Failure Of Charisma: The Cultural Revolution In Wuhan

Shaoguang Wang


Failure of Charisma: The Cultural Revolution in Wuhan. Article. Jan 1997. Because Mao employed both bureaucratic and charismatic methods of mobilization, this movement offers an opportunity to compare the structural characteristics of the two and evaluate their distinctive capacities. Through a case study of the most prominent Cultural Revolution rebel organization, I demonstrate that the informal structure of charismatic mobilization gave the movement a rule-breaking power that made it highly effective in undermining bureaucratic authority. The Cultural Revolution, formally the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, was a sociopolitical movement in the People's Republic of China from 1966 until 1976. Launched by Mao Zedong, then Chairman of the Communist Party of China, its stated goal was to preserve Chinese Communism by purging remnants of capitalist and traditional elements from Chinese society, and to re-impose Mao Zedong Thought (known outside China as Maoism) as the dominant ideology in the Party. The Revolution marked Mao's return Original citation: Calhoun, Craig (1996) Book review: failure of charisma: the cultural revolution in Wuhan. by Wang Shaoguang. American journal of sociology, 102 (2). pp. 609-611. ISSN 0002-9602. American Journal of Sociology Wang focuses almost entirely on factional struggles in Wuhan, where he was a Red Guard and later a schoolteacher. His account is informed by a diary he kept in the early 1970s. It may also be informed by his own experiences as a movement participant, but he is not explicit about this and never reveals where he stood in relation to the events he describes (though he occasionally offers opinions on what he thinks were participants' real motives). Wang makes good use of documentary sources, some only recently available to researchers, and.