

observe about Wan Li: “at no point did he present household contracting as *the* policy direction for the countryside” (101). Nor did Deng Xiaoping play a decisive role; instead, he paid less attention to rural policies and quietly relied on his protégés.

A result was that provincial leaders had to figure out how to proceed. They were reluctant to be out of step with the Party line, but as Sun and Teiwes put it, “in the provinces, on the crucial issue of household farming the problem was not siding with one presumed faction or another in Beijing, but rather the ambiguity of policy coming out of the Party Center” (273). Consequently, different provinces undertook somewhat different policies, and household farming was implemented spottily as policy in some: “as the relaxation of policy gathered apace under the new Deng leadership, the acceptable scope of what qualified as backward areas where household farming could be accepted was contested, but it nevertheless was expanded” (286). This was largely a top-down exercise, not a bottom-up upsurge. But as household farming was adopted by one provincial region after another, there were significant increases in agricultural production in 1982–83, and this validated and imbedded the new farming practices.

In sum, a complex and unplanned interplay between the top leadership and provincial and subprovincial levels of the bureaucratic structure, involving ambiguous directives from reformers at the top who were hesitantly open to household farming and ongoing pressures among provincial and subprovincial officials to react, gradually culminated in the countryside’s near-total abandonment of agricultural collectives. There had been no master plan, no deliberate effort from above to steer all of rural China uniformly down a single path. Yet, due to the nature of Chinese political organization and practices, that is precisely what occurred. Over the course of a four-year period all of rural China was launched into an entirely new agrarian order. It was an extraordinary turning point in PRC history. Teiwes and Sun capture this well, showing the important cumulative details of incremental shifts while never losing sight of the broader scenario. The authors deserve applause.

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Negotiating Rural Land Ownership in Southwest China: State, Village, Family, by Yi Wu. Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2016. xvii+282 pp. US\$65.00 (cloth).

This ethnographic study describes how China’s national and local governments, administrative villages, natural villages, and households have interacted to delimit and exercise rights to land from the 1950s up to the present day in Fuyuan County,

Yunnan. Yi Wu invokes Harold Demsetz's notion of a bundle to show how rights to use, derive income from, and transfer land are divided among these jurisdictions (12). Wu introduces the concept of bounded collectivism to highlight the distinctive "roles played by natural villages and rural families" (221). She defines this concept in terms of four features: collective ownership, egalitarianism, state domination, and a natural village's boundedness, including both geography and membership (61–65). The natural village in Fuyuan aligns with the former production team/current villagers' small group and is also referred to locally as a *zhaizi*, literally "a village protected by a line of strong posts" (23).

The book's focus on the boundedness of the natural village, particularly its discussion of membership criteria and attention to the importance of the family over the individual, is an overall strength of Wu's ethnography. Yet, as a central organizing concept of the book, Wu could have provided stronger empirical grounding for the four defining features of bounded collectivism. With respect to membership, Fuyuan has a mix of single-surname and multi-surname natural villages (25), but it is not clear what role—beyond defense of lineage graveyards (34ff.)—lineage or surname plays in the leadership of the small group or in the ongoing management of its land resources. She writes that "politics within villagers' groups tend to follow nonofficial mechanisms such as lineage, marriage, sworn brotherhood, religion, and so on" (67–68). Small-group leaders are elected (78), but there is no description of the electoral process, who is eligible to vote, who actually casts votes, who wins, or other indicators of membership and participation in the community.

While egalitarianism within natural villages was evident in Fuyuan in the Maoist era and in the implementation of the household responsibility system in the 1980s, that defining feature of bounded collectivism seems to have disappeared over time. Despite changes in household size and labor composition, no major land reallocations have taken place in Fuyuan since the initiation of household farming (97); Wu contrasts Fuyuan's situation with other regions of China where "farmers' preference for egalitarian land-holding" is manifested by ongoing reallocations of land (98). "Similarly, within a villagers' group/*zhaizi*, not all households were allocated equal tobacco quotas" (168). Relatedly, it is not clear whether egalitarian principles govern the distribution of compensation within the natural village when land is requisitioned by authorities. Thus, the question arises whether egalitarianism is indeed a defining feature of bounded collectivism in Fuyuan.

Finally, the feature of state domination is ambiguous. According to Wu, "what is most striking is the tenacity of local communities to assert rights, including land ownership rights within historically sanctioned borders of the *zhaizi*" (64). At the same time, however, farmers in Fuyuan lack the right to decide whether to plant tobacco or to fully control income from the planting of tobacco (176). In the context of land takings, "all levels of administration . . . are mobilized to enforce the land requisition . . . group leaders will assist the local government" (215). In light

of this, in what sense have villagers' groups "been vested with certain exclusive land rights, due to the legacy of bounded collectivism" (228)?

The study's organization and approach to ethnography make it difficult to bring alive the struggle to control land. The book addresses the family, the village, and the government in separate chapters. Wu traces "three Fuyuan *zhaizi*" (41–42, 227), but references to these three communities fade out and do not appear in most chapters, which rely heavily on the secondary literature. This approach leaves open many questions that an ethnography is well poised to examine. How did political pressure to plant particular cash crops (127, 177–80) affect real families in these three communities? What happened to real families affected by land requisitions? Who decided to acquiesce in or protest such requisitions, why, and what outcomes did they experience? The discussion of land requisitions (196ff.) relies on cases reported in the secondary literature in Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Henan, Guangdong, and Shaanxi, along with H and X Townships of Fuyuan; it is not clear how H and X Townships relate to the three *zhaizi*, which are not mentioned in this context. With respect to village and small-group cadres, what are the advantages and disadvantages of serving in leadership positions in the context of government-mandated tobacco production or land requisitions? What was the relationship between government and village cadres? Were the same village and small-group cadres in power throughout the decade or more of ethnographic research?

Finally, the study introduces some underdocumented claims about land rights. The study refers without citation to the decision following the Third Plenum of the Seventeenth Central Committee in 2008 to assert that rural households' land contracts "were renewed for the third time for another seventy years" (231; also 10, 15, 93–94). Neither the text of the 2008 decision (中共中央关于推进农村改革发展若干重大问题的决定) nor contemporary land-use certificates (农村土地承包经营权证) reflects seventy-year use rights for arable land. Is Fuyuan a special experimental site in this regard? Although land titling had not taken place in Fuyuan during the period under study, Wu writes that "with formal land certificates, farmers can better defend their land use rights in many circumstances" (10), and certificates will "make land requisition by various levels of government difficult" (75). How does Wu know the effect of land titling? In her conclusion, she writes: "I believe that land property relations among natural villages in Fuyuan represent those in most rural areas in south China and bounded collectivism has formed in most rural areas in south China" (229). What is the basis for generalizing from research conducted in a single county in Yunnan to a large, diverse region? Despite these questions, the study's focus on contestation over land among the household, small group, village, and government is a vital one.

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