

THE ROLE OF RESEARCH IN REVITALIZING RURAL AREAS:

Global and Chinese
Perspectives

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Beijing, China | June 25, 2018



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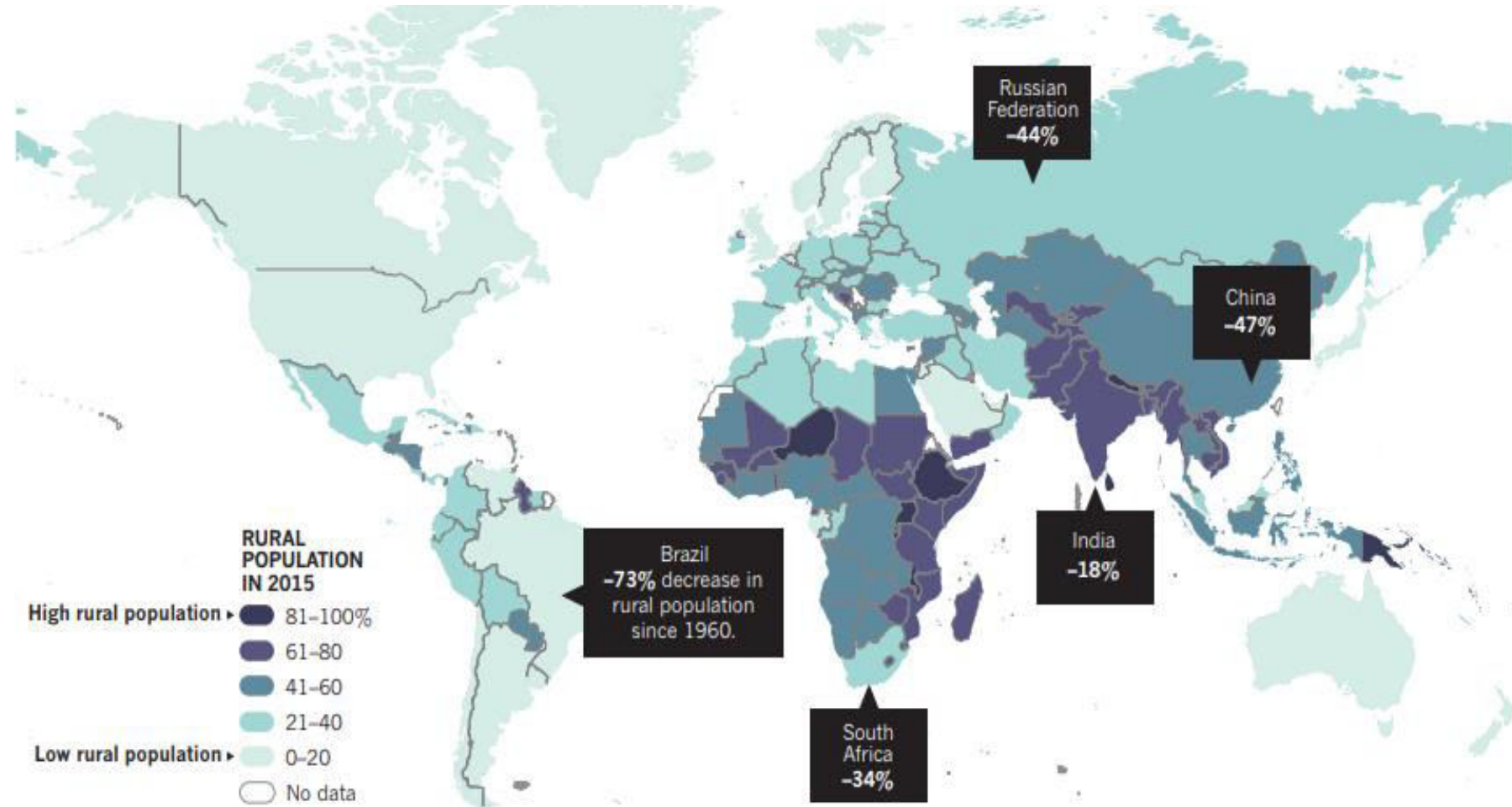
Outline

- ▣ Rural revitalization presents important opportunities
- ▣ China's rural development policy led to great progress, but challenges remain
- ▣ Global experiences provide lessons for an integrated approach to rural revitalization
- ▣ Key research issues need to be addressed for rural revitalization

Why rural revitalization at this time?

Rural areas are facing major challenges associated with poverty, hunger, malnutrition demographic shifts (e.g. aging, migration) and environmental degradation

World rural populations, 2015



Opportunities for rural revitalization are ahead

- **Key opportunities to revitalize rural areas**
 - Technological advances for rural connectivity
 - Growing markets in urban areas
- **Rural revitalization can help balance major economies by generating demand within the country and reducing reliance on exports to other countries**
- **Key issues to consider will include:**
 - Employment and livelihoods
 - Environmental sustainability
 - Territorial development connecting rural areas with intermediate cities/towns and large urban areas
 - Infrastructure and connectivity
 - Rural services

A group of women in a rural setting, carrying water jugs on their heads, walking across a field. The scene is set against a backdrop of trees and a clear sky. The foreground shows a body of water with reeds. The text is overlaid on the image in a white box.

**Global experiences provide
lessons for an integrated approach
to rural revitalization**

Improving living conditions of rural areas

- **Korea's New Village Movement**

- Improves infrastructure in rural area, bringing modernized facilities such as irrigation systems, bridges and roads in rural communities

(Korean Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry 2012)

- Empowers villages, highlighting importance of self-governance and cooperation



- **Revitalizing rural areas in Japan**

- Rural-urban linkages are key in addition to rural infrastructure projects and direct payments

- Mandatory Social Long-Term Care Insurance provides services to seniors based on physical and mental status (Muramatsu and Akiyama 2011)



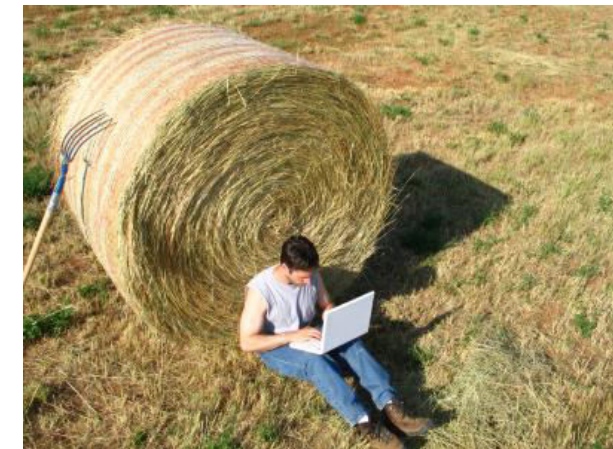
Converting subsidies to rural development support

- **Shifted product/price support to income support and direct payments (1st Pillar)**
 - Further reforms linked payments to food safety, environmental protection, and sustainable agriculture
- **Set up special fund to support rural areas (2nd Pillar)**
- **New policies introduce better targeted, more equitable safety net and strengthened rural development**
 - E.g. Green direct payments rewarding farmers for eco-friendly practices, support for investments beneficial to the environment and climate



Keeping rural towns connected

- **Rural economic sectors increasingly capital-intensive, leading to fewer jobs and skills mismatch**
 - Lack of investment in infrastructure, limited access to finance, training, and education, rural youth/brain drain
- **Identifying issues with Rural Prosperity Task Force and proposing new investments**
 - US \$1.5 trillion investment package, including broadband connectivity for rural areas
- **New technologies and work modalities can revitalize rural areas**
 - E-commerce, telework offer business and development opportunities



Developing niche products and empowering rural areas

- **Promoting accessible, rural-based initiatives to reduce poverty, e.g.**
 - Organic rice farming, handicraft production, and rural tourism
- **One Tambon One Product (OTOP)**
 - Government initiative to spark local product and provide alternative incomes for poor farmers
- **Community Work Accreditation Scheme (CWAS)**
 - Decentralizes decision making and supports sustainable agriculture by building local capacity to develop development projects
- **AND continued support to vulnerable communities through, e.g. village health volunteers**



A photograph of a lush green field of grain crops, likely sorghum, under a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds. The text is overlaid on the image within a white rectangular border.

**Key research issues need to be
addressed for rural revitalization**

How to promote interface between rural development, agriculture, and environment?

- **Highlight evidence-based techs for health and the environment**
 - Yield enhancing technologies (e.g. Remote sensing, precision agriculture)
 - Improved, climate-resilient varieties (e.g. New Rice for Africa “NERICA”)
 - Nutrition-driven and nutrition-sensitive technologies (e.g. Biofortification)
- **Scale up new multiple-win technologies**
 - Alternative proteins to reduce GHGs, environmental impact, health risks
 - Big data and analytics to lower transaction costs, improve monitoring
 - Blockchain-enabled traceability
- **Support farmer-led innovations**
 - E.g. planting basins to conserve water and improve food safety



Photos: Ageitec, IRRI, WEF

Need to consider impact on smallholders, children's nutrition, jobs, etc.

How to improve rural services and employment?

- **Improvements to rural services are key to better living standards**
 - Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand's rural investment in public health and education improved life expectancy and infant survival rates
 - Small cities and towns could act as bridges to bring education, health, information and administrative services to remote villages
- **Invest in rural areas for more attractive recreation and leisure**
 - Promote recreation and cultural industries, including tourism
 - E.g. Swedish rural municipalities since 1980s relaxed regulations for building along lakes to attract more rural residents
- **Enhance agricultural and rural non-farm service sectors**
 - Rural non-farm sectors contribute to economic growth, household income diversification, rural employment, and poverty alleviation

How to enhance agricultural and rural engineering?

- **Strengthen rural-urban linkages**
 - Improve policy coordination between rural and urban areas
 - Support efficient and inclusive rural-urban value chains
 - Leverage towns and intermediate cities to facilitate socio-economic links
- **Promote ICTs to improve value chains**
 - Mobile phones, internet tracking for better accuracy, comprehensiveness
 - E.g. China's G20 initiative: E-commerce connects rural farmers with supply and demand information on agricultural produce and materials, and consumer products
- **Improve rural housing to be inclusive, affordable, and adequate**
 - New Urban Agenda highlights integrated housing policies spanning continuum of rural to urban areas



How to improve institutions and local governance?

- **Support development and co-existence of different farming models**
 - Include cooperatives and family farms for efficiency-building competition
 - Support institutional arrangements to promote mechanization e.g. cooperatives
 - Improve extension activities for left-behind farmers
- **Promote efficient, well-functioning land rental markets**
 - Solid legal framework for resource allocation promotes natural resource preservation (Ringler and Nkonya 2012)
- **Integrate agriculture and rural development strategy, policy, and investment**
 - E.g. Changing Ministry of Agriculture to **Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs**— including at provincial and county levels
- **Promote participatory local governance – bottom-up approach**
 - E.g. Xiaoguan village in China and Åre in Sweden demonstrated success of strong voice of local committees or stakeholders in implementing revitalization initiatives (Li et al. 2016)



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2018

**Beijing Launch, 18:00-21:00,
June 26**

**Multi-functional Room, 2nd floor
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