

Planning Informalities in Chinese Cities: a Gamification Approach to the Adoption of Innovative Land Value Capture Strategies

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SUMMARY

Partly as a response to the current transitional context, many Chinese cities make use of innovative, but informal land value capture instruments to meet the demand of public infrastructure, finding ways to bypass formal procedures underlying processes of land leasing. Informality has become an effective strategy by public sectors in China to deal effectively with changing situations (Webster et al., 2016). However, several issues have come up in these practices of informality. The most significant problems involve the risk of abuse and the decreasing credibility of formal institutions, which challenge local governance and development (Kreibich, 2012; Roy, 2012; Varley, 2013). In addition, Roy (2015) critically argues that the state utilizes urban informality as an instrument of both accumulation and authority. Nonetheless, Kreibich (2012) explains that informality might be the symbol of public authorities' inability to regulate and guide rapid urban growth, and the gap left has to be filled by informal institutions. Therefore, it is important to identify the origin and effect of informality in order to figure out possible ways to cope with these challenges.

In this paper we attempt to contribute to the understanding of informality in planning processes in Chinese cities, by focusing on the implementation of innovative land value capture instruments to TOD. We use a gamification approach to analyze in a game simulation carried out for a case study in Shenzhen how two of these informal value capture instruments – inclusive land leasing and land readjustment – can be used to contribute to more effective planning practices.

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