

Thoughts from the Bar Stool.

2025 02

People show off on social media. On average, one is likely to encounter more people who have a better life than they do. Social media makes people feel less well off than average.

We were told that capitalism and free markets gave us a fair chance of improving our lives. It makes sense to measure relative wealth over absolute wealth. People will expect to become relatively better off over time.

Capitalism tends to exacerbate inequality as ownership of capital allows accumulation of financial and intellectual capital. Labour struggles at compounding.

Power seeks wealth and wealth seeks power. Achieving one tends to lead to the other and to entrenchment.

Patience with Trickle-down economics is running out.

People don't want to see people richer than themselves. They think that most people are richer than they are. Thus, people just don't want to see people, period.

People will tend to cluster around people in their same situation. They will do so around common causes. The biggest common cause is dissatisfaction with the status quo.

Developed democracies have seen the rejection of political incumbents. This has not extended to developing countries. Is democracy enabling a quicker mode of political expression and are autocracies only delaying the same dynamic?

People prioritise individual needs over collective ones. Liberal democracies provide a mode of expression. However, it often leads to unsustainable policies. The more collective interests are subordinated, the less sustainable is the fiscal

position of the state.