

25 Years Ago: The End of History?

By Bob Hancké, LSE

I just read [this very interesting critique](#) in the Guardian Review of Francis Fukuyama's essay 'The End of History?', which came out 25 years ago this summer. Ignore the somewhat silly title, clearly designed for maximum impact; there was actually something intriguing about the essay, and Eliane Glaser, the author of the Guardian essay, does a very good job reminding us of what that was.

One thing is, looking back, that obviously ideology has not died — 9/11, the Bush years, and developments in Latin America over the last decade leave little doubt about that — but the big confrontation between Left and Right, which organised politics in most of the world for most of the twentieth century, is no longer fought on ideological terrain. It has become a battle of pragmatically doing 'best' for most of the population. The other is that, as a result of that, politics has become either exciting but leaderless and non-programmatic, as in the Occupy movement, or boring policy work — something, as Glaser says, like figuring out the optimal threshold level of carbon dioxide. And, sadly, where ideology returns, as we discover in many European countries today, it is, put mildly, not of the enlightened kind that we have normally associated with modern society. Perhaps Fukuyama was onto something in his famous essay, which may well merit a careful re-read, also for us on the Left. You can find it [here](#).

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