

PLRG-CALS SEMINAR

How China Escaped the Poverty Trap: The Co-evolution of Diversity in Property and Economic Development

Professor Xu Ting, University of Essex

Associate Professor Christian Hofmann, NUS Law (Moderator)

Monday 25 October 2021, 6.00pm to 7.30pm (SGT) / 11.00am to 12.30pm (UK)

This paper examines one of the most important factors contributing to China's escape from the poverty trap by looking at how diversity in property and economic development co-evolved from the late 1970s to the 1990s. It brings Darwinian ideas into the arena of studying the co-evolution of institutions and economic development, developing insights from evolutionary economics, especially those of Veblen and Schumpeter, in the context of property regime transformation in China. The paper offers a nuanced approach to studying the co-evolution of diversity in property and economic development, which contains key mechanisms, including variation (diversity), inheritance, and selective adaptation as well as innovation and emulation. This approach also extends the conception of the market as an intellectual ground to test different ideas and experiments. Institutions that build this kind of market are not necessarily 'good institutions' in the neo-liberal sense. An analysis of China's long-term property regime transformation from the seventeenth century to the late 1990s has demonstrated that economic activities and diverse property institutions co-evolved with occasional institutional innovations underpinning upswings in (Schumpeterian) economic development.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER



XU Ting is Professor of Law at the University of Essex. She graduated with an LLB from Sun Yat-sen University and then gained her LLM (with Distinction) and PhD from the London School of Economics. Professor Xu is the author of *The Revival of Private Property and Its Limits in Post-Mao China* (Wildy, Simmonds and Hill Publishing, 2014), and co-editor of *Property and Human Rights in a Global Context* (edited with Jean Allain, Hart Publishing, 2015) and *Legal Strategies for the Development and Protection of Communal Property*, Proceedings of the British Academy, vol. 216 (edited with Alison Clarke, Oxford University Press, 2018). Her research interests are situated in the fields of property law; comparative property law; Chinese law; law, governance and development; property and human rights; socio-legal studies; comparative law; and political economy.

Participation by invitation

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