Setting the Poverty Line: Policy Implications for Squaring the Welfare Circle in Hong Kong

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Abstract
This paper aims to discuss how to properly use the income-based poverty lines to evaluate poor populations and the impact of the government’s policy interventions for alleviating poverty in Hong Kong. It argues that the crucial way to analyse poverty is by using the “pre-intervention” and “post-intervention” income levels as reference points. Once the post-intervention line is accepted by the public to measure the incidence of poverty in Hong Kong, it will enhance our understanding of the cost-effectiveness of the amount of money spent on poverty-related measures, and, in return, make it easier to convince the general public with regard to the financial resources that should be allocated for welfare benefits and services, particularly with regard to the “squaring the welfare circle” dilemma.

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