Food security has been an essential component of the various socioeconomic development strategies followed by the People’s Republic of China for nearly 50 years. But what began as self-sufficiency in grains within the rural village space, in the context of a closed economy with almost total isolation from the rest of the world evolved into a combination of policies for agriculture tending towards the preservation of national independence in the provision of basic foods, now with a broad opening to the rest of the world and a certain degree of exploitation of regional comparative advantages. The challenge for China is to preserve its food security without recurring to the earlier fanatical policies of self-sufficiency, which had economic and social costs that left their mark in terms of growing inequality between the rural and urban sectors.

Keywords
China, food security, self-sufficiency, grains, rural-urban inequality.