

## **Mobilization Chains under Communist Rule — Comparing Regime Transitions in China and Poland**

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### **Summary**

This paper examines the impact of societal mobilization on regime transitions from Communism in China (between 1949 and 1989) and Poland (between 1945 and 1989) respectively. One of the main theoretical arguments put forward by this article is that of a dynamic model of dialectical interactions between a mobilizing society and a nondemocratic regime. I argue that China and Poland share a unique political culture in the form of a mobilizing society that is able to generate meaningful resistance even under highly repressive conditions. The second puzzle addressed in this paper is why, given their similar domestic environments, the Polish regime collapsed in 1989 whereas the one in China — despite facing intense mobilization in the same year — was able to survive. These differences in transition outcomes will be explained by a number of independent variables: different modes of regime establishment (authentic revolutionary in China versus imposed in Poland), elite and opposition attitudes to democracy, regime cross-case learning, economic development, and the role of the religion.

**Keywords:** Regime transitions, societal challenge, post-Communism in Eastern Europe and China, social movements, authoritarianism

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