

## *When Authoritarianism Responds: Conditional Government Responsiveness in China's Environmental Conflicts\**

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### *Abstract*

Nongovernmental stakeholders are sometimes able to change policy outcomes under certain conditions in environmental conflicts in China, a circumstance contradictory to the theory of the policy process in authoritarian regimes that we describe as conditional government responsiveness. By applying qualitative comparative analysis (QCA), this article suggests stakeholders can use the same mechanisms to signal their preferences as in democracy. Nevertheless, as government accountability is upward under China's regional decentralized authoritarian (RDA) regime, policy change as a kind of government responsiveness is conditional, which distinguishes China from a democracy or a typical politically closed authoritarian state.

The theory of political survival suggests that the fundamental reason authoritarian regimes tend to respond less to social preferences in

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