

Public Lecture on 50 Years of Growth of Organised Global Research on the Nonprofit Sector, Civil Society, NPOs, and Volunteering: Voluntaristics

The new term voluntaristics refers to the global, interdisciplinary field and emerging academic discipline focused on the study of voluntary action, civil society, the nonprofit sector, third sector, voluntary sector, charitable/charity sector, philanthropy and giving, nonprofit organisations (NPOs), nongovernmental organisations (NGO), voluntary associations, volunteer service programs, foundations, etc. Socio-behavioral science disciplines started to focus on such phenomena mainly in the early 20th century and thereafter. The field has been growing exponentially since about 1995 in terms of researcher associations, journals, research centres, sections of existing discipline and professional associations, journal articles, books, dissertations, university courses, and even university programs and a few departments and schools/colleges within universities. Illustrated with examples of all of these, this public lecture is to outline and examine this phenomenal development, and discuss why this global field growth has occurred.

Based on global research, Professor Smith will also discuss briefly (a) how to encourage growth of the nonprofit sector in Hong Kong and more generally, and (b) how to stimulate growth of voluntaristics/civil society/nonprofit sector research in Hong Kong and more broadly.