

## Jasmine Revolutions, Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, and Francis Fukuyama's still wrong

by kevin harding - Wednesday, February 23, 2011

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Francis Fukuyama argued that the "end of history" was the emergence of liberal democracy - and, of course, capitalism - as the predominant ideological force in the world. According to Fukuyama, the shift to liberalism was inevitable - it was just, quite simply, better than anything else. When he wrote this, in 1989, just before the fall of the Berlin Wall, democracy was breaking out across the world, and it was indeed 'liberal' in many cases.

Some commentators have suggested that the recent uprisings across the Middle East are the 'proof' of Fukuyama's argument that has been, for so long, elusive. This is a suggestion that the popular, people's movements for democracy show that liberal democracy is still the ultimate stage in human political development, with its focus on the individual and its attendant trappings of capitalism.

With that in mind, I find it absolutely fascinating to read and to hear "market concerns," or "business worries," reflected in stock market trading and commodity prices, that these popular uprisings might spread across the region. The markets are afraid of this.

If Fukuyama was right, and if liberal democracy and capitalism is the ultimate stage in human development, that elusive 'end of history,' then shouldn't the markets be embracing these uprisings and revolutions?

They're not, though. For a good reason. The popular uprisings in Tunisia, in Egypt, in Libya, and nascent ones in China and Yemen and in so many other places are taking a different form. These uprisings are based on communities of action, they are leaderless, they feature collective action and mutual aid as ways that they operate. They're not calling for democracy and the right to freely trade their stock options and derivatives, they're calling for democracy and human rights.

These popular uprisings show that Fukuyama's thesis is far from being confirmed - indeed, it's again being shown to be just as preposterous as it always has been. Liberalism isn't the end of history. Any number of these regimes that have fallen or will soon fit perfectly well into the liberal mode. The people are demanding something else - something beyond Fukuyama's "end of history."

They are demanding - actually, they are going beyond the demand and they are actively creating - their capacity to collectively decide their own futures. Something that liberal democracy and capitalism deny them.

And the markets and the stock traders and the businessmen know this. Which is why they are afraid of these uprisings spreading. Which is why Fukuyama is still wrong. And why the people in Egypt and Tunisia and Libya and Yemen and China and Wisconsin are right.

