

The Decentralisation Debate: The Downside of Economies of Scale

Steve L. Monroe

YSS4274

Economies of scale are a blessing.

But they are sometimes a
curse.

But they are sometimes a
curse. When?

But they are sometimes a
curse. When? Why?

The Decentralization Debate

When is smaller better for governance?

Seminar Objectives: To Discuss

- When smaller is better for (local) governance?

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- When smaller is better for (local) governance (**Dell et al; Post and Kuipers; Taleb; Veenendaal and Corbett**)?

Outline of Seminar

- 1 Announcements
- 2 Map Quiz
- 3 Case Study: The Rise of Emily Muli
- 4 Reading Presentation: City Size and Public Service Access
- 5 The Decentralization Debate: When is Smaller Better for Local Governance?
- 6 Next Seminar: To Dos

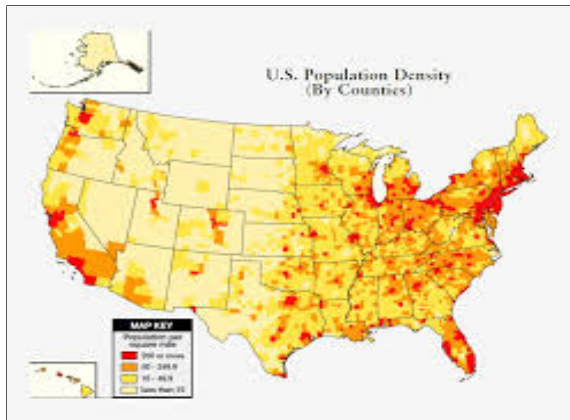
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Op-Ed 1 (Feb 23)

- Must discuss small state(s) (however defined) in relation to: development, decentralization, democracy or diversity
- Word count: 800
- Target audience: educated non-academic reader (Straits Times; New York Times)
- Op-Ed 1 + Op-Ed 2 = 25% of final grade
- Prof Monroe will upload rubric shortly
- Prof Monroe will not look at drafts, but can come to office hours to discuss the op-ed

Check In: Case D



Source: NicePNG

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Map Quiz

- Caribbean / Latin America: 11, 16, 2, 20, 23
- Europe: 41, 24, 36, 14, 47
- Oceania: 13, 22, 2, 12, 4

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Case Study: The Rise of Emily Mulii



Source: tearawhatu

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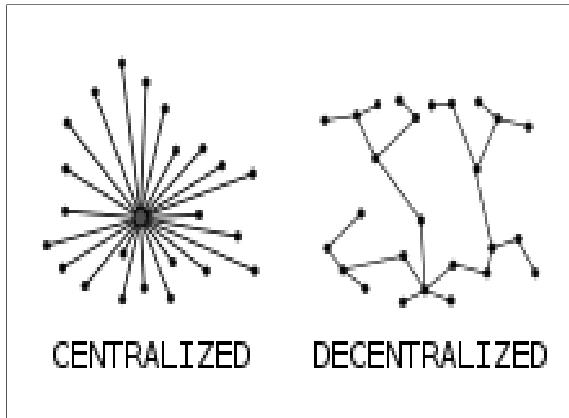
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City size and public service access: evidence from Brazil and Indonesia by Allison Post and Nicholas Kuipers

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What is decentralization?



Source: Wikipedia

Why might decentralization
facilitate good governance
(rule of law, public services)?

Why might decentralization *facilitate* good governance (rule of law, public services)?
(Write reasons why).

Decentralization: Pro

- Proximity (Horizontal)
- Accountability
- Inclusivity
- Collective Action (Bottom Up)
- Flexibility

Plato's Republic



Source: Wikipedia

“An administration is shielded from having to feel the sting of shame (with flushing in his face), a biological reaction to overspending and other failures such as killing people in Vietnam. Eye contact with one’s peers changes one’s behavior. But for a desk-grounded office leech, a number is just a number. Someone you see in church Sunday morning would feel uncomfortable for his mistakes - and more responsible for them.”
- Taleb (pg. 89).

“Stalin could not have existed in a municipality.” - Taleb (pg. 89)

The Killing Fields (Cambodia, 1970 - 1975)



Source: The Borgen Project

The Problems of Scale

The Problems of Scale

Scale can amplify mistakes.

Dinning Hall vs. UTown Flavors



Source: The Octant

Lecture vs. Seminar(s)



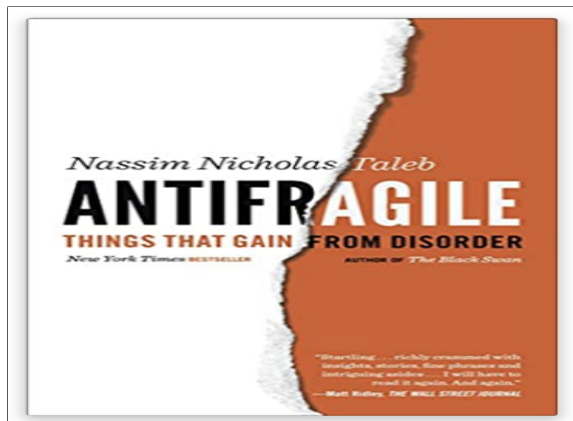
Source: Wikipedia

The Problems of Scale

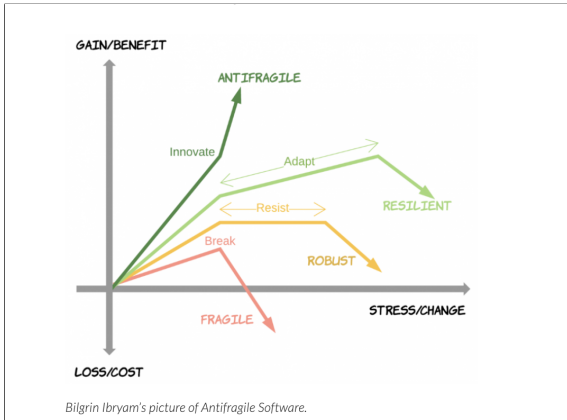
The Problems of Scale

Scale is fragile.

Anti-Fragile (Taleb, 2014)

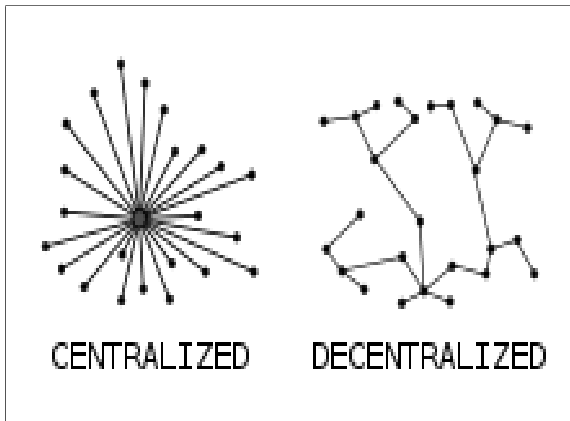


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Source: Perficient

Why might bigger (centralized) be more fragile?



Source: Perficient

Why might decentralization
impede good governance (rule
of law, public services)?

Why might decentralization *impede* good governance (rule of law, public services)? (Write reasons why).

Decentralization: Con

- Personalism
- Amateurism
- Resource Constraints
- Oligarchy (Top Down)

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Next Seminar (Feb 1st): To Dos

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- Size and Governance (Part 2)
 - ▶ Dell et al reading
 - ▶ Reading Presentation: Fors
 - ▶ How are authors measuring governance?

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- Size and Governance (Part 2)
 - ▶ Dell et al reading
 - ▶ Reading Presentation: Fors
 - ▶ How are authors measuring governance? Size?

Have a great week!