

## Equality and Growth: Changes in the Composition and Distribution of Wealth in Rural China, 1946—1966



Monday, January 30, 2017

2:00 - 3:30 pm

W113 Seashore Hall

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This paper employs novel micro-data from mid-twentieth century China documenting rural household property from before Land Reform in the 1940s to the eve of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in the 1960s to explore the changing patterns of household wealth distribution due to Land Reform and Rural Collectivization. We present preliminary findings from a dataset of Four Cleanups (1964-1966) household registration forms containing over 6,700 households from 31 villages in Shanxi Province, which is the beginning of a more ambitious project begun by the Research Center for Chinese Social History (RCCSH) at Shanxi University and the Lee-Campbell Research Group at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) to collect and analyze these data on a larger scale. These data record detailed household property for four points in time: before and after land reform ca. 1950, at the time of forming advanced agricultural production cooperatives in 1956, and at the time the forms were recorded ca.1966. We first look at the overall composition of rural property and document how there was not only significant wealth creation during this period, but more importantly a qualitative shift from traditional agricultural property to more “modern” forms of wealth like consumer goods, wage incomes, and education. Then we examine the distribution of this new wealth and find significant inequalities both between and within village communities. We suggest that rural China’s emergent collective economy can be characterized by both growing equality – in the distribution of traditional property, and unequal growth – in new forms of wealth.

This talk is part of the **Inequality Seminar** which is a seminar and speaker series that provides a forum on campus for faculty and graduate students who are interested in inequality broadly defined. It is an opportunity for faculty and graduate students to present their research and to hear about other inequality-related work from researchers on the off-campus. These talks are free and open to the public. For more information about the Inequality Seminar, contact Professor Sarah Bruch at [sarah-bruch@uiowa.edu](mailto:sarah-bruch@uiowa.edu).

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