

Fukuyama, Democracy and the New World Order of ISIS

Niccolo Caldararo*

Department of Anthropology, San Francisco State University, San Francisco, USA

Abstract

Reviews of Francis Fukuyama's ideas of the end of history and Samuel Huntington's concept of the clash of civilizations still haunt Anglo-American foreign policy and deserve scrutiny. Both ideas lack a foundation in culture history or the study of technology and culture change theory. A general analysis of the ideas in this context demonstrates how ethnocentric both ideas are.

Keywords: Democracy; Civilization; Ethnocentric; Aristocracy; Fukuyamacrit

Introduction

David Runciman's review of Francis Fukuyama's new book [1] provides us with an effective view of the evolution of Professor Fukuyama's views on democracy and his attempts to compensate for the debacle of his claim that history had ended with the collapse of the Soviet Union. That embarrassment aside, we find that Fukuyama now has decided that democracy can only take place after a strong state has been created. Therefore, using this logic it appears that Fukuyama's condemnation of the Stalinist USSR has now developed into an acceptance of the Leninist theory of the "dictatorship of the proletariat." He, like Lenin, believes that humans need a period of training for freedom, a sort of process of democratic domestication.

Fukuyama picks South Korea as his model, first a dictatorship, then democracy! Of course, this was a capitalist dictatorship, not a Socialist one. His idea of a failure of democracy in Africa depends on his idea and definition of democracy, but Africa's struggle is due more to the legacy of colonial boundaries and the social and economic damage of colonialism, which has made self-government difficult. It is also a surprise to hear that there was no law or political structure in India before colonialism, which should come as a revelation to Indian scholars like Rhapsody Romila [2] who has written extensively on the development of indigenous states and institutions prior to the British.

However, the real jewel to Fukuyama's book is the idea that war is constructive in the creation of democracy. War was used by the aristocracy in ancient Rome to repress democracy as in Livy Titus, The Early History of Rome [3] clearly describes. The best argument against his proposition is the origin of the American republic, and as it is not a democracy but a democratic republic, a critique can begin there. He also misinterprets the history of the republic, as it began in over 200 years of local self-government and self-interest, plagued by rebellion against the government of the Crown and not by wars. Benjamin Franklin clearly describes in his autobiography the manner in which the British Army depended on the colonists' initiative for supplies and support and not the other way round.

The central problem with Fukuyama and Samuel Huntington's ideas in his Clash of Civilizations is their ethnocentric view of democracy. Greek "democracy" as described and promoted by these writers illustrated by figures like Plato and Socrates is little more than the tyranny of ruling clans whose leaders sat as legislative bodies in open exchange as is the case in thousands of traditional societies across the globe described in ethno historical documents over the past 5,000 years [4]. Almost all the Greek city-states including Athens were slave societies and women could not vote or participate. We have plenty

of examples from contemporary Greek writers like Xenophon and Herodotus where the difference between democratic governments and aristocratic ones is really more a matter of policy than internal practice. This can be seen where the supposedly "aristocratic" Sparta argues for independent cities and "democratic" Athens conquers, exterminates, enslaves and builds an empire. There is little difference between the democracy of the Greek city states and the democracy described by Ibn Khadun [5] among the Arab peoples of the town and country. Even de Tocqueville [6] noted that they elected their own chiefs and carried on discussions of issues, voting on their affairs in public. De Tocqueville recognized the democratic character of the Berber and Arab societies while he lived in a nation ruled by dictators and usurpers whose arbitrary actions were the antithesis of liberty and freedom.

Another recent book by Michael Mandelbaum, The Road to Global Prosperity [7] makes a number of important points regarding the perspective of Fukuyama. I would like to add that like Francis Fukuyama's premature claim of the end of history [8], Mandelbaum's idea is a limited vision based on a very short period of apparent improvement, or "prosperity." He posits that political conflict has been superseded by economic integration, but by what standard to we judge this? How much time and to what degree can we assess such an announcement? Another view is that globalism is just a new phase of colonialism, where local, indigenous methods of human use of environments that have been stable for centuries, are replaced by new means, borrowed from the west and imposed by financial organizations paralleling western firms. The ecological stability of these new methods is yet to be tested and like the over plowing of the prairies that produced the dust bowl, or the use of DDT and now over fishing and garbage in landfills and the oceans, the outcome of globalism is still in the balance.

Modernity and Technology

The "new order" of modernity as Mandelbaum and Fukuyama argue in benefits, we find instead patterns of development, environmental disturbance, population growth and inequality leading to conflict in the past from Livy's early Rome to the world wars that followed on

*Corresponding author: Niccolo Caldararo, Department of Anthropology, San Francisco State University, San Francisco, USA, Tel: 415-405-2536; E-mail: cald@sfsu.edu

Received: October 21, 2014; Accepted: October 27, 2014; Published: November 03, 2014

Citation: Caldararo N (2014) Fukuyama, Democracy and the New World Order of ISIS. *Anthropol* 2: 133. doi: [10.4172/2332-0915.1000133](https://doi.org/10.4172/2332-0915.1000133)

Copyright: © 2014 Caldararo N. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

the industrial revolution. The fragility of the current period of growth and its benefits is questioned in an article by Donnan, Bland and Burn-Murdoch, "A slippery ladder," [9] that finds the new middle classes of the world's emerging markets nations are hardly better off today than before the boom and are endangered of new poverty. One might say, as I have in a recent article and book [10,11] that globalism leaves once aboriginal societies worse off than before.

In this same vein, Paul Mason's book, "Why it's kicking off everywhere," has a brief discussion of the role of technology in the uprisings that swept the globe in 2011, both Mandelbaum and Mason miss the central comparison one can make. The 2011 uprising has more in common with the revolutions of 1848 both in,

1. The unexpected explosion and the dynamic spread and
2. The numbers of people involved and
3. But without formal political, religious or ethnic associations.

Also, as Priscilla Robertson notes in her book, "Revolutions of 1848," [12] the cultural and technological changes of the half century before the risings in 1848 both explain and define the themes and intensity of the revolt. Massive programs of removal of peasants to the cities had taken place producing an impoverished mass in the cities, poorly housed, fed and exploited for cheap labor described in detail by Polanyi [13] and Tawney [14]. Rural agriculture was being mechanized and large farms replacing small ones. In the cities people were faced with rapid change in technology, the jobs available required new skills and living arrangements undermined or destroyed former extended family associations and assistance. A similar trend can be seen in the Middle East and North Africa in the past 30 years where both changes in agricultural technology and the streaming of rural population to the cities has produced a mass of people faced with bewildering changes in life style and demands to learn new technologies. One might say that China's communist revolution as it swept away ancient associations and economic structures and inequalities replaced such a new state ideology that is in transformation added by a new lust for technology and money a potent novel response for now. What historical claims like those of Fukuyama lack that results in overreach is a failure to understand the role of technology and culture, a central approach to culture change as Redfield noted in his remarkable book, *The Primitive World and its Transformations* [15].

Unlike 1848, however, where there existed no unifying ideology and organizing principle to produce successful democratic institutions, today the idea of democracy is strongly present in the concept of globalism and social progress. The failure of the French Revolution still stalked Europe in 1848 and the American democratic ideal was still tarnished by slavery, but today the major threat to the creation of democratic institutions in North Africa and the Middle East, in the assessment of the west, is the fear of Islamic radicalism. The energy contained in this radicalism can best be summarized, in a western context [16], where social stresses from economic and political inequalities were channeled harmlessly, in America and England, into religious revivalist movements.

Religion and Culture

Adam Smith in his *Wealth of Nations* also expresses the problem. He notes that history, and especially the recent history of England in his time, demonstrated that religion was one of the greatest threats to free enterprise. But this fear was of certain brands of centralized religious fanaticism, not the ability to use religion to foster distractions. This was

a positive element of religion to be fostered in all its various aspects to channel human energy into productive paths rather than to the ends of the egoism of preachers.

What seems to be happening in the Arab world is much as I have described the form of response similar to that of Europe of 1848, but also a revival of the popular revolt of the Qarmathians (899 C.E.) against the Caliphate in the annals of Elmacin, Abulpharagius and Abulfeda. In that defeat we might speculate that it would be as if the Wars of the Reformation had been won entirely by the Catholics. In that case, Christendom might look much like the nations of Islam today, a continuing conflict of sects, each without specific authority but in rebellion against the dominant sect forever attempting its overthrow. The failure of a clear victory in the Wars of the Reformation has most likely been responsible for the perpetual truce of Christendom.

The fear in the west of the destructive energy of religion is well founded in the disasters of the Wars of the Reformation. But it seems that the west has been fomenting this energy in the Middle East by both its neo-colonial policies and its anti-democratic actions against popular movements. The west has largely created the conditions for the rising conflict and for disaster. We can make comparisons with the success of Christianity and Islam in the fact that both arrived as competitors in new areas, and as Lewis has noted in Africa [17] both were written and excluding religions forcing choice and division in communities. Its practitioners had to reject other approaches to religion, even those of family and friends or convert them. As both came to dominate societies they emerged as replacements and then achieved total conversion and repression of other competitors [18].

John Authers' article recently [19] attempts to revitalize Francis Fukuyama's failed assertion that we live in the end of history and that liberal democracy is the end point and final achievement of the evolution of human governmental evolution. This is challenged not only by the crony capitalism of states like Russia, but by the state capitalism of China and the communitarian capitalism of Japan, Sweden, Denmark, and others. If one is myopic and sees only the Anglo-American sphere of influence, then Authers can make such a claim, but a wider view sees other models, as in rising Islamic economic and political challenges and not just al-Queda but by the cultural contributions of people from Islamic regions on western nations.

The face of capitalism has changed over time but the relation of Athenian merchants and their commons & slaves, Victorian and American plantation owners and their commons and slaves remained nearly identical given the 2,000 years that separated them. The struggle between the classes and the corrosive effects of inequality was the same among the Greeks and Romans as in 19th and 20th century England and the USA. That inequality has only worsened in recent decades at the cost of the commons. Fukuyama's fantasy is only remarkable for the celebrity it has achieved. Instead history shows us a repeated contest over the past 2,500 years. Just as the Roman historian Livy tells us how the extreme Senatorial party (optimates) constantly arranged for wars to distract the demands of the commons for reform of inequalities, the current posturing between the west and Russia only masks the vast transfers of wealth the oligarchs in Ukraine and Russia, the USA and Europe have accomplished since the 1990s. We are simply seeing repeated patterns of culture history. Jamil Anderlini's article on China and its future [20] repeats many of the claims and fears in the western press. Fantasies concerning China's demise at a time when the west's economies are in ruins and depend on China's productivity seems a most strange kind of political expression of masochism. Certainly the "Modernization theory" of Fukuyama is both culture bound and time

limited. Was Athens democratic? Were the wars of the Greek states an expression of democratic maturity? Did slaves in the USA prior to the Civil War make the USA a democracy, or the slaves in Athens? The same problems mentioned for Chinese citizens: growing inequality, inadequate health care, over taxation, lack of job security, etc. plague a growing majority of Americans, citizens of the UK and the EU.

In general, Anderlini's argument, like that of most Sinologists, represents a lack of history and of vision. It is still locked in the past struggle of the two great ideologies of the 20th century, Marxism and Capitalism and presupposes that there can be no alternative future system of economics or political organization than capitalism. What is missing is what made Fukushima's theory absurd and obsolete shortly after it was published the rise of fundamentalist Islam. Like the rise of militant nationalist fanatics in Roman first century Judea, as Josephus gives vivid description, a great alternative ideology grew up to challenge the ancient world, that challenge was a Jewish sect we call Christianity today. To believe that the ability of humans to creatively produce new ways of organizing our social relations has been exhausted with capitalism is certainly myopic and ethnocentric. China produced a vast transformation with Maoism and with Deng's variation on that theme, I do not think that the Chinese are now devoid of ways of mastering the challenges of these innovations.

In all the discussion today concerning China and the difference in governance and aggression between the West and China, we should consider that China is more like Sparta than the Athens which the West identifies. Should we examine those examples of government we find that the Athenians' democracy excluded women and slaves. In Sparta the ephors were elected as were the archons in Athens and many of the people of Sparta did not participate in elections or government as was also the case in Athens. Still, when people sing of the glories of democracy, as do historians like Huntington and Fukuyama but they forget that Athens was driven by arrogance and greed to attack Asia Minor then under the rule of Persia, and the Persians invaded Greece to punish them. The Spartans joined to save Greece but later, the growing imperialism, brutality and constant wars Athens started across the eastern Mediterranean, drove the Spartans into war with Athens. In the eventual Athenian defeat (resulting from her duplicity and corruption) Xenophon writes, "The Athenians were now besieged by land and sea. They had no ships, no allies and no food; and they did not know what to do. They could see no future for themselves except to suffer what they had made others suffer, people of small states whom they had injured not in retaliation for anything they had done but out of the arrogance of power and for no reason except that they were in the Spartan alliance." When the Athenians sued for peace, the Corinthians and Thebans who had suffered much at their hands, demanded the destruction of Athens, but it was the Spartans who refused to enslave the Athenians and instead ended the war with compromise and pity which the Athenians had begun with ruthlessness. So much for the peaceful nature of democracies. China does not threaten the world, America does. Since 1945 America has invaded countries across the globe, decade after decade and projects an image of Athens not only by these wars but by her inequality and discrimination at home. China is not America's problem in economic competition, America is the problem. America needs a new business plan.

Historians and Social Science

It is always amusing to read the comments of one historian criticizing another for misinterpreting history, or selectivity in their citations as Professor Fukuyama does of Philip Bobbitt's excellent

study of Machiavelli. What is refreshing in Bobbitt's book is that it is so unusual in its thorough coverage of not only Machiavelli's writing, but of his life and his times. Where most writers who have produced descriptions of Machiavelli (both the historians and those in the popular trade) have perhaps read *The Prince* or at most *The Discourses*, Bobbitt makes a comprehensive analysis of Machiavelli's central work, the *History of Florence*. Fukuyama misses the danger of the time which was ruled by the conflict between the German and French kings and the cities and popes. Machiavelli realized that this struggle, but essentially the way the popes promoted disunity among the Italian cities, weakened Italy. Most important, however, was the role of the professional soldiers and their captains (condottieri or warlords) in seizing towns and territories for their own advantages treating the population as fodder and property. Machiavelli's citizen soldiers were an answer to the chaos and were a result of his reading of Gibbon where Romans lost their liberty by the surrender of state armies to professional soldiers and their generals.

This does not explain the contrast between the democrat Machiavelli and the theme of *The Prince* that has dominated people's ideas about Machiavelli for 500 years. One has to recall that Machiavelli organized tirelessly the citizens of Florence and abroad to resist kings and pontiffs, mercenaries and princes. The massacre of the citizens of Prato by the mercenaries and encouraged by the condottieri resulted in Machiavelli being imprisoned, tortured and when released kept under observation by Pope Leo X, a Medici family member. Many authors have argued that the book is a satire, so that many of the things we find in it which are morally absurd, specious, and contradictory, are there quite deliberately in order to ridicule. This position was the standard one in Europe during the 18th century, amongst the Enlightenment philosophes. Diderot thought it was a satire. And in his *The Social Contract*, the French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau. On the other hand, the suffering of Machiavelli as a prisoner must have influenced him to attempt to gain some favor with the princes that dominated Italy and had him in their control. Thus the book can be seen as a kind of immediate flattery to gain favor and a clever criticism (like Erasmus' *In Praise of Folly*). Of course, for Fukuyama, a follower of Leo Strauss (who was certainly no democrat in his worship of Plato), to attack Bobbitt's perception of Machiavelli is, well, Machiavellian, given that he like other Neocons supported the politics of Reagan in the defeat of the Soviet Union and Bush and Cheney in engineering the invasion of Iraq. Strange indeed!

However, it is not just a matter of ideologically driven data interpretation. Karen Armstrong has noted in her work that one of the main problems with the 20th century was the degree of certainty with which people carried out plans and programs. The lack of consideration, of balance and of examination of motives and assumptions has been at the base of many of the great crises of the past 100 years and stand at the foundation of ideologies. This applies not only to social scientists like Fukuyama but to journalists like Thomas Friedman. There can be few so dramatic reversals in perspective as his man's view of globalism's benefits in his book *The World is Flat* in 2005 and his opposite view in 2008, *Hot, Flat and Crowded*. One can extend this to economists, especially when presented in 2008 with a paper by Dominic Wilson and Raluca Dragusanu of Goldman Sachs: "The Expanding Middle: The Exploding World Middle Class and Falling Global Inequality. How wrong this view is today is clear, but it is symptomatic of the kind of knee jerk science that characterizes much of financial analysis in the past two decades. The central problem is a failure to understand the nature of social change on a local and a global scale. Anthropologists

have focused on this problem for over a hundred years and in the 1960s began to produce systematic analysis [21].

Gideon Rachman's article in the *Financial Times* would more appropriately have been titled, "Bankrupt illusions" than "End of the world..." He lists 5 elements to the ideology of the period before the financial crisis, which like Toynbee's explanation (*Civilization on Trial: and the World and the West* (1948) for the earlier "age of anxiety" after the First World War, are not elements of an ideology but rather, as Toynbee expressed in the earlier case, segments of an illusion. Toynbee referred to this illusion as the fin de siècle middle-class English hallucination, but one cannot let the poor upper class public school boy off so lightly. It was a European illusion of middle and upper class privilege. This becomes clear when we examine Rachman's "elements".

He notes the ideal of the "march of democracy" expressed by Fukuyama's essay on the "end of history," certainly now one of the great failures of bravado and ethnocentrism. Fukuyama and others' belief that military power could produce democracy has wrecked America's military on the reefs of endless conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan. Now twenty-four years after the first Bush presidency invaded Iraq we still cannot force Iraqis to behave in our image of democracy. Fukuyama and the other neocons might have looked in their own garden, as Voltaire warned, to see that the failure to address the lack of democracy in America's class and race system was aggravated by the stagnation of income in the majority of American workers and the explosion in incomes in the highest 1% of earners. To turn Cicero's phrase a bit ("There can be no peace without justice."), there can be no democracy without justice.

Rachman's second "element" is belief in the triumph of markets over the state and, of course, this is now seen as one of the major causes of the present crisis, a lack of governmental control of markets. What was promoted was free markets, but what was sold was monopoly and risk. The third "element" was a belief in "the transforming power of technology" which Rachman holds to be a king pin and it certainly was since the sheer arrogance brushed aside all indigenous markets and local economic systems. It brought about a world economy addicted to energy gadgets and computer power, now realized too late as the "garbage in, garbage out" of math quants and risk management systems. Globalization has been a disaster allowing an economic "flu" to spread across the globe and destroy economies in even obscure remote villages. Rachman's fourth "element", the key stroke in his estimation, was the idea of "democratic peace" that democracies did not go to war against each other and with capitalism the risk of conflict would subside or disappear. A little history might have caused reflection on this, since one can find many examples of democracies at war with each other, unless the UK's democratic monarchy does not qualify as a democracy in the War of 1812. One can begin with England vs France during the Directory and end with the Falklands War for beginners. The fifth "element" was faith in the last resort of American military power. One only needs refer to the behavior of Republican Rome after the defeat of Carthage to see how military power always overreaches itself. Our invasion of Iraq is much like Crassus's invasion of the same area over 2000 years ago only at least Crassus and his son paid for it with their lives.

What is clear is that blaming China on the west's, and mainly Anglo-American dominance's troubles, is not constructive. There is no "zero-sum" game here, certainly not any more than the UK and America have played in economic policy in the past 200 years as Ha-Joon Chang has eloquently shown in this book, *Bad Samaritans*. The high unemployment in the USA and the prospects of its continuance into

the next decade(s) is very much like that similar trend in employment that characterized the UKs generation of "redundancies" from the 60s to the 80s. Measures that might revive American industry like a "buy American" clause in the stimulus were criticized as bad for world trade, which really means knee-jerk anti-unionism. The anti-unionism thread in current economic reporting is so dogmatic that many rightwing economists cannot see the present, let alone the future. An example of this is the statement on CNN on October 23rd by economist Peter Morici of the University of Maryland stated that unions destroyed economies. He is incredibly wrong. No matter what you may think of China's political system, the country does have unions, they dominate the industrial sector as in Japan and in Scandinavia. What seems clear is that in the West, and certainly the Anglo-American countries, the lack of unions is associated with a lack of labor discipline and organized industrial enterprises.

Rachman's fear of China is characteristic of most economic writers today. His repeating the idea that a rising Asia should be contained is counterproductive. Should this happen the world would fall into the greatest depression of the last 100 years. The world needs China's energy and labor discipline. It is not a "zero-sum" game that has brought us to this point but secrecy and a widening wealth gap, but undermines any hope of functioning democratic institutions.

Finally Rachman repeats the old saw that millions of people are richer today because of the spread of democratic and capitalist ideas. What ideas? Those that ran plantations in pre-Civil War America? Slavery in Africa and Central America? What does he mean by "richer" or freer? Free to be evicted and be homeless? Or his argument that there is more peace and less conflict, rather we have endless wars as in Somalia and Iraq or Afghanistan, the Middle East and southern Russia?

It is not the failure of liberal ideas that have brought us to this situation, rather we are locked in the death rattle of both major ideologies of the 20th century. The failure of capitalist and socialist theories are now heaping up a mass of social debt that will have terrible repercussions, and the inability of today's economists of either ideological camp to explain the rise of China is a central mark of ideological bankruptcy. More on this can be found in my chapter in Karson's new book *Banking and Finance Developments* [22].

References

1. Thomas WH (2014) "Unsafe for democracy," *Financial Times*.
2. Romila R (2002) *Early India: From the Origins to A.D. 1300*. University of California Press, Berkeley.
3. Titus L (1987) *The Early History of Rome*. Penguin Books, New York.
4. Thorkild J (1967) *Mesopotamia* in eds. Henri Frankfort, Mrs. H.A. Frankfort, John A. Wilson & Thorkild Jacobsen, *Before Philosophy*, New York, Pelican Books. 137-236.
5. Rosenthal F (1967) *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*. Bollingen Series, Princeton.
6. Tocqueville de Alexis (1962) *Oeuvres complètes, VIII*. Bibliothèque de la Pleiade, Paris.
7. Mandelbaum M (2014) *The Road to Global Prosperity*. Simon & Schuster, New York.
8. Fukuyama F (2013) "The Modern Prince," *Financial Times*.
9. Shawn D, Bland B, Burn-Murdoch J (2014) "A slippery ladder," *The Financial Times*.
10. Caldararo N (2013) *The Anthropology of Complex Economic Systems*, Lexington Press, Lanham.
11. Caldararo N (2014) "Anthropology, sustainability and inequality." *Anthropology* 2: 2-4.

-
12. Robertson, Priscilla S (1960) *Revolutions of 1848*. Harper Torchbooks, New York.
 13. Polanyi K (1944) *The Great Transformation*. New York.
 14. Tawney RH (1992) *The Agrarian Problem in the 16th Century*. Longmans, London.
 15. Robert R (1953) *The Primitive World and Its Transformations*. Cornell University Press, Ithaca.
 16. Richard NH (1929) *The Social Sources of Denominationalism*. Meridian Books, New York.
 17. Lewis IM (1967) *The Introduction of Islam in Tropical Africa*. Hutchinson Publishing Group, London.
 18. Jack G (1987) *The Interface Between the Written and the Oral, Studies in Literacy, Family, Culture and the State*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
 19. Authers J (2014) "Shrewd investors assess threats to globalization." *Financial Times*.
 20. Anderlini J (2013) "The China Paradox." *Financial Times*.
 21. Michael B (1966) *The Social Anthropology of Complex Societies*, A.S.A. Monographs, London.
 22. Caldararo N (2011) *Derivatives and Debt: The Market as God and Marketing as Proselytizing*. Finance and Banking Developments, Nova Science Publishers, New York. 99-117.