BOOK ONE CHAPTER EIGHT

The Habsburg Empire was the height of refinement during Mozart’s era. The structure of society was divided as such: nobility, who controlled society, and was very much like the Ancienne Regime in France in that there were counsels of peers who had a duty of care to respond to local matters.

However, like in France, the power of the nobility could be corrupted and often tread on common decency as money could influence the opinions of judges.

Enter Emperor Joseph, what they call an “Enlightened Despot”, to address systemic problems with a series of reforms, centralizing power in the process. These reforms included a uniform written code of justice, among other things.

Watching developments in France, Emperor Joseph realized that the power of the state could be put to good use. The centralized national system of government in France had eliminated the redundancy of having a powerful local government that operated like a dictatorship and a state that operated like a dictatorship. Rather, local governments should be answerable to the state. Unfortunately, local governments did not see it that way, and resisted Emperor Joseph’s reforms.

What they could not anticipate back in the 18th Century was that a rising tide lifts all boats. Life has become increasingly easy for those in countries that have experienced enlightened reforms since. These eventually happened in Austria as the nobility realized their precarious situation as a stream of refugee nobles fled to Austria from France 1789-1799 during the French Revolution, and post Napoleon all of Europe entered into the era of the modern state.

The rising tide lifts all boats: as the utility of money has increased the worker earning a median income has become rich compared to how things were before the utility of money has become so high. In addition, the already rich who have passed down huge fortunes over generations have become the ultra-rich.

REASONS WHY LIFE IS EASY AND BECOMES EASIER OVER TIME

There are reasons why having faith in the modern state makes things easy. This is because the share of national revenue that goes to the state addresses social problems. There is less conflict about who has authority, and transactions run more smoothly.

Post Napoleon the Napoleonic Code was one of the first codes for buildings. This code would have seemed extremely intrusive to people who wanted to build buildings in the private sphere.

Some societies have still not adjusted to this intrusion of the state and local governments via code enforcement for private buildings.

While societies may have already had informal standards for building construction, formal standards written down have become increasingly important since electrification. Mistakes in routing wiring through houses can result in electrocution and occasionally fires. Getting voltages wrong can damage electronic equipment. As things get complicated having a code that contractors can follow simplifies things.

https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Napoleonic\_Code

**Institutions are already in place… people have faith in institutions to enforce their social priorities**

Just like people living in the modern nation state with developed markets have faith in the state to protect them from foreign invasion, they have faith that public institutions to protect their interests.

Over time, bad actors are purged from the system.

**The market will ensure that someone’s trash becomes another one’s treasure.. commoditized** world

Commoditized world ensures that there are enough suppliers to accommodate everyone. With international markets fruits are available year round. Instead of waiting for things to grow, goods are available instantaneously.

Over time, the market will fill all available niches. The lowest of low quality goods will go to the poor as recycled refuse from the rich.

**Over time, risks are reduced**

People really go overboard at my anxiety group. Modern anxieties are nothing compared to the anxieties people who have to be self-sufficient and rely on natural capital face.

When I lived in Guatemala I faced continued food insecurity.

The risks of food insecurity have been reduced as the productivity of land has increased. The US with the most innovative farm sector in the world has also become the breadbasket of the world.

An example of this is innovations and institutions have gradually reduced the risk of consuming food itself as well.

MOMENTUM TOWARDS MODERNITY

As social priorities change, maybe the market will change. There is a momentum towards modernity in countries that are already modern.

Saving resources has become a social priority in Germany and Austria. These are the countries that have done forward research into the products that will replace plastics. Plastics, which are biodegradable in thousands of years, are polluting. It is much more attractive to have plastics that are biodegradable in years instead.

In certain regions of the US like Berkeley, CA the same kind of social priorities exist. This is why many people from Germany and Austria have found a second home there.

When I grew up in Berkeley, CA there was a big movement to ban Styrofoam from restaurants. Thus I grew up with a sense that Styrofoam is wasteful. Styrofoam has since become replaced with cardboard, it’s ecofriendly alternative.

As the equation of GDP becomes revised to show the effect of the degradation of natural capital, there is an international movement to transition to a smarter use of materials that fits the goal of a zero waste society. The rich policymakers will be able to rest easy not only that their short term interests are protected, but that the interests of the next generation will be protected as well.