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Is Elite Autocracy Expected for Fair Wages and a Fair Life?



It's interesting—no matter where I go in the world, everyone seems to look beyond democracy for a solution to overturn the broken system.

Just as successful companies are not entirely democratic—being apparently governed by an elite elected through general assemblies—many highly educated intellectuals also believe that countries could be rescued if they were run in this manner.

But what do we really mean when we say "successful company"? Are profitable companies managed fairly? More precisely, is equitable distribution possible through a conscientious form of autocracy?

In this week's article, we will discuss these questions.

In fact, the complex and unjust structure of the global economy is one of the most fundamental issues facing societies today.

The gap between top executives earning sky-high salaries and workers at the lower levels is a prime concern on the agendas of many countries and corporations.

The Nordic countries, especially Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, are often seen as the best examples in this regard.

Since the early 2000s, these countries have implemented comprehensive policies aimed at **reducing income inequality** and wage gaps.

For instance, in Denmark, the "Equality Law" enacted by the government in 2010 set a maximum limit on executive salaries and encouraged wage structures where employees also have a voice.

According to **OECD** reports (2018), these policies have helped reduce income inequality by 20% and increased societal transparency.

Furthermore, state-supported unions and collective bargaining mechanisms have contributed to a more equitable distribution of wages. Of course, it's necessary to ask Danes

for their opinion directly.

Narrowing the gap

Let's shift our focus to the big countries of the European Union now. France and Germany, in particular, have sought to significantly narrow the gap between high-level managers' salaries and ordinary employees, especially since 2010.

In Germany, the "Wage Transparency Act" introduced in 2015 made it mandatory for companies to report **the pay gap** between top executives and other workers.

International economic experts argue that these measures, by promoting balanced income distribution, have also encouraged economic growth (Brennen & Pacula, 2018).

Another example is the Public Services Company in the Netherlands (2010). This company established an equitable and fair wage policy for both employees and managers.

Salaries were determined according to position, with restrictions placed on top executives. The rights of employees to organise and participate were supported, enabling the company's sustainability not only financially but also in terms of quality of life.

Focusing on fair wage policies is the most important step for a company's long-term success - Jan de Vries

Economic historian Jan de Vries commented on this: "Focusing on fair wage policies is the most important step for a company's long-term success" (Harvard Business Review, 2014).

The world's largest food company, Danone, decided in 2015 to keep the pay gap between top executives and other employees below 100%.

Under the leadership of then-CEO Emmanuel

Faber, Danone increased **employee engagement** through transparency and fair pay policies. Faber explained this approach as: “Sustainability in business is not just about the environment but also about equitable income distribution” (Danone, 2020). He isn’t wrong.

In the United States, **Ben & Jerry’s** developed policies in 2018 aimed at reducing wage disparity. The company implemented profit-sharing programmes and capped executive salaries, ensuring that employees felt valued without forcing income inequality.

Not just profit, but justice and sustainability

What unites these examples is their shared philosophy of “not just profit, but justice and sustainability.”

Former U.S. Secretary of Labor **Robert Reich** emphasises this point, saying, “Equality is the foundation of economic and social development,” and highlights that these practices are not only ethical but also economically successful (Reich, 2015).

In summary, many countries and corporations around the world are developing new policies and practices to reduce income inequality.

Particularly, the partnerships built by Nordic countries—centred on transparency, participation, and fair wages—are strong examples of sustainable success and social peace.

Fair wages and income distribution do not solely strengthen the moral and social fabric of societies; they also benefit economic growth and sustainability

This story shows us that fair wages and income distribution do not solely strengthen the moral and social fabric of societies; they

also benefit economic growth and sustainability.

Strong institutions and equitable wage policies should aim not only at profit but also at adding value to society.

The world’s most successful examples reveal that balancing income distribution is key to both psychological and economic sustainability.

In conclusion, although each country and enterprise has its unique conditions, a just income distribution is fundamental to a successful and sustainable economy.

This implies that advanced nations and pioneering companies are not only shaping policies and practices but also creating a culture: transparency, participation, and justice.

When these three elements come together, societies become more peaceful, and economies more resilient.

The role of elite power

Unfortunately, I haven’t found prominent examples of this in developing countries.

Amid high inflation and severe cost of living, coupled with large-scale public spending that wastes resources, everyone tends to live by saying, “I got through today, we’ll wait and see tomorrow.”

If five years ago someone told me that the “Dark Enlightenment” movement would become increasingly accepted worldwide, and that instead of democratically elected leaders, a digital elite would govern the planet, I would have considered it a fantasy. Now, I am starting to believe that it might be possible.



As history shows, technological advances—such as AI, big data, and digital surveillance—are rapidly transforming how power and influence are distributed globally - Emre Alkin

This shift reflects a broader trend where technological and societal developments challenge traditional democratic structures.

Increasingly, people are questioning whether the current political system can truly serve the needs of the many or if a technocratic elite, operating behind the scenes, might assume control in the future.

It is important to note that these ideas are still highly debated and controversial.

Yet, as history shows, technological advances—such as AI, big data, and digital surveillance—are rapidly transforming how power and influence are distributed globally.

The potential for a digi-elite or digital aristocracy to govern might become a reality, especially as trust in traditional institutions declines.

In summary, while today's world still largely operates under conventional democratic systems, the signs are increasingly pointing towards a future where a technocratic or elitist governance might be the norm — not necessarily by force or control, but through influence wielded by those who master and control the digital infrastructure.

It's an intriguing, sometimes unsettling prospect—one that raises questions about equality, justice, and how societies will adapt

in the coming decades.

One thing is clear: the debate over governance models will continue to intensify, and the role of elite power—whether in democracy or autocracy—will remain a critical issue for the future.