

"To the study of resistance, this superb book, is akin to the discovery of a major 'new species.' 'Rightful resistance' may well be the most significant form of popular protest in quasi-authoritarian systems. This closely-reasoned, broadly comparative and innovative book will inspire many new research programs in its wake." -James C. Scott, Yale University

"This slim volume is a little gem. After spending more than a decade researching rural protest in post-reform China, O'Brien and Li have masterfully synthesized their collaborative work in this elegantly written book. While providing substantive new material from recent surveys and interviews, as well as from research by various Chinese scholars, this book is first of all a theoretical contribution to the literature on social protest. As such, it should attract the attention of scholars both within and beyond the China field. . . In conclusion, the book defines rightful resistance with utmost clarity and rigor. The size of the volume is deceptive: this is a theoretical book, never overburdened with empirical evidence. But nonetheless there is evidence, succinctly recalled where necessary. The same holds for the innovative theoretical advances. Thoroughly familiar with the literature on popular protest, the authors succinctly mention relevant works, wasting no space on secondary digressions. This closely reasoned, clearly argued book is eminently suitable for teaching adoption in the fields of Chinese studies and political science." -Lucien Bianco, *China Quarterly*

"The book is a pleasure to read. Practically every step of the argument is solidly support by empirical data, either the authors' own interviews or material from a huge bulk of Chinese and Western scholarly literature on rural China, and practically every observation is interpreted in light of the general social science literature on popular movements, protest, resistance etc. and then used to question, expand, and revise general concepts and perceptions. In this sense, the book shows how the study of China can contribute social science theory, rather than just testing whether general concepts fit or do not fit the Chinese case. It is lucidly written, and will certainly be a landmark for future debates about Chinese rural politics." -Stig Thøgersen, *Copenhagen Journal of Asian Studies*

"By carefully explicating the concept of 'rightful resistance,' O'Brien and Li's book makes a significant contribution to the literature on contentious politics and the study of popular protest in China. Highly conversant with the theoretical literature and expertly synthesizing and marshaling hundreds of interviews, survey data and existing scholarly research, the end product is original, thorough and convincing. The book is also a clearly written and highly engaging read, not an insignificant achievement for such a dense conceptual study. . . . As befits such an accomplished conceptual study, the book provokes many further research questions and hypotheses and is essential reading for anyone interested in social protest in China and elsewhere." -Jonathan Sullivan, *Political Studies Review*

"In six short but dense chapters, *Rightful Resistance in Rural China* gives the concept its fullest development and provides a sweeping picture of rural contention in contemporary China. Yet above all, this book marks the authors' systematic and innovative effort to converse with scholars of collective action, and as such, may perhaps best be seen as their gift to sociology. Readers of this journal will delight in it." -Guobin Yang, *Mobilization*

"This brief but dense book...is remarkable in many respects....[*Rightful Resistance in Rural China*] marks a major contribution towards...understanding the dynamics at work in the relationship between state and society in China: it highlights the deep contradictions within the regime and the way in which these are exploited by the people. . . . This book can be highly recommended as a major contribution to political science that sheds new light on the relations between state and society in China and raises key questions regarding the evolution and mode of functioning of the regime." -Chloe Froissart, *China Perspectives*

"Studies of contemporary China move between two poles of presentation -- richly detailed analyses of phenomena that seem specific to China and more sweeping panoramas that leap to broad generalities without always marking their steps forward clearly. Kevin J. O'Brien and Lianjiang Li offer an insightful study of collective action in contemporary China that successfully steers a course between the typical extremes. Their work is solidly anchored in years of research in the Chinese countryside, where they have conducted interviews and administered surveys, and about which they have read government documents and the press. Their work also takes into account the growing amount of scholarship being produced by the Chinese themselves. And most helpful to their efforts of explaining Chinese cases to a broader audience, their analysis consistently engages the literature on collective action conceptualized principally out of studies of advanced industrial societies and the histories of those societies." -R. Bin Wong, *Perspectives on Politics*

"O'Brien and Li's work is path-breaking in many ways. *Rightful Resistance in Rural China* is very inspiring to read and will initiate many new research projects in years to come. The book is a must-read for any student interested in contemporary China or popular protest and contentious politics, and it is also recommended for scholars working on political participation and political change." -Maria Heimer, *China Information*

"Within existing limits, villagers through rightful resistance are asserting their rights and opening up channels of political participation that are slowly changing China's political scene at the grassroots. O'Brien and Li's path-breaking study reveals an aspect of Chinese political change that few have been aware of and few have foreseen." -Merle Goldman, *The Review of Politics*

"The themes covered in this book are encompassing, and they make meaningful theoretical contributions to how political opportunity structure influences movement emergence and process, why the repertoires of collective action evolve and expand, and what changes peasants' local politics give rise to. The book also provides lucid and rich empirical evidence about the episodes the authors collected in their fieldwork." - Doowon Suh, *Contemporary Sociology*

"This book is a major contribution to the growing literature on political development in China. It is focused and clearly written, and readers can easily follow where the engaging empirical examples fit into the literature and theoretical framework. I highly recommend it to scholars and students (graduates and undergraduates) who are interested in social movement theory and political protest in China, and its findings should appeal to many others both within and beyond the China field." -John James Kennedy, *Journal of Asian Studies*