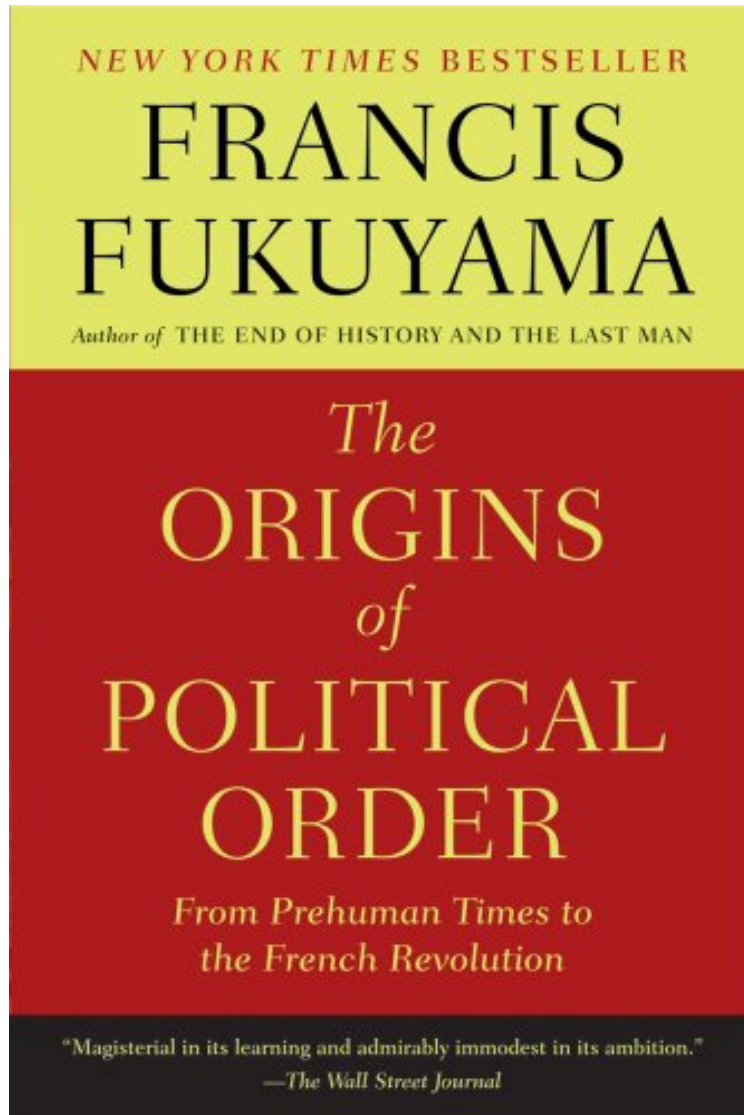


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# The Origins of Political Order: From Prehuman Times to the French Revolution

*Francis Fukuyama*

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#59013 in Books Francis Fukuyama 2012-03-27 2012-03-27 Original language: English PDF # 1 .32 x 1.60 x 5.50l, 1.12 #File Name: 0374533229608 pages The Origins of Political Order From Prehuman Times to the French Revolution | File size: 16.Mb

**Francis Fukuyama : The Origins of Political Order: From Prehuman Times to the French Revolution** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Origins of Political Order: From Prehuman Times to the French Revolution:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. How did we get this way? By Walter W. Olson, Ph.D, P.E. I have just

finished reading *The Origins of Political Order* by Francis Fukuyama. This is the first of two books which covers the history of building of the state. The second book was recommended to me by one of my former students and I thank him for doing this. Finding that he was recommending the second book, I decided to read the first book first. After reading the first book, I am looking forward to the second book which I own but haven't read yet. I am convinced by Dr. Fukuyama's arguments that good modern governments need the rule of law, accountability to its citizens and a strong state to be successful. If a citizen is serious about their country, they should know why it is the way it is, why it is legitimate (or illegitimate,) and the possible modes of decay. Dr. Fukuyama has presented several models based on history and philosophy. His arguments are convincing. The future is not necessarily hopeful. As he adequately expresses, "The United States seems increasingly caught in a dysfunctional political equilibrium, wherein everyone agrees on the necessity of addressing long-term fiscal issues, but powerful interest groups can block the spending cuts or tax increases necessary to close the gap." As a Conservative, I see that this is a correct analysis of the situation we find ourselves in today. Dr. Fukuyama shows that extreme conservatism (extreme by my standards of conservatism) results in institutions that can no longer adequately function. He credits this more than any other factor as the reason why states fail. And I think he is right: people receiving the benefits of an institution prevent it from being changed. Furthermore, these institutions grow and require more and more resources (read TAXES,) eventually these institutions grow so big and are so dysfunctional, they kill the state that created them. Furthermore, the interests of the particular institutions grow so dependent on the institutions that they will protect these institutions even if it means neglecting the protection of the overall state. This has happened in both Hungary and France. This is not the Conservatism espoused by Buckley and Hayek, but is a form of conservatism that is known by other names. Dr. Fukuyama has been referred to as a neoconservative by others in his outlook but, he, himself disputes this. The reader of this book needs to understand this. When conservatism is a maintenance of institutions that have lost their ability to efficiently serve the purposes that they were created for, then it is necessarily wrong and does not in general represent modern Conservatism. I regret that Dr. Fukuyama used this term as it will confuse those who can not distinguish the difference. Unfortunately, many will read this book and improperly infer the wrong conclusion. However, Dr. Fukuyama's analysis of history and the formation of the political states rings with truth. His thesis is largely that an effective modern government needs a balance between the rule of law, accountability, external family/tribal social mobilization and a strong state. He dismisses Marx and Hobbes for assuming facts not in evidence. Dr. Fukuyama fundamentally believes that man is a social animal and has never lived without a social structure of man's own making. First that social structure was family and then it developed into a tribe as being more efficient to meet man's needs. As the need for defense from other tribes grew, it required state-like organizations to survive. As man became increasingly agrarian, the efficiency of food supply offered by farming required property rights that needed protection. The development of religion influenced what people thought about laws, morals and legitimacy. Ultimately, it affected how states formed. This was not a linear process as Marx professed but a process where cultures differed and where reversion to earlier conditions often occurred. In many cases the conditions for a modern state did not exist until late. In some cases, it is still developing. The natural state of man favored family so often early development of states reverted back to patrimonialism. And where modern states did develop, the paths were variable depending on the geography including religion and history of the region. But states that succeeded overcame this through various supporting mechanisms including religious supports, legal supports and the involvement of nonruling classes in government have come to some successful institutions that have endured. There were very different ways of achieving a modern government. He only touches briefly on recent developments. This he is reserving for the second book. But he has built a great foundation for further discussion. In general I agree with Dr. Fukuyama and look forward to reading the second book.

127 of 133 people found the following review helpful. A thoughtful addition to the world-historical theorizing genre. By Ryan

*The Origins of Political Order* is an engaging read for anyone willing to grant the author license to do some old school multidisciplinary broad-scope theorizing on a hugely important question: What are the origins of political order? Why did key political institutions -- a centralized state with a monopoly on the use of force, enforcement of legal norms by third parties, and accountability of the state to outside forces -- develop in some places and not others? The real standard for evaluating this kind of book, a work in the world-historical *Guns, Germs, and Steel* genre, is not whether the author gets details wrong, or misconstrues some of the theories or cultures he discusses. This is inevitable. No one can be an expert in biology, the history of China, cultural anthropology, primate behavior, and legal history. But as Fukuyama correctly argues, that the task is necessarily imperfect and difficult doesn't mean it isn't worthwhile. The standard for success is whether the necessarily imperfect effort nonetheless tells us something new and interesting. And Fukuyama succeeds on this metric. Fukuyama abolishes any doubts the reader might harbor about political development as separate from economic or social development, and destroys any notion the reader might have that political order is somehow automatic or natural. Fukuyama will persuade you that political order is instead fragile and contingent. And he'll do it while taking you on a fascinating tour of the history of several different nations as well as the history of humans as a species. You'll learn about geography, primate behavior, and religion. Indeed, the pages are brimming with interesting theories on the various sub-topics that make up the volume, each of which could form its own PhD project. That none is quite fully explored is a necessary byproduct of the scope

of the work. Fukuyama, of course, has his biases. He gleefully and rightly eschews political correctness. Some readers might flinch, for example, at the characterization of societies that use women as chattel as essentially egalitarian and free. But Fukuyama's biases are not Right or Left; readers of any partisan persuasion will find things to like and dislike about Fukuyama's conclusions. If nothing else, the book is a sterling example of clear, concise prose that is well-edited. You won't find yourself puzzling over poorly written sentences, awkward constructions, or unfocused structure. It's hard to imagine a reader of nonfiction who wouldn't find something to like about this book. Give it a shot. 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. A Must Read By Nelson I intensely disliked Fukuyama's *End of History*, but he redeems himself in this historical survey of the origins of political order and, perhaps most importantly, highlighting how it differs in different cultures (culture underlying everything). Excellent book, and to me convincing. He argues "natural human sociability is built around two principles, kin selection and reciprocal altruism." In political terms, that means a constant struggle in the pre-19th century Malthusian world to prevent kin politics dominating the state and the benefits that can accrue to a rent-seeking power elite. Entrenched interest groups tend to accumulate in any society over time, which aggregate into rent-seeking coalitions in order to defend their narrow privileges." He lists the methods attempted by Chinese, Indian, Muslim and Western societies to empower the dispassionate state over kin and kin and rent-seeking politics, from bureaucratic Confucianism to Brahminism to Muslim slave ruler states to parliamentary government. "Shared mental models most particularly those that take the form of religion, are critical for facilitating large-scale collective action." Lots of good stuff. I hope his book on political order from 1815 to the present is equally convincing.

A New York Times Notable Book for 2011 A Globe and Mail Best Books of the Year 2011 Title A Kirkus Reviews Best Nonfiction of 2011 title Virtually all human societies were once organized tribally, yet over time most developed new political institutions which included a central state that could keep the peace and uniform laws that applied to all citizens. Some went on to create governments that were accountable to their constituents. We take these institutions for granted, but they are absent or are unable to perform in many of today's developing countries with often disastrous consequences for the rest of the world. Francis Fukuyama, author of the bestselling *The End of History and the Last Man* and one of our most important political thinkers, provides a sweeping account of how today's basic political institutions developed. The first of a major two-volume work, *The Origins of Political Order* begins with politics among our primate ancestors and follows the story through the emergence of tribal societies, the growth of the first modern state in China, the beginning of the rule of law in India and the Middle East, and the development of political accountability in Europe up until the eve of the French Revolution. Drawing on a vast body of knowledge in history, evolutionary biology, archaeology, and economics Fukuyama has produced a brilliant, provocative work that offers fresh insights on the origins of democratic societies and raises essential questions about the nature of politics and its discontents.

From Publishers Weekly Starred . The evolving tension between private and public animates this magisterial history of the state. In his *hominids-to-guillotines* chronicle of humanity's attempts to build strong, accountable governments that adhere to the rule of law, international relations scholar Fukuyama (*The End of History*) advances two themes: the effort to create an impersonal state free from family and tribal allegiances, and the struggle often violent against wealthy elites who capture the state and block critical reforms. Fukuyama's multifaceted comparative approach grounds politics and government in the demands of biology, geography, war, and economics, and pays appropriately lavish attention to China (he styles the Qin Dynasty of 221 B.C.E. the world's first modern state), India, and the Islamic countries. A neo-Hegelian, he's especially trenchant on the importance of ideologies especially religious beliefs as an autonomous instigator of social and political change. (He cogently ascribes Europe's distinctively individualistic culture to the medieval Catholic Church's "assault on kinship.") Fukuyama writes a crystalline prose that balances engaging erudition with incisive analysis. As germane to the turmoil in Afghanistan as it is to today's congressional battles, this is that rare work of history with up-to-the-minute relevance. (Apr.) (c) Copyright PWxyz, LLC. All rights reserved. From Booklist Political theorist Fukuyama presents nothing less than a unified theory of state formation, a comparative study of how tribally organized societies in various parts of the world and various moments in history have transformed into societies with political systems and institutions and, in some cases, political accountability. Drawing upon a diverse range of sources in sociobiology and anthropology as well as macroeconomics and legal history and paying particular attention to political development in Asia, Fukuyama describes a somewhat evolutionary mechanism wherein political systems develop in response to certain societal conditions and become institutionalized because of, among other things, their ability to adapt. Very much a continuation of his former teacher Samuel Huntington's interest in political decay, this wide-ranging and frequently provocative work also carries the mantle of the great nineteenth-century sociologists, who addressed many of the same questions. Though Fukuyama hints at his theory's relevance to present-day political challenges, readers seeking commentary on anything more recent than the French Revolution will need to be patient; this is volume 1 of 2. --Brendan Driscoll Ambitious and highly readable. The New Yorker Political theorist Francis Fukuyama's new book is a major accomplishment, likely to find its

place among the works of seminal thinkers like Jean-Jacques Rousseau and John Locke, and modern moral philosophers and economists such as John Rawls and Amartya Sen . . . It is a perspective and a voice that can supply a thinker's tonic for our current political maladies. Earl Pike, *The Cleveland Plain Dealer* An intellectual triumph--bold in scope, sound in judgment, and rich in provocations; in short, a classic. Ian Morris, *Slate* A sweeping survey that tries to explain why human beings act as they do in the political sphere. Magisterial in its learning and admirably immodest in its ambition. David Gress, *The Wall Street Journal* In many respects, Fukuyama is an ideal guide for this enormous undertaking. He combines a deep expertise in political institutions with an impressive familiarity of world history, philosophy and social theory. An engaging writer, his prose crackles with sharp observations and illuminating comparisons, and the book marshals a breathtaking array of stimulating facts and provocative generalizations. Who knew, for instance, that the tsetse fly retarded the spread of Islam into sub-Saharan Africa? Simply as a compendium of fascinating minutiae and social science theory, the book offers a treasure trove to the casual student of political history. More important, Fukuyama's book can help us appreciate why so many countries fail to combine the strong institutions, rule of law and accountability that are the hallmark of peaceful and prosperous nations. Eric Oliver, *San Francisco Chronicle* Fukuyama's intellectual instincts hard-wire him into the most geopolitically strategic--not to mention dangerous--corners of the world. [He] is arguably the world's bestselling contemporary political scientist... His new book, *The Origins of Political Order*, which hits bookstores this week, seeks to understand how human beings transcended tribal affiliations and organized themselves into political societies... His books have taken on not only politics and philosophy, but also biotechnology and that tinderbox of an idea: human nature. He's incredibly intellectually honest,' says Walter Russell Mead, a historian of American foreign policy. He goes where his head takes him. His first duty is to the truth as he sees it.' Andrew Bast, *Newsweek* The history profession is today dominated by small minds studying small topics. Specialists trade in abstractions, taking refuge in tiny foxholes of arcane knowledge. It was not always this way. In the 19th century, men like Leopold von Ranke, George Macaulay Trevelyan and Frederick Jackson Turner used the past to try to understand the present. Their ideas were big, and sometimes too were their mistakes. Francis Fukuyama is at heart a Victorian. As he admits, he wants to revive a lost tradition' when historians were big thinkers. In *The Origins of Political Order*, his topic is the world, his starting point the chimpanzee. He charts how states evolved, in the process explaining why, despite humans' common origin in Africa perhaps 50,000 years ago, great political diversity exists today... [It is] impressive to see such a huge and complicated topic covered in such an accessible and engaging fashion.... *The Origins of Political Order* tries to make sense of the complexity that has cluttered the last two decades. It is a bold book, probably too bold for the specialists who take refuge in tiny topics and fear big ideas. But Fukuyama deserves congratulation for thinking big and not worrying about making mistakes. This is a book that will be remembered, like those of Ranke, Trevelyan and Turner. Bring on volume II. Gerard DeGrott, *The Washington Post* *The Origins of Political Order* "begins in prehuman times and concludes on the eve of the American and French Revolutions. Along the way, Fukuyama mines the fields of anthropology, archaeology, biology, evolutionary psychology, economics, and, of course, political science and international relations to establish a framework for understanding the evolution of political institutions. And that's just Volume One. At the center of the project is a fundamental question: Why do some states succeed while others collapse? Evan Goldstein, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* The evolving tension between private and public animates this magisterial history of the state.... Fukuyama writes a crystalline prose that balances engaging erudition with incisive analysis. As germane to the turmoil in Afghanistan as it is to today's congressional battles, this is that rare work of history with up-to-the-minute relevance. Publishers Weekly (starred, and a Top 10 Politics Pick for the Spring Preview) Ambitious, erudite and eloquent, this book is undeniably a major achievement by one of the leading public intellectuals of our time. Michael Lind, *The New York Times Book* Stimulating. . . With impressive erudition, the author travels across China, India, the Islamic world and different regions of Europe looking for the main components of good political order and at how and why these emerged (or failed to) in each place. . . Mr. Fukuyama is still the big-picture man who gave us *The End of History*, but he has an unerring eye for illuminating detail. Books on political theory are not often page-turners; this one is. *The Economist* This exceptional book should be in every library. David Keymer, *Library Journal* Human social behavior has an evolutionary basis. This was the thesis in Edward O. Wilson's book *Sociobiology* that has caused such a stir . . . In *The Origins of Political Order*, Francis Fukuyama of Stanford University presents a sweeping new overview of human social structures throughout history, taking over from where Dr. Wilson's ambitious synthesis left off. . . Previous attempts to write grand analyses of human development have tended to focus on a single causal explanation, like economics or warfare, or, as with Jared Diamond's *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, on geography. Dr. Fukuyama's is unusual in that he considers several factors, including warfare, religion, and in particular human social behaviors like favoring kin. . . 'You have to be bowled over by the extraordinary breath of approach,' said Arthur Melzer, a political scientist at Michigan State University who invited Dr. Fukuyama to give lectures on the book. 'It's definitely a magnum opus.' Nicholas Wade, *The New York Times* Sweeping, provocative big picture-study of humankind's political impulses. . . Endlessly interesting -- reminiscent in turns of Oswald Spengler, Stanislaw Andreski and Samuel Huntington, though less pessimistic and much better written. Kirkus s Political theorist Fukuyama presents nothing less than a unified theory of state formation, a comparative study of how tribally organized

societies in various parts of the world and various moments of history have transformed into societies with political systems and institutions and, in some cases, political accountability. . . This wide-ranging and frequently provocative work also carries the mantel of the great nineteenth-century sociologists. Brendan Driscoll, Booklist