

[CFP: Panel for AHA Annual Meeting 2022, Regulating daily leisure and entertainment activities in the twentieth-century](#)

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Hi all,

I am putting together a panel that investigates how political regimes tried to shape its people's identities and build its political legitimacy by organizing and regulating daily leisure and entertainment activities. Papers in this panel would demonstrate an earnest top-down expectation to mix education and entertainment in such activities/cultural institutions. More importantly, they would examine how local people simultaneously reacted to and interacted with such initiatives. Last, going beyond discovering diversified life experiences on the ground, all papers would draw connections between individuals' lived experience and broader issues of contemporary relevance.

This panel formulates popular entertainment as total social phenomena, so that research in political propaganda, habit and custom, aesthetics, popular religion, local economics, etc. could easily find connections to this theme. Collectively, I hope this panel on the multi-functional totality of popular entertainment could open up an expansive window on local societies in the twentieth-century.

My own paper explores how the Chinese Communist Party cultivated qualified collective members and re-defined rural culture by tracing the practices of the rural club in Shanxi province from 1956 to 1966. It also traces the continuously local resistance to assuming a collective identity. At the same time, it also describes a vigorous traditional culture in rural areas, nurtured by both peasants and local cadres. What the party-state sought to erase was widely shared and deeply rooted in local society, and explains why the Party's efforts in promoting the rural club ultimately failed. It also foreshadows an immediate revival of traditional rural culture during the post-collective period.

Please contact Yi Ren at yiren@sas.upenn.edu if interests. Any suggestion or advice is welcomed!

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