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1

Democracy through Strength

Starting with Development

Economic development is Asia's inescapable fact. Imagine a seasoned Asia traveler from the early 1970s being catapulted fifty years forward in time to any Asian city in the present day.¹ Whether they touched ground in Tokyo, Seoul, Hong Kong, Singapore, Shanghai, Taipei, or even Hanoi, Jakarta, Bangkok, or Kuala Lumpur, there is simply no question what transformation would strike them first. One of the world's poorest regions has become one of its richest.

We call this region "developmental Asia." It is a region defined by political economy, not just physical geography. All of its burgeoning economies lie along the Pacific Rim of Asia, so geography is hardly irrelevant. But not all countries in Northeast and Southeast Asia qualify. Developmental Asia is a region you have to "join" by pursuing particular developmental policies and accruing developmental successes. Specifically, the region's twelve cases² have all pursued national catch-up development through the political prioritization of rapid economic growth, grounded in a developmental model that prizes exports, uses state sponsorship to encourage industrialization, and treats private firms as a cornerstone of national economic advancement.

Economic growth across developmental Asia has been nothing short of spectacular. Yet it has also been undeniably uneven. Within each society, the fruits of economic growth have been very unevenly shared. Hundreds of millions have escaped poverty, but tens of millions still have not. Across cases, some began developing much earlier and have attained far greater levels of wealth than others. Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore have boasted high-income status for decades. Malaysia, Thailand, and Indonesia started later and have reached less lofty developmental heights. Meanwhile, among the four inward-looking laggards who did not "join"

developmental Asia by pursuing rapid export-led, state-sponsored capitalist growth until after the Cold War ended—China, Vietnam, Cambodia, and, most belatedly, Myanmar—China has skyrocketed past all the rest, while still not catching up to its developmental Asian predecessors in terms of per capita income.

The Patterns

Our core purpose in this book is not to explain developmental Asia's economic transformation, however. It is to explain a pattern that is far less obvious. For all of developmental Asia's remarkable economic modernization, only about half of the region has moved from authoritarianism toward democracy, even as the entire region has moved—albeit unevenly, both within countries and across them—from poverty toward wealth.³

This uneven pattern of democratization is nearly as striking and puzzling as Asia's impressive economic development. Because if economic development is Asia's inescapable fact, the connection between economic development and democratization is the modern world's inescapable correlation. There are obvious and important exceptions, of course: the occasional poor democracy in Africa, the handful of rich dictatorships in the Middle East. Yet the overall global pattern remains both clear and enduring, as modernization theory long ago identified: richer countries tend to be more democratic countries. This is especially true when, as in developmental Asia, economic development is driven by capitalist markets and accompanied by enormous class transformations.

We adopt a comparative and historical perspective to examine and explain developmental Asia's uneven democratization experience. Critically, *the region's unevenness in democratization does not map directly onto its unevenness in development*. Levels of economic development are not clearly correlated with levels of democracy in developmental Asia. If they were, Asia's democratization story would be a pure modernization story—but it plainly is not. Most strikingly, Singapore and Hong Kong are extremely wealthy but not democratic; China is getting no closer to democracy even as it grows phenomenally richer; Indonesia became a democracy and has remained a democracy for over two decades despite its modest middle-income status; and even Myanmar took substantial steps toward democratization in the 2010s, while remaining developmental Asia's poorest country, before a military coup reversed those tenuous yet tangible democratic gains in 2021.

One of the central propositions of our book is that democratization across developmental Asia has not merely been *uneven*; it has been *clustered*. That is, only certain *types* of political economies in developmental Asia have experimented with democratic reforms and, in some cases, completed and consolidated their democratic transitions. Other types have not. Explaining developmental Asia's clustered pattern of authoritarianism and democratization requires a fundamental rethinking of Asian geography itself.

It also requires a rethinking of how development shapes democratization. Economic development has profoundly shaped developmental Asia's patterns of democratization, as one would generally expect. But this is only because different types of *economic* development have been associated with different types of *political* development. Authoritarian regimes across developmental Asia built up considerable political strengths—but different types of political strength—while they were building up their national economies.

Of particular importance, different developmental patterns have been accompanied by the rise to positions of prominence and dominance of very different political organizations and actors: bureaucracies, conservative parties, socialist parties, and militaries. They have also positioned developmental Asia's twelve cases quite differently in the global economy, fostering different patterns of historical dependency on major powers such as China, Great Britain, Japan, and the United States. It is in this powerful yet indirect fashion that a shared overarching pattern of economic development had divided Asia by the early twenty-first century, almost evenly, into authoritarian and democratic halves.

The Argument

We argue that developmental Asia's most common pathway to democracy has been unusual but not unique. This pathway is *democracy through strength*.⁴ It might seem like a truism to say that democracy can only emerge once an authoritarian regime has become too weak to endure. Yet developmental Asia's historical democratization experience consistently shows otherwise. From Japan after America's post-World War II occupation to Myanmar in the 2010s, and with Taiwan, South Korea, Indonesia, and Thailand in between, incumbent authoritarian regimes in developmental Asia have repeatedly conceded democracy without conceding defeat. They have opened themselves up to freer and fairer electoral competition, not as a way of exiting power and transferring power to their opponents but as a way of shoring up their own power in a democratic game.

The defining feature of democracy through strength in developmental Asia has been regime confidence, not regime collapse. Specifically, we see authoritarian regimes embarking on democratic reforms when their historically accumulated strengths give them two distinctive kinds of confidence. The first is *victory confidence*. This is the expectation among incumbent authoritarian elites that they can fare well, or even continue to dominate outright, in democratic elections. The second is *stability confidence*. This is their expectation that political stability—and with it, economic development—will persist under democratic conditions.

As we will discuss at length, the greatest source of stability confidence and victory confidence lies in political organizations, especially political parties and the bureaucratic state. Yet economic development itself contributes as well to both the victory confidence and stability confidence necessary for authoritarian regimes to democratize through strength.

In the barest possible terms, figure 1.1 displays our basic logic. With an impressive developmental track record, authoritarian rulers can generate a measure of performance legitimacy—a credible retrospective record of developmental achievement—to help them win free and fair elections moving forward.⁵ And to the extent that economic development reduces poverty and expands the middle class, it softens the anticipated pressures for downward redistribution that often frighten the well-off away from embracing democratization.⁶

When authoritarian leaders in developmental Asia have lacked victory confidence and stability confidence, they have not pursued democratic reforms, no matter how much pressure to democratize they confronted. Rather, when they have democratized, they have done so not to surrender their power but to stabilize it on more solid footing.

This argument contrasts sharply with the conventional notion that dictators only give way under the most extreme, even existential pressures. As Plato concluded in *The Republic*, “Yes, that is how a democracy comes to be established, whether by force of arms or because the other party is terrorized into giving way.” Much more recently, one of the most influential books on democratization of the twenty-first century thus far, Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson’s *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, is built around the premise that authoritarian rulers only accept democracy as a way to prevent an imminent violent popular overthrow. In contrast, our argument centers not on *revolutionary threats* but on *stability expectations*.

This is not to say that expectations of stability are ever absolute or unequivocal. Conceding democracy with confidence is not without risk and

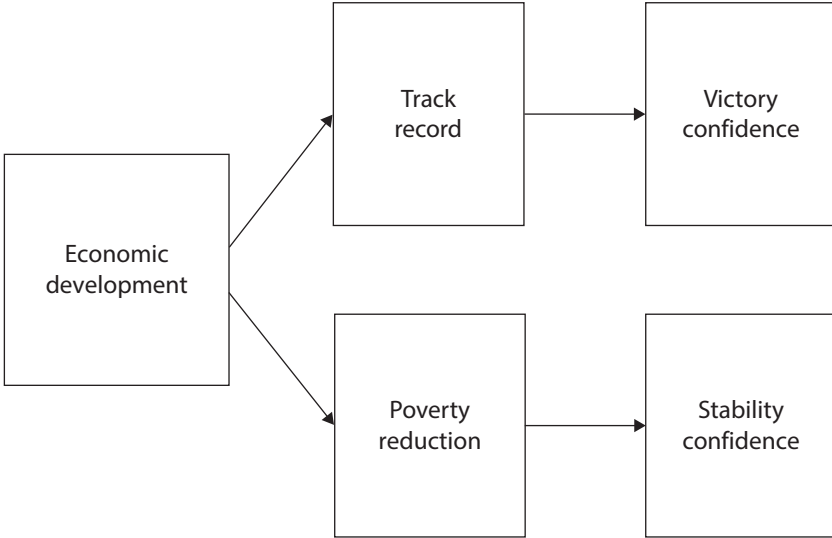


FIGURE 1.1. Authoritarian Development and Regime Confidence

uncertainty. We do not argue that strong authoritarian regimes ever possess perfect foresight and can predict precisely how well or poorly they would fare after conceding democratic reforms. Confidence is never omniscience. Democracy through strength is not intelligent design. It is a *reversible experiment*. Confidence must be considerable for democracy through strength to be commenced; it must be confirmed by experience throughout the reform experiment for democracy through strength to be completed.⁷

Our emphasis on stability expectations does not imply that pressures for democratization are unimportant, however. They are absolutely vital. Frederick Douglass was not mistaken when he famously claimed, “Power concedes nothing without a demand.” When strong authoritarian regimes confront no pressure for change, they are highly unlikely to change course. Autocrats are extremely unlikely to embrace democratic reforms in the absence of political challenges.

Pressures for democratization can come from outside, as when Japan and Taiwan democratized, in part as a way of ensuring ongoing American security support. They can also come from below, such as when massive democratization protests helped accelerate regime change in South Korea in the late 1980s. And pressures for democratization can come from the economy, like when Indonesia’s calamitous crash during the Asian financial crisis of the late 1990s made the exhaustion of the Suharto regime’s development strategy painfully obvious.

The more such pressures dictatorships face, the more likely they are to democratize. Yet it is essential to conceptually distinguish, and to empirically appraise in separate fashion, *the pressures regimes suddenly confront from the strengths they enduringly possess*. The considerable political strengths that authoritarian regimes in developmental Asia accrued while they were building up their economies came first and grew gradually; pressures for political change came later and emerged more suddenly, presenting fundamentally strong authoritarian regimes with new challenges, but also with new choices.

In sum, the key to democratic reform in our theory of democracy through strength is not authoritarian elites' perception of an imminent revolutionary threat and the regime's coming collapse. It is their well-founded expectation of continued stability and even continued outright victory after democratization takes place.⁸

An Illustrative Comparison

Before spelling out our theory in greater detail, consider a real-world illustration. No case of Asian democratization gained greater global attention than the People Power movement that toppled Ferdinand Marcos in 1986 in the Philippines. A discredited dictator, Marcos was chased out of office, and out of the country, by massive protests that paralyzed Manila and made his hold on power unsustainable. The protests themselves were prompted by a military coup against Marcos and by a dramatic plea by the archbishop of Manila, Cardinal Jaime Sin, for the public to gather in the streets and force Marcos to step down. The military was too split to defend the Marcos presidency after he had brazenly stolen national elections. The aging dictator's American backers also made it clear they would not be helping him stay in power either.

This was a paradigmatic example of *democracy through weakness*. It is the most commonly understood way that democratization occurs, both to scholars who study democratization and to the wider public that has dramatic televised images like those from Manila's People Power movement seared in their memory. Democratization through weakness means unmanageable, unrelenting, and sometimes violent crowds of urban protesters. It means a dictator flying off into exile, recognizing they have no path to holding power any longer. It means a triumphant replacement of the disgraced with the inspirational, as seen when the slight and humble figure of Corazon Aquino took the oath of office amid a throng of cameras and cheering onlookers, becoming the Philippines' democratically elected president in February 1986.

Almost two years to the day after Aquino was sworn in as president of the Philippines, in February 1988, a very different presidential oath of office would take place in nearby South Korea. Dressed in an impeccable business suit rather than military dress, former general Roh Tae-woo raised his right hand and swore to uphold South Korea's newborn electoral democracy. Despite his military pedigree, Roh was not assuming the presidency as a military leader or as an authoritarian ruler of any kind. He had been democratically elected a few months earlier in 1987 as leader of the Democratic Justice Party, which had ruled South Korea in authoritarian fashion under General Chun Doo-hwan. Democratic elections had not been forced by a revolutionary urban threat that toppled the ancien régime, by a divided and disloyal military, or by the abandonment of American backers. Rather, they were a strategic concession made by South Korea's authoritarian military and party leaders, with the relatively confident expectation that free and fair elections would let them stay in power rather than concede outright defeat or, worse yet, their own obsolescence. This confidence was fulfilled, and South Korea remains a highly functioning democracy to the present day.

Unlike the Philippines, South Korea experienced *democracy through strength*. We will elaborate all that this means, conceptually and theoretically, in the following sections. But a few observations about these two specific Asian cases are worth making before doing so, to illustrate some larger points. First, the Philippines has never been part of developmental Asia, and therefore it is not the kind of case we consider in this book. The fact that the Philippines democratized through weakness is consistent with a wide variety of existing theories of democratization in political science. It is also unsurprising insofar as the Philippines has not loosened its postcolonial political and economic ties to the United States in a manner that would allow it to pursue rapid state-led national economic development, as many of its Southeast Asian neighbors have done.⁹ Countries like the Philippines that fail to build either authoritarian strength or developmental strength simply never have the option of democratizing through strength.

South Korea is the type of case we explore in this book. It tells a much less familiar story of how democratization happens. And yet in developmental Asia, it is the most important story to know. Authoritarian regimes can democratize from a position of strength, and those authoritarian elites can maintain much of their strength in a new democratic form. In the examples of democracy through strength that we examine in this book, former authoritarian elites can become successful democratic elites. Crucially, this does not mean that the

democracy resulting from authoritarian concessions is less meaningfully democratic than one arising through authoritarian collapse. In fact, South Korea remains a far healthier democracy than the Philippines today, even though its democratic transition did not come with the immediate emotional catharsis of a dictator's ignominious departure, broadcast live on global airwaves.

Strength versus Weakness

Democracy through strength is not the typical scenario through which democracy is expected to arise. In this section, we contrast our historically underexamined democracy-through-strength scenario to the more familiar pathway of democratization through authoritarian weakness. To be sure, every authoritarian regime possesses a mix of strengths and weaknesses, and neither strengths nor weaknesses can be ignored in any real-world case of democratization. Yet there are striking differences between cases in which regime strength predominates in the democratization process and those in which authoritarian weakness is the key factor propelling regime change.

In the canonical understanding of how authoritarianism ends and democracy begins, which we call *democracy through weakness*, the story goes something like this: Ruling elites are deeply divided. They confront an increasingly imminent prospect of violent overthrow if they do not give way. They thus either sit down with opposition leaders to negotiate a peaceful exit from power or simply flee the scene and leave a collapsed regime in their wake. Democratization arises as the last resort of authoritarian leaders. In these scenarios, the regime's collapse is relatively sudden, and its legitimacy is entirely relinquished as an entirely new ruling group rises to power. The regime becomes opposition, if it survives the transition at all, and the opposition becomes the regime. Simply put, the regime collapses, conceding defeat. The demise of the Marcos regime in the Philippines in 1986 is a classic example.

In all of these aforementioned respects, democracy through strength looks different from democracy through weakness. Instead of being divided at the start of the democratization process, ruling elites are relatively unified. Although pressures for democratization may be growing, there is no imminent threat of the incumbent authoritarian regime being toppled. Instead of a revolutionary threat confronting the regime and giving it *little choice* but to give in, expectations of stability and even continued victory after democratization put the regime in a situation of relatively *little risk*. The incumbent authoritarian regime thus preemptively and unilaterally establishes new rules and a

substantially leveled playing field, without being forced to negotiate the details with its opponents. This often takes the form of sequential concessions of gradual democratizing reforms. The authoritarian regime's political legitimacy gets redefined, not relinquished. Instead of being forced aside or stepping aside to make way for their opponents, ruling elites often continue ruling, or at least share power in a ruling coalition, despite the regime change. South Korea's democratic transition looked much more like this strength scenario than the weakness scenario that unfolded in the Philippines, almost simultaneously and amid much greater global fanfare.

An additional way in which democracy through strength differs from common understandings is worth underscoring. In much the same way that scholars of international relations believe countries tend to bungle their way into war, scholars of comparative politics increasingly claim that democratization happens by accident as well, rather than by design.¹⁰ Some kind of miscalculation sets an authoritarian regime on a slippery slope toward democratization.

Our perspective is not diametrically opposed to this interpretation of how democracy sequentially unfolds, but it is different nonetheless. We do not argue that autocrats have perfect information. They cannot concede democracy with prescience. Rather, we see democracy through strength as a process of *reversible experimentation*. When strong authoritarian regimes begin liberalizing, they do not know for certain where the reform process will lead. They have a highly informed expectation of continued stability and success; but politics being politics, things might always go much worse and less smoothly than expected. If so, the liberalizing dictatorship can pull the plug and at least attempt to return to the authoritarian status quo ante. They can reverse the experiment.¹¹

In fact, a virtue for incumbent authoritarian leaders of democratizing preemptively and from a position of strength is that they are far more able to guide the transition process to their own liking, maintaining the capacity to shift gears if and when surprises erupt. The stronger the regime is when it commences the experiment, the better its chances of controlling the transition. If the regime waits too long, by contrast, and squanders its window of opportunity to transform itself and the political system on its own terms, it is far more likely to lose control of the process entirely. This is what unfolded over the course of the 2010s in Malaysia, Cambodia, and Hong Kong, and what could potentially transpire in the very near future in China, Singapore, and Vietnam.

For strong authoritarian regimes like those that predominate in developmental Asia, the biggest miscalculation when it comes to democratization is

waiting too long to attempt it. Regimes that transition through strength should do so before their “best before” date expires. Every authoritarian regime reaches its historical apex, and the trick to democracy through strength is pursuing it when that apex is still historically recent rather than distant. The closer the regime is to its apex of power, the more likely it can successfully concede democracy through strength. The opportunities to democratize through strength are almost certainly not inexhaustible because authoritarian strengths are almost certainly not inexhaustible. This makes the path of democracy through strength, we contend, a rational choice for strong authoritarian regimes.

A Region of Clusters

Developmental Asia is characterized by substantial but not equivalent strengths across its twelve cases. In the cluster that encompasses the world’s exemplary “developmental states” of Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan, these strengths have been remarkable.¹² In the cluster comprising Southeast Asian military regimes—namely, Indonesia, Myanmar, and Thailand—these political strengths have been far less impressive.¹³ Yet across this eclectic range of six Asian countries, the core story remains the same: *democratic reforms commenced when authoritarian elites felt considerable victory confidence and stability confidence, and not when they were in a death spiral of political crisis and imminent collapse.*¹⁴ Moreover, the more strength these authoritarian regimes possessed before democratization, the more their confidence would be fulfilled after democratization. We demonstrate that these authoritarian regimes can be arrayed across a spectrum of *strength* before democratization that would then be reflected in their spectrum of democratic *success* afterward.

It is thus no accident that democratization went quite smoothly for strong incumbent conservative parties in postwar Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan, while military-led regimes in Indonesia, Thailand, and Myanmar experienced much rockier and reversible transitions from authoritarianism to democracy.¹⁵ What is clear in hindsight was not entirely clear at the time, to be sure. Yet the relative “settledness” or “unsettledness”¹⁶ of these six regimes’ liberalization processes can be very well explained by the levels of authoritarian strength from which these parallel processes began. Postwar Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea—what we group together as the “developmental statist” cluster—were the strongest authoritarian regimes and became the strongest, most enduring democracies in Asia. We explore these cases and their journeys from development to democratization at length in chapters 3 through 5. Democratic

experiments in the “developmental militarist” cluster of Thailand, Myanmar, and Indonesia (chapter 7), in comparison, have been far less certain and far more prone to authoritarian reversals.

In the case of Thailand, the experiment with democracy through strength that commenced in the early 1980s would be reversed entirely, though it took decades for the democratic collapse to occur. Myanmar’s democratization experiment of the 2010s arguably stalled short of actually establishing democracy and was then reversed entirely, as in Thailand, in the 2021 military coup. Only in Indonesia has a military-led regime gone from initial democratic concessions to eventual democratic consolidation without authoritarian reversal. This relative success, we contend, reflects Indonesia’s antecedent authoritarian strength, and especially the greater role played by a deeply rooted conservative ruling party during Indonesia’s authoritarian period, which Thailand and Myanmar both sorely (and fatally for democracy) lacked.

The primary empirical focus of our book is to explore the different ways that democracy through strength has unfolded in these six developmental Asian countries. Yet our argument that spectrums of authoritarian strength predictably translate into spectrums of democratic success also has important implications for the six cases in developmental Asia that have not pursued democracy through strength. Unlike our aforementioned developmental statist cluster (Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan) and developmental militarist cluster (Indonesia, Myanmar, and Thailand), these six Asian political economies have pursued *democracy avoidance* rather than democratic concessions from their positions of authoritarian strength. But like the six instances of democratic concessions, the cases of democracy avoidance belong in two clusters of their own: “developmental Britannia” (Singapore, Malaysia, and Hong Kong) and “developmental socialism” (China, Vietnam, and Cambodia).

The final empirical chapters of our book (chapters 8 and 9) tackle the question of whether democracy through strength is as feasible in these latter two clusters of countries as in other parts of developmental Asia. Of particular interest are the developmental Asian behemoth, China, and Lilliputian, Singapore, which capture so much global attention for their durable authoritarianism despite spectacularly expanding national wealth.

Table 1.1 summarizes the entire region’s developmental and democratic clustering. Along the left side of the table, *italicized*, we see the two clusters of “concession cases” that have, at one time or another, pursued democracy from positions of relative strength. The two CAPITALIZED cases, Thailand and Myanmar, are the “reversal cases” that have seen coups undo those democratic

TABLE 1.1. Developmental Clusters and Democratization Patterns

High Strength	
Developmental Statism	Developmental Britannia
1. <i>Japan</i>	1. Singapore
2. <i>Taiwan</i>	2. <u>Malaysia</u>
3. <i>South Korea</i>	3. <u>Hong Kong</u>
Intermediate Strength	
Developmental Militarism	Developmental Socialism
1. <i>Indonesia</i>	1. China
2. THAILAND	2. Vietnam
3. MYANMAR	3. <u>Cambodia</u>

Note: italicized type indicates concession cases (6); unitalicized type indicates avoidance cases (6); **bold** type indicates candidate cases (3); underlined type indicates embittered cases (3); CAPITALIZED type indicates reversal cases (2).

concessions. On the right side, unitalicized, are the two clusters of cases that have avoided making such concessions, despite enjoying sufficient authoritarian strength to do so.

Of these six “avoidance cases” on the right side of table 1.1, all developed enough authoritarian strength to concede democracy and thrive; but none has. Some—namely, China, Singapore, and Vietnam—remain strong enough to do so. We use **bold** to identify them as “candidate cases” because they could still democratize through strength if their authoritarian leaderships so choose.

By contrast, our three other avoidance cases have all allowed themselves to weaken to the point that they could only democratize through weakness, not strength. Formerly but no longer strong candidate cases, Malaysia, Cambodia, and Hong Kong are underlined as what we call, for reasons that will become clearer later in this chapter, “embittered cases.” They have all missed their best window of opportunity to concede democracy without conceding immediate defeat. Incumbent regimes chose to hang on far past their authoritarian apex, relying on increasingly repressive means to stay in power, such that democracy through strength ceased to be a viable option.

Only time will tell if developmental Asia’s three “candidate cases” (China, Singapore, and Vietnam) will eventually become “embittered cases” (like Cambodia, Hong Kong, and Malaysia)—that is, strong authoritarian cases that refuse to democratize through strength until they become too weak to do so—or not.

Table 1.1 should be read vertically as well as horizontally. The wealthier an authoritarian regime was when confronting pressures to democratize, the higher it sits in the table. Most broadly, six higher-income cases (the relatively wealthy statist and Britannia clusters) stand above six cases with more intermediate national income levels (the growing but lagging militarist and socialist clusters). For the basic reasons elaborated earlier in figure 1.1, these levels of wealth are very strongly if not perfectly associated with authoritarian strength and confidence. Richer regimes tend to have better development track records and enjoy deeper wells of performance legitimacy that enhance their victory confidence, including greater poverty reduction and expansion in the size of the middle class to bolster their stability confidence.¹⁷

Table 1.1's vertical dimension thus broadly displays levels of strength as well as wealth. Herein lies a critical point to our argument: although authoritarian strength is a prerequisite for democracy through strength, levels of strength are not an explanation for which countries pursue it and which do not. Paradoxically, *democracy through strength is not explained by strength itself*; strong regimes do not necessarily democratize. Rather, the likelihood of a democracy-through-strength scenario unfolding is most efficiently explained by the developmental cluster in which the case built up its strength. Every single developmental statist and militarist case conceded democratizing reform, at least for a time; every single Britannia and socialist case has avoided democratic reforms, steadfastly refusing to concede.

Why do developmental clusters shape democratization patterns so profoundly, and even precisely? As we will detail below, it is because clusters help determine the kinds of *signals and strategies* that, when combined with strength itself, best determine whether a democracy-through-strength transition is likely to occur.¹⁸ Signals increase the likelihood of democratic reform when they convey either that sustaining authoritarianism is no panacea for whatever current governance ills face the regime (what we call “ominous signals”) or that calling free and fair elections should not usher in a disastrous result for authoritarian incumbents (what we call “reassuring signals”).

In the final analysis, democracy through strength is always a choice. More specifically, it is always a strategic choice made by incumbent authoritarian leaders contemplating the mix and balance of the strengths they have accumulated and possess versus the types and strength of signals they confront. It is not always the choice authoritarian leaders make, however, no matter how strong they might be.

Before laying out that entire argument in more detail, we define the key building blocks in our theory: democracy, strength, and confidence.

What Is Democracy?

Democracy is a form of government in which opposition parties and politicians are given the unimpeded opportunity to compete for popular support, and thus for power, in national elections. This is not all that democracy means, but democracy cannot exist without it. This book is squarely focused on the question of how authoritarian regimes that substantially impede their opponents from competing for popular support and national power come to remove those substantial impediments. In the fortuitous metaphor of Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way, democracy requires a level playing field.¹⁹ This book explores and explains why some authoritarian regimes level the playing field on which they compete with their opponents, while others do not.

There is a great deal to democratic development that this focus sets aside. A fully healthy democracy respects the rights of minorities, imposes constraints on the political executive and the state's coercive organizations, fosters widespread political participation, allows significant transparency into the inner workings of government, and minimizes the outsize influence that the very wealthiest citizens tend to have over the electoral process. Nothing in our book explains why some countries fare better on these vitally important democratic virtues than others. As long as authoritarian regimes concede free and fair elections and respect the outcome of those elections, they have made a substantial democratic concession, even if they still fall very far short of establishing a high-quality democracy, with all that it entails.

Although merely leveling the playing field may seem like a modest change, it nonetheless requires substantive and substantial transformation of the political system and its rules of the game. Leveling the playing field is not trivial. Of particular importance are the liberties that must precede and accompany a free and fair electoral process. Political parties must be freely allowed to form, mobilize, and communicate; the press must be free from censorship; voters must be able to make choices on the basis of free-flowing information rather than coercion and intimidation. When elected governments fail to meet these standards, we tend to call them "electoral authoritarian," and thus no longer even minimally democratic.²⁰

Of less importance in our analysis are the liberties that we hope and believe must follow democratic elections. Chief executives may run roughshod over

parliament; the police may be given license to kill suspected criminals without due process; ethnic majorities might physically attack religious minorities with impunity and without government intervention; and so on. Tellingly, such acts tend to be described as “illiberal democracy.” As awful as these government actions and inactions may be, they do not mean that a country has lost its core democratic substance: the unimpeded opportunity for people outside government to compete in democratic elections for power inside government.²¹

In sum, electoral competition without substantial impediments may not be the most important or desirable aspect of democracy. But it is a central aspect of democracy, and it is the one we focus on in this book. As a democratic achievement, it is significant enough to be worthy of explanation.

What Is Strength?

Having offered our approach to the question of democracy, how do we approach the question of authoritarian strength? Authoritarian strength in our framework is primarily absolute rather than relative. In other words, *an incumbent authoritarian regime’s strength does not automatically decline as opposition strength increases*. A stronger opposition means pressures on an authoritarian regime are on the rise. Yet it tells us nothing about how much strength the regime has, and has accumulated over decades of development, to confront that rising challenge. In fact, activists who oppose authoritarianism may come to support the “authoritarian successor party” after democratization because of its developmental track record, and hence its appeal to voters who wish to see the decades of development continue.²² This is demonstrated most clearly in the case of Taiwan’s Kuomintang.

The strength of any authoritarian regime is a moving and difficult target to measure. We focus on the institutions and coalitions that underpin the regime over time. Institutions are the heart of authoritarian strength. By this, we primarily mean organizations rather than rules. Rules matter less under autocracy than under democracy since it is easier for an authoritarian leadership than a democratic government to change them on the fly. Yet political organizations often endure in authoritarian settings, and dominate.²³ For instance, the “rule” in China that presidents could only serve two terms had for decades been considered a cornerstone of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) regime’s institutionalization. Xi Jinping had this “institution” discarded in 2018, allowing him to rule in perpetuity—at least in principle. His rule can only continue

so long as he leads the CCP itself. In the past, in the present, and for the foreseeable future, the CCP is the most important institution in China.

The essence of institutions is that they structure political interactions over time, such that even when the current generation of leaders leaves the scene, we can expect established patterns of interaction and the lasting underpinnings of domination more or less to continue. In authoritarian settings, it is organizations more than rules that give the regime a sense of continuity and predictability over time. They are the locus of repeated interactions, even when authoritarian leaders alter the rules of interaction within and between these organizations dramatically. These authoritarian organizations range from incredibly strong to pathetically weak. In developmental Asia, they have tended to be exceptionally strong and capable, although the spectrum running from our strongest cases, such as Taiwan, Singapore, and Japan, to our weakest cases, such as Cambodia, Thailand, and Myanmar, is quite vast.

The most important organization in any authoritarian setting is the state apparatus.²⁴ While leaders and regimes come and go, the “iron cage” of the state—with its many bureaucratic agencies as the individual bars that uphold it—remains. When the state recruits its personnel in meritocratic ways, affords those personnel some measure of autonomy from day-to-day interference by political leadership, and invests those personnel with financial resources and organizational infrastructure necessary to implement national policy goals, the state is quite strong.

States with these characteristics have generally been dubbed Weberian or bureaucratic. By contrast, when state personnel are recruited on personalistic rather than meritocratic grounds and denied the autonomy, resources, and infrastructure necessary to govern society effectively, the state is weak. Such weak states are often described as patrimonial.

The developmental implications of state strength versus weakness are enormous. Only Weberian states can be developmental states, while patrimonial states more often deteriorate into predatory forms of rule. While real-world states typically combine bureaucratic and patrimonial features, exhibiting intermediate strength as a result, the distinction remains informative and analytically useful.²⁵

On average, developmental Asian states are more Weberian and less patrimonial than their contemporary counterparts across the postcolonial world. Yet the spectrum of bureaucratic strength across the region is expansively wide. Within the developmental statist cluster of Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan, bureaucracies have long been among the world’s very strongest and most

effective. China since the late 1970s also stands out within the developmental socialist cluster for the relative meritocracy, autonomy, and resourcefulness of its bureaucracy, at least compared with the other cases in the developmental socialist cluster, Vietnam and Cambodia. Bureaucratic strength is also remarkably high in Singapore, and compares favorably with its neighbor and fellow former British colony Malaysia, which has long combined Weberian and patrimonial features. Finally, in the developmental militarist cluster, Myanmar stands apart for the relative weakness of its bureaucratic organizations, while Thailand's bureaucracy, and specifically its economic bureaucracy, has a far more impressive history of capacity and autonomy. Indonesia lies somewhere in between, with an initial colonial legacy of a strong bureaucracy, followed by highly patrimonial patterns of authoritarian rule. State strength not only varies across countries but over time within countries as well.

States do not only rule populations through the bureaucracy, however. Especially in authoritarian settings, they also coerce them through the state's security apparatus, including policing organizations, intelligence bodies, and ultimately the military. Just as with bureaucratic organizations, strength for these coercive organizations depends on available resources and an expansively built infrastructure for rule. Yet it does not depend on Weberian characteristics. To the contrary, a police, intelligence, or military apparatus that enjoys substantial autonomy to ignore political pressures from above is not the kind of coercive machine an authoritarian leadership typically wants. Hence, when it comes to coercive organizations, authoritarian strength depends not so much on the Weberian characteristics that underpin a strong bureaucracy, as it hinges on the political cohesion of those who command and deploy force.²⁶

On this front, we see far less variation in the political cohesion of coercive organizations in developmental Asia's authoritarian regimes than we see in the Weberian capacity of their bureaucratic organizations. Virtually nowhere in developmental Asia has disloyalty or factionalism been a major impediment preventing authoritarian regimes from relying on their coercive organizations to stifle and repress dissent. Coercive sources of strength have been impressive almost entirely across the board.

This is a major reason why democratization has not unfolded in developmental Asia through authoritarian collapse. Autocrats in the region have not liberalized because they doubted their military and police's capacity to defend them against popular threats. They have done so because they had very good reason to expect the incumbent regime's most important political and economic organizations to endure and even flourish under newly democratic

conditions. When democracy is pursued from a position of strength, democracy offers bureaucracies, militaries, and police forces a new lease on life rather than sounding a death knell. Democratization can also prove perfectly consistent with the interests of the authoritarian regime's most important leaders and followers, as we now explore.

What Is Confidence?

For our argument, at the end of the day, *strength matters because confidence matters*. The two concepts are related but distinct. In some cases, an authoritarian regime might lack strength but be overconfident in its capacity to thrive after making democratic concessions. This accords with the argument that democratization is usually a miscalculation by autocrats who expect democracy to serve their interests better than it ultimately does.²⁷ Alternatively, a regime might possess imposing strength yet lack confidence that those strengths could readily transfer into continued dominance and stability under democracy. This is most evident in China and Singapore, strong states and dominant regimes that have steadfastly avoided democracy. Like a currency that must be converted before it is spent, strength must be translated into confidence if democracy through strength is to occur.

If authoritarian regimes are not confident that they can continue to thrive after democratization, they will not concede democracy from a position of strength. State strength as just discussed is especially important because it increases *stability confidence*: the expectation that democratic concessions will not undermine either political stability or economic development. Yet stability confidence is only half of our story. The other half is *victory confidence*. If stability confidence mostly comes from strong state organizations, because they can be expected to persist even if the regime type changes, where does victory confidence primarily come from? Our answer is strong authoritarian ruling parties, underpinned by broad support coalitions and impressive developmental track records.²⁸

At one level, the strength of any political party is a purely organizational matter. Like Weberian states, strong parties are professionalized organizations that draw clear boundaries between members and nonmembers, ascribing to members formal roles in which they are expected to follow predictable rules. Strong parties boast loyal members and experienced leaders. They are built as organizational pyramids, starting off broad at the bottom and gradually narrowing near the top, as loyal and competent cadres get rewarded with

promotions and outsiders are prevented from parachuting into the organization at high levels.

Yet a strong and confident authoritarian ruling party cannot be determined merely from an organizational chart. We need to look at a party's history of interactions, both within the party itself and between the party and society, to gauge its strength and likely confidence in a democratic concession scenario. One way party cadres can gain experience and exhibit loyalty in an authoritarian setting is by competing and prevailing in authoritarian elections. These are typically meaningful, if skewed, exercises. If a ruling party has an impressive history of winning elections that generally capture the will of the voters, it stands to reason the party should have more confidence that it can carry that popularity over to a fairer, democratic electoral arena. Competitive authoritarian elections provide an especially important gauge of a regime's incumbent strength and its victory confidence in democracy.

Strong ruling parties also gain internal coherence in large measure by promoting a consistent ideology that appeals across class and ethnic divides. They are not "cleavage" parties, attracting a specific segment of the electorate like a single economic class or an ethnic community, but "catch-all" parties, striving to generate support and popularity among the entire national body politic. In developmental Asia, they promise economic development as a means of expanding national strength, pragmatically leveraging state intervention and unleashing market forces as needed, rather than rigidly favoring one over the other. In other words, no ideology matters more than national development.

A history of economic development is a source of party strength. These strong, developmentally oriented authoritarian ruling parties are also often bound tightly together by a shared sense of historical heroism and purpose, frequently grounded in the experience of winning a revolution, expelling imperialists, or rebuilding peace and stability from the detritus of civil war. In China and Vietnam, in fact, long-ruling communist parties credibly claim historical credit for all three of these achievements.

Finally, and again resembling strong states, strong ruling parties construct an encompassing national infrastructure over time, at the most local levels and in the most remote corners of national territory. Strong parties are national parties. This party machinery can be converted and deployed in democratic electoral competition after authoritarian controls are lifted. Although democratic concessions always entail risks, the robustness of a built ruling-party infrastructure mitigates those risks. Individual party members might defect to other parties or run as independents under democracy; but the party is

virtually certain to live on as an authoritarian successor party when democracy is conceded by an authoritarian regime that is still strong.

To be the kind of strong organization that lends authoritarian elites victory confidence when contemplating democratic reforms, a ruling party must be strong on the outside as much as on the inside. In other words, it needs a dependable support coalition that is both wide enough to win national elections and tight enough to generate a loyal set of core voters and followers. To some degree, and in some cases more than others, this is a product of the consistent ideology mentioned earlier. Voters and followers, after all, are motivated by ideological appeals and historical mythology as much as, if not more than, party members themselves, who enjoy selective benefits from membership that nonmembers lack. However, strong party coalitions are also the result of lasting links between the party and social organizations like labor unions, business associations, peasant leagues, and religious communities. This societal infrastructure, standing alongside the internal infrastructure of the party itself, gives party leaders the capacity to mobilize a nationwide network of supporters, and the confidence that it can keep doing so after democratization.

These state, party, and coalitional strengths are the bedrock of victory confidence and stability confidence for authoritarian regimes. They are the strengths that make democracy through strength possible. But just because authoritarian leaders can reasonably expect to thrive under democracy does not fully explain why they actually ever preemptively democratize. Paradoxically, *any authoritarian regime strong enough to thrive under democracy is strong enough to retain its authoritarian power in the near term if it so chooses*. In the following section we offer an explanation for such choices, and why some strong authoritarian regimes concede democratic reforms while others—surely most, in fact—do not.

Why Democratize from Strength?

Our core argument in this book is that in developmental Asia, the modal path to democratization has been through strength. “Through strength” does not mean “because of strength,” however. Of the twelve cases we consider in developmental Asia, all of which have exhibited substantial authoritarian strength, exactly half have pursued democracy through strength at some time or another, and half have not.

The difference between the two halves is not their levels of authoritarian strength, as we demonstrated visually in figure 1.1. At first glance, the key

difference between those authoritarian regimes that democratized through strength and those that chose not to is simply the developmental cluster in which the country is located. The three developmental statist cases (Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan) and developmental militarist cases (Indonesia, Myanmar, and Thailand) have all conceded democracy from a position of strength. By contrast, the three developmental Britannia cases (Singapore, Malaysia, and Hong Kong) and three developmental socialist cases (China, Vietnam, and Cambodia) all have not. We call the first set of cases our six “concession cases” because they have at some point conceded democracy; we call the second set our six “avoidance cases” because we argue that they have at some point exhibited enough strength to concede democracy without conceding defeat, yet all have avoided taking the leap.

In the next chapter, we consider the variety of reasons why developmental clustering has shaped democratic clustering. At its core, our causal story is far simpler. Put most starkly, we argue that democracy through strength results from a combination of strengths, signals, and strategies.

Developmental clusters matter for democratization in many ways, as we will shortly detail. But they matter most significantly because of how they shape these three core ingredients in the causal recipe of democracy through strength. We have already discussed how economic development and the strong states, parties, and coalitions that tend to accompany it generate victory confidence and stability confidence. But these strengths alone, to reiterate, do not explain why some strong authoritarian regimes choose to preemptively democratize, while others do not. What shapes this fateful choice? To understand this variation, we turn our attention to signals and strategies.

As a matter of political survival, authoritarian regimes are constantly seeking and receiving signals of their shifting strength. By driving economic development and modernization, they generate new bases of support, but also new cleavages and citizen demands.²⁹ Thus, the common phrase “authoritarian status quo” is a misnomer. This is especially so in a region like developmental Asia, where authoritarian regimes’ dogged commitment to pursuing break-neck economic growth and development means that the background conditions against which regime maintenance takes place are flowing like rapids, not frozen like a glacier. Even for extremely strong authoritarian regimes, stability requires consistent adaptation to shifting signals, not “standing pat” to preserve some elusive and even illusory status quo. Even two of the most stable and seemingly durable authoritarian regimes in the world, China and Singapore, have evolved to look very different—and to offer their citizens far

more benefits in exchange for accepting authoritarian controls—from how they looked before the turn of the twenty-first century. Their adaptations reflect their changing societies, their evolving political economies, and the developmentally oriented states driving them.

We divide the kinds of signals authoritarian regimes can receive into four types: electoral, contentious, economic, and geopolitical. These signals vary in their clarity and strength. Harking back to our earlier distinction between enduring strengths and emerging pressures, what is critical to our argument is that these signals often (but do not always) assume the form of pressures on the regime to consider experimenting with democratic reforms.

Of the four, electoral signals are the *clearest* signals. When an electoral authoritarian regime experiences rising or falling electoral fortunes, it is as clear a signal of shifting regime strength as it can possibly receive. The second kind of signals, contentious signals, are the *strongest* signals. When thousands (and sometimes tens and hundreds of thousands) of citizens pour into the streets to demand the reform or even removal of an authoritarian regime, it is impossible for authoritarian leaders to ignore. We pay particularly close attention to electoral and contentious signals in our empirical chapters. They are the most vivid forms of opposition pressure to democratize that an authoritarian regime can confront.

The third and fourth types of signals, economic and geopolitical, tend to lack both the extreme clarity of electoral signals and the thundering strength of contentious signals. Yet they prove quite important in particular developmental clusters.³⁰ For instance, the geopolitical signal of shifting and waning American support was vital to democratic prospects in the developmental statist cluster. In Taiwan, Washington's decision to withdraw diplomatic recognition in favor of mainland China provided powerful pressure for new thinking by the Kuomintang on democratic reform. In South Korea, American diplomatic pressure became more strident during the spring and summer of 1987, changing the political calculations of Seoul's authoritarian elite and nudging them toward a concession strategy. In Japan, America's "reverse course" in its policy in 1947 signaled its support for conservative-led democratization. Analogously, economic signals have proved especially consequential in the developmental militarist cluster, particularly Indonesia, where the 1997–98 Asian financial crisis strongly signaled that the Suharto regime's days of rapid growth and social stability had evaporated.³¹

How do signals increase the chances that a strong regime will democratize through strength? Our causal logic is that signals must help shatter one of two

illusions: (1) that authoritarian repression is a panacea or (2) that democratization would be a disaster for the incumbent authoritarian regime. We call the first kind of signals *ominous* signals, and the second type *reassuring* signals.

Which kind of signal is more conducive to democratic reform depends on the strength of the regime. If the regime is extremely strong (e.g., Singapore), it is unlikely to reform unless it receives ominous signals. If the regime is only somewhat strong (e.g., Vietnam), it is more important for it to receive reassuring signals if it is to take the risk of democratic concessions. Returning to our theory's core moving parts: signals matter because they affect authoritarian regimes' stability confidence and victory confidence.

Democracy through strength becomes especially likely when a fortuitous mix of ominous and reassuring signals shifts relatively strong authoritarian regimes into what we call the "bittersweet spot."³² *This is the zone where an authoritarian regime expects neither that continuing or raising levels of repression will restore political stability nor that leveling the playing field with its opponents will lead to its imminent defeat.* When new signals—electoral, contentious, economic, or geopolitical—show that conditions have fundamentally changed, repression cannot look like a panacea, and democratization cannot look like a catastrophe, if democracy through strength is to emerge. Signals of shifting regime strength and support can neither be so reassuring that nothing *needs* to be done nor be so ominous that there is nothing *left* to be done.³³

This zone is "bitter" for authoritarian regimes because it always includes a significant dose of bad tidings. Ominous signals are indicating that there is no longer any restful and enduringly stable "authoritarian status quo." Something must be done. Yet it is still a "sweet spot" because it contains significant hope for the regime's democratic renewal. There is still something left to be done, for the polity in general and the incumbent ruling party specifically. Reassuring signals suggest democratization would mean a soft landing, not suicide.

If the incumbent regime fails to reform during this moment of opportunity, however, it could miss it entirely, hurtling through the bittersweet spot and weakening too far to pursue democracy through strength. This is exactly what happened in Malaysia, as we discuss at length in chapter 8. There, one of Asia's strongest authoritarian regimes as of the mid-1990s resisted democratization through strength in the wake of the Asian financial crisis. This commenced a two-decade decline that culminated in the ruling National Front's outright landslide defeat—despite its substantial remaining authoritarian controls—in the elections of 2018. Malaysia's authoritarian regime missed its window of opportunity to concede with strength.

Hurting through and missing the bittersweet spot has also been the fate of Cambodia. A regime popular and successfully developmental enough to have won free and fair elections in the first decade of the 2000s effectively overstayed its welcome by the 2010s. Hun Sen's Cambodian People's Party (CPP) now can only stay in power by shedding its electoral character, doubling down on authoritarian controls, and becoming effectively a single-party regime, mimicking its developmental socialist neighbors China and Vietnam.

The most dramatic instance of missing the bittersweet spot in developmental Asia has recently unfolded in Hong Kong. Ever since the island's handover from British to Chinese control in 1997, competitive elections delivered predictably strong results to conservative, pro-Beijing parties and candidates. Yet protests over the slowness and reversals of democratic reforms still erupted periodically, signaling the dangers to Hong Kong's ruling conservatives and their backers in Beijing of waiting too long to address local reform demands. In large measure because Hong Kong's fate is ultimately determined in China, however, democracy avoidance instead of democratic concessions remained the order of the day. By 2019, mass protests had exploded to a scale at which Hong Kong became ungovernable, and local elections produced a shocking, unprecedented victory for the anti-Beijing, democratic opposition. As in Cambodia and Malaysia, the foundations for victory and stability confidence that conservatives in Hong Kong enjoyed during the early 2000s had eroded by the end of the 2010s. By then, the local administration had hurtled through the bittersweet spot. Any remaining prospect of democratic experimentation had evaporated. "Candidate cases" had become "embittered cases."

The examples of Malaysia, Hong Kong, and Cambodia vividly illustrate a vital lesson of our argument: *democracy through strength always begins with strength, but it also always requires a choice—a choice that authoritarian leaders can simply refuse to make.* But this refusal comes with a risk of its own: the risk that a narrow window of opportunity to concede democracy in a stabilizing fashion may be frittered away. This is why we have to take the strategies of incumbent regime leaders seriously as the final link in the causal chain running from regime strength, which builds up over a long period of time, to democratic concessions through strength, which can be unveiled in virtually an instant.

There can be no possible single explanation for why some of the most powerful people in the world—authoritarian rulers in strong regimes—choose the strategies they do. Democracy through strength is never anything close to inevitable. Nor is it ever structurally foreclosed for strong rulers who

wish to pursue it, even when no ominous or reassuring signals arise to prompt it. We simply see democratic concessions as extraordinarily unlikely in the absence of the kind of signals we have described, and increasingly likely as such signals gain in strength and clarity.

In the end, it ultimately comes down to leaders' strategies. We argue that *it is primarily from new legitimation strategies that democracy through strength finally arises*. It is not crucial that a single leader have overwhelming decision-making power; although such power might well describe Taiwan's Chiang Ching-kuo, it most certainly did not apply to Indonesia's weak president B. J. Habibie. What does seem to be essential, however, is that leaders and their core followers come to perceive that old authoritarian legitimation formulas, such as economic performance alone, have run their course, and that preemptive democratization offers these power holders a new lease on political life.

As an observational matter, we can never be sure what leaders think. We can know, however, what they do and what they say. In politics, actions and words matter, especially when they are used to justify major changes of direction. In the chapters that follow, we expect to see democracy from strength commencing when leaders claim that "the end of an era" has been reached and that, having delivered development and stability to the nation, democratization will be the authoritarian regime's next great gift. When it comes to democracy through strength, the goal is not to exit the national stage and hand over power to a regime's opponents, but quite the opposite: to keep competing for power, and ideally continuing to win power outright, but to do so in a democracy rather than a dictatorship.

The Book to Follow

The primary goal of this introductory chapter has been to lay out our argument, including the concepts on which it is based and the geographical terrain on which it will play out.

Chapter 2 has much more to say about that terrain: developmental Asia and the four distinctive clusters it encompasses. Chapters 3–5 detail how developmental statism paved the way for an especially stabilizing form of democracy through strength in postwar Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea. Though all three cases demonstrate democracy through strength, we also highlight variations in strength among the incumbent regimes and how these shaped their respective democratic transitions.

Chapter 6 shows that China had not accumulated strengths comparable to those of its developmental statist neighbors in Northeast Asia by the time of the 1989 crisis in Tiananmen Square, leading to a crackdown from a position of weakness rather than concessions from a position of strength. Departing from the standard view that the CCP was *much stronger* than its socialist brethren in the Soviet bloc, and hence did not collapse, we show how the CCP as of 1989 was also *much weaker* than its neighbors in the developmental statist cluster of Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea, and hence could not confidently concede democracy from a position of strength. The CCP in 1989 was too strong to collapse, but not yet strong enough to concede democracy through strength.

Chapter 7 shifts our attention to the developmental militarist cluster of Indonesia, Thailand, and Myanmar. Here, more intermediate levels of developmental and authoritarian strength have yielded far shakier and reversible experiments with preemptive democratic reforms than in Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea. We turn our attention in chapter 8 to the developmental Britannia cluster of Singapore, Malaysia, and Hong Kong, where, puzzlingly for modernization theory, truly spectacular levels of economic development have been accompanied by democracy avoidance instead of democratic concessions. Chapter 9 returns our focus to China as the behemoth of the developmental socialist cluster, arguing that the CCP's impressive strength has not been accompanied by the requisite signals that democratic reforms are either pertinent or pressing enough to meet the growing governance challenges China faces. In other words, China today has the strength to stably concede democracy, but it lacks the signals. Vietnam and Cambodia persist with democracy avoidance within the developmental socialist cluster as well, as we more briefly detail.

We conclude the book with a wider theoretical discussion of the fraught relationship between democracy and stability. Democracy may not be the world's ultimate value, we readily concede, but it remains a universal value. Wherever democracy cannot solve problems of peace and prosperity, it will be eternally vulnerable. Clarifying the multiple ways in which democracy can prove compatible with political stability will be vital if democracy is to have a future equal to its past.

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