cardiff, however, mentions that humans innately like to trust and having that someone to hold accountable if things fail or succeed. Goldstein then touches on his idea of the "economic

pie” and how it only gets bigger and everyone can get richer with technological progress. He notes that in terms of AI, it is important to recognize human strengths and weakness and how we can use AI to advantage these systems. Some particular technological ideas he mentions are self-driving cars and self-driving companies, as well as drone systems for things like mail and medicine deliveries. While we have already seen implications of self-driving cars in perhaps our own neighborhoods, I think the idea of delivery drone systems is genius and something I would be interested in seeing in the near future.

I listened to this podcast before reading Chapter 8 yet had some preconceived questions and ideas. Since we have talked a lot about technology in this class, I was thinking about ways technology is and can be applied to our monetary systems. We already have money transferring apps like Venmo and Cashapp and even digital currencies like crypto and Bitcoin. The concept of a universal value to money is also a very interesting concept as we’ve already discussed appreciation and depreciation of currencies. But the value of a Bitcoin, for example, is the same all around the world. I think technology with monetary management systems on a larger scale, will also be seen more frequently in the near future. Like Venmo, for example, but on a government or corporation scale, where big companies and even nations can transfer money around the world online. This definitely raises some privacy and security questions, however, that will need to be addressed if it happens.