

Fukuyama Tells Cast from Clay Populism Is a Listening Failure

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-- In a [Policy Unstuck interview](#), Francis Fukuyama says western populations take liberalism for granted, bury government in rules, and that educated people are not very good at listening.



Francis Fukuyama has told [Cast from Clay](#) that refugees fleeing dictatorship still understand what a liberal society offers, that the people actually living in those liberal societies take what they offer for granted, and that populism is less a policy problem than a listening one.

The Stanford political scientist, author of *The End of History and the Last Man* and Olivier Nomellini Senior Fellow at the Freeman Spogli Institute, said claims that communism "was actually not that bad," and that the Soviet Union and Mao's China "weren't such terrible places," reflect "outright ignorance." Educated people, he said, offered job retraining while working-class communities lost work to China, and paid too little attention to how that felt.

"Policy per se is not the solution to populism," Fukuyama said. "A lot of it is really about the way that people either talk or listen." He added: "Part of the secret is to be able to listen to people that are unlike yourself."

The vast majority of people, he said, would say bureaucrats are too rulebound: a clerk who will not issue a driver's licence at 4:59 p.m. because the office closes at five. In the United States, buying a government desk can mean several hundred pages of acquisition rules written to stop corruption. "They've completely lost sight of what the law was supposed to do," he said. Citizens want clean water, safe flights, protection from disease and safe streets, not officials promoted for following detailed rules rather than producing results.

Tom Hashemi, Chief Executive of Cast from Clay, said: "Fukuyama names a problem our interviewees keep describing: government busy following rules and poor at producing results. For as long as our democracies prioritise process over outcome, the yearning towards strong man governments will remain."

The full interview is available at <https://policyunstuck.castfromclay.co.uk/p/last-men-we-are-francis-fukuyama>

About Cast from Clay

Cast from Clay is a strategy and positioning consultancy that builds the infrastructure of policy influence for nonprofits. More at <https://castfromclay.co.uk/>

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