

Audio file

[069ad45f4cbbfb40ecb9f95ffa58eb78 1.mp3](#)

Transcript

00:00:17 Speaker 1

Hello and welcome to the Koga podcast.

00:00:19 Speaker 1

A podcast by the quality of.

00:00:21 Speaker 1

Government institute at the University of Gothenburg.

00:00:25 Speaker 1

In this podcast.

00:00:26 Speaker 1

We have conversations with well known experts to try to make sense.

00:00:30 Speaker 1

Politics and governments worldwide.

00:00:33 Speaker 1

Hosting this show is Professor Victor Lapuente, and in this episode he will talk to Francis Fukuyama, professor at Stanford University, political scientist, political economist, and writer, who might be most known for his book *The End of History and The Last Man*, published in 1992.

00:00:54 Speaker 1

Kiama has inspired both academics and practitioners all over the world, and since that book no important world event has been untouched by the idea that we might be experiencing the end of this.

00:01:07 Speaker 1

Or the triumph of the western model of liberal democracies today, Francis and Victor will talk about the war in Ukraine.

00:01:15 Speaker 1

It's the end of history, closer or further away, giving conflicts like this one.

00:01:20 Speaker 1

They will also talk about Francis.

00:01:22 Speaker 1

More recent books like Liberalism and its discontents in this book.

00:01:26 Speaker 1

Francis is defending liberalism in a way seen by many critics as a former new.

00:01:32 Speaker 1

Icon In addition, Francis outlines the main challenges current liberalism faces, which he argues come from more inside our societies, like the increasing monopolistic and ugly archaic power of some corporations rather than from outside enemies.

00:01:49 Speaker 1

We hope you enjoyed the episode.

00:01:51 Speaker 1

Don't forget to like share.

00:01:53 Speaker 1

Subscribe if you do.

00:02:03 Speaker 2

Today in the podcast, we are privileged to have Francis Fukuyama, professor at Stanford University and one of the most influential thinkers of our time.

00:02:10 Speaker 2

Since 1989, when he published the much discussed article on the end of history that later became a book, from that moment onwards, every world event from the war in the Balkans.

00:02:22 Speaker 2

The war in Ukraine from Islamic terrorism to Western population has been interpreted in contrast or in dialogue with Suyama's idea of the end of history.

00:02:32 Speaker 2

But far from limiting himself to defend his thesis, Fukuyama has been quite the opposite, providing new, illuminating insights to understand the evolution of the wall.

00:02:41 Speaker 2

Not only the fate of democracies during this century, but also the origins of political order from the beginning of time until nowadays, his contributions to on the one hand, the emergence of state capacity and meritocratic.

00:02:54 Speaker 2

And on the other, on the importance of ideas, values.

00:02:58 Speaker 2

And political philosophy and religion are testimony of a gigantic intellectual legacy.

00:03:05 Speaker 2

Nothing from the grey bureaucrat to the colourful French literature escapes the radar of Fukuyama, so it's therefore a great honor to talk to you, Francis, especially from an institution.

00:03:16 Speaker 2

The quality of Government Institute, where many of us have been studying the historical roots and consequences of bureaucratic autonomy.

00:03:24 Speaker 2

So let's start with the most worrying.

00:03:26 Speaker 2

The issue in the world they were in.

00:03:28 Speaker 2

You have been probably one of the most cited scholars when it comes to try to understand the background of the conflict.

00:03:33 Speaker 2

In many cases, for the usual I guess misinterpretation of your work on the end of history and with remarks like look, the world looks like more a clash of civilization rather than at the end of history when actually in your 1989 article.

00:03:48 Speaker 2

The word probably not referring to the end of history as an ease, but more as a shoot, a normative rather than a descriptive statement.

00:03:56 Speaker 2

But anyway, what does this tell us?

00:03:59 Speaker 2

This invasion by by Russia, about what's going on in the world.

00:04:02 Speaker 2

It's just the final act of a psychopath and Putin.

00:04:07 Speaker 2

Or is it the beginning of a longer confrontation between the liberal order and authoritarian threats and regimes like Russia or China?

00:04:15 Speaker 2

It's just an an impasse.

00:04:16 Speaker 2

Or or an event in a longer chain of crisis of the Western model of capitalist democracies.

00:04:23 Speaker 3

So Victor, that's a really important question.

00:04:27 Speaker 3

I think that social scientists and historians have.

00:04:32 Speaker 3

Try to understand events under a framework of either structure or agency.

00:04:39 Speaker 3

So structure you know refers to social classes, to characteristics like geography, climate changes and technology, whereas agency has to do with individual actors, whether they're leaders at the top.

00:04:52 Speaker 3

Or act this.

00:04:53 Speaker 3

At the grass.

00:04:54 Speaker 3

Roots and a lot of my work has been trying to understand those underlying structures because I do believe that there's something like history in the regalian sense, that is to say, a modernization process that is coherent, that affects societies around the world in similar ways.

00:05:15 Speaker 3

Regardless of their cultural starting points.

00:05:17 Speaker 3

But that doesn't deny the impact of agency.

00:05:22 Speaker 3

First of all, the changes that occur, the structural changes won't happen unless individual agents push for them, and they can also be reversed by individual decisions.

00:05:33 Speaker 3

And so, you know, my understanding of what's happening in Ukraine right now is really more about agency than about structure.

00:05:43 Speaker 3

That I think if Vladimir Putin were a leader that was interested really in kind of the best interest of the Russian people.

00:05:51 Speaker 3

He would have continued down a liberal path that was begun by Yeltsin in the 1990s. He would have corrected some of the big flaws in the post Soviet political system that emerged, and he would have tried to integrate both politically and economically, into Europe. And instead, I think.

00:06:11 Speaker 3

What he has done is to basically.

00:06:16 Speaker 3

You know, maintaining what's really a colonial mindset that comes from 19th century Slavophile ISM.

00:06:23 Speaker 3

Where Russia can't be Russia without dominating its neighbors without having this very expanded sense of national identity that includes Ukraine and Belarus and the Slavic peoples that were formerly part of the Russian Empire.

00:06:40 Speaker 3

He said this very, very explicitly, both in an article that he published last summer and in the big speech that he gave prior to the invasion.

00:06:49 Speaker 3

So in a sense, you know he's still living.

00:06:51 Speaker 3

In a kind.

00:06:52 Speaker 3

Of 19th century colonial world, in which great powers can determine the fate of smaller nations, regardless of what?

00:07:00 Speaker 3

The people living in those countries feel, and that's the reason that he's made probably one of the biggest miscalculations, political miscalculations of any leader in in recent memory because he didn't understand that the.

00:07:14 Speaker 3

World has changed.

00:07:15 Speaker 3

That actually the kinds of forces that I was talking about in the end of history where people take to the streets because they want self determination, if not exactly liberal democracy, they certainly don't want to be.

00:07:29 Speaker 3

Bullied by great.

00:07:30 Speaker 3

Powers that simply use military force to get their way, and as a result.

00:07:35 Speaker 3

He's met this incredible resistance on the part of Ukrainians, and now he's trying to deal with that.

00:07:41 Speaker 3

But I think that ultimately.

00:07:43 Speaker 3

The outcome of this struggle is going to lie with, you know, people that are mobilizing from the grassroots and so they're exercising a different form of agency.

00:07:55 Speaker 3

That I think in.

00:07:56 Speaker 3

The in the end, it's going to prevail.

00:07:59 Speaker 2

Yeah, you are.

00:08:00 Speaker 2

Nevertheless, embedding this agency within some sort of structural and cultural Slavic tradition you were mentioning now and.

00:08:08 Speaker 2

And this reminds me your recent book on Liberalism and its discontents, where you make a strong defense of liberalism or the liberal spirit that took roots in Europe.

00:08:20 Speaker 2

And well, many were surprised because they were saying, well, we have here Fukuyama former Neo con defending liberalism.

00:08:26 Speaker 2

But I think it's a fantastic and a very original defend.

00:08:30 Speaker 2

And why?

00:08:31 Speaker 2

Therefore liberalism emerge in Europe and did not in Russia?

00:08:35 Speaker 2

Why Russia was still dominated by this colonial 19th century Slavic ideology you have mentioned in here?

00:08:43 Speaker 2

Because on the one hand, as you have noted elsewhere, Europe was, I don't know if to say lucky, but quite the opposite.

00:08:50 Speaker 2

May be unfortunate to have experienced very.

00:08:54 Speaker 2

Bloody religious wars in in the 16 and 17th century.

00:08:59 Speaker 2

On the other hand, there are obvious quite the opposite. judeo-christian roots are the core idea of liberalism. The the idea of human agency that you were mentioning right now, or moral choice that starts with the Genesis. This the the humans can choose to act correctly or or wrongly so.

00:09:18 Speaker 2

What I would like to ask is why did these ideas, liberal ideas emerge in Europe?

00:09:23 Speaker 2

And probably a majority of scholars would have emphasized a more traditional, let's say, Marxist interpretation.

00:09:30 Speaker 2

Well, first, these countries got economic development, and then the religious ideas or whatever ideas came afterwards.

00:09:37 Speaker 2

But you seem to correct me if I'm wrong side more with Max Bever in the sense that probably was ideas.

00:09:44 Speaker 2

What moved the world initially and the question is which ideas and why in Europe and not in Russia for example?

00:09:51 Speaker 3

Yeah, that's that's a lot of very complicated questions to answer.

00:09:56 Speaker 3

So I I should begin by defining what I mean by liberalism, because there are other uses of that term out there that are not what I'm intending.

00:10:07 Speaker 3

So in America, liberals are people that are left of center.

00:10:11 Speaker 3

You know progressives, and I think actually a lot of them have become kind of anti liberal because they've rejected, you know, ideas like tolerance and so forth.

00:10:21 Speaker 3

There's a European sense of liberal like the German Free Democrats, who are right of center parties that emphasize, you know, market economy.

00:10:30 Speaker 3

Low taxation and and so forth.

00:10:33 Speaker 3

And that's also not my definition.

00:10:35 Speaker 3

It's my definition.

00:10:37 Speaker 3

Is certainly not American libertarianism, which is a peculiar doctrine that really dislikes the state per say, and that's certainly not my view.

00:10:47 Speaker 3

So my understanding of liberalism probably is best explained in terms of that.

00:10:53 Speaker 3

Historical origin that you described.

00:10:56 Speaker 3

In the middle of the 17th century, by the time of the Peace of Westphalia, Europe had been fighting religious wars for 150 years. Since the the onset of the Protestant Reformation.

00:11:09 Speaker 3

And liberal thinkers like Thomas Hobbes or Pufendorf or John Locke began to say, well, maybe we would have a better outcome if we lowered the horizons of politics not to encompass the good life as defined by a particular religious doctrine.

00:11:29 Speaker 3

But that would emphasize.

00:11:30 Speaker 3

Life itself, that is, we all need to serve.

00:11:33 Speaker 3

They're not going to agree on the final ends of life as defined by religion, so let's agree to disagree that we'll tolerate different views of these final goods in the interests of peaceably living together.

00:11:47 Speaker 3

And I think that that's been the core idea of liberalism ever since that it's really a pragmatic way of living.

00:11:55 Speaker 3

And and governing in diverse societies now, by the time you get to the late 19th, early 20th century religious division has really been replaced by national division.

00:12:06 Speaker 3

And so you have these rising.

00:12:08 Speaker 3

Nation states like Germany and Italy, and the so forth that challenged the idea again of liberal tolerance by promoting a very aggressive form of nationalism.

00:12:20 Speaker 3

And so Europe fights too horrendous world wars and at the end of that experience they recover and they say, well, maybe liberalism.

00:12:30 Speaker 3

Isn't so bad, and so you have the European Union that's really founded on liberal principles.

00:12:35 Speaker 3

You know that there should be economic and social interchange without respect to hard national borders and the like.

00:12:44 Speaker 3

And that really lays the ground for a great deal of European prosperity, since that time.

00:12:50 Speaker 3

Now, why did Russia not fall into that consensus?

00:12:55 Speaker 3

I'm not sure I can really answer that.

00:12:57 Speaker 3

You know, one kind of typical historical claim has to do with the nature of the Christian Church.

00:13:05 Speaker 3

In the east, where you had a Orthodox Church that was located in the Xanthium that had a single head, that was always very closely allied with the Byzantine Empire.

00:13:16 Speaker 3

And then with the rise of Russia.

00:13:18 Speaker 3

The patriarch really moved to to Moscow.

00:13:22 Speaker 3

Russia thought of itself as the third Rome.

00:13:25 Speaker 3

But you never had the kind of religious diversity in Russia that you did in Western Europe and the diversity in Western Europe was not just the fact that you had Protestants and Catholics, but even the Catholic Church.

00:13:40 Speaker 3

Was very separate from the emperor.

00:13:42 Speaker 3

The Holy Roman emperor.

00:13:44 Speaker 3

There's constant fighting between the two, and the church created its own institutions.

00:13:49 Speaker 3

This is what I argue in my book the origins of political order, that the origins of law in Europe really came out of ecclesiastical law.

00:13:58 Speaker 3

In the 11th century, when the Catholic Church really declared independence from the emperor and asserted its right to appoint its own priests and bishops, independently of what the political authorities wanted.

00:14:10 Speaker 3

And so there's always a kind of independence of law and a lack of subordination of religious authority to political authority.

00:14:18 Speaker 3

In Catholic lands that really didn't exist in Orthodoxy, now this is one of those big.

00:14:25 Speaker 3

Meta historical narratives that a lot of people have put forward, I think there must be something to that, but actually, you know, I spent a great deal of time in Orthodox countries over the last 8-9 years.

00:14:40 Speaker 3

And I just think that it's one of those complicated questions that that we really need to think about.

00:14:46 Speaker 3

Much further, because, among other things, this idea that there's a single Orthodox religion is really not true.

00:14:53 Speaker 3

They're actually Orthodox multiple Orthodox patriarchs, you know, one.

00:14:57 Speaker 3

Of the things interesting.

00:14:59 Speaker 3

Things that's going on right now between Russia and Ukraine is that the Ukrainian Orthodox Church basically declared independence from the Moscow Patriarch and.

00:15:11 Speaker 3

This is one of the.

00:15:12 Speaker 3

Things that's really upset the Russians that you know, they feel that they run Orthodoxy and they've been trying to.

00:15:18 Speaker 3

Align all of.

00:15:19 Speaker 3

The Orthodox churches under their banner.

00:15:21 Speaker 3

But the Patriarch and Constantinople doesn't want to go along with this.

00:15:25 Speaker 3

Certainly the ones.

00:15:26 Speaker 3

In Egypt and Ethiopia don't agree with this necessarily.

00:15:30 Speaker 3

So I think the situation is actually a lot more complex than that, so maybe I'll just leave the answer at that.

00:15:38

I think you you're.

00:15:39 Speaker 2

Right in the sense that.

00:15:40 Speaker 2

Are many authors who have been emphasizing the difference between the Western European Church and the Eastern Church, but I think that you also provide the original insights in the sense, for example, when you talk that we need to go back to in, in your book on identity to Martin Luther and the Protestant reform.

00:15:58 Speaker 2

And also to Rousseau to try to understand the evolution of a certain type of individualism or or extreme liberalism or expansive individualism, as, as you call it, could.

00:16:12 Speaker 2

Could you explain us why we need to come back to Martin Luther and to and to Rousseau, which is the relationship between Luther?

00:16:18 Speaker 2

And Donald Trump.

00:16:20 Speaker 3

Well, actually we need to go even further back in history than that.

00:16:25 Speaker 3

In in the first volume of my political order series, I talked about the origins of individualism that comes out of the writings of these new family historians that.

00:16:36 Speaker 3

Began to note that in the late Roman Empire, as the Roman Empire was transitioning into kind of medieval Christendom, that the Catholic Church made a number of important decisions restricting the ability of kin groups to keep property within themselves.

00:16:54 Speaker 3

And so they forbade divorce, remarriage.

00:16:58 Speaker 3

To lever it, which is a practice that it was very common in the Mediterranean world, where if the husband died, the widow would have.

00:17:06 Speaker 3

To marry the.

00:17:06 Speaker 3

Younger brother of the husband.

00:17:08 Speaker 3

All of these, it was argued, were efforts to prevent family groups from retaining property over generations, and actually.

00:17:17 Speaker 3

Led to the ability of women to to inherit property and basically broke the economic power of extended king groups.

00:17:26 Speaker 3

And so you have the origins, especially in England, of an individualism outside of these powerful extended families that starts very, very early on.

00:17:38 Speaker 3

Way before the the rise of modernity.

00:17:40 Speaker 3

But the Protestant Reformation adds to that in a really important way, because what Martin Luther says is that the essence of the Christian faith is not observance of external rituals going to confession or going to mass or saying the.

00:17:58 Speaker 3

You know the rosary.

00:18:00 Speaker 3

It really lies in this internal belief of the inner believer that is not visible to outsiders and that that's the only thing that God cares about.

00:18:11 Speaker 3

And I think what that does is it changes the valence of inner and outer, where in Protestant Christianity the core of the religion is.

00:18:21 Speaker 3

This deeply buried inner self, this inner believer, and that's more important than all of the external social rituals, the laws of the Catholic Church, you know and and so.

00:18:33 Speaker 3

And I think that Rousseau becomes important in this story.

00:18:36 Speaker 3

Rousseau and Immanuel Kant in many ways, where they basically put forward a a secular version of the same idea that all of us carry.

00:18:46 Speaker 3

These inner individual cells within us, that it's really society that imposes.

00:18:53 Speaker 3

These artificial constraints, these norms, these social structures that distort and and suppress that inner being, and I think that part of the this is something that the philosopher Charles Taylor, I think, has been very good at explicating so much of what we understand to be the modern individual.

00:19:13 Speaker 3

Is not simply someone that's able to inherit property and have these legal rights, but it's also this deeply buried inner person and authenticity.

00:19:24 Speaker 3

The authenticity of that inner individual is really what is morally celebrated.

00:19:29 Speaker 3

It's it's the great artist or the great writer breaking through.

00:19:33 Speaker 3

Bourgeois convention that becomes the most celebrated type of individual in many Western society.

00:19:39 Speaker 3

Variety and that secular version I think, explains a lot of where we are in the modern world, where that authenticity, rather than social conformity, becomes really the the greatest virtue that people can exercise.

00:19:55 Speaker 3

And that's certainly something that starts in the Protestant world.

00:19:58 Speaker 3

And it's still, I think.

00:19:59 Speaker 3

Probably the most deeply.

00:20:01 Speaker 3

Embedded there.

00:20:03 Speaker 2

But shouldn't we celebrate this expansive individualism at up to certain extent?

00:20:10 Speaker 2

I really think that, yeah, we need to follow certain social norms, but of course there are moral codes and I am not going to exaggerate in case of marrying your 11 year old daughter with a cousin or or expelling an homosexual son.

00:20:25 Speaker 2

That those are extreme cases, but where do we put the border between what should be social conformity and individual expansion?

00:20:34 Speaker 2

I think first of all that actually a lot of the research in recent years have been confirming your your idea on this on the effect of these values of the?

00:20:45 Speaker 2

Of the church and so.

00:20:47 Speaker 2

But I see as well that two different views of the moral evolution of the of the humankind, on the one hand, child's failure and and George on on the idea that individualism maybe has been excessive and people feel orphan.

00:21:02 Speaker 2

And like Anna Haren, when she tried to explain why Jiang German joined the Nazi Party.

00:21:08 Speaker 2

He said, well, it's basically loneliness and spiritual emptiness.

00:21:11 Speaker 2

So probably we what we see nowadays is loneliness and spiritual emptiness, leading many young people to join the Islamic jihadist and in some countries or national populists in in the Western.

00:21:24 Speaker 2

But I see another one more optimistic view of the moral evolution, a more optimistic view of moral individualism, which would be the one emerging from the work of anthropologist like Joseph Henrich saying that, actually, we have kind of weird values.

00:21:41 Speaker 2

Western European industrialized democracy values.

00:21:44 Speaker 2

That are many, but mostly 3.

00:21:47 Speaker 2

Individualism versus collectivism, impartiality versus the rule of personal rule and social trust.

00:21:53 Speaker 2

Trusting strangers, in contrast to just trust the people from your kind or your club or your family and I I see that that those are good values.

00:22:07 Speaker 3

It's very hard to come up with a theoretical dividing line where communal values and this kind of individualism, where that should be.

00:22:19 Speaker 3

And it probably differs in different societies.

00:22:23 Speaker 3

I think that all human societies need various forms of community.

00:22:30 Speaker 3

They need collective action.

00:22:32 Speaker 3

And that's underpinned by a powerful set of human emotional faculties. You know, like shame, pride, anger, guilt and the like that reinforce the community's ability to, you know, to maintain.

00:22:46 Speaker 3

Group cohesion and that exists also.

00:22:49 Speaker 3

At many different levels.

00:22:50 Speaker 3

So it goes from families to neighborhood.

00:22:54 Speaker 3

Companies, organizations, clubs, all the way up to nations and.

00:22:59 Speaker 3

Possibly even transnational organizations at the highest level.

00:23:04 Speaker 3

The liberal hope, I think, has been that in a liberal society we will tolerate a lot of individual differentiation, provided that individual choice doesn't limit the choice of other people to make their own choice.

00:23:22 Speaker 3

And that the communal life that we enjoy is voluntary, that we only join communities where we actually want to be members.

00:23:31 Speaker 3

We're not really forced into membership.

00:23:34 Speaker 3

But, you know, in practice it's it's not that easy.

00:23:38 Speaker 3

Because there's social pressure, there's also, I think, a very powerful human desire for conformity that gives a lot of power to communal groups and at one end, you know, at one extreme can lead to kind of aggressive nationalism of the sort we're seeing in Russia Today.

00:23:57 Speaker 3

But the absence of community also does lead to this kind of it I I guess it's funny what you said at at the outset of of your last comment I think is is right that there's this funny oscillation between the alienation produced by extreme individualism and then the desire.

00:24:17 Speaker 3

To go to the opposite extreme, you know to join a group where you have no choice at all.

00:24:21 Speaker 3

Ohh and so I think you're referring to the experience of a lot of radical Islamists who like the people that perpetrated the September 11th attacks that they were in America.

00:24:33 Speaker 3

They were going to strip clubs and drinking and doing all of these things, which in a liberal society are perfectly free to do.

00:24:41 Speaker 3

But they also hated themselves for that.

00:24:44 Speaker 3

And then they go to the opposite extreme of being the most conformist.

00:24:48 Speaker 3

You know, most rigid religious fanatics.

00:24:51 Speaker 3

And that's a I think that's part of the.

00:24:55 Speaker 3

Problem that's going on in the United States today with the the the rise of Donald Trump and this populist right that they see the way that more liberal people act, especially with regard to these gender identity issues, and it offends them and they begin to mobilize.

00:25:15 Speaker 3

Around the opposite idea that this is really decadence and terrible and it's leading to pedophilia and all these other horrible things.

00:25:24 Speaker 3

So that's just a way of saying that I think we all need a sense of community that needs to be balanced against.

00:25:32 Speaker 3

Individual choice, but where exactly that line is going to be drawn will really depend, I think, on the historical tradition.

00:25:40 Speaker 3

You know if.

00:25:40 Speaker 3

You go to Asia, for example, group identity has always been much more culturally embedded there.

00:25:47 Speaker 3

I mean, Japan is a really great example where in formal terms it's a.

00:25:52 Speaker 3

Very good liberal democracy.

00:25:54 Speaker 3

It it guarantees individual rights.

00:25:56 Speaker 3

You've got freedom of speech and so forth.

00:25:58 Speaker 3

But I think anybody that's spent time in Japan knows it's also an extremely conformist society.

00:26:05 Speaker 3

Where you don't follow the unwritten rules of your company or your family, or any number of different social groups, you're very likely to be socially ostracized, and it makes Japan really different from the United States or Australia or another Western kind of country.

00:26:24 Speaker 3

I don't think it's possible to make a clear normative judgment about which of these is better, because in many ways Japan is successful because it's got this communal orientation on the other.

00:26:39 Speaker 3

Western liberal societies are very successful because they do the opposite and and I'm really at a loss to.

00:26:46 Speaker 3

Really come up.

00:26:46 Speaker 3

With a theoretical way of understanding what.

00:26:49 Speaker 3

The the appropriate mix is.

00:26:51 Speaker 2

Yeah, but it's interesting to see that other successful Western societies like the highly developed welfare states in the Nordic countries are also based in societies that have very strong unwritten rules.

00:27:04 Speaker 2

And I can say that as a person who have been living in Sweden for 14 years and still struggle to identify which are the unwritten.

00:27:11 Speaker 2

Codes of conduct that one needs to to follow.

00:27:16 Speaker 2

I would like to talk a little bit more on on the rise of population that you have mentioned.

00:27:20 Speaker 2

One very intriguing paradox is that inequality has been on, on the rise and and the West neoliberal policies probably have been correctly blamed for that.

00:27:31 Speaker 2

And we have allowed the accumulation of rents on fewer and fewer corporations and fewer and fewer individuals.

00:27:37 Speaker 2

This has created resentment, and one would expect this to lead to radical political left populism, but quite the opposite.

00:27:46 Speaker 2

What we see is the rise of radical far right.

00:27:50 Speaker 2

How can we explain that?

00:27:51 Speaker 2

Paradox in your view.

00:27:54 Speaker 3

Yeah, it's it's very interesting because after the 2008 financial crisis, you would have expected to see a big upsurge in in traditional left wing populism.

00:28:05 Speaker 3

I think it's several things going together.

00:28:08 Speaker 3

I think that the left lost credibility in its ability to solve some of these problems for a number of reasons.

00:28:18 Speaker 3

The welfare state had been around a lot, but it seemed to be, you know, not terribly effective in the way it was redistributing things, but the other.

00:28:26 Speaker 3

Problem is that.

00:28:27 Speaker 3

Culturally, the same people that wanted more economic.

00:28:32 Speaker 3

Protections and more economic equality also bought into this new identity framing of the problem of the inequality, so that really what happened between the middle of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st was a different progressive understanding of inequality that was focused.

00:28:53 Speaker 3

Particular narrow identities, so race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, all of these things became the focus of concern for the groups that have been marginalized because they have those characteristics rather than a really broad social group like the proletarian working class.

00:29:14 Speaker 3

In general.

00:29:15 Speaker 3

And if you think about feminism or gay rights, a lot of the individuals involved were actually pretty well to do well educated, middle class professionals that were not economically oppressed in the sense of kind of 20th century Marxism, let's say, Marxist categories and.

00:29:35 Speaker 3

Conversely, the working class felt under a lot of cultural pressure because those progressive people really didn't share a lot of their more traditional social values regarding family patriotism.

00:29:49 Speaker 3

Traditional moral understandings of, you know, sexuality, this sort of thing.

00:29:55 Speaker 3

And so for that reason, I think the left wing parties began to lose out.

00:30:02 Speaker 3

What they didn't really try was just sticking to the economic agenda and rejecting the cultural agenda.

00:30:08 Speaker 3

And I think you're seeing this playing out in the United States again right now that Biden has promoted much larger state intervene.

00:30:18 Speaker 3

Much greater social protections, and he's actually delivered on a lot of those in the first year of his presidency, but he hasn't managed to distance himself from some of the left wing cultural positions, like defund the police or certain kind of identity politics.

00:30:36 Speaker 3

That really.

00:30:37 Speaker 3

Irritates a lot of middle class or and working, especially working class voters and that's why they continue.

00:30:45 Speaker 3

To vote for.

00:30:47 Speaker 3

Republicans or right wing candidates because they don't like the cultural message.

00:30:52 Speaker 3

I think that the contemporary progressive left is oftentimes.

00:30:56 Speaker 3

Pushing. You certainly saw that in the British election that led to Boris Johnson's current prime ministership. I mean Jeremy Corbyn, in a way, with the 20th century sort of Marxist leftist.

00:31:09 Speaker 3

But the Labour Party itself had also adopted a lot of these new identity issues as part.

00:31:16 Speaker 3

Of what they.

00:31:18 Speaker 3

So is their agenda.

00:31:19 Speaker 3

And again, I think in Britain that you know that helped Johnson quite a lot, even though economically they should have been voting for for labor.

00:31:28 Speaker 2

Right early in the COVID pandemic, you claim that the major dividing line in effective crisis response will not place autocracies on one side and democracies on the other.

00:31:38 Speaker 2

And you were among the first ones talking about the importance of trust in government and actually now in February 2022, an article in The Lancet provided empirical evidence.

00:31:48 Speaker 2

For that, they explore the impact of dozens of governmental factors, including public expenditure and healthcare, and so on, and which ones were associated with a better handling of the pandemic and actual.

00:32:01 Speaker 2

Trust in government and also social trust and absence of corruption were the only variables that matter.

00:32:08 Speaker 2

They matter these soft variables that say matter more than hard indicators like public expenditure and so on.

00:32:14 Speaker 2

So trust in government is seems to be very important and and the question is what creates that trust in government?

00:32:22 Speaker 3

You know, that's also a.

00:32:24 Speaker 3

Really complicated question to answer the.

00:32:28 Speaker 3

The kind of rational choice answer would be it's the effectiveness of delivered services that determines your level of trust in government.

00:32:36 Speaker 3

And so if the government actually promises to do something like deal with the public health epidemic, and does it effectively, then people are going to trust it.

00:32:47 Speaker 3

And there's certain evidence that that.

00:32:49 Speaker 3

Is the case, but it's also we can also see examples where there's kind of rabid distrust of government even when the government has.

00:33:00 Speaker 3

Pretty well and and you see examples of that in the United States where a lot of pandemic measures that were actually quite effective in terms of reducing the incidence of COVID mortality and infections and so forth still became the object of a lot of active distrust.

00:33:18 Speaker 3

And that is I think.

00:33:20 Speaker 3

The kind of.

00:33:22 Speaker 3

Externality that's produced by the cultural polarization that polarization on cultural issues is so extreme.

00:33:30 Speaker 3

And that it leads people to take positions that are simply not in their material self-interest. For example, today in the United States, the vast majority of people dying of COVID are unvaccinated people.

00:33:45 Speaker 3

And they're unvaccinated, not based on good scientific research and findings.

00:33:52 Speaker 3

And you know what the public health authorities are saying?

00:33:55 Speaker 3

They're listening to right wing talk radio and people that are telling them that vaccines are highly dangerous.

00:34:02 Speaker 3

I mean, some of them actually believe that more people have died of the vaccine than died of COVID.

00:34:08 Speaker 3

Right and that.

00:34:08 Speaker 3

Sort of.

00:34:09 Speaker 3

Illustrates, you know, the power of these cultural narratives that are also, I think, being reinforced by social media, by technology that allows or really has eliminated the control of different kinds of hierarchical authorities over reliable information.

00:34:28 Speaker 3

And that leads people then.

00:34:30 Speaker 3

To distrust the government kind of irrationally, even when it hurts.

00:34:35 Speaker 3

Their own immediate self-interest.

00:34:38 Speaker 3

So it's a complicated world where we're living in and how in our country in the United States, we're going to recover that trust in government.

00:34:48 Speaker 3

I'm not really quite sure because it's not just the government performance that leads people to exhibit trust, but but something different.

00:34:57 Speaker 2

I think this interaction between government performance.

00:35:00 Speaker 2

And the degree of polarization is very intriguing.

00:35:03 Speaker 2

In our recent paper with Andre Rodriguez, poster of the LLC, and Nicolas Sharon from the quality of Government Institute.

00:35:08 Speaker 2

Actually what we see is that regions in Europe where there was more polarization in the sense that there were more different in the trusting government between the government supporters and the supporters of the position.

00:35:20 Speaker 2

There were said that his party was more deaths during the first wave of the pandemic, so it seems actually that that the data seems to support this.

00:35:31 Speaker 2

This peculiar relation between between the capacity of government.

00:35:36 Speaker 2

The current polarization in many democracies, especially from 2004 when you published State Building governance and world than in the 21st century.

00:35:46 Speaker 2

We can see a sort of shifting a little bit in your focus from emphasizing more democracy to emphasizing more the importance of bureaucracy or state capacity, but as.

00:35:56 Speaker 2

Trusting government, one of the most overused.

00:36:00 Speaker 2

Concepts and stretch concepts in political science is state capacity.

00:36:05 Speaker 2

What do we mean by state capacities?

00:36:06 Speaker 2

Military power is welfare state is the ability to make a a canister is the quantity of a state.

00:36:13 Speaker 2

It's the quality of a of a state.

00:36:15 Speaker 2

So so.

00:36:16 Speaker 2

Which which would.

00:36:17 Speaker 2

Be your your interpretation of of what is.

00:36:20 Speaker 2

State capacity.

00:36:24 Speaker 3

I think all of those things that you mentioned are components.

00:36:26 Speaker 3

I mean the problem is that the state, the modern state is really big and expensive.

00:36:31 Speaker 3

And it does a.

00:36:32 Speaker 3

Lot of things.

00:36:33 Speaker 3

It provides lots and lots of different kinds of services, you know, from security to public health to building infrastructure, to educating children, to providing legal services and.

00:36:45 Speaker 3

Running a judiciary and police and I think that all of those require different kinds of capacities.

00:36:54 Speaker 3

And states can actually be very good in certain areas, but also very weak in others. So I think right now as a result of a lot of the reforms that were set in motion beginning in the 1980s and 90s, most countries these days have really good central banks. They're independent and, you know, you look at Russia right now.

00:37:14 Speaker 3

The Central Bank has actually been quite competent.

00:37:18 Speaker 3

Controlling inflation and and actually protecting Russia against sanctions and so forth. And that wouldn't have been the case 20-30 years ago.

00:37:27 Speaker 3

But in other areas, like the military, they're pretty bad, and the reform hasn't stretched there.

00:37:33 Speaker 3

I think my State Building book actually gave us.

00:37:37 Speaker 3

A kind of conceptual framework for understanding what was reformable and what was not in terms of the transaction volume and then in a way the specificity or measurability of the outcomes, that particular.

00:37:51 Speaker 3

Agency was seeking.

00:37:54 Speaker 3

This would involve us in a whole nother discussion, you know about how do you measure state capacity?

00:38:00 Speaker 3

What's important is it outcomes, outputs inputs, you know throughputs and the like.

00:38:06 Speaker 3

I'm afraid we don't have time to get into all of this, but these are, you know, obviously very important questions.

00:38:13 Speaker 2

Running out of time.

00:38:14 Speaker 2

Just a.

00:38:15 Speaker 2

Quick question based on your very peculiar personal trajectory, I mean you you have an unconventional or a Ferox trajectory, not that of a typical academic political science, but you were moving between different disciplines.

00:38:28 Speaker 2

You were travelling to Europe to work.

00:38:30 Speaker 2

The the constructionist the philosophers, like Jack Derrida, then years later, you were working at the Department of State with the Republicans and then now you.

00:38:40 Speaker 2

You have been a political scientist, so you said actually, that you wanted to avoid becoming a sociologist like your father, but you ended up being one.

00:38:48 Speaker 2

Actually, I face a symmetric problem.

00:38:50 Speaker 2

I want to prevent.

00:38:51 Speaker 2

My kids from becoming political scientists, but I don't know if I will.

00:38:55 Speaker 2

But based on this, which?

00:38:57 Speaker 2

Would be your your lessons even if the word lessons probably doesn't suit a liberal thinker like you, what would you recommend to the new generations of political scientists that they should study?

00:39:07 Speaker 2

I mean sociology, anthropology, or what they should read in order to become accomplished scholars like you?

00:39:15 Speaker 3

There's a difference between what they need to do to make it as a political scientist, particularly in the United States these days, because the discipline, all discipline, all academic disciplines, are really custodians of a certain methodology.

00:39:30 Speaker 3

And if you want to succeed and get tenure and rise in the ranks of political scientists today.

00:39:37 Speaker 3

You have to toe.

00:39:38 Speaker 3

The line in terms of current methodology.

00:39:40 Speaker 3

So right now, almost everybody at Stanford is doing a randomized controlled experiment of some sort, because that's the current methodological flavor.

00:39:49 Speaker 3

But it also means that.

00:39:51 Speaker 3

If you spend time doing interdisciplinary things, reading outside.

00:39:55 Speaker 3

Of your field.

00:39:56 Speaker 3

Working with other people and especially working on issues like public policy.

00:40:01 Speaker 3

You're not going to get enough peer reviewed journal articles that are going to get you tenure and you're.

00:40:06 Speaker 3

Going to fail.

00:40:07 Speaker 3

On the other hand, if you don't broaden your horizon a little bit, you're never going to rise beyond being a kind of narrow social scientist defined by a particular narrow methodology.

00:40:20 Speaker 3

Now, I was very lucky.

00:40:21 Speaker 3

In the sense that I didn't have to come up.

00:40:25 Speaker 3

Through the tenure system I started my academic career having tenure right from the outset because I wrote books that that people were reading.

00:40:34 Speaker 3

But I would actually never recommend that as a as a strategy for a young scholar, because it's very risky and I was very lucky in the way that I got to.

00:40:44 Speaker 3

Do that but.

00:40:45 Speaker 3

If you actually want to have that academic career, I think I'm afraid you're gonna have.

00:40:49 Speaker 3

To toe the.

00:40:49 Speaker 3

Line you know on on methodology and and.

00:40:53 Speaker 3

The sorts of things that you need to do to to succeed.

00:40:58 Speaker 2

Thank you very much, Francis, for your very honest and insightful answers and for this conversation.

00:41:03 Speaker 3

Thank you, victor.

00:41:04 Speaker 3

I'm really appreciate it.