

# A Three-Party Game of Institutional Resilience versus Transition: A Model and Comparative History of China-Japan Revisited

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## **Resumo/Abstract:**

In the late 19th and the early 20th century, China and Japan witnessed landmark institutional transitions. In both cases, thousand-years-old institutional arrangements came to an end, together with the collapse of the ruling regimes that had by themselves lasted for centuries. Yet, the post-transition experience of the two countries diverged. Japan went through a sequence of mostly peaceful reforms that transformed the country into a major power in the modern world; whereas China was plunged into a prolonged series of conflicts instead, which apparently failed to lift the country off the mud of underdevelopment. Combining a model of three-party game and a comparative narrative of these two historical episodes, this article explores the endogenous nature of institutional resilience versus transition to shed light both on how the ruling regimes managed to survive for long in both countries as well as on the divergent transitional experiences of these two nations. Our analysis highlights the role of state capacity, ideological differences among key players, and the inherent institutional capacities in either countries.