National Taiwan University Department of Political Science Political Science II (Spring 2025) Mock Final Examm Solution Guide

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1. The author of the "*End of History*," Francis Fukuyama, used to be interviewed by the Nikkei Asia and share with readers the following views on the Chinese model:

"The Cold War had two dimensions: geopolitical struggles and ideological conflicts. Currently, ideological conflicts no longer exist. What is important is the ultimate form of social institutions as the goal...The only force with strong development momentum and capable of confronting the United States is China...In the future, competition between the United States and China will become increasingly intense, and China will also strengthen its territorial claims, but this has nothing to do with ideology. It is simply traditional geopolitics driving the actions of the two countries."

If Fukuyama is right, and after the Cold War, ideological conflicts such as "democracy versus authoritarianism" and "market versus socialist economy" have ceased to exist and been replaced by traditional geopolitical factors, what impact will this have on how people study democratization in comparative politics? Specifically, what implications does this have for our understanding of the drivers and development models of democratic transition?

- (a) The core issue of this topic lies in the fact that mainstream democratization studies have traditionally focused on identifying domestic factors behind political transitions—whether through modernization theory or, more recently, the economic origins explanation proposed by Acemoglu and Robinson (emphasizing inequality and the commitment problems faced by dictators). This perspective generally downplays the connection between democratization and international politics.
- (b) Fukuyama's statement opens up a new perspective. Although previous literature has touched on international linkages, the focus has typically been on how these linkages affect the balance of power among different domestic groups. However, Fukuyama points out that the development of democracy may in fact be related to geopolitical conflicts and tensions. While this view does not entirely dismiss the importance of domestic factors, it introduces a fundamentally different angle: that struggles in international politics may constrain the political development of individual countries. For instance, the United States may actively promote democratization in its potential allies as a way to jointly confront geopolitical adversaries.