

Book Review

Political Order and Political Decay: From the Industrial Revolution to the Globalization of Democracy, Francis Fukuyama (New York: Farrar, Straus and Girouz, 2014), 658pp.

Reviewed by:

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INTRODUCTION:

In this interesting book, Fukuyama keenly insists a strong interest for the study of political institutions. The book presents findings on the origins, evolution and decay of political institutions. A critical question addressed in this volume of Fukuyama's book is how a strong, impersonal and accountable political institution developed. According to Fukuyama, modern political order based on modern state, rule of law and accountable government. Fukuyama insists that government effectiveness determined by its legitimacy, more flexibility and the response to changing public demands. In other words, a successful liberal democracy can only flourish under conditions of a prior establishment of a well-armed and functional territorial state, an independent judiciary overseeing the rule of law with a measure of accountability.

The book is organized in to four major thematic areas. Part I explores the political development in Prussia, Greece, Italy, Britain, and the United States. Part II scrutinizes "the effort to transplant modern political institutions from one part of the world to another" (Fukuyama, 2014: 213) with intense focus on Africa, Latin America, and East Asia. Part III deals more specifically with the spread of democracy in the world since the 19th century and the final part (part IV) also emphasized on political decay and take the case of the political institutions in the United States of America as a case study.

Besides, this book is the companion volume to *The Origins of Political Order: From Pre-human Times to the French Revolution*. This project started out as an effort to rewrite and update Samuel P. Huntington's classic *Political Order in Changing Societies*, first published in 1968 (Fukuyama, 2012). Fukuyama's current volume takes its title from the first chapter of the latter book, which in turn was based on an article originally published in *World Politics*.

Fukuyama takes a staunch liberal attitude by reminding his readers that liberal democracy is the offspring of the modern territorial state. The liberal kind of system comes with advantages like legalizing and legitimating social divisions, enabling the growth of civil society and facilitating the grand-scale enfranchisement of people. Fukuyama in his book explores different historical legacies of colonialism in Latin America and Africa and attempted to address why in some regions political institutions have succeeded and developed more quickly than others.

According to Fukuyama, government incompetence is a universal characteristic as a result there is no perfect government in the world. This is evident in his book quoted "there is no automatic mechanism that produces clean, modern government" (Fukuyama, 2014: 205). Fukuyama is very insightful by the fact that state as an entity that can structure political life to some degree independently of the way power is distributed within the international system. Accordingly Fukuyama, recommends the Western models of development, which have been notably effective, "each society must adopt them to its own conditions and build on indigenous traditions" (Fukuyama, 2014: 320). Thus, the book illustrates how domestic politics affect their foreign policy. Besides, Fukuyama in his book demonstrates the relation between prosperity and democracy. In his book, Fukuyama argues that besides to the connection between prosperity and democracy, what matters most of all is getting the sequence right. Thus, democracy does not come first. A strong state does. Evidently, the book demonstrates through various case studies that states that democratize before they acquire the capacity to rule effectively will invariably fail.

In spite of the good lessons and immense contribution of his book, there are however, certain ideas in the book, which are arguably open to certain kinds of challenges. For instance, Fukuyama follows the liberal democracy approach in his theory of "political development". However, there are certain and exceptional cases that do not follow the same approaches of Fukuyama. The case of Indonesia, Taiwan and India override his argument and shows liberal democratic approach is not the only

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means of political development. Therefore, Fukuyama only follows the dominant Western approach, which is considered as an occidental model and this model blinds him to commit the fallacy of hasty generalization.

Generally, Fukuyama's book is organized historically and attempts to show order and disorder result from the complex interaction of numerous factors such as tradition, climate, business identity, geography, commerce and others.

REFERENCES

- 1) Fukuyama, Francis. 2014. *Political Order and Political Decay: From the Industrial Revolution to the Globalization of Democracy*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Girou.
- 2) *The Origins of Political Order: From Prehuman Times to the French Revolution*. New York : Farrar, Straus and Giroux.