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AN UNDERSTANDING OF "UNIVERSAL HISTORY" IN FRANCIS FUKUYAMA'S
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В КНИГЕ ФРЭНСИСА ФУКУЯМЫ «КОНЕЦ ИСТОРИИ И ПОСЛЕДНИЙ ЧЕЛОВЕК»*Нго Нхи Нгок Линь**аспирант,**Университет социальных и гуманитарных наук ВНУ;**преподаватель,**Университет Тхань До,**Вьетнам, г. Ханой*

ABSTRACT

In this article, we propose an understanding of "Universal History" after studying Francis Fukuyama's *The End of History and The Last Man*. From the arguments that Fukuyama gave, we understand that he wanted to make the concept of universal history newer and more personal. Therefore, we examine Universal History in this work by analyzing Fukuyama's reasons and ideas to have a basis for providing an understanding of his concept of Universal History.

АННОТАЦИЯ

В этой статье интерпретируется «Всемирная История» по книге Фрэнсиса Фукуямы «Конец истории и последний человек». Из приведенных Фукуямой аргументов автор делает вывод, что он хотел создать концепцию всемирной истории более новой и личностной. В данной статье проводится исследование Всемирной Истории, анализируются аргументы и идеи Фукуямы, для того чтобы сформировать понимание его концепции всемирной истории.

Keywords: Francis Fukuyama, Universal History, The End of History and The Last Man.

Ключевые слова: Фрэнсис Фукуяма, Всемирная История, Конец истории и Последний человек.

Introduction

Francis Fukuyama is an American political philosopher, international relations expert and scholar, famous for his thesis *The End of History*. He won the Best Book of 2018 award from *The Times* (UK) and the Best Political Book of 2018 by the Financial Times. *The End of History and The Last Man* [2] by Francis Fukuyama was pub-

lished in 1992. This work bears the very unique characteristics of political philosopher Francis Fukuyama with reflections surrounding the core issues of existence, fate and future of each person, each nation and all humanity. One of the topics of interest to many scholars related to this book is the concept of Universal History.

The concept of "Universal History"

Universal History is a concept that is not easy to clarify, especially in the work "The End of History and the Last Man" it has become one of the central contents that Francis Fukuyama wants to explain in detail interspersed with the reader. Fukuyama was not the first person to mention this concept, but before that Hegel and Kojève and other scholars had also talked about it. So he writes: *"By raising once again the question whether there is such a thing as a Universal History of mankind, I am resuming a discussion that was begun in the early nineteenth century, but more or less abandoned in our time because of the enormity of events that mankind has experienced since then"* [2, p. xiv].

In his work, Fukuyama refers to Universal History as a deep and personal concern that we need to read carefully to better understand it. He affirms this right in the book's introduction: *"This volume immodestly presents not one but two separate efforts to outline such a Universal History. After establishing in Part I why we need to raise again the possibility of Universal History, I propose an initial answer in Part II by attempting to use modern natural science as an regulator or mechanism to explain the directionality and coherence of History"* [2, p. xiv]. Then, following Nietzsche's line of thinking, Fukuyama gave answers to a series of questions that he believed required us to have answers to say: *"They arise naturally when we ask whether there is such as a thing as progress, and whether we can construct a coherence and directed Universal History of mankind"* [2, p. xxiii].

That is why Fukuyama mentioned the reason why we need to raise again the possibility of Universal History at the beginning of the book "The End of History and the Last Man".

2. The rationale of the study is to clarify the definition of Universal History

The first thing Fukuyama mentioned shows some lack of optimism when it comes to the reason for concern about Universal History. Although from a personal perspective, each person can be optimistic about his or her life when satisfied with issues such as: having health and happiness. But when looking at another aspect, a broader scope related to humanity, here Fukuyama refers first to America and the West with the big question raised: whether history has or will progress. Ministry or not, the answer is completely different from before. Therefore, he commented that: *"The pessimism of the twentieth century stands in sharp contrast to the optimism of the previous century one"* [2, p.4]. To convince of the unoptimism of the situation in the twentieth century, Fukuyama pointed out the optimism of the nineteenth century with two bases: the belief that modern science will improve people's lives by Victory over disease, poverty and liberal democratic governments will continue to spread to more and more countries around the world. Then, the reason for extreme pessimism in the twentieth century was partly due to the cruelty of broken previous expectations such as the emergence of totalitarianism that went against democratic governments. and claims about the progress of science and technology become problematic. The development of totalitarianism means

negative upheavals, typically the First World War. When talking about the First World War, people cannot help but be horrified by the consequences and damage it caused to people. Next, a series of destructive weapons were born, biotechnology led to the destruction of the environment to serve war, these are all scientific and technological advances but go in the opposite direction of humanity. literature, humanity, and should have made people have a better life, it has made them darker, more miserable, and more lost. Therefore, *"The twentieth century, it is safe to say, has made all of us into deep historical pessimists"* [2, p.3].

Along with the upheavals in the twentieth century, a number of countries considered strong countries emerged such as Germany..., from which Fukuyama analyzed to point out the weaknesses of these countries. For strong states, a failure of legitimacy is a fatal weakness. Fukuyama borrowed the idea of Socrates and explained in Plato's Republic that *"even among a band of robbers there must be some principles of justice that permits them to divide their spoils"* [2, pp. 15-16]. Therefore, for any strong country, legitimacy is extremely important, even for dictatorships.

Demonstrating the importance of legitimacy, Fukuyama gave examples in many different countries across territories. The first is the case of the Alawi-dominated regime in Syria. Another case is Saddam Hussein's Ba'athist party in Iraq. A completely different example is Supranationalism, a fascist ideology that held that the ultimate source of legitimacy was the race or nation, specifically the right of "master races" such as the Germans to rule over others. But legitimacy is not the only thing that causes strong states to collapse quickly; the ability to solve many serious economic and social problems is also a fatal weakness, especially for left-wing authoritarian governments property. A typical example is the failure of dictatorships in Latin America and Southern Europe such as in Portugal and Spain in the mid-70s of the 20th century that Fukuyama pointed out. Is it true that when these countries were in a strong state but were aware of their fatal weakness, they tried to avoid a quick collapse and instead tried to maintain a dictatorship or globalism? Governance will gradually transform to democracy more flexibly and effectively, history will have fewer twists and turns, and people will soon reach a perfect society as expected.

It was the weakness of strong states that caused dictatorship in many countries to give way to democracy and then the revolution of freedom around the world took place. Talking about liberalism and democracy, Fukuyama recognized that these are two separate concepts but are closely related to each other. He agreed with Lord Bryce that democracy is limited by three basic rights: civil rights, religious rights and political rights [2, p. 42-43] and adhere to rights compatible with those contained in the United States Bill of Rights. Next, to evaluate a democratic country, Fukuyama also provides an official definition as a normative measure: *"A country is democratic if it grants its people the right to choose their own government through periodi, secret-ballot, multi-party elections, on the basis of universality and equal adult suffrage"* [2, p.43]. However, after providing

this definition and reflecting on reality, Fukuyama himself also had to admit certain limitations of democracy. He saw the instability of democracy because it sometimes cannot guarantee equal rights and participation, and can be manipulated by elites and opens up the possibility of unlimited abuse of democratic principles. From this limitation, we can see Fukuyama's contradictions in his perception of democracy because he seems to always promote democracy and liberalism in all fields, even comparing them to communism, capitalism and totalitarianism to prove its superiority. And of course, as the worldwide liberal revolution took place, liberal democracy emerged, leading Fukuyama to conjecture that the tendency for liberal democracy to prevail is reasonable cycle. He sees the rise of liberal democracy and economic liberalism as bedfellows and the most notable macropolitical phenomenon of the past four hundred years. From there, Fukuyama presented his research in the table on pages 49-50 of the book [2] to show that the development of democracy is not continuous or does not follow a definite direction. Looking at this chart, we can see that dictatorship was replaced by democracy and that it succeeded in many places and peoples around the world, not limited to Western Europe or North America.

From here, Fukuyama concluded that mentioning Universal History is an old thing, but what he wanted when researching it was to raise the concept to a new level. He also saw that the development of Freedom was considered a central issue in history to be systematically written into Universal Histories.

After expressing his pessimism, in the second part Fukuyama is more optimistic, sketching a guiding universal history using modern natural science as an authority or mechanism to explain nature have historical direction and consistency. This is an idea for Universal History.

3. An idea for Universal History

He argued that universal history is not the same as the history of the universe and is not the history of all peoples and cultures. Fukuyama argues that the first truly Universal Histories in the Western tradition were Christian: "*As the Christian account of history makes clear, an implicit "end of history" is implicit in the writing of all Universal Histories*" [2, p.56]. They were the first to introduce the concept of the equality of all people before God, and thus the concept of a common destiny for all the peoples of the world. There are many scholars who argue for universal history, such as alternative theories of progress advanced by Enlightenment thinkers such as Voltaire, Turgot, and Condorcet. In it Fukuyama referred to Condorcet's *Progress of the Mind* as containing a ten-stage Universal History of man, the last era of which - yet to be achieved - was characterized by equality of opportunity, liberty, rationality, democracy and universal education [2, p.57]. And he commented that: "*Like Fontenelle, Condorcet postulated no terms to human perfection, implying the possibility of an eleventh stage of history unknown to man the present*" [2, p.57].

Next, the idea of universal history from a cosmic perspective was discussed by Immanuel Kant in an essay

in 1784. Kant suggested that history would have an end point and then, for universal history. In general, taking into account all societies and all times, there is general reason to expect the general progress of mankind towards the establishment of republican politics, that is, what we now understand as liberal democracy [2, p. 58]. After analyzing this view of Kant, Fukuyama said that Kant's essay itself is not a Universal History. The project of writing Kant's Universal History, once philosophically serious and based on a mastery of empirical history, was handed over to his successor, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, appeared after Kant's death.

Fukuyama appreciated Hegel's concept of universal history in both content and form more than Kant's. Hegel was absolutely serious about his project of universal history. For Hegel, the embodiment of human freedom is the modern constitutional state, or what we call liberal democracy [2, p.60]. This is completely similar to Fukuyama's view that the legitimacy and controllability of civil society is inherited from the idea that "*The History of the world is none other than the progress of the consciousness of Freedom*" [2, p.60] by Kant. According to him, Hegel's universal history presents not only the progress of knowledge and institutions, but also the changing nature of humanity itself. Because human nature is not fixed, it is not a pre-existing existence but is always moving to become something different from the nature it once was.

Not only stopping at the universal concepts of Kant and Hegel - classic German philosophers, Fukuyama also deeply analyzed the arguments of Marx and Kojève. He believes that these two philosophers can both be considered interpreters of Hegel but at different stages. If Marx was the greatest interpreter of Hegel in the nineteenth century, then Kojève was the same in the twentieth century. Marx's *Communist Manifesto* was also a foretaste of universal history, but after witnessing the failure of Marxism in typical events in 20th century history, Fukuyama was skeptical that universal history Is Hegel's summary prophetic history? This is where Fukuyama inherited Kojève through Kojève's highly influential series of lectures at the École Pratique des Hautes Études in the 1930s [2, pp.65-66]. Like Marx, Kojève did not feel bound to simply interpret Hegel's thought, but instead used it creatively to offer his own understanding of modernity, which is also something that in his book Fukuyama tries to do to complete Universal History.

Later, Fukuyama also studied other universal histories although they were not as famous as those of Hegel and Marx. Some relatively optimistic theories about progressive social evolution came from Auguste Comte and Darwin Herbert Spencer [2, pp.67-68] in the second half of the 19th century. This work argues that we will later see social evolution as part of a larger process of biological evolution, subject to laws similar to those of survival of the fittest. Next, he mentioned *Decline of the West* and Arnold Toynbee's *The Study of History* [2, p.68] in the twentieth century. Both of these authors deal with the problem of historical divisions of distinct peoples - "cultural" in the case of Spengler and "societies" in the case of Toynbee - each of which is said to follow certain

uniform laws of development and decline. However, Fukuyama emphasizes a work on universal history written by a collective group of social scientists - mainly Americans - after World War II, under the common rubric of "modernization theory" [2, p.68] in the 20th century. He believes that this is the starting premise of "modernization theory" and explains many economic, political, and social issues in the future hybrid.

Starting from the first universal history, Fukuyama argued that Kant stood on an international perspective to prophesy a truly global culture. He somewhat agrees with the view that history is cyclical, but according to Fukuyama it will be subject to the grip of modern natural science. Evidence of cyclicity is that *"Those who have read Thucydides can note the parallels between the rivalry between of Athens and Sparta and the Cold War conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union"* [2, p. 68] or *"At the end of the 20th century, Hitler and Stalin appear to be bypaths of history that led to a dead end"* [2, p.127]. After analyzing those evidences, Fukuyama made the comment *"a Universal History need not justify every tyrannical regime and every war to expose a meaningful large pattern in human evolution"* [2, p.128]. In trying to answer the question of whether there is a rational pattern to history, in this work Fukuyama hopes for a broad universal history. He believes that it is possible to recognize the fact that modern times have allowed people to commit more crimes, even question the essence of human moral progress, but still continue to believe in the existence of human beings. of a directed and coherent historical process.

To build a democracy there must certainly be democrats, which is what Fukuyama affirmed in his argument when giving an answer to a directional universal history. As stated above, one of the limitations of democracy is that it still cannot ensure the right to fair participation and that democracy is being exploited along with the progressive development of science and technology, which goes against the purpose of development: progressive development. Here, when mentioning mechanism, Fukuyama believes that it is an economic explanation of history and that it is human desire that causes them to exploit capabilities that push themselves away. Fukuyama believes that mechanism is a type of Marxist explanation of history that leads to a completely un-Marxist conclusion [2, p.131]. But, contrary to Marx, the type of society that allows people to produce and consume large quantities of products on the most equal basis is not a communist society, but a capitalist society. A truly universal history of humanity, then, would have to be able to explain not only broad and incremental evolutionary trends, but also discontinuous and abrupt trends. In fact, this has happened, because universal history is not subject to any limitations on geographical space or the culture of nations and peoples. It takes place and increases various variables, including both progressive and anti-progressive things such as war, death and environmental pollution. A fuller

universal history, even one based largely on modern natural science, would have to understand the pre-modern origins of science, and of the desires that lie behind them wants of economic people. So, finding a universal history to underpin it is not easy. From there Fukuyama advises not to rely on Marx and the social science tradition derived from an economic perspective based on his conception of history, but on Hegel, Marx's "idealistic" predecessor, the philosopher first responded to Kant's challenge to write a Universal history. For perhaps history, in Hegel's understanding of the mechanisms underlying the deeper historical process, is unmatched by Marx or any other contemporary social scientist. Hegel's Universal History complements the Mechanism we have just outlined, but gives us a broader understanding of man - "man as man" - that allows us to understand disruption, wars and sudden irrational explosions from smooth economic development, that described actual human history [2, p.135]. So, it can be said that the state of universality and uniformity that emerged at the end of history can be considered to lie on the two pillars of economics and recognition, both of which are issues that most histories universally mentioned, especially more deeply than in Hegel. In the second part, when giving an answer about universal history, Fukuyama mentioned the impact of culture on economic development, whether as a stimulus or a constraint, pointing out the potential obstacle in the journey of Universal History.

Finally, having settled on the question of the possibility of writing a Universal History, Fukuyama decided to suspend the question of whether intentional historical change constitutes progress. For him, the attempt to construct a Universal History in his work created two parallel historical processes, one guided by modern natural science and the logic of desire, the other due to the struggle to be recognized [2, p.289]. Both conveniently culminate at the same end point, capitalist liberal democracy. And he argues that the idea of a universal and guiding history leading to liberal democracy may become more palatable to everyone but will face some problems and pessimism in the future can still happen.

Conclusion

Sticking closely to the content of the works *The End of History and The Last Man* and the arguments given by Francis Fukuyama, it can be seen that Universal History is one of the ambitions of the book. Although Fukuyama is not confident in saying that his work is a universal history, with the research efforts and arguments in it, perhaps, we can still recognize a clear concept of Universal History according to his point of view. Universal history exists with direction and consistency, but is unstable because it sometimes seems to represent past and ongoing repeating cycles that also admit of interruptions, regressions, and a little prediction about the future.

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