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The Occupy Movement in Hong Kong

Sustaining decentralized protest

Yongshun Cai



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The Occupy Movement in Hong Kong: Sustaining
Decentralized Protest (Routledge Contemporary China
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The Occupy movement in Hong Kong was sustained for approximately 80 days due to government tolerance, the presence of determined participants, and a weak leadership. In addition, sustained protest may not only result in more dramatic action, however they also bring about the diffusion of protests or result in significant policy adjustments. Unlike other social actions, such as the 1989 Tiananmen movement, the Occupy motion reached its peak of participation at the beginning, making it difficult to sustain the momentum. The presence of determined individuals who thought we would stay until the government responded was crucial to the sustaining of the movement. These self-selected individuals were caught in a dilemma between fruitless occupation and reluctance to retreat without a success. The motion lasted also because the poor leadership was struggling to force the government to concede or devise techniques for making a "graceful exit. Sustained protests are worth analysis because they not merely reveal the broad social context in which the protests occur and persist but also explain the dynamics of the escalation or the decline of the protests. This book develops a new framework to explain the sustaining of decentralized protest in the absence of strong movement organizations and leadership." As a result, site clearance became the common choice of both federal government and the protestors. The government tolerated the occupation because its preliminary use of force, in particular teargas, was counterproductive and provoked large-scale participation.



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