

Fukuyama - Origins of Political Order

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- “How did anybody first develop basic political institutions?”
- Three aspects of governance:
 - The state: centralized, hierarchical source of authority that is able to concentrate power & enforce rules over a defined territory
 - Rule of law: set of rules that reflect the community’s notions of justice
 - must be superior to the will of anyone running the government - all equal before law
 - Accountability (used in place of word “democracy” because it’s broader)
 - accountable gov’t in England in 17th century - Glorious Revolution
 - Still centuries from representative democracy
 - Can you have non-procedural accountability?
 - Moral accountability - feeling responsibility towards citizens
- Modern states with all three of these institutions are “bit of a miracle”
- Believes that modern polisci isn’t historical enough - we don’t understand contingent complex origins of these institutions

State-building

- Focused on China because it was first modern state
 - Also wanted to avoid Eurocentrism of classic modernization theory
 - Typical modernization theorists thought that England’s path of development was universal
 - However, England & Europe generally were peculiar
- Why did China set up impersonal state in 221 BC?
 - Warfare! (or rather the need to organize for it)
 - “state makes war, and war makes the state”
 - Chinese did nothing but fight each other for ~700 years (nearly 1200 wars from 8th to 5th century BC)
 - Conquest reduced conflicts, as fewer outlying areas were left to conquer
 - Eventually, 3000 separate tribal organizations coalesced into a single state
 - State-building through warfare
- State-building is a struggle against the family
 - Inclusive fitness: altruism towards genetic relatives (can lead to nepotism)
 - Reciprocal altruism: mutual back-scratching
 - How to move to impersonal institutions instead of family preference?
- Example of China
 - Need to mobilize peasants into an army spurred censuses, taxes, etc.
 - Eventually you get people selected for talents rather than family connections
 - Contemporary China has a very high-quality authoritarian government
 - However, never had rule or law or political accountability
- Ottoman Empire: military slavery used to defeat family preference
 - Slaves couldn’t marry or have children
 - Served same function as Catholic church imposing celibacy on priests
 - Idea: preventing patrimonialism

Rule of Law

- Organized religion is major source of rules that are regarded as higher than even monarchs

- F. considers this a major source of the rule of law
- China never had a “transcendental” religion - only ancestor worship - which seemed to militate against the development of the rule of law
- Gives Catholic church a lot of credit in this book
- Democratic development is highly historically contingent
 - All feudal European societies had courts or parliaments that represented the elites in the country, and which could grant king permission for some actions (like taxation)
 - This is obviously unpopular with kings
 - England is only country where parliament hung together against the king (17th century, killed Charles I - the protectorate)
 - Parliament eventually imposes a constitution on the monarch, which becomes the foundation of accountable government
- Is India more accountable today because of British colonialism?
 - Not necessarily - has not been a unified country for very long
 - British didn't actually penetrate India (geographically or societally) very deeply
 - Indian society has been very resistant to the type of centralization that China fought towards
- Extended kinship came to an end in Europe not because a state claimed sovereignty, but because of the Catholic church
 - Different inheritance rules in 7th & 8th century - affected property ownership
 - Catholic church owned about 40% of territory in France in 9th century
 - Emergence of contracts: parents could sign maintenance contracts with children to force them to support them

Comments

- First commentator: sequencing is important
 - Character of regimes is a function of sequencing of developments
 - Path dependency is seen as more of an economic phenomenon
- Second commentator: do legal & political reforms lead to conflict? we should be more careful about promoting change in other societies
 - Modern development is “doing history in a hurry”

Questions

- There's a ton of history in Fukuyama's books. How do you start to learn all of this?
 - Important to have good guides - don't just order randomly on Amazon
- End of History was modernization theory. Have you rethought some of your earlier work?
 - Yes, it's a rethinking of those issues. “If you don't make any personal progress in 20 years you shouldn't be an academic”
 - Institutions are kind of like spandrels: can't predict which will prove important/become accepted features of the landscape
- What do we do if there isn't much written history (like Africa)? What's the first step, policy-wise?
 - There's no single answer. However, trying to build a state before the other institutions are in place seems problematic.
 - If you don't get sequencing correct, you'll “make big mistakes”
 - Revolutions are not made by the poorest of the poor - they're made by middle class people who've come to a place where they're stymied by lack of options for political participation
- Missed the question, but answer:

- He's all in favor of gradualism
- You can't get to Denmark immediately, or simultaneously
- Obviously historical conditions for development have changed radically with the industrial revolution
 - Malthusian vs. non-malthusian world