GRAPHIC 3
ALTERNATIVE FUTURES FOR INTERNATIONAL NORMS

Resurgent Democracies

How we got here: Advanced democracies see improved economic growth, social safety nets...authoritarian countries see increased political and economic instability.

Dominant normative focus: Governance, human rights, sustainability, transparency, nonproliferation.

Features and implications: Advanced democracies champion environmental sustainability and transparent governance...local push-back and capacity shortfalls experienced in other regions.

Competing Spheres

How we got here: Advanced democracies and authoritarians exert primacy in their respective spheres of influence...a large group of democracies rally around Western-origin norms.

Dominant normative focus: Sovereignty, emerging technology, development.

Features and implications: Deliberations become more zero-sum in key areas, adherence erodes, more competing arise on the same topic.

Bottom-up Normative Communities

How we got here: Constant gridlock and weakening of post-1990s-era norms.

Dominant normative focus: Environment, governance, individual empowerment, commerce.

Features and implications: Norms become more localized...ones that animate corporate, civil society, and local concerns galvanize energy and responses.

Authoritarians Expand Influence

How we got here: Democracies remain divided, China and its authoritarian partners are better coordinated on states’ rights and behave opportunistically.

Dominant normative focus: Sovereignty, information control, mercantilist international trade.

Features and implications: Further weakening of Western-origin norms, particularly on human rights, open commerce, and collective defense...authoritarians capture key institutions like the UN and regional organizations and exclude non-state actors.

How we got here: Authoritarians expand influence as they seek to undermine Western-origin norms and assert their own agenda internationally.