

POST-HISTORICAL FACTOR IN THE CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL PROCESS: A PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT: The article aims to reveal the features of how the ideas of the end of history and post-history influence the contemporary political process. The adherents to the concept of the end of history, while considering the collapse of authoritarianism and totalitarianism and withdrawal of any alternatives to liberalism from the historical scene, ignore the deep crisis of the liberal ideology and liberal-democratic regimes. The main fallacy of the end of history and post-history concept, which exists in the public consciousness, is the confusion of the sense of the end of history and the impasse of historical development with the completion of historical development. The way out of this situation is developing the paradigm of linear historical development, which can adequately respond to the current political crisis, rather than claiming the end of history.

KEYWORDS: End of history; Post-history; Political process; Ideology; Philosophy of history.

INTRODUCTION

In the late 20th century, the ideas of end of history and the humanity entering the post-historical era became frequent. For a while, these two ideas were subject to active discussion among scholars and even covered in newspapers and journals. Nowadays, at first glance, they seem to recede far into the background. For this reason, one may see all that was of a temporary interest,

the ideas are out of fashion now and have fell into oblivion. However, it is a deceptive impression.

One should assume that the notion of the end of history or at least that of the deadlock state the humanity has entered are deeply rooted in the contemporary public consciousness. It should be highlighted that it is comprehending the uncertainty of the situation we are in rather than the negative influence of the theories of the end of history or post-history (though it played a certain role) that made it possible.

This uncertainty is dangerous especially present in the political process that eventually defines the direction for public development. In this respect, the philosophy should aim at revealing the onset and background of a theory rather than overthrowing it. In the view of philosophical analysis, the nature of paradigm sets formed by post-historical ideas concerning political process triggers particular interest within current article.

This article aims to reveal the peculiarities of how the ideas of the end of history and post-history affect the contemporary political process.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The concepts of the end of history and post-history are neither the results of someone's task-specific propaganda nor the fruits of some philosophizing intellectuals' imagination that ran wild. They result from comprehending real tendencies incident to the contemporary political process. Along with that, they represent metaphysical (in the traditional sense) one-dimensional perceptions of contradictory characteristics of the contemporary political processes.

The idea of the end of history was always present in linear concepts of philosophy and history, for example, in the studies by Hegel, Marx, Jaspers, etc. Nevertheless, it was Francis Fukuyama (1992) who first transferred this idea from exclusively philosophical and historical dimension to political philosophy. He defined the competition of political ideologies as a content of historical process. In his opinion, as it was the liberal ideology, which has no serious alternatives hereafter, that won in the ideological struggle, the historical process is complete.

Very few scholars share his conclusion about the end of history. However, his statement about the victory of the liberal ideology was indirectly – if not

directly – supported by many. It can be confirmed by existing conclusions about the integration of modern ideologies mainly based on liberal values (Dalton, Welzel, 2014), the transition of political struggle from strategic problems to daily, routine tasks (Dalton, Welzel, 2014; Grant, 2001), universal recognition of liberal rights and liberties (Akram, Marsh, McCaffrie, 2014; Kimlicka, 2014; Richards, Smith, 2014), etc.

But the majority of researchers, including the adherents to post-history concept, evaluate the contemporary political process in the opposite way. The concept of the end of history was subject to most severe criticism by Jacques Derrida, who qualified Fukuyama's work as 'new testament rhetoric': he considered frivolous the apology for the triumph of the capitalism or economic and political liberalism, that for 'universalization of the Western liberal democracy as the final point of human government, 'the end to the problem of class antagonism'. 'What cynicism of "pure consciousness" what intellectual blindness can make one write, and even believe, that "all the hurdles to reciprocal recognition of human dignity are overcome and buried in history once and for all"' (Derrida, 2006: 118). Besides, Derrida (2000) convincingly demonstrated that the peculiar feature of modernity is the end of the political rather than the triumph of democracy. It would be legitimate to mention as well the theorists of multiculturalism admitting that the contemporary liberal democracy requires significant corrections (Grant, 2001; Guo, Wong, 2015; Wieviorka, 2014).

It is slightly more complicated concerning the theory of post-history. It is also evoked by the contemporary political process, but by its crisis manifestations. Firstly, its adherents stress that currently there is no political ideology capable of addressing all the critical problems of modernity. According to Derrida, 'A set of transformations of all sorts (in particular, techno-scientifico-economico-media) exceeds both the traditional givens of the Marxist discourse and those of the liberal discourse opposed to it. Even if we have inherited some essential resources for projecting their analysis, we must first recognize that these mutations perturb the onto-theological schemas or the philosophies of technics as such. They disturb political philosophies and the common concepts of democracy, they oblige us to reconsider all relations between State and nation, man and citizen, the private and the public, and so

forth' (Derrida, 2006: 103). Secondly, they prove that the peculiarity of the contemporary society is the increasing political indifference (Baudrillard, 2000).

On their parallel ways to the conclusions of the theory of post-history were also social and humanitarian sciences. Originally, the linear understanding of historical process was based on the philosophical studies by Hegel, Marx and other thinkers of the Modern History. It implied the human ability to comprehend the meaning and orientation of historical process. However, as soon as in the late 19th century, neo-Kantianism, neo-Hegelianism, neopositivism and postpositivism as well as many others questioned this ability. And indeed empirical historians initiated the transition from macro- to micro-history. Therefore, as Franklin Ankersmit reasonably underlines, the transition from speculative philosophy of history to historicism and then to postmodern philosophy of history, i.e. post-history, is a fairly consistent outcome (Ankersmit, 2003: 424).

Invidious postmodern conclusions about the wreck of 'Enlightenment Project' were most substantially grounded by Jürgen Habermas (2003). His criticism of post-historical views on political process was supported by adherents to both anti-multiculturalism (Joppke, 2004; Malik, 2015) and liberal ideology (Akram, Marsh, McCaffrie, 2014; Dalton, Welzel, 2014; Thomassen, 2015).

This notwithstanding, the criticism of both the theory of the end of history and that of post-history seem one-dimensional. In other words, revealing their theoretic and methodological drawbacks critics fail to pay enough attention to certain legitimacy of their argument. Therefore, this research attempts to conduct a dialectical analysis of these theories.

METHODS

In the contemporary science the concepts of 'the end of history' and 'post-history' have two interpretations. The first of them – within linear philosophy – implies that 'the end of history' means the termination of historical development of humankind, while 'post-history' ('post-historical society') is the name of the final stage. In particular, this is how they are understood in the famous Francis Fukuyama's concept (1990). The second interpretation, which derives from postmodern philosophy, 'the end of history' and 'post-history'

mean that previous understanding of the historical process becomes a thing of the past. In order to prevent confusion, this article understands the end of history according to the first definition and refers the second one to post-history.

The theories of the end of history and post-history are sure to affect public consciousness in various ways. Therefore, it should be taken into consideration in the course of studying the influence of post-historical ideas on the contemporary public consciousness. Taking this circumstance into account is possible due to the application of comparative analysis.

Along with that, the peculiar feature of the contemporary time is a curious combination of the ideas of the end of history and post-history that exists in public consciousness in many countries. In other words, researching the influence of post-historical ideas on the contemporary political process implies separate consideration of how both ideas affect practice, while public consciousness should be considered as something synthesized from these both theories. The consideration of these both circumstances is only possible relying upon analysis, synthesis and a system method.

The problem of correlation between social theories and political practice is most completely solved through dialectical method. In particular, it implies that social theories reflect fundamental tendencies of political practice, but they also significantly influence its course.

It should be noted that the ideas of the end of history is nothing new – it was present in all linear concepts of philosophy of history. It functioned as a kind of historical orienting point, then, in Fukuyama's concept, it obtains another meaning and turns into a kind of starting point. Therefore, this research applies historical method to take into account historical variability of methodological and worldview-related (axiological) dimensions of the concept of the end of history.

Lastly, it should be clarified that this article understands the end of history according to Fukuyama's interpretation. As for 'post-history', there is no consonance concerning its definition in postmodern philosophy, thus the main reference is made to Jean Baudrillard's interpretation.

LIBERALISM, THE SOCIAL, THE INDIVIDUAL: POST-HISTORY VERSUS THE END OF HISTORY

The main Fukuyama's argument in favour of the end of history is the collapse of authoritarian and totalitarian regimes, the oblivion of all the alternatives to liberalism, and 'final' establishment of liberal ideology in public consciousness of the humankind. It is very hard to object to the first part of the argument, while the second one is completely unacceptable. The point is that Fukuyama did not pay attention to the fact that liberalism (both as ideology and as practice) was also involved in severe crisis. In this regard, modernism seems more consistent declaring 'decline' of modernist metanarratives in general, including universal ideologies.

It is mainly agreed that the contemporary democracy faces serious crisis. All the manifestations of the crisis can be divided into two groups based on their temporal dimension. In other words, it is the crisis of democracy today and that in the future.

The crisis of democracy today is primarily manifested in the decline in confidence in contemporary democratic institutions. For instance, according to Richards and Smith (2014), the proportion of those who had 'almost never' believed that the British government prioritized social needs over political interests increased from 10% in 1974 up to 40% in 2009. Akram, Marsh, McCaffrie (2014) draw attention to the widespread drop in political participation in developed liberal countries. Although the authors specify the emergence of new forms of political participation, the crisis of traditional forms is obvious. Thus, in the post-war Great Britain about 80% of population took part in general election, while in the early 21st century this figure accounted for only 50-60%. According to Akram, Marsh, McCaffrie (2014), Armingeon, Guthmann (2014), and Thomassen (2015), party membership fell by half or more in France, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Switzerland, and Ireland compared to the 1980s.

In this regard, one even concludes that in developed democratic countries a devoted, loyal citizen is being substituted by a new assertive one as a type of political culture (Dalton, Welzel, 2014). The previous political culture was characterized by high confidence in institutions, high participation in election and other conventional forms of legitimate activities. A new political culture is

characterized by low confidence in institutions and the participation in non-violent activity that is provocative towards elites. On the one hand, the new culture bearers are adherent to democracy, on the other hand, they are unsatisfied with the realization (implementation) of democracy in their country (Ibidem).

It should be underlined that the crisis began back in the 1960s. The research conducted then demonstrated the same data. Thus, the group of scholars led by Dalton (2002) reported that the proportion of strong party adherents declined by 26% in Great Britain; in Sweden, Austria and Australia – by 15%; in Norway – by 9% and in the USA – by 7% (Ibid., 262-263). Webb, Farrell, Holliday (2002) conducted similar research and revealed the same data in all the 16 Western democracies under study, which means that it is impossible to deny the weakening of public support for political parties in the majority of Western democracies. In Canada, the number of people confident in political parties declined from 30% in 1979 to 11% in 1996 and in Germany – from 43% in 1979 to 26% in 1993 (Dalton, Wattenberg, 2002: 28).

An ideology should conform not only to the present but also to the future. In other words, it should be capable of solving possible perspective problems. If looking at the problem under study through this lens, the prospects of liberalism are far from being positive. Dahl (1989) convincingly demonstrated that modern liberal democratic system may function efficiently only in a nation-state. However, nowadays, as a result of globalization, nation-states are becoming a thing of the past and national identity is diffusing, i.e. the foundations of liberal democracy are being demolished.

In this respect, the ability of liberal ideology to extrapolate its values and practices to new social relations assumes significance. In this regard, it is sure that the most serious challenge for liberalism is multiculturalism. Some prove that it represents a new stage of liberal development, is consistent, getting widespread, and takes roots (Kimlicka, 2014; Guo, Wong, 2015; Wieviorka, 2014), others claim its failure and that it mines the foundations of liberalism (Joppke, 2004; Malik, 2015). Although there is no consonance concerning the achievements of multiculturalism, the fact that liberalism has to solve this problem is undeniable. If one manages to insert the provisions of multiculturalism into liberal ideology, it may safely be said that it will not be the

same (i.e. current) liberalism.

Fukuyama does not mention anything concerning these manifestations of crisis that the contemporary liberal democracy is involved in. Acknowledging that the contemporary democracy faces a large number of problems, he refers to drug abuse, homelessness, criminality, ecological catastrophes, and thoughtless consumerism. He states that ‘these problems fail to be obviously insolvable based on the liberal principals and are not so grave to be sure to lead to the wreck of society as a whole – the wreck similar to that communism experienced in the late 1980s’ (Fukuyama, 2004: 23).

As there not yet exist any proper solutions to these problems, it is untimely to claim that one has found the optimal ideology. In this respect, the theory of the end of history has extremely negative influence on the solution to the stated problems, creating an illusion of solving all the critical problems and channeling ideological struggle in the wrong direction. Sure enough that historical process is infinite, applying the terms used by Karl Popper (2013), and represents a sequence of shifts from a less perfect ideology to a more perfect one.

Unlike the adherents to the end of history, their counterparts supporting the theory of post-history bring the crisis of the contemporary democracy to the forefront rather than turn a blind eye to it. In particular, Baudrillard explicitly states, ‘the only genuine problem today is the silence of the mass, the silence of the silent majority’ (Baudrillard, 2000: 30).

One has to agree with him that such political indifference should not be explained through the manipulation of consciousness, although it should not be completely ignored either. Baudrillard explains the indifference of the masses through being ontologically inherent in them: ‘this indifference of the masses is their true, their only practice, that there is no other ideal of them to imagine, nothing in this to deplore, but everything to analyse as the brute fact of a collective retaliation and of a refusal to participate in the recommended ideals, however enlightened. Nevertheless, this is the very thing that makes the masses be what they are’ (Baudrillard, 2000: 20).

According to Baudrillard (2000), the Modern History saw the “rise and fall of the political”. He states that the political and the social were inseparable since the French Revolution. The political manifested the social, with the latter

becoming its content. However, the emergence of Marxism initiated the hegemony of the social and the economic, with the political converting to its reflection. Having expelled the political and become omnipresent, now the social backfired; it suffered the same fate as the political: ‘...the social itself no longer has any name. Anonymous. THE MASS. THE MASSES’ (Baudrillard, 2000: 25).

Baudrillard interprets the social as a feature that is only inherent to modernist society. However, now ‘chaotic’ society replaces that with fixed structure and relations. Baudrillard states: ‘the social has well and truly existed, but does not exist any more’ (Baudrillard, 2000: 91). Along with the social, the political is also becoming a thing of the past.

There is a need to dwell on two key problems that Baudrillard raised, namely, the end of the social and the nature of the masses. He understands both definitions (‘the social’ and ‘the masses’) in a specific way.

Conventionally, social relations are defined as those that people establish in the course of reproduction of social being. Such understanding of social relations exists in any society, while, according to Baudrillard, the social exists only in modernist society. Is such understanding of the social is legitimate?

On the one hand, no one would question the specific features of social relations in modernist society. Baudrillard attached great importance to the temporal factor, stressing the sustainability and stability of social relations.

On the other hand, when accelerating and changing quite rapidly, do they stop being social? Yes, sure, in its classical meaning. Indeed, social relations change more rapidly than one can comprehend it and develop a strategy for adaptation, let alone the inability to foresee and, certainly, to regulate them. Nevertheless, in their conventional meaning, social relations still exist. Consequently, a point should be made about new means to comprehend and regulate social relations.

In this respect, the explanation of the specific feature of postmodern social relations, which the adherents to the theory of post-industrial society suggested, seems more substantial. In particular, concerning the transformation of education, Alvin Toffler stated, ‘in static societies, the past is slow to merge with the present and repeat itself in the future. In such a society, the most sensible way to educate a child is to teach them the competence of the past’ (Toffler,

1997: 325). The industrial education of the masses focused on (1) teaching well-known skills and (2) making a person disciplined. However, this system becomes obsolete in the post-industrial society. If knowledge gets out of date quickly, there is no need to remember it. In post-industrial society, 'education should train people to function in temporary organization of tomorrow' (Ibid., 323).

Conventionally, the term "the masses" refers to atomized and alienated individuals. Such individuals are known to appear during the decomposition of traditional society and establishment of industrial one. These processes make some people left outside the system of traditional relations trying to find a new one. Therefore, such an individual seeks to connect with those of their kind and blend into the society of such individuals. José Ortega y Gasset noted, 'The mass is all that which sets no value on itself—good or ill—based on specific grounds, but which feels itself "just like everybody," and nevertheless is not concerned about it; is, in fact, quite happy to feel itself as one with everybody else' (Ortega y Gasset, 1989: 121). Erich Fromm made a legitimate comment that one of the main mechanisms of 'escape from freedom' is a transformation of person into an 'automaton': 'the individual ceases to be himself; he adopts entirely the kind of personality offered to him by cultural patterns; and he therefore becomes exactly as all others are and as they expect him to be. The discrepancy between "I" and the world disappears and with it the conscious fear of aloneness and powerlessness' (Fromm, 1990: 159).

It would be quite appropriate to stress that Baudrillard's statement about the masses generally contradicts the postmodernist idea of a fragmented world, society and subject. The fragmentation of society means that a single social environment is torn into separate pieces, with every individual being isolated in their own little world. Such an individual does not seek to blend into society, nor become similar to others, but, conversely, they try to stand out from the society, to become nothing like the others.

This contradiction is likely to be triggered by the following circumstance. On the one hand, postmodernists had an intuitive feeling of an unusual type of society being established. On the other hand, different representatives of postmodernism prioritize various characteristics of this society. What is that new society like?

Social sciences provide the knowledge that in the infancy of mankind,

people lived in communities (that sometimes called '*Gemeinschaft*'). This community was based on 'natural', tribal relations. Then, it has been substituted by society in its modern meaning, i.e. based on rational relations (defined as '*Gesellschaft*'). This society is where a nation is formed, i.e. individuals who realize their interests and rationally regulate their relationships.

However, the transition from community to society can trigger the emergence of the masses, i.e., as said, individuals who seek to blend into a community of their kind. In post-industrial society, it is not unexpected that individuals increasingly focus on satisfying their personal needs. Such society makes an impression of being a mass, in the sense that all the people are involved in solving their personal problems in similar way. They are no longer a nation determined to pursue collective interests. However, it is not a mass society in its traditional meaning as individuals act separately. Baudrillard pays attention only to one feature of a new society – the unwillingness of individuals to concern themselves about common problems. Along with this, he is right that the establishing society is strikingly different from the former, industrial society and requires deep research.

There is no doubt that there are many factors that cause this political indifference of the masses, with the delegitimization of the institutions of modern democracy being considered a major factor. These institutions were meant for solving the problems of the development of the modernist society, so they do not correspond with further development of the post-industrial one. This problem clashes into a fundamental issue of orientation points for further development of a society. Besides, researchers are both concerned (Kutyryov, 2016; Omelchenko, 2017) and optimistic (Mattern, Floerkemeier, 2016; Santucci, 2016) about the opportunities of further scientific and technical progress to influence social relations and a human.

Neither the concept of the end of history nor that of post-history contribute to the solution of the stated issue. Their main drawback is excessive influence of determinism. This is a paradox, especially for post-modernism, as claiming the end to metanarratives (universal theories) (Chotchaeva, Sosnovskii, 2017: 179), it implicitly proposes a new one. It can be said that it is the metanarratives of the past, not metanarratives in general, that have become obsolete.

CONCLUSIONS

The concepts of both the end of history and post-history manifest the contradictory nature of the political processes that run nowadays. Along with that, they are one-dimensional expression of various tendencies. The concept of the end of history expresses such features of the contemporary political process as the end of ideological struggle, the priority of short-term factors over long-term ones, worldwide spread of liberal values and practices. The concept of post-history expresses such features of the contemporary political process as the crisis of democratic institutions and the decline in political participation. Both concepts mix the ideas of the termination of historical process and that of (real) historical process itself in the public consciousness.

The concepts of both the end of history and post-history have reverse influence on the contemporary political process. The concept of the end of history, while substantiating the end of political and ideological struggles, drives away from the comprehension of increasing fundamental contradictions of modern society. The concept of post-history, while substantiating the end of the political, creates the wrong idea about the insoluble social and political contradictions.

The main fallacy of the concepts of the end of history and that of post-history is the interpretation of the feeling of the end of history and the deadlocked state of the historical progress formed in public consciousness as the termination of historical development. Stressing this aspect of the situation, the theories inadvertently worsen it.

The way to overcome current state of affairs is to avoid claiming the end of history and work out the paradigm of linear historical development able to become a new political ideology that would adequately respond to the political crisis. That said, suggesting working out a linear paradigm, no single option of development should be claimed as the only possibility considering the contemporary methodology (synergy).

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