

Duquesne University

Duquesne Scholarship Collection

Hallowed Secularism

The Collective Works of Bruce Ledewitz, Adrian
Van Kaam C.S.Sp. Endowed Chair in Scholarly
Excellence and Professor of Law

1-21-2019

January 21, 2019: Why Wasn't Fukuyama Right?

Bruce Ledewitz

Duquesne University, ledewitz@duq.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dsc.duq.edu/ledewitz-hallowedsecularism>



Part of the [Constitutional Law Commons](#), and the [Law and Philosophy Commons](#)

Repository Citation

Ledewitz, B. (2019). January 21, 2019: Why Wasn't Fukuyama Right?. Retrieved from <https://dsc.duq.edu/ledewitz-hallowedsecularism/1220>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the The Collective Works of Bruce Ledewitz, Adrian Van Kaam C.S.Sp. Endowed Chair in Scholarly Excellence and Professor of Law at Duquesne Scholarship Collection. It has been accepted for inclusion in Hallowed Secularism by an authorized administrator of Duquesne Scholarship Collection. For more information, please contact beharyr@duq.edu.

Title: Why Wasn't Fukuyama Right?

Date: 2019-01-21T06:46:00.000-05:00

1/21/2019--Why didn't 1989 turn out to be the end of history? In retrospect, we think Francis Fukuyama was silly. But the consensus in 1989 was that the combination of government humanity had hit upon--representative democracy, judicial review (the rule of law) and market capitalism with a safety net--was about the best you could do and was not likely to be improved very much and did pretty well for people. That conclusion did not turn out to be wrong. Although the political world is cracking up, no one has come up with a better ideology. I for one still believe in the system Fukuyama described. Is China a better system? Fukuyama was destined to be wrong about history because of the rise of new powers--China, for example--the decline of old ones--America--and new threats--like climate change. But why did he turn out to be wrong about politics? Why didn't that three part consensus system prove stable? The Left says economic inequality and the loss of jobs. But people did not actually get poorer. But yes, life did seem hopeless to many people and that is why Trump and Brexit won. But why did life seem hopeless? Economically things were not that bad for most people anywhere in the West. Was it the dislocations of 2008? The Right says two things. Too much government proved intolerable. That's what the rich say. The populist Right says what the Left says, plus nationalism and racism. "We" are disappearing. Here is the crisis of immigration. I believe that the breakdown occurred because of what I have called The Crisis of Secularism--See my book, Church, State and the Crisis in American Secularism. The crisis is the failure to create what this blog calls Hallowed Secularism. In other words, life has no intrinsic meaning. Traditional religion--Christianity and Judaism--fail to remain vibrant and believable and no other account of meaning arises. So, Trump. Brexit. Nationalism. Populism. The dark forces that are always potentially present are no longer held in check by a myth of intrinsic meaning--a way to fit into the universe. The way Michael Ignatieff puts this is to say that secular society inevitably disappoints. But that is because he cannot imagine an account of intrinsic meaning arising from naturalism. Alfred North Whitehead would disagree about that.