Human Stupidity

Tuesday, June 13, 2023

The Third Law of Stupidity

Reasonable people have q hard time imagining unreasonable behavior. A stupid person is one who causes harm to others while gaining nothing and even harming himself in doing so. (See Cipolla and Taleb (2021))

A stupid person will harass you with no reason. You have no rational way of telling if and when and how and why the stupid creature attacks. When confronted with a stupid individual, you're completely at his mercy. Because the stupid person's actions do not conform to the rules of rationality. From all that proceeds:

1. You're caught by surprise.
2. You cannot build a rational defence because the attack lacks any rational structure.

Frequency Distribution

Most people do not act consistently, they will act intelligently one time and helplessly another. Stupid people normally show perfect consistency in all fields of human endeavours.

Cipolla and Taleb (2021) classify four types of people, comments are mine:

- Helpless: Identify and help the helpless.
- Intelligent: Identify and surround yourself with intelligent people.
- Bandit: Identify and utilise bandits with great caution when circumstances demand it.
- Stupid: Identify and isolate stupid people from your daily life, especially at work.
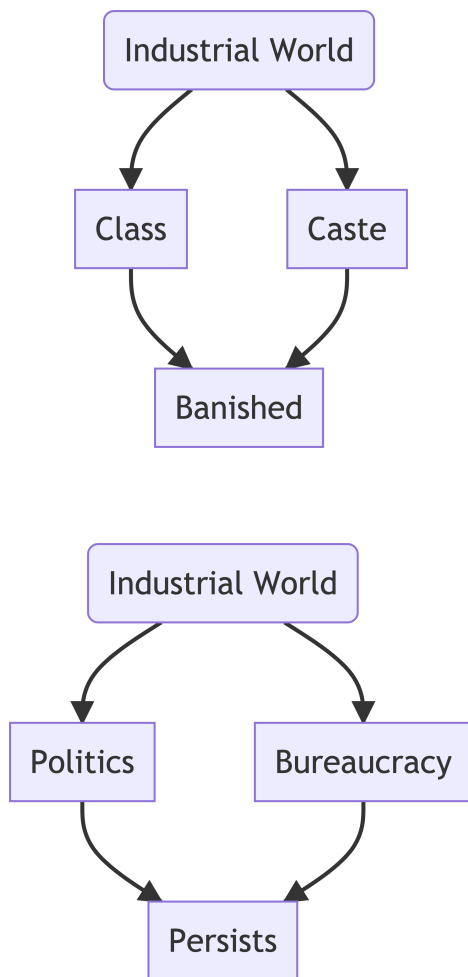
Stupidity and Power

Damaging potential of stupidity is a function of:

1. Genetic factors and the resulting inheritance
2. The position of power and consequences

Key Takeaways

The world has changed but the fraction σ[1] is till maintained. In Industrial world, class and caste have turned into politics and bureaucracy and the religion has faded away:

```mermaid
graph TD
    A[Industrial World] --> B[Class]
    A --> C[Caste]
    B --> D[Banished]
    C --> D
```

```mermaid
graph TD
    A[Industrial World] --> B[Politics]
    A --> C[Bureaucracy]
    B --> D[Persists]
    C --> D
```

Also see: The Basic Laws of Human Stupidity

References

Cipolla, Carlo M., and Nassim Nicholas Taleb. 2021. *The Basic Laws of Human Stupidity.* New York: Doubleday.

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[1]Fraction of stupid people within a population is denoted by the symbol σ. No specific numerical value is assigned as a numerical estimate would likely be an underestimate.