The evolving regulations of illegal housing in urban renewal practice: case study of Y project in Shenzhen

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by

ZHANG Xukun
Department of Public Policy
City University of Hong Kong
PhD Student

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Informal housing is a popular feature in developing countries and key to our understanding of what the housing system works in such countries. This is no exception in China, a country that takes tight control of urban land use as an important instrument in developing the urban economic. Chengzhongcun (urban villages) are urban enclaves that extensively exists in the most developed cities in China that falls out of planning and development control of the urban system. It is the important role such urban villages play in solving the housing need of urban migrants are they widely tolerated. Traditional lines of studying the urban village appears to be inadequate in understanding the dynamics of its continual existence and particularly on how governmental regulations on their demolition and redevelopment are formulated and implemented. Building on the critical perspective of informality, this paper will explore the evolving of the regulation of Chengzhongcun in Shenzhen, the wealthiest city in China. Through the lens of “informality”, the flux boundary between the legal and illegal, formal and informal will be examined.

This paper will first take a historical overview of regulations of illegal housing in Shenzhen city and present the policy framework. Analysis of the policies and government roles in Shenzhen was examined systematically. Followed by an analysis of a detailed case study of Y village renewal project to illustrate how negotiations between government and villagers over ratio of demolition and compensation based on the legality of housing and property rights have shapes the regulations enforcement and compliance.

Enquiries: Cris TSAI
Email: pol.phdprog@cityu.edu.hk
(Free admission)

All are welcome!