

On stakeholders...

“The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionizing the instruments of production, and with them the whole relations of society.”

-Karl Marx, Communist Manifesto

Personally I lean socialist and draw the line at communism. For reasons I will expand on later, communism has always had a negative connotation in the US but the irony is that watching the attempted regulation of our hyper-capitalist society by the government is the exact reason why I would never trust a communist system. Over the past few weeks I have begun to think more about globalization and economies of scale as it pertains to our current environmental crisis. More precisely I have begun to see the emergence of two distinct stakeholder groups and their roles in globalization and “progress”.

First, this idea was brought into focus after this week’s debate on enforcing the circular economy. The role of enforcer and specifically who that might be was a point made to address the ambiguity of our current situation. Maybe better described as the incongruity of environmental policy within the framework of globalization. Yesterday I wrote a wholly despondent draft post and sat with it overnight to think through my pessimism. It was along the lines of a mass con being perpetrated by “capitalists” on the rest of the population, manifesting in the paper straw and sorting plastic movements while billionaires shoot rockets off at their leisure. Revising this post today in a more optimistic and pragmatic head space, I still believe there is a tension between the population at large and the billionaire class, but instead of spiraling into an apocalyptic scenario, I am resolved to look more closely at this gap. The outcome of this will in fact be a question but first I need to expand on the idea of enforcement and why the irony I referenced earlier

exists.

Using my home political system as basis for this observation, I only need to look back to the previous administration to explain the irony. In terms of enforcement, I did wonder *who* would enforce and the logical answer is the government. This prompted a follow up question of how effective is the government at enforcement? From 2016-2020, 114 EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) policies were dismantled (Popovich, Albeck-Ripka and Pierre-Louis, 2020). The reversal of these policies was not done for any other reason except to benefit the oil industry. This is one of many examples but how can one trust a government to enforce systems when we watch them consistently work within their own self-interests? This is also the reason I would distrust a communist government – at the end of the day power anywhere but in the people’s hands is misplaced. To be clear not all governments fall into this trap as easily but I am more concerned with governments and markets like the US where their influence and impact on a global scale is greater than in most other countries. The question I have been asking myself over the past weeks is how can environmental stewardship surpass profit has the main driver of markets? I’m not sure that it can so then the question becomes how can the two become symbiotic? Ideally, we would be able to find a way to remove their perceived mutual exclusivity in order to have each driver exert a proportioned pressure on the markets. Until then, I would expect to see more profit over planet governing, especially by one particular political party...

Popovich, N., Albeck-Ripka, L. and Pierre-Louis, K. (2020). The Trump Administration Is Reversing Nearly 100 Environmental Rules. Here’s the Full List. *The New York Times*. [online] 16 Oct. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/climate/trump-environment-rollbacks-list.html>. [Accessed 3 Nov].

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