

# STRATEGIES FOR AGRICULTURAL COOPERATION IN CONTEMPORARY CHINA

by

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## Abstract

A movement is emerging in rural China for a new type of cooperation that is more oriented toward democratic participation. Analytically distinguishing these cooperatives is important for the evaluation of their success as economic enterprises and their role in building a more democratic China. We identify them as community-based cooperatives, as opposed to other types of cooperatives that tend to be grounded in private (“dragon head”) enterprises or Party/State programs. The absence of reliable, consistent data at the national level makes comparative analysis difficult across this diverse nation. Hence, most of the work on Chinese cooperatives tends to be provincial-level case studies. We propose a set of criteria to guide these case studies toward comparative analysis in several dimensions: specialization, organizational structure, substance, geographic scope, the role of elites, and farmer/member differentiation. We briefly examine data in a case study of Shaanxi Province in terms of these variables.

**Keywords:** agricultural cooperation, community-based cooperatives, Chinese agriculture