

Fukuyama finishes sweeping look at governance

By [Alan Wallace](#)

October 4, 2014

Francis Fukuyama's long-held worldview is given expansive treatment in his new book, "Political Order and Political Decay: From the Industrial Revolution to the Globalization of Democracy" (Farrar, Straus and Giroux).

In "The End of History?", an essay published in 1989, the Stanford University scholar declared that in the wake of communism's collapse, only liberal democracy — "liberal" in the classical sense — was suited to govern socially and economically modern nations. Building on that premise, this book completes the sweeping look at political institutions' development that Fukuyama began in 2011 with "The Origins of Political Order: From Prehuman Times to the French Revolution."

Fukuyama considers political accountability, a strong and effective state, and rule of law the essentials of liberal democracy, but shows there's no universal formula for establishing it. Those essentials don't necessarily come simultaneously, in the same order or at a consistent pace.

Recognizing that those essentials hold the potential to work at cross-purposes, Fukuyama discusses why some regions have thrived and others haven't, the differing repercussions of colonialism in different parts of the world, corruption's effects and why it's been easier to battle in some places than in others. And while "Political Order and Political Decay" is mostly about other nations, he makes clear that America's achievement of liberal democracy is no guarantee that we will maintain it or that it will function as well as it has in the past.

He sees evidence of decay in growing public distrust of increasingly weak, inefficient and corrupt American government that's manipulated by interests employing armies of lobbyists. And what threatens liberal democracy in America increasingly threatens it in Europe, he says, as nations there surrender more of their authority to make policy to the European Union.

Fukuyama offers no easy answers. But he does fulfill his aim for the book, as he put it in an Aug. 28 post at The American Interest website — "to show how simplistic understandings of how development works can lead to disastrous policy."

EXPLAINING REGULATION

“Bootleggers & Baptists: How Economic Forces and Moral Persuasion Interact to Shape Regulatory Politics” by Adam Smith and Bruce Yandle (Cato Institute) — The authors are Clemson University economists related as grandson and grandfather, respectively; the elder author formulated the “public choice” theory to which the title refers in 1983. Drawing its name from groups whose respective economic and moral interests led them to jointly support laws requiring liquor stores to close on Sundays, the “Bootlegger and Baptist” theory holds that government regulation occurs and endures only when groups that seek private benefits and groups that seek to serve the public interest both support it. The book presents numerous examples of such common-goal coalitions, many drawn from events taking place since that theory was introduced, and applies the theory to such issues as the recent financial crisis and environmental regulation. In doing so, “Bootleggers & Baptists” provides a distinctive perspective on special interests' influence.

WINNING HISPANICS' VOTES

“A Race for the Future: How Conservatives Can Break the Liberal Monopoly on Hispanic Americans” by Mike Gonzalez (Crown Forum) — Hispanics' political importance has risen along with their share of the U.S. population, now more than 16 percent, and they've become a reliable voting bloc for liberal Democrats. The author, a Heritage Foundation senior fellow and former journalist who worked at the Securities and Exchange Commission and the State Department under President George W. Bush, tackles this demographic shift and how Republicans can reverse its political implications. He explains what “Hispanic” means, how Hispanics are not homogeneous but include nationalities with distinct differences, and the ways that liberals have monopolized Hispanics politically through policies encouraging public assistance and discouraging assimilation. He says Republicans need to appeal to Hispanics' core values through policies encouraging school choice, family values and financial freedom if the GOP is to win key future elections.

IN THE PIPELINE

Forthcoming titles from both ends of the political spectrum:

Conservative

- “Dreamers and Deceivers: True Stories of the Heroes and Villains Who Made America” by Glenn Beck (Threshold Editions, Oct. 28)
- “A Nation Wholly Free: The Elimination of the National Debt in the Age of Jackson” by Carl Lane (Westholme Publishing, Oct. 30)
- “The Mind of James Madison: The Legacy of Classical Republicanism” by Colleen A. Sheehan (Cambridge University Press, Oct. 31)
- “Stonewalled: My Fight for Truth Against the Forces of Obstruction, Intimidation, and Harassment in Obama's Washington” by Sharyl Attkisson (Harper, Nov. 4)

- “The Pity Party: A Mean-Spirited Diatribe Against Liberal Compassion” by William Voegeli (Broadside Books, Nov. 4)

Liberal

- “Losing Our Way: An Intimate Portrait of a Troubled America” by Bob Herbert (Doubleday, Tuesday)
- “All Things Possible: Setbacks and Success in Politics and Life” by Andrew M. Cuomo (Harper, Oct. 14)
- “Political Mercenaries: The Inside Story of How Fundraisers Allowed Billionaires to Take Over Politics” by Lindsay Mark Lewis with Jim Arkedis (Palgrave Macmillan, Oct. 21)
- “Workers Unite!: The International 150 Years Later” edited by Marcello Musto (Bloomsbury, Oct. 23)
- “Black Mosaic: The Politics of Black Pan-Ethnic Diversity” by Candis Watts Smith (NYU Press, Oct. 24)

Alan Wallace is a Trib Total Media editorial page writer (412-320-7983 or awallace@tribweb.com).