



*Narrative of governing emigration: A case study in Hong Kong*

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Policy narratives render legitimacy for the government to implement certain policies. They also provide it with justification for the consequences of the policies it has implemented. Sometimes, government narratives can be seen as a means of influencing interpretations of unfolding events. Such efforts are important for governments, as how events are interpreted shapes the formation of the collective memory in the future, which serves for the evaluation of governance. This talk's analysis focuses on discussions by the general public and the government's narrative on emigration from Hong Kong in the past two years during the COVID-19 pandemic. The general discussion usually suggests that the emigration wave is related to the large-scale social unrest in 2019 and the perceived societal changes that followed. This discussion shows that, in contrast, the government frames the current emigration wave with alternative explanations of how it has occurred. The key point of the government's narrative is to dissociate the emigration wave from past events of social unrest. It emphasizes that the increase in emigration from Hong Kong is a result of widespread rollouts of COVID-19 vaccinations in the world, which have promoted travel and the gradual reopening of borders with many countries since last year.