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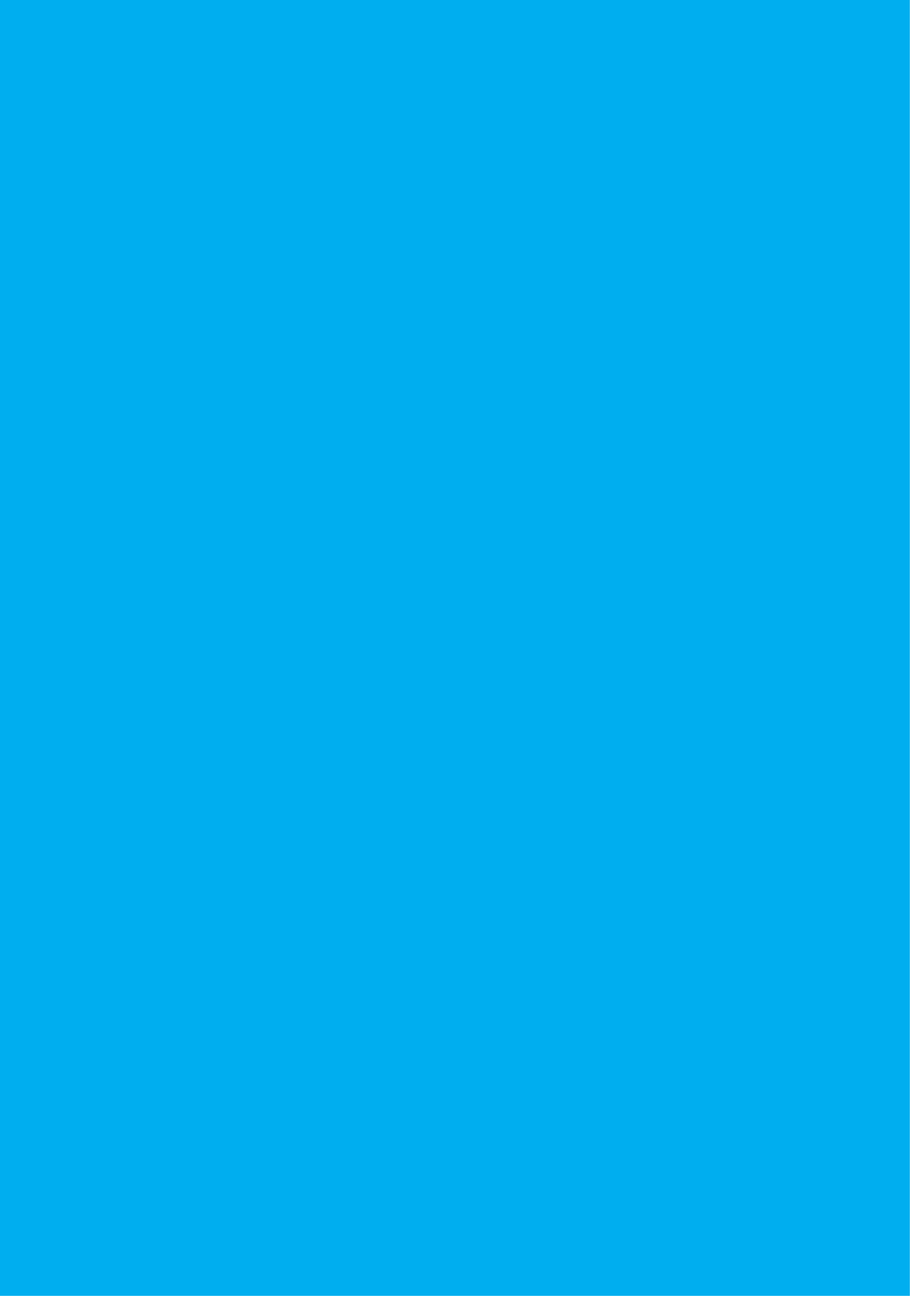
**International Dimensions of Democratic Development in East Asia:  
Strategic Rivalry, Regionalism, and Globalization**

**Tun-jen Cheng**

Class of 1935 Professor, Government, The College of Williams and Mary's  
tjchen@wm.edu

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# **International Dimensions of Democratic Development in East Asia: Strategic Rivalry, Regionalism, and Globalization**

*Tun-jen Cheng*

## **Abstract**

Taken as a whole, East Asia has had good economic conditions when compared to other regions reached by the third wave of democratization. Yet, democratic development in East Asia, especially in the economically more advanced areas, seems to be surprisingly more difficult, even intractable, than the literature suggests. Fragile and fluid democratic legitimacy may be attributed to the inclination in this region toward authoritarianism. It is also related to the distinct geo-economic and geo-strategic conditions under which regime dynamics have been unfolding in the region.

# International Dimensions of Democratic Development in East Asia: Strategic Rivalry, Regionalism, and Globalization

## Introduction

The third wave of democratization has been showing sign of recession since the mid-1990s.<sup>1</sup> The incidences of democratic breakdown via military or executive coups or incremental degradations have been increasing. Were it not for the unexpected advent of the Arab Spring in 2011, the number of transitions toward democracy would be lagging significantly behind the number of reversals. Freedom in the world also has slipped following the turn of the century. As Arch Puddington observes in his most recent report on freedom in the world, erosion has continued to trump gains in the row of five years since 2006.<sup>2</sup> Obviously, many third-wave democracies have been mired in the difficult task of democratic consolidation, an observation that reminds us that democratization is neither linear nor irreversible.

Two puzzles are particularly noteworthy if we focus on East Asia. First, among all regions graced by the third wave, East Asia seems to be having more than its fair share of difficulty in achieving democratic consolidation. East Asia presently being the most vibrant economic region on earth, new democracies here should have a better chance of survival and development (as in the case of East and Central Europe [ECE]) than other regions affected by the third wave. And yet democratic malaise in East Asia is as pronounced as in Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa, including reversals, lack of progress in Freedom House scores, and popular ambivalence about democracy.<sup>3</sup> Many regimes in East Asia have remained authoritarian, unlike in Southern Europe, the ECE, Latin America, and even sub-Saharan Africa, where nearly all nations turned democratic when the third wave arrived. Thus, East Asia's track record in democratic transition was not spectacular to begin with, and its record of democratic reversals (for example, the 2006 military coup in Thailand and the desecration of democratic process in the

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<sup>1</sup> Larry Diamond, "Why Democracies Survive," *Journal of Democracy* 22, no.1 (January 2011): 19. By Diamond's count, one in every five third-wave democracies has been reversed, and three quarters of these episodes occurred after 1999. For his take on the direction of change among "strategic swing states," moving more away from than toward democracy, see *The Spirit of Democracy* (New York: Times, 2008), 59-64, 212-218.

<sup>2</sup> Arch Puddington, "Democracy under Duress," *Journal of Democracy* 22, no. 2 (April 2011): 17-31.

<sup>3</sup> Including both the post-colonial democratization (that began in 1960) and the third wave (that began in the mid-1970s) in their dataset, Ethan Kapstein and Nathan Converse have recorded thirteen cases of reversal in twenty-three cases of democratic transition for Asia between 1960 and 2004. The rate of reversal is 56.5 percent. The corresponding figures for Latin America, East Europe, and sub-Saharan Africa are, respectively, 34.6 percent, 9.5 percent, and 63 percent. In terms of reversals, Asia's report card is as bad as sub-Saharan Africa's. See Ethan Kapstein and Nathan Converse, *The Fate of Young Democracies* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 39-40.

Philippines) is equally as worrisome. To the extent that democracies have been sustained or restored in this region, there are many warning signs, most notably, a high proportion of the public consistently casting doubt on the democratic legitimacy of its new political system. As the Asian Barometer Survey (ABS) team observes, the level of popular support for democracy in East Asia is lower than in Southern Europe, Eastern Europe, Africa, and even some Latin American countries.<sup>4</sup>

Second, within East Asia, there is a striking divide between economically more developed new democracies, notably South Korea and Taiwan, and economically less developed new democracies, the Philippines, Thailand, and even Mongolia, regarding the public's commitment to democracy.<sup>5</sup> The level of unconditional support for democracy in South Korea and Taiwan has been consistently lower than in the other three countries, and, indeed, close to the level found in China and Vietnam!<sup>6</sup> Citizens in higher income countries appear to be less committed to democracy than their counterparts in lower income countries in Asia, an ABS finding that runs counter to the thesis that the World Values Survey has advanced and supposedly corroborated.

Taken as a whole, East Asia has enjoyed good economic conditions when compared to other regions that were reached by the third wave of democratization. Its economic growth has been high, its inflation mild, its income inequality not terribly lopsided, and its foreign exchange reserves generally huge. The 1997-1998 Asian financial crisis was acute but it was much briefer than what the pundits had forecast, substantially shorter than the decade-long Latin American debt crisis (1982-1991), and less tenacious than the arduous task of economic transition that East and Central European new democracies experienced. East Asian nations, by and large, were the last nations to be

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<sup>4</sup> Min-Hua Huang, Yu-tzong Chang, and Yun-han Chu, "Identifying Sources of Legitimacy: A Multilevel Analysis," *Electoral Studies* 27 (2008): 45-72. Peter Smith shows that the third wave, or cycle III, of democracy in Latin America has fared much better than the previous two cycles in terms of the durability and spread of democracy, though in terms of representation of the less fortunate groups, the third wave is not as inclusive as the second wave. People are not necessarily happy with the democracy they have. See Peter Smith, *Democracy in Latin America: Political Change in Comparative Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 317-319. In most of Latin American democracies (Uruguay, Venezuela, Argentina, Chile, Mexico, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, and Central American states, but not Peru, Ecuador, and Paraguay), the 2006 Latinobarometro survey shows that the public had become more satisfied than it was at the beginning of the twenty-first century. However, only in Uruguay, Venezuela, and Argentina are more than 50 percent of those surveyed satisfied with their democratic system. See *The Economist*, December 9, 2006. Note that Latinobarometro released another survey in 2009, but this essay uses the 2006 survey to compare with the 2007 ABS.

<sup>55</sup> And, indeed, Indonesia as well, but it was not included in the ABS's first two surveys, conducted in 2001-2002 and 2005-2006.

<sup>6</sup> Yun-han Chu and Min-hua Huang, "Solving an Asian Puzzle," *Journal of Democracy* 21, no. 4 (October 2010): 114-120.

dragged into the 2008 global financial and economic crisis, and almost the first ones to emerge from it.

Democratic development in East Asia, especially in the economically more advanced part of it, seems to be surprisingly more difficult (even intractable) than the literature has suggested. Many large-N studies show that economic hard times are not conducive to democratic development, and may well contribute to reversion to authoritarianism. In examining regime changes in ninety-seven Third World countries from the 1950s through the late 1980s, Mark Gasiorowski found that recessionary crises had no effect on democratic transition but facilitated democratic breakdowns.<sup>7</sup> Focusing on the same period, Adam Przeworski et al., confirm that income erosion made democracies three times more likely to vanish than when an economy expanded.<sup>8</sup> In their studies of the fate of young democracies for the 1960-2004 period (combing post-colonial democratic change with the Third Wave cases), Ethan Kapstein and Nathan Converse found that democracies with poor socioeconomic conditions were less likely to survive.<sup>9</sup> Inequality creates strong pressure to organize opposition for redistribution, but there will be resistance to democratic change and high propensity to suppress, especially when inequality is acute and assets are fixed rather than mobile (that is, an exit option is not open to the capitalist class). Carlos Boix thus contends that inequality and democratic transition are inversely related, and to the extent that democracy pre-exists, redistributive conflict may even trigger authoritarian reversals.<sup>10</sup> Acute inequality may hinder growth, as Robert Barro shows,<sup>11</sup> and economic underperformance may weaken democracy. Economic woes catalogued here are either non-existent or mild in newly democratized Asia. Thus, the odds for democratic development should be much better for East Asia than for other regions with new democracies. Economic performance alone is no guarantee for democratic

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<sup>7</sup> Gasiorowski also found that inflationary crises inhibited democratic transition in the 1950s through the 1970s, but helped to bring about democratic change in the 1980s. Mark J. Gasiorowski, "Economic Crisis and Political Regime Change: An Event History Analysis," *American Political Science Review* 89, no. 4 (1995): 882-897.

<sup>8</sup> Adam Przeworski, Michael E. Alvarez, Jose Antonio Cheibub, and Fernando Limongi, *Democracy and Development: Political Institutions and Well-Being in the World, 1950-1990* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

<sup>9</sup> Kapstein and Converse, *The Fate of Young Democracies*, chap. 2.

<sup>10</sup> See Carlos Boix, *Democracy and Redistribution* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003). Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson argue that democratic transition is likely if the level of inequality is moderate, but unlikely if the level is very high or very low. See Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson, *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006). Haggard and Kaufman did not find much empirical support for class conflict as a causal mechanism for either transition or reversal. See Stephan Haggard and Robert R. Kaufman, "Inequality and Regime Change: Democratic Transitions and the Stability of Democratic Rule," forthcoming in *American Political Science Review*.

<sup>11</sup> Robert J. Barro, *Determinants of Economic Growth: A Cross-Country Empirical Study* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997).

development or against democratic breakdown. But at least it should alleviate the task of democratic consolidation and national development.

Perplexed by the low level of support for democracy in East Asia, the ABS team has been assiduously teasing out public attitudes toward the dimensionality and structure of democratic legitimacy. The team has highlighted nostalgia toward authoritarianism to explain why democratic legitimacy has been “fragile and fluid” in the region. In addition to this nostalgia effect, the team has alluded to the relevance of Asia’s regional context to the Asian public’s ambivalence toward its newly installed democracy. This paper builds on the plausible nostalgia explanation and elaborates on what we might call the “neighborhood effect” in the Asian public’s assessment of democracy. Assuming that the public is looking both back to the past and around in the region, this paper attempts to contextualize democratic dynamics in East Asia. Neither a theoretically- nor data-driven exercise, the paper hopes to map the geo-strategic and geo-economic environments in which to discuss democratic development in East Asia. Democratic development of the region is conditioned by regional economic and security environments.

Section I briefly summarizes what the ABS team has found with respect to the problems of democratic development in East Asia. Following the ABS team’s reports, the paper focuses mainly on South Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines, and Thailand, making reference to other cases whenever possible. Section II revisits the trajectory of East Asian democratization and identifies the distinct geo-economic and geo-strategic conditions within which regime dynamics have been unfolding. Reading both history and the macro-environment, the public in democratic East Asia seems obsessed with the opportunity cost of democratic change and is likely to bear in mind the political and economic conditions of reference societies when adjudicating its democracy. The awareness of opportunity cost and the choice of reference points, we contend, color one’s assessment of democracy. Section III briefly dwells on the divide within democratic East Asia. We argue that most citizens in South Korea and Taiwan are critical democrats because their democratic aspirations are stronger and their lowest threshold for democratic satisfaction is higher than for their counterparts in the Philippines and Thailand, resulting in deeper democratic deficits, à la Pippa Norris. History and geo-strategic and geo-economic settings have conditioned the public’s democratic attitudes in Northeast Asia differently than in Southeast Asia. The paper’s conclusion reflects on East Asian democratic development in light of the Arab Spring.

## Ambivalence toward Democracy

The first two rounds of ABS surveys found significant majorities of citizens in East Asia rather unhappy with their democracy, while nostalgic for authoritarianism.<sup>12</sup> To understand their reservations about democracy, the ABS team explored the extent to which the public was attached to democracy, on the one hand, and detached from the authoritarian past, on the other. To better gauge popular support for democracy, the team went beyond typical single-dimensional questions, such as the following three: “Is democracy always preferable to any other form of government?” “Can an authoritarian government be preferable under some circumstance?” And, “Does it matter whether the government is democratic?” In addition, the team delved into four dimensions of democratic legitimacy: desirability, suitability, efficacy, and priority (is democracy desirable, suitable to my nation, capable of solving problems, and more important than other social goals such as development). Answers to these seven questions denote one’s attachment to democracy. ABS then presented another three statements to explore the public’s detachment from an authoritarian alternative: Do you favor returning to strongman rule, single-party rule, or military rule?<sup>13</sup>

The first round (2001-2002) of surveys showed that the citizens in the four young democracies that are discussed in this paper, plus Mongolia, had ambivalence about democracy. Eighty percent or more of them found democracy desirable and suitable, but the share of those seeing democracy as capable of solving problems slipped to 70 percent. The share of those who preferred democracy to all other forms of government dropped further, below 60 percent, while the share of those who regarded democracy as equally or more important than development plummeted to 35 percent. In the second round (2005-2006) of surveys, “every indicator of average support for democracy showed a decline.”<sup>14</sup> There is some variation among the five democracies for each indicator; for example, Taiwan tended to score the lowest, Thailand the highest. And with regard to preference for democracy (answer to the question of whether democracy is preferable to all other forms of government), the gap between South Korea and Taiwan, on the one hand, and the Philippines, Thailand, and Mongolia, on the other, was most noteworthy, a divide to which we will return, below. The general picture that ABS revealed is that attachment or commitment to democracy in East Asia is “fragile and fluid.”<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Yu-tzung Chang, Yun-han Chu, and Chong-min Park, “Authoritarian Nostalgia in Asia,” *Journal of Democracy* 17, no. 3 (June 2007): 66-77.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.



Not only is attachment to democracy weak in Northeast Asia, but also there is significant lingering support for authoritarianism. In the 2001-2002 survey, barely over half of the surveyed public in the five young democracies rejected all three authoritarian propositions (abandon elections and parliament and embrace a strong leader; abolish the opposition party; let the military assume political power). Only in South Korea was the percentage in favor of democracy considerably higher than the average; the corresponding figure for Taiwan was slightly over the average, while percentages in Mongolia, the Philippines, and Thailand were substantially below the average. Moreover, in the 2005-2006 survey, while the public in Korea and Taiwan turned further away from authoritarianism, “pockets of support for authoritarianism... [were] growing rather than diminishing” in the three less-developed countries.<sup>16</sup> Again, we will return to this divide below.

Why were there teetering support for democracy and lingering nostalgia for authoritarianism in East Asia? Weak support for democracy was attributable to the public’s dissatisfaction with the working of its democracy. The democratic government was blamed for corruption, though it was also seen as trying to overcome this problem. The democratic government also was deemed ineffective, as revealed in the poor scores it received on questions of economic performance.<sup>17</sup> The public was not happy with outcomes for which former authoritarianism in the region was remembered. Most authoritarian rulers in this region reigned over rapid and sustained economic expansion, provided stability, albeit restricted civil and political liberties, and were not engaged in money politics or predatory behavior. Most Thai military coup leaders were cleaner than elected democratic leaders. Taiwan’s Chiang Ching-kuo had no qualms about persecuting his own nephew. Korea’s Park Chung-hee was stoic and completely devoted to development. The economy of the Philippines was quite decent under a martial law regime until Imelda Marcos began to claim her cut. With democratic transition, the public “found [government] performance hampered by grave governance challenges flowing from political strife, bureaucratic paralysis, recurring scandals, sluggish economic growth, and foggy economic outlooks.”<sup>18</sup> The ABS explanation for weak support for democracy and lingering nostalgia for authoritarianism in East Asia presumes that memory and attention often are selective, that the public was especially attentive to what it liked under an authoritarian regime and what it did not like under democracy, and that the public perceived the grass as greener yesterday under authoritarianism than today under democracy.

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 73.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 69.

With respect to the unexpected finding on the lower level of unconditional support for a democratic system in South Korea and Taiwan than in the Philippines and Thailand, the ABS team has provided a novel taxonomy to shed light on this puzzle. The taxonomy is based on the relative level of support for a democratic system, on the one hand, and commitment to democratic values, on the other. Commitment to norms and principles of democracy (political equality, popular accountability, political liberalism, political pluralism, and separation of powers) does not always go hand-in-hand with endorsement for a democratic system (based on its preferability, desirability, suitability, and efficacy). Unlike Japan (with strong public support for its democratic system and deep commitment to democratic values) or authoritarian Asian nations, such as China and Vietnam (with weak support for democracy and shallow commitment to liberal values), South Korea and Taiwan have many critical democrats, tenaciously adhering to liberal values, but all too often disapproving of their democratic system. In contrast, many citizens—called superficial democrats—in the Philippines and Thailand, and for that matter in Mongolia, displayed support for their democratic system because democracy is a socially desirable concept to embrace, while actually holding “many antidemocratic values.”<sup>19</sup> The ABS team is yet to explain why citizens in South Korea and Taiwan were more critical of democracy, while citizens in Thailand and the Philippines more cavalier in subscribing to democracy, at least rhetorically. The level of economic development may provide a clue, but the connection to democratic attitudes remains to be elucidated.

In presenting its findings on the sagging support for democracy, the ABS team is very cautious to separate answers to abstract questions from answers to specific questions and not to prize any particular causal factor. The team suggests that the more abstractly a survey question is worded, the more support for democracy one can collect; conversely, the more specific a question is, the less support one should expect. Weak support for democracy in East Asia has much to do with governance issues (corruption and lack of rule of law) and efficacy (insufficient economic performance being the most often used proxy indicator). But the ABS team also underscores the relevance of history and regional environment to the public’s evaluation of democracy. Following this thread, we now turn to contextualization of the East Asian public’s view of its democracy.

### **Democratic Transition, Open Regionalism, and Strategic Rivalry**

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<sup>19</sup> Chu and Huang, “Solving an Asian Puzzle,” 117.

In a pioneering study on regime change and economic growth, Jonathan Kriekhaus shows that regional “initial conditions,” or pre-existing socioeconomic systems at the time of democratic transition, help to explain why democracy is praised in some regions but frowned upon in others.<sup>20</sup> Highly skewed income inequality being the hallmark of pre-transition Latin America, democratic change released populist pressure and trigger redistributive conflict—previously fended off under authoritarianism—and thereby hurt economic growth.<sup>21</sup> In Asia, many developmental authoritarian rulers long had been associated with rapid growth via export promotion and good industrial policy, thereby expanding employment and improving income distribution. Once democratized, this relatively wealthy region began to redeploy resources from growth to redistribution, ending the era of rapid economic expansion. In ethnically fragmented Africa with heavy doses of clientelism, patrimonialism, and corruption (all of these found elsewhere, but most pervasive in Africa), democratic change made it easier to evict or constrain predatory leaders and elites, thereby helping the economy to grow.<sup>22</sup> Kriekhaus’s analysis suggests that democratic change would be more appreciated in Africa than in Latin America or Asia.

In a follow-up and more extended study on regional patterns of regime dynamics and economic change, Ethan Kapstein and Nathan Converse concur that initial conditions matter, but argue that economic outcome of democratic change is also shaped by leadership and policies, and that the fate of young democracies cannot be easily predicted.<sup>23</sup> In Latin America and sub-Sahara Africa, democratic change actually brought about respectable economic growth, though the growth rates eventually leveled off. Inflation-wise, post-democratic Latin America had high and volatile inflation, but the rates were moderate throughout in Africa. In democratic Asia, inflation rates were good, but economic growth rates dropped after democratic transition, and continued to drop beyond the first five years. In East and Central Europe, democratic change (and economic transition) resulted in immediate and sharp

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<sup>20</sup> Jonathan Kriekhaus, “Democracy and Economic Growth: How Regional Context Influences Regime Effects,” *British Journal of Political Science* 36 (2006): 317-340.

<sup>21</sup> Kriekhaus examines 1960-2000, with four control variables: government spending, trade openness, initial per capita GDP, and growth in the labor force. Democracy, indeed, has negative effects in Latin America and Asia in a variety of time frames (1960-2000, 1960-1980, and 1980-2000), while positive in Africa 1960-1980, 1960-2000, although the effect is not significant for 1980-2000. Dropping the influential cases (outliers) or adding new control variables (life expectancy, education, climate, and so on) does not affect the results. However, Karen Remmer shows that the record in managing the debt crisis of Latin American democracies was as good as that of their authoritarian counterparts. See Karen Remmer, “Democracy and Economic Crisis: The Latin American Experience,” *World Politics* 42 (1990): 315-335. Barry Ames, *Political Survival* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990) shows that authoritarian regimes were as indulged in popular, redistributive policies as democratic regimes in Latin America.

<sup>22</sup> Kriekhaus, “Democracy and Economic Growth,” 317-318.

<sup>23</sup> Kapstein and Converse, *The Fate of Young Democracies*, 75-76.

economic contraction, but then the economy bounced back and even exceeded the track record of the pre-democratic period. Inflation in the ECE region was kindled immediately after democratic change, but moderated later on. Proximity to and the possibility of joining the European Union helped to further improve the economy in the newly democratized ECE. Kapstein and Converse's dataset shows that, among all major regions of new democracies, ECE has the lowest authoritarian reversal rate, confirming a widely shared observation that democracies are better consolidated there than elsewhere. It seems that all good things have come together for ECE.

The two studies summarized above suggest African and ECE exceptionalism, respectively. But if we zero in on East Asia, we find this region no less exceptional in terms of the economic and strategic context for democratization. East Asia has at least three distinct features that might affect the way its public perceives and evaluates its new democracy. These three specific features are scope and economic timing of democratic transition, open regionalism, and strategic rivalry, cumulatively creating a unique neighborhood effect and providing a wide array of benchmarks or reference points for democratic assessment in East Asia that are not found in other regions of third-wave democracies.

*Auspicious but Incomplete Transition:*

Democratic transition in East Asia, in most cases, came after decades of long-sustained, rapid economic expansion, while democratic transition elsewhere typically occurred in economic hard times (e.g., during the debt crisis in Latin America) or with economic bankruptcy (the case of ECE).<sup>24</sup> Moreover, while other regions (Latin America, ECE, and even sub-Saharan Africa) have gone through region-wide blanket democratic transition, nearly half of East Asian regimes have remained authoritarian. In addition, most of these entrenched and resilient authoritarian states have emerged as out-performers of capitalist economies. Table 1 lists twelve developing countries that have sustained an average economic growth rate of 7 percent or higher over the course of two or more decades between 1960 and 2009. All of these top performers had leadership continuity and none of them was a multiparty competitive democracy during their high growth phase. Eight in this dataset are in East Asia. Among the eight East Asian cases, three (South Korea, Taiwan, and Thailand) experienced democratic transition, four (Cambodia, China, Singapore, and Vietnam) remain authoritarian, and one (Hong Kong) was absorbed

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<sup>24</sup> Stephan Haggard and Robert Kaufman, *The Political Economy of Democratic Transition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995).

into China. The three democratized polities registered their rapid economic growth during the pre-transition years, while the four authoritarian regimes have continued their high growth all along. Examining this table, the citizens in newly democratized Asia easily can conclude that sustained rapid growth belongs to either their own past or to the present capitalist-authoritarian states in the neighborhood.

Table 1. Countries Sustaining Rapid Growth over Two or More Decades (1960-2009)

Country	High Growth Phase	Open Elections	Leadership Continuity
Botswana	1960s-70s-80s	Not competitive	Botswana Democratic Party (BDP)
Cambodia	1990s-2000s	Not competitive	Cambodian People's Party (CPP)
China	1970s-80s-90s-2000s	No	Chinese Communist Party (CCP)
Equ. Guinea	1990s-2000s	No	Teodoro Obiang Ngeuma
Hong Kong	1960s-70s-80s	No	UK Colony
Ivory Coast	1960s-70s	No	Felix Houphouet-Bogny
Kuwait	1990s-2000s	No	Emirs of Kuwait
Singapore	1960s-70s-80s-90s	Not competitive	People's Action Party (PAP)
South Korea	1960s-70s-80s	Not competitive	Military Dictators
Taiwan	1960s-70s-80s	Not competitive	Kuomintang or Nationalist Party (KMT)
Thailand	1960s-70s-80s	Sometimes	Military Dictators (mostly)
Vietnam	1990s-2000s	No	Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP)

Source: Adapted from Devin Joshi, "Multiparty Democracies and Rapid Economic Growth," *Taiwan Journal of Democracy* 7, no. 1 (July 2011): 35.

### *Open Regionalism:*

East Asia is a region without an overarching international organization that can nurture liberal democratic norms, socialize elites, shape state behavior, and manage disputes among member states along these norms. In Latin America, the Organization of American States (OAS) was instrumental in restoring democracy in Guatemala, albeit this organization initially failed to adjudicate the dispute after the 2008 coup in that nation. In Africa, the Organization for African Union (OAS) was eventually able to help to orchestrate a democratic procedure to end the conflict between North and South Sudan. It is widely known that the European Union has inspired or required political reform in European states aspiring for EU membership.<sup>25</sup> Southeast Asia has

<sup>25</sup> Laurence Whitehead, "International Aspects of Democratization," in *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Comparative Perspectives*, ed. Guillermo O'Donnell, Philippe C. Schmitter, and Laurence Whitehead (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 3-45, and Jon C. Pevehouse, *Democracy from Above: Regional Organizations and Democratization* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), chap. 1.

a sub-regional association, the Association for Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Including more authoritarian regimes than democracies and meant to enhance peace and harmony via a consensus-building decision-making process, the ASEAN is nominally a democracy-endorsing club, but it is hardly one that promotes democracy. Thus, while Serbia, for example, recently had to turn in human rights abusers to the international criminal court to improve its odds for acquiring EU membership, Burma was not penalized by other ASEAN members for cracking down on monks and students; instead, it was able to host the ASEAN annual meeting. <sup>26</sup>

East Asia, however, is a region where members are vehemently engaged in economic integration, as manifested in ever-mounting intraregional trade, financial, and tourist flows. While not quite at the EU level yet, East Asian integration has exceeded what Latin America and Africa have attained. The process of economic integration in East Asia has been market-driven, but is increasingly based on initiatives by state leadership, as seen from the growing number of free trade agreements (FTAs) or proposals. East Asian economic integration transcends regime fault lines. Indeed, economic interaction across regime types has been even more vibrant than that within the community of democracies or the arc of capitalist-authoritarian states. Moreover, irrespective of their political regime type, East Asian economies have been more actively engaged in world trade as well as in securing foreign direct investment than their counterparts in the non-Western developing world. <sup>27</sup> Most intriguingly, authoritarian regimes in the region (e.g., China, Vietnam, and Singapore) are more trade-dependent, FDI-seeking, and FTA-ready than their democratic counterparts (e.g., Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan). Authoritarian regimes in this region embrace East Asian open regionalism perhaps even more closely, if you like, more firmly, believing in the thesis of market efficiency. <sup>28</sup> In his study on how Asian governments cope with globalization forces, Dae Jin Yi found that the compensation thesis typically holds up much better in democracies than in their authoritarian counterparts, as they have expanded the public sector, expenditure, and programs (severance pay, skills training, unemployment compensation, and other elements of a social safety-net) to

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<sup>26</sup> Diamond, *The Spirit of Democracy*, 151, and Donald K. Emmerson, ed., *Hard Choice: Security, Democracy and Regionalism in Southeast Asia* (Washington, DC: Brookings, 2008), especially the chapter by Erik Kuhonta.

<sup>27</sup> For the open and soft nature of regionalism, see Christopher Dent, *East Asian Regionalism* (London: Routledge 2008).

<sup>28</sup> The thesis of market efficiency posits that capital mobility (and the location choice made by multinational corporations [MNCs]) compels the government to discourage labor union activities and offer tax incentives to MNCs, therefore constraining public revenue and social spending. See George Avelino, David S. Brown, and Wendy Hunter, "The Effects of Capital Mobility, Trade Openness, and Democracy on Social Spending in Latin America, 1980-1999," *American Journal of Political Science* 49 (July 2005): 625-641.



compensate social groups negatively affected by trade, investment, and financial flows.<sup>29</sup>

*Strategic Rivalry:*

East Asia is the only region of new democracies that continues to be shrouded in strategic rivalry in the post-Cold War era. The third-wave democratization gained momentum in tandem with the ending of the bipolar Cold War system. The strategic rivalry between the two superpowers in the past was not really conducive to democratic promotion, as the two superpowers competed to win political allies and often were compelled to prop up authoritarian clients. With the end of the Cold War, the United States—the remaining superpower—has been in a better position to promote democratization in all regions, except in the Middle East. The American unipolar moment, however, seems most transient in East Asia. While Europe, Latin America, and even sub-Saharan Africa have each fielded an expanding community of democracy and a zone of peace, East Asia, in contrast, is experiencing new and, indeed, multiple layers of strategic rivalry, including the once tacitly coordinated and now increasingly competitive U.S.-China dyad, the resurfaced Sino-Japanese historical animosity, lingering hostility on the Korean peninsula, tensions (now eased but not defused) across the Taiwan Strait, plus clashes over the South China Sea. Certainly, quite a few institutions—all in the form of dialogue mechanisms and consultative forums—have been developed to minimize misunderstanding, prevent miscalculations, and hopefully alleviate potential conflicts.<sup>30</sup> However, given the geo-strategic structure of East Asia, it is hard, if not impossible, to create any kind of collective security system, as the texture is shaped by the fundamentals, most notably, the massive economic resource shifts from the United States (and other G-7 nations) to China (and to Brazil, Russia, and India, the other three BRIC members), and China's hegemonic rise.

The crowning Sino-American strategic rivalry is evidently manifested in the military posturing in the East and South China seas, quarrel over currency exchange rates, challenges to dollar hegemony, discussion on redistribution of voting power within international financial institutions, and other materialistic issues. But the rivalry is also played out in cultural and ideological domains that involve competing

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<sup>29</sup> See Dae Jin Yi, "Democracy, Globalization and the Public Sector in Asia," *Asian Survey* 51, no. 3 (May-June 2011): 472-496. For the compensation thesis itself, see Alicia Adsera and Carles Boix, "Trade, Democracy, and the Size of the Public Sector: The Political Underpinnings of Openness," *International Organization* 56 (Spring 2002): 229-262.

<sup>30</sup> For these institutions and their limited functions, see Michael Yahuda, *The International Politics of the Asia-Pacific* (London: Routledge, 2011), 195-202.

perspectives on political values (human rights and other liberal democratic values vs. Asian values, and the Washington Consensus vs. the Beijing Consensus). Famously defended in Singapore in the 1990s and obviously still endearing to the ears of PRC leaders, the Asian values thesis—Asia favors Confucian harmony, order, and collectivity over partisanship, freedom, and individualism—has long been a response or defense against U.S. criticism of human rights violations and authoritarian rule in China. Since 2004, the Beijing Consensus—advanced in London by Joshua Cooper Ramo but not really endorsed by PRC leaders—has often been construed (wrongly so, see below) as antithetical to the Washington Consensus (details below) as a policy guideline for Third World development. Presumably a refinement of developmental experiences in capitalist-authoritarian China, the Beijing Consensus seems to symbolize this rising power’s ideological prowess or soft power. The Beijing Consensus essentially signals to the developing world that there is an alternative to the pathway for development charted by Western liberal democracies in Washington, D.C., in 1990. The Washington Consensus is regime neutral, as it essentially says that the ten policies included in this consensus are prerequisites for sustainable development in poor countries, authoritarian or democratic. The Beijing Consensus, however, is biased toward authoritarianism, as it suggests that a developing nation can significantly advance its economy without pursuing democratic transition.

Given the above three distinct features, auspicious but incomplete democratic transition, open regionalism, and strategic rivalry, what would the citizens’ thought process be when evaluating their newly acquired democracy? This paper submits that in assessing democracy, many citizens in the democratic part of East Asia are likely to see relatively high opportunity cost of their democratic change; that they are likely to use region-specific reference points or yardsticks for evaluation; and that they also realize the limits of authoritarian allure.

#### *The Opportunity Cost:*

With the age of authoritarian repression presumably gone, the advent of democracy typically is seen as a good thing and a sign of progress that is not negotiable. As the transition euphoria recedes, the opportunity cost of democratic change may slowly and subtly factor into one’s political judgment. And when opportunity cost is deemed too high, one may begin to discount the value of democracy, especially when power rotation between political parties cannot reduce the opportunity cost of democratic change. Recall that, of the four questions the ABS used to test attachment to democracy, the fourth one on “whether democracy is equally or more important than



economic development” received the support of only 35 percent of respondents in the first round of the survey (in 2001-2002), and less support in the second round (in 2005-2006). It seems plausible to say that the percentage of positive responses to this question would have been very high if an ABS survey had been conducted right after democratic transition at the turn of the 1990s.

High economic growth—found in the pre-democratic past and authoritarian neighbors as shown in table 1 above—might well be the first item on the opportunity-cost list. A second and equally big item is the political latitude for economic management in an age of globalization. Economic openness renders domestic groups vulnerable to the whims of international markets, a condition that, as discussed above, often calls for the government to compensate and protect domestic losers. And yet, elaborate labor regulations, more taxation, and increased public debt may drive investors away, thereby aggravating economic problems. The contradiction between the need to compensate domestic constituencies and the need to please international investors and, indeed, rating agencies is equally real for political leaders, but less intractable for authoritarian rulers than for elected officials in a democracy. Potential losers can be electorally mobilized under democracy to veto economic initiatives that may benefit the whole economy in the long run. In authoritarian regimes, potential losers can be suppressed and may not be compensated. Evidently, it is easier to ink FDAs with China than with Japan.

It should be quickly noted that lack of economic performance can bear more heavily on governments in young democracies than on their counterparts in established democracies. In the West, there is evidence for retrospective voting, with incumbents rewarded or penalized, depending on their economic performance.<sup>31</sup> Retrospective voting in developing areas, however, tends to be asymmetric, as incumbents often are punished for economic problems, but not rewarded for economic performance.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, voters in young democracies are as myopic as those in established democracies, caring about present economic conditions more than future growth and potential gains.<sup>33</sup> Finally, economic openness poses a bigger challenge to young

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<sup>31</sup> For retrospective voting, see Michael Lewis-Beck, *Economics and Elections: The Major Western Democracies* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1988), chap. 7. The effects of inflation and unemployment are significant, but those of economic growth are not. See Michael Lewis-Beck and Glenn Mitchell, “Transnational Models of Economic Voting: Tests from a Western European Pool,” *Revista del Instituto de Estudios Economicos* 4 (1990): 65-81.

<sup>32</sup> Alexander Pacek and Benjamin Radcliff, “The Political Economy of Competitive Elections in the Developing World,” *American Journal of Political Science* 39 (1995): 745-759.

<sup>33</sup> Jose Antonio Cheibub and Adam Przeworski, “Democracy, Elections, and Accountability for Economic Outcomes,” in *Democracy, Accountability, and Representation*, ed. Adam Przeworski, Susan C. Stokes, and Bernard Manin (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 222-249, esp.

democracies than to established ones. It is hard to consolidate a newly created democracy if elected leaders are obliged to meet foreign investors' and rating agencies' expectations rather than domestic voters' preferences, thereby denigrating the concept of citizenship. It is thus not too surprising that in a large-N study on political impact of economic openness, Quan Li and Rafael Reuveny found that globalization contributes more to democratic decline than to democratic expansion.<sup>34</sup>

*Reference Society:*

In evaluating democratic development, experts (for example, panelists at the Freedom House and Polity III home institution) act like impartial judges, using criteria and scales that are typically generic, universal, and abstract. For the public answering survey questions on democratic assessment, concrete reference points or benchmarks are more likely to be employed, and their selection is regionally conditioned, reflecting "neighborhood effects." In Europe, peer group pressures for democratic development is keen, thanks to the "expectations" from regional organizations, as well as emulation efforts within newly or not yet democratized regimes.<sup>35</sup> The benchmarks are likely well-established democracies or European democracy in general (how do we measure up to the average or the top-tiered?). Competitive pressure for democratic development really does not exist in East Asia. Instead, this region has long been immersed in an economic race, and the obsession always has been with one's ascension or downward shift in the regional economic pecking order. Successful economies and competitive economies, especially those with cultural affinity and historical ties, often emerge as reference societies. As Reinhard Bendix put it, reference societies are mirrors for self-examination and for answering the question, "If they can, why can't we?"<sup>36</sup>

Recall again the four ABS questions used to test public attachment to democracy. The first one concerns the desirability of democracy, the second one, its problem-solving ability, while the third question asks if the respondent prefers democracy to other forms of government. It is reasonable to assume that a respondent does not need a reference point to answer the first question. However, a respondent may have a reference society

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238-239.

<sup>34</sup> Using Polity III data, and covering 127 countries from 1970 to 1996, Quan Li and Rafael Reuveny's study finds that trade openness and portfolio investment inflows negatively affect democracy, while foreign direct investment inflows positively affect democracy, but the effect tends to weaken, leading them to conclude the former, on balance. See Quan Li and Rafael Reuveny, "Economic Globalization and Democracy: An Empirical Analysis," *British Journal of Political Science* 33, no.1 (January 2003): 29-54.

<sup>35</sup> For these neighborhood effects, see Jan Teorell, *Determinants of Democratization: Explaining Regime Change in the World 1972-2006* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), chap. 4.

<sup>36</sup> Reinhard Bendix, *Kings or Peoples* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980).

in mind in answering the second question, and is most likely to use at least one non-democratic polity as a yardstick to sort out his or her preference order. About 80 percent of the respondents find democracy desirable and suitable, but the share of those believing democracy is capable of solving problem slips to 70 percent, and the share of those who prefer democracy to all other forms of government drops further, below 60 percent. It seems that the more the reference society is deployed, the more ambivalent one tends to be with respect to one's support for democracy.

There is no international survey on reference societies. Circumstantial evidence (based on newspaper coverage, issue-framing in public discourse, and, indeed, academic papers, including those presented at this conference) suggests that South Korea and Taiwan used to see each other as a reference society but both China and Singapore are becoming their reference societies as well. Similarly, Thailand and the Philippines have been reference societies to each other, but Singapore, China, and even Vietnam have been drawing their attention as well. It seems that the highly performing capitalist-authoritarian states are increasingly chosen as reference societies in East Asia. This reorientation may be affecting the commitment and attachment of the East Asian public to democracy. To paraphrase Larry Diamond, if an authoritarian regime can provide, as it has in Singapore, "booming development, political stability, low level of corruption, affordable housing, and a secure pension system," the appeal of democracy may fade.<sup>37</sup>

Here, it is heuristic to inject an Indian note. Authoritarian China is invariably a reference point for democratic India. Both China and India are leading new great powers and most promising emerging markets, but to Pranab Bardhan, a prominent Indian-American economist at Berkeley, China has been more dynamic, India less vibrant. For the performance gap, Bardhan unequivocally attributes the difference to the Chinese government's ability to stick to incentive-based, free-market competitive principles in both market and political-bureaucratic domains, and India's electoral pressures and bureaucratic blame-avoiding inclinations.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Diamond, *The Spirit of Democracy*, 215.

<sup>38</sup> India obviously lags far behind China in the manufacturing sector. In the service sector, China is slightly less developed than India in finance. Bardhan also finds India prevailing in only one area of infrastructure, telecommunication, while China is leading in all others, including power, transportation, and urban facilities. See Pranab Bardhan, *Awakening Giants, Feet of Clay: Assessing the Economic Rise of India and China* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010). Bardhan's apprehension of India's lack-luster economic performance in this comparative work is in line with his more blatant criticism of India's chronic stagnation, which, in his view, has had to do with democratic pressures exerted by all social sectors, industrial, labor, and farming. See Pranab Bardhan, *The Political Economy of Development in India* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1994).

*The Limits of Authoritarian Allure*: Nostalgia for authoritarianism is real and significant, but it has limits. Capitalist-authoritarian regimes have a record of delivering rapid economic growth, but such growth comes with political repression, and growth is only a prerequisite for further development. Distributive justice and welfare enhancement are equally important ingredients of modernity, and democracy is better posed to help to bring about them, as shown in the cases of South Korea and Taiwan.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, not all authoritarian regimes in East Asia have performed, at least not up to Singapore's high-water mark. Myanmar and North Korea, for example, have not delivered at all. East Asia certainly has its share of predatory (vs. developmental) authoritarianism. Finally, in terms of development ideology, the alleged challenge of the authoritarian Beijing Consensus to the democratic Washington Consensus is more apparent than real.

The Washington Consensus as a well-developed and integrated policy package has been widely criticized and often misunderstood, but it has as many supporters as detractors, and it has been self-reflecting and updated. In contrast, the Beijing Consensus and its persuasiveness is arguably a myth, as its authors read the economic rise of China wrongly, and its applicability to other developing nations is debatable at best. The three core elements that Joshua Cooper Ramo has identified are either wrong or trivial. First, the driving force for China's development has not been technological prowess, but rather labor mobilization, induction of FDI, and integration into the world economy. Second, China's development might well be sustainable, but not equitable, as income gaps have widened rather than narrowed. Third, Ramo has lauded the Chinese development strategy as "unique." Each country's development is unique. Indeed, China has implemented four, and is working assiduously on four more, core policy elements advanced in the Washington Consensus.<sup>40</sup> We may add that for industrial policy, an area not touched on by the Washington Consensus, China is not so unique either, as it has been doing what the three preceding capitalist developmental states in the region (Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan) had been doing, except that China's

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<sup>39</sup> Stephan Haggard and Robert Kaufman, *Development, Democracy, and Welfare States: Latin America, East Asia and Eastern Europe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008). See also, Joseph Wong, *Healthy Democracies: Welfare Policies in South Korea and Taiwan* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004).

<sup>40</sup> Scott Kennedy, "The Myth of the Beijing Consensus," in *In Search of China's Development Model*, ed. S. Philip Hsu (London: Routledge, 2011). This is based on Arthur Kroeber's reading, reported in Kennedy's chapter. The first four counts are fiscal discipline, a competitive exchange rate (perhaps in the case of China, overly competitive), trade liberalization, and decontrol of inward foreign direct investment. China is working on reducing non-merit subsidies toward public goods, expanding the tax base, easing barriers to market entry, and legalizing property rights. China also has embarked on privatization of numerous state-owned enterprises. The only unchecked box is liberalization of interest rates.

policy performance has not been as praiseworthy as that of its neighbors.<sup>41</sup> Finally, the relevance of China's development model to other developing nations also is debatable. Size, regional disparity, as well as doses of Leninist organizational and socialist ideological legacies make China hard to compare with other developing or transition economies.<sup>42</sup> Mark W. Frazier contends that the Chinese development experience is most sensibly discussed in conjunction with that of large and unevenly developing economies, such as India, Brazil, South Africa, and Indonesia.<sup>43</sup>

### **Critical Citizens in South Korea and Taiwan**

Citizens in South Korea and Taiwan are more critical of democracy than their counterparts in the Philippines and Thailand. For the former, the commitment to democratic values is strong, but the support for democracy is weak, while for the latter, the reverse is true in relative terms. Democratic deficits are high in South Korea and Taiwan, each with a high level of democratic aspiration (based on eagerness to live in a democracy), but a low level of democratic satisfaction (based on evaluation of perceived democratic performance).<sup>44</sup> Do these deficits pertain to higher levels of economic development in South Korea and Taiwan than in the Philippines and Thailand? Can East Asian democratic transition, regionalism, and strategic environment help us to understand critical democrats in South Korea and Taiwan?

The four East Asian nations experienced democratization virtually simultaneously, at a time when the Cold War was ending and the post-Cold War economic race was fiercely unfolding in East Asia. Three East Asian region-specific factors might explain greater democratic aspiration and firmer commitment to democratic values but lower democratic satisfaction and harsher democratic evaluation in South Korea and Taiwan than in Thailand and the Philippines. First, the former pair had economic prosperity within reach, while the latter two countries were yet to attain it. Being richer, Korean and Taiwanese citizens have sought post-material values such as those found in deepened democracy, in contrast to their less prosperous Thai and Filipino counterparts, a very Inglehartian argument. Using one question (Is democracy

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<sup>41</sup> This is Arthur R. Koreber's verdict. See Arthur R. Koreber, "Developmental Dreams: Policy and Reality in China's Economic Reforms," in *Beyond the Middle Kingdom: Comparative Perspectives on China's Capitalist Development*, ed. Scott Kennedy (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011), 44-65.

<sup>42</sup> See S. Philip Hsu, "Introduction," in *In Search of China's Development Model*, ed. S. Philip Hsu (London: Routledge, 2011).

<sup>43</sup> See Mark W. Frazier, "Welfare Policy Pathways among Large Uneven Developers," in *Beyond the Middle Kingdom*, ed. Scott Kennedy, 89-110.

<sup>44</sup> These concepts are from Pippa Norris, *Democratic Deficit: Critical Citizens Revisited* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

important to your life?) to measure democratic aspiration, Pippa Norris finds that aspiration has to do with education, not income, as democratic life is as important to rich and it is to poor nations.<sup>45</sup> The ABS team contends it is socially desirable to declare that democracy is an important part of modern life. Using four questions that contain no mention of “democracy,” the team has discovered that commitment to democratic values is much shallower in the Philippines and Thailand than in South Korea and Taiwan.

Second, regional economic dynamics tend to lead Korean and Taiwanese citizens to embrace democratic values more firmly than their Thai and Filipino counterparts. South Korea and Taiwan used to be the most cited, widely lauded, and fervidly emulated newly industrializing countries (NICs). That glamour and status are now passé. East Asia’s two authoritarian capitalist economies, China and Singapore, are now leading regional economic expansion. Democracy is likely to be on the top of the list in which Korean and Taiwanese citizens now take pride (for Thai and Filipino citizens, economic prosperity probably would top the list). If democracy is to be the crown jewel of these countries, it must foster both good values and perform. The minimum level of Koreans’ and Taiwanese’ democratic satisfaction is thus set extremely high, an expectation level that makes it more likely for South Korea and Taiwan to register democratic deficits than for Thailand and the Philippines.

Third, South Korea and Taiwan are more vulnerable to the fallout of strategic rivalry in East Asia than their two Southeast Asian counterparts. China has emerged as an economic partner for all four democracies, but the rise of China arguably prompts a level of anxiety and apprehension in South Korea and Taiwan that may well be unimaginable to Thais and Filipinos. China and its protégé, North Korea, are at the doorsteps of South Korea and Taiwan. China can be a tough neighbor for any state to deal with in political and security domains (for example, the competing territorial claims in the South China Sea), but at least it is not a next-door neighbor for Thailand and the Philippines, both members of the ASEAN security community. Not directly affected by the Sino-American strategic rivalry, these two nations can even contemplate navigating between Pax Americana and Pax Sinica, much in the same way that Thailand, one of the three non-Western nations never colonized, balanced the British against the French in East Asia. South Korea and Taiwan, as consumers of American security, cannot equivocate. They must believe in the community of democracy (CD), as their security is root in it.

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 127.



## Conclusion

The third wave of democratization has been losing steam since the mid-1990s. Economic crises such as the burst of the technology bubble in 2000 and the acute 2008 global financial crisis (not over yet) have put new democracies under duress. Many have survived,<sup>46</sup> but democratic consolidation remains a daunting task, especially in East Asia, where new cases of democratic transition have long been in short supply. The Arab Spring is yet to buck the trend of global democratic recession. It might have reignited the hope for a new wave of democratization, but it has yet to spark a renewed trend in new democratic transitions, and the hope inspired by the revolutions is yet to travel beyond the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Indeed, even within the MENA region, the momentum for change seems hard to sustain. While personal dictatorship in Tunisia, Egypt, and Yemen has collapsed, and that in Libya and Syria is under siege, monarchies in Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Morocco still seem immune to democratic challenge.

The Arab Spring does not seem to be generating the sort of demonstration effect that would help democratic development in East Asia. While much of the MENA region has been simmering owed to economic failure—a major fuel for democratic uprisings in Tunis, Cairo, and Sanaa, nearly all East Asian nations (North Korea being a notable exception) have a vibrant economy. Equally important, economic dynamism is more pronounced in capitalist-authoritarian states than in democracies in East Asia. Indeed, for this region, the most stellar economy is under the watch of the authoritarian regime in the historical core civilization state, China.<sup>47</sup> The very existence of a sizeable arc of highly performing capitalist-authoritarian states, led by China, is arguably the most persistent stumbling block for democratic development in East Asia, where the only mature democracy, Japan, is “managing its relative decline.”<sup>48</sup> In a definitive volume that refined conventional wisdom on democratic change, Larry Diamond predicted in 2008 that “[East] Asia [would] determine the global fate of democracy.”<sup>49</sup> That prediction can still be entertained today. As Roland Rich rightly pointed out, the universalism of liberty and democracy is keenly tested in East Asia, a

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<sup>46</sup> Diamond, “Why Democracies Survive.”

<sup>47</sup> The MENA region has no core civilization state. See Peter J. Katzenstein, ed., *Civilizations in World Politics* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2009). For the ideological influence that China, as a core civilization state, historically exercised, see David C. Kang, “Civilization and State Formation in the Shadow of China,” in this book, 91-111.

<sup>48</sup> The characterization is Michael Yahuda’s. See Yahuda, *The International Politics of the Asia-Pacific*, chap.11.

<sup>49</sup> Diamond, *The Spirit of Democracy*, 212. The prediction referred to East Asia. South Asia was mentioned in passing only.

non-Western civilization zone, where authoritarian China is the core state.<sup>50</sup> And the test is not going to be easy.

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<sup>50</sup> Roland Rich, *Pacific Asia in Quest of Democracy* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2007), 283-284.