

Reflections on Attempts to Search for a Common Strategy for Rural Revitalisation in a Diversified World

Professor Lam Kin-Che, Adjunct Professor at The Chinese University of Hong Kong; Chairperson of Vetting Subcommittee of the HKSAR Government's Countryside Conservation Funding Scheme

Rural revitalisation is a multi-stakeholder and multi-objective process which calls for a unified goal, a common strategy and concerted efforts. However, the process is often complicated by dichotomies in the natural vs cultural environment, the past legacy vs the future as well as the competing priorities of urban vs the countryside; particularly in the absence of an institution that facilitates collaborative efforts. With reference to experience in Hong Kong, this presentation explores and reflects on the successes and limitations of previous attempts to resolve these dichotomies through top-down and bottom-up approaches, unicentric and polycentric decision-making mechanisms, and government-led and community-based initiatives. It is argued that the ultimate yardsticks for assessing the efficacy of these approaches are sustainability and resilience. The key question is how to build a collaborative institution which can unleash untapped capabilities, orchestrate efforts and envision a sustainable future.