

THE END OF HISTORY ?

1. Francis Fukuyama's grand theory for **explaining the post-Cold War world** is that history has a plot, and that **ending is liberal democracy**. He argues that human **history is divided up into periods**, with **each one an improvement on the last**. **The ultimate destination for everyone is Western-style democracy because that is the best system for satisfying the human need for recognition and equality**. *When all nations become capitalist democracies, he says, it will mark the end of history*.

2. Fukuyama argues that the **break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991** proves that **liberal democracy and capitalism** - an economic system that emphasizes the **private ownership of goods** - are the best political and economic systems, with the fewest flaws. In *The End of History* he claims that this **triumph of Western liberalism - the political philosophy that emphasizes freedom, equality and regularly contested elections** - represents a **historical endpoint, a final stage that will replace war with lasting universal peace**. He is not specific about the timeframe for this process. He also acknowledges that some countries face serious obstacles in changing how they operate. But Fukuyama **fundamental argument is that all human societies evolve in the same way, and that human history everywhere leads to liberal democracy**.

3. Fukuyama draws heavily on the ideas of political philosophers of the past in order to build his vision of the future. He revives and develops the famous dialogue between influential nineteenth-century German philosophers **Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and Karl Marx**. Both thinkers agreed that a historical endpoint would come, but disagreed on what it would be. **Hegel's view was that history is a continuing fusion of ideas that lead to refinements in the way society is arranged**. This **evolution of ideas** means that **good ideas survive** and are, in turn, **fine-tuned as people improve society by degrees**. Even contradictions, once discovered, lead to further tweaks until spiritual enlightenment is reached. **Marx rejected this idealism and favored a more robust approach to the periodization of history - one in which revolution brings about meaningful change**. Fukuyama's bold prophesy of the triumph of Western liberalism draws on a wider body of political thought, beyond Hegel and Marx. He is particularly keen on borrowing **the concept of thymos**, from the ancient Greek philosopher Plato. This refers to a **part of the human psyche (or soul) that drives people to aim for a fairer, more equal way of life**. Plato stated that **humans**, unlike other animals, require **recognition and continually struggle to achieve it**. According to Fukuyama, only liberal democracy can satisfy this human need. Another **major influence** on Fukuyama's writing was **Russian-born philosopher Alexandre Kojave**, who offered a twentieth-century interpretation of Hegel and believed that **liberalism was the ultimate and increasingly universal stage in world history**.

4. Many critics pointed out, Fukuyama's logic was a bit too **reminiscent of the pseudo-Hegelian historical determinism** that **Marxists and Fascists deployed** to disastrous effect earlier in the 20th century. But when his article appeared in *The National Interest*, it was hard to disagree with him. The **Berlin Wall was about to fall, the Soviet Union was collapsing**, and the world was clamoring for the **consumerist boom** in an orgy of **free-market** excitement. Everything seemed to suggest that **only liberal capitalist democracy allowed people to thrive in an increasingly globalized world**, and that only the **steady advance of laissez-faire economics would guarantee a future of free, democratic states**, untroubled by want and oppression and living in peace and contentment.ⁱⁱ

5. Fukuyama's, thesis fully fits to the **Gulf War conditions**. Because, **after Iraq's attack to Kuwait, all democratic countries from all over the world came together to end this condition** which did not suit the world's last stage of **ideological evolution**. However, his **thesis as per some critics was completely falsified**.ⁱⁱⁱ

(a) Firstly with **Bosnia. Ethnic cleansing in Bosnia** marked the **end of the optimistic dreams of Fukuyama's end's analogy**. Because none of liberal democratic countries, tried to end this event. The states that finished their evolution did not act as they had to do. Moreover the **cases of Kosovo and especially the events on 11 September 2001 in the USA** showed that, **nothing has come to an end**, instead of this, **the world history will probably face with important transformation processes in the future**.

(b) He tried to make a **long-term civilizational analysis**, but with only **analysing short-term indicators**. So he may use the term 'civilizational transformation', instead of 'end of history'. The

era which was tried to be analyzed and defined by Fukuyama was only one of the turning points in the world history. As we can see, the history is within an ongoing transformation process which needs further analysis.

(c) Consequently we can say that, Fukuyama **wanted to give a name to the situation after the collapse of communism**. He gave the name 'the end of history', with **one-dimensional, ethno-centric perspective**. He was probably too quick to claim such an assertive thesis. Perhaps he did this to **legitimize and formulate the theoretical framework of the New World Order**. Because in order to create a new world order, the old one must have an end. Further, **he used Hegel to legitimize USA's leadership role**, as Hegel too ends history with the victory of one state. **To show US's everlasting victory, he had to create a very optimistic perspective**.

6. Today, it is not hard to imagine Fukuyama being more wrong. **History is not over and neither liberalism nor democracy is ascendant**. The Western consensus he inspired is under threat in ways he could never have predicted. **A new Cold War has broken out**. China's "**Marxist capitalism**" suggests you can **have wealth without freedom**. And the **advance of ISIS** is heralding a **new, state-oriented Islamic fundamentalism**.

7. The **connection between capitalism, democracy, and liberalism upon which Fukuyama's argument depended has itself been broken**. In the wake of the **credit crunch and the global economic downturn**, it has become increasingly clear that **prosperity is not, in fact, best served either by the pursuit of laissez-faire economics or by the inexorable extension of economic freedoms**. It is indeed, quite the opposite. As Thomas Piketty argues in *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, **free markets have not only enlarged the gap between rich and poor, but have also reduced average incomes across the developed and developing worlds**. It was seen that **In the countries hardest hit by the recession - such as Greece and Hungary - voters turned away from precisely that conception of liberalism that Fukuyama believed they would embrace with open arms**. Across Europe, **economic interventionism, nationalism, and even open racism** have exerted a **greater attraction** for those casting their democratic votes **than the causes of freedom, deregulation, and equality before the law**. Liberal capitalist democracy hasn't triumphed. Instead, the **failures of capitalism have turned democracy against liberalism**. In turn, liberalism's intellectual self-identity has been left in tatters.

8. In short, a **liberal politics must be a moral politics**. Liberalism **will not work** if too much **emphasis** is placed on **total human autonomy** at the **expense of all others**, nor if it is **obsessed with materialism and consumerism**. In contrast to the Fukuyama model of yoking liberal values to economic self-interest - a combination that, when given free rein, has often damaged society at large in recent years - a **model that emphasizes human dignity, allows for a more positive, relevant kind of politics** that constantly struggles to assert itself. Instead of encouraging us to rest easy in the assurance that liberalism will certainly triumph, a **conception of liberty based on human dignity** recognizes that there is nothing inevitable about its success. While each of us may wish to be free as an individual, it shows that individual freedom is dependent on us all being free; and that means that we all have to cling to **our shared humanity, our shared dignity**.

9. If **liberalism** has a **future**, therefore, it lies **not in Fukuyama's shattered determinism**, not in economics, or the tides of history **but in each of us** and lies in the **recognition of the worthiness of humanity itself**.

10. The End of History remains an **important reference point because it had an impact on American and European foreign policy**. It is generally agreed that **key events since publication undermine the book's core argument** (especially the **rise of China, which is opposed to liberalism, and the 2008 global financial crisis, the relative decline of American power, enduring human conflict, and the inability or refusal of some states to implement democratic reforms**).

ⁱ An Analysis of Francis Fukuyama's 'The End of History and the Last Man' By Ian Jackson with Jason Xidias

ⁱⁱ It's Still Not The End Of History, by Timothy Stanley and Alexander Lee

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://dergipark.org.tr/download/article-file/100889>