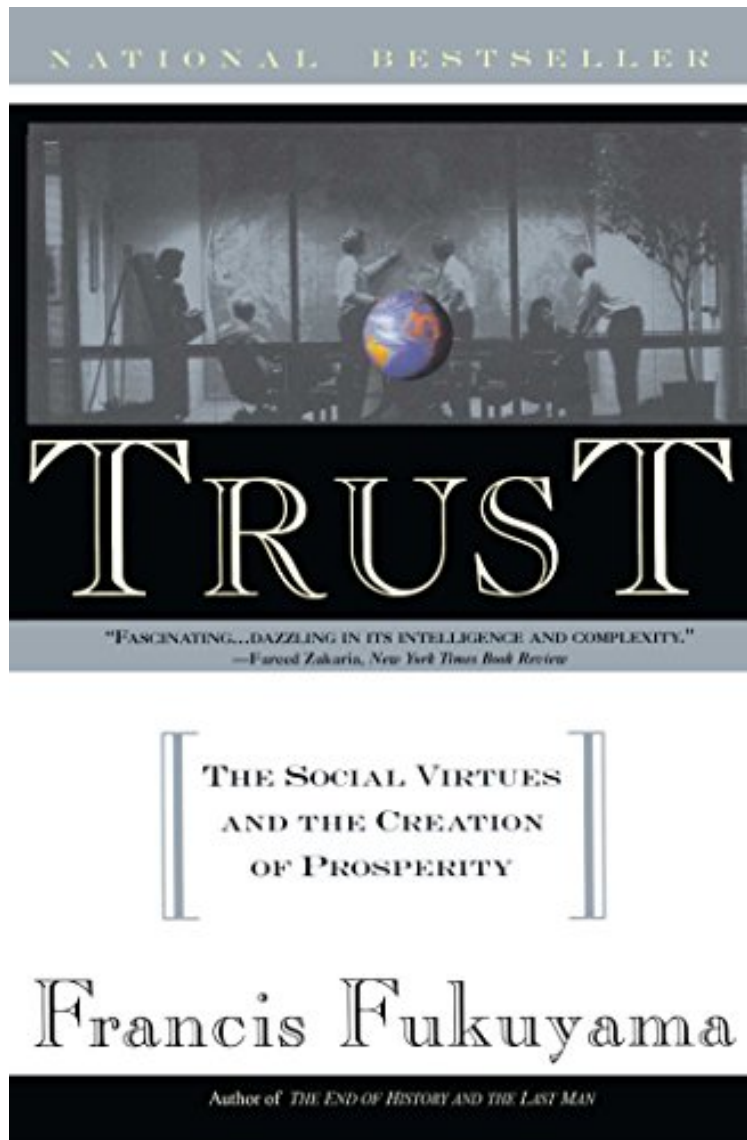


(Download) Trust: Human Nature and the Reconstitution of Social Order

Trust: Human Nature and the Reconstitution of Social Order

Francis Fukuyama

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Francis Fukuyama : Trust: Human Nature and the Reconstitution of Social Order before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Trust: Human Nature and the Reconstitution of Social Order:

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important read for today's world
6 of 7 people found the following review helpful. I thought this was dazzlingly brilliant...
By Stephen Armstrong
Fukuyama outlines how the "intermediate social

organizations" of society, under the Protestant ethic, permitted the development of modern capitalist structures; whereas in low-trust societies (where you cannot depend on the corresponding person to trust you, or you to trust him), only family oriented businesses could grow, and inevitably collapsed after the second or third generation. He links the development of these intermediate organizations--guilds, PTAs, unions, volunteer activities--to the social fabric that engendered trust. He comments that a country can "spend" this hard-to-develop social capital and eventually become a rigid, non-trusting, and economically backward state. Furthermore, Fukuyama points out that the United States probably is doing just that, in nearly all intermediate social organizations, which are now surrounded by litigious critics--the educational system, Boy Scouts, union-management conflicts, the Catholic Church (which has never trusted its parishioners to have other than the standard orthodoxy, and now has suffered enormous scandal), and so forth. The lack of trust in our country is seen as pointing to our economic future, whether for good or bad. Fukuyama is a genuinely interesting and informative writer. In his sense of fairness, he also points to examples where trust is generated, and cites them as necessary for a country to make both social and economic progress. I really enjoyed the multiple perspectives that the author brings to his task of explaining how some countries are prosperous, and some are not. He is truly an innovative thinker.

In his bestselling *The End of History and the Last Man*, Francis Fukuyama argued that the end of the Cold War would also mean the beginning of a struggle for position in the rapidly emerging order of 21st-century capitalism. In *Trust*, a penetrating assessment of the emerging global economic order "after History," he explains the social principles of economic life and tells us what we need to know to win the coming struggle for world dominance. Challenging orthodoxies of both the left and right, Fukuyama examines a wide range of national cultures in order to divine the underlying principles that foster social and economic prosperity. Insisting that we cannot divorce economic life from cultural life, he contends that in an era when social capital may be as important as physical capital, only those societies with a high degree of social trust will be able to create the flexible, large-scale business organizations that are needed to compete in the new global economy. A brilliant study of the interconnectedness of economic life with cultural life, *Trust* is also an essential antidote to the increasing drift of American culture into extreme forms of individualism, which, if unchecked, will have dire consequences for the nation's economic health.

From Publishers Weekly Fukuyama argues that a nation's economic strength is tied to its social unity, and that America is in danger of losing both. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal Fukuyama (*The End of History and the Last Man*, LJ 1/92) examines the impact of culture on economic life, society, and success in the new global economy. He argues that the most pervasive cultural characteristic influencing a nation's prosperity and ability to compete is the level of trust or cooperative behavior based upon shared norms. In comparison with low-trust societies (China, France, Italy, Korea), which need to negotiate and often litigate rules and regulations, high-trust societies like those in Germany and Japan are able to develop innovative organizations and hold down the cost of doing business. Fukuyama argues that the United States, like Japan and Germany, has been a high-trust society historically but that this status has eroded in recent years. This well-researched book provides a fresh, new perspective on how economic prosperity is grounded in social life. Highly recommended for academic libraries. Jane M. Kathman, Coll. of St. Benedict Lib., St. Joseph, Minn. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist Fukuyama's first effort at global punditry, *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992), was an international best-seller; his new book is a blueprint for success in this "posthistorical" world. Neoclassical economics, Fukuyama maintains, is 80 percent correct but ignores the role of social capital ("reciprocity, moral obligation, duty toward community, and trust") in facilitating the "stability and prosperity of postindustrial societies." High-trust societies like Japan, Germany, and (in spite of our individualism) the U.S. develop the kind of flexible organizations that the global economy demands far more easily than do low-trust societies or "familistic" nations like China, France, Italy, and South Korea. Fukuyama assesses the success and failure of various social structures, arguing that the U.S. needs to overcome its "Crisis of Trust": "American liberals need to understand that they cannot take organic cohesion of American society for granted. . . American conservatives, for their part, have to understand that before they cut back the role of the state in society, they should have some idea about how to regenerate civil society and find alternative ways of taking care of its weaker members." Though much of this is traditional conservative thought dressed up in contemporary jargon, Fukuyama's track record, strong publisher promotion, and a 50,000-copy print run should generate interest. Mary Carroll