

Informal housing in China: the main forms and how the government responded to

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Over the past two decades, China's urban population has increased from 230 million to 550 million. Urban land is not enough, at the same time the city government sold the land to obtain funding, these reasons make the city housing price is too high for many people to afford, thus came out the demands of informal housing. Unlike any other developing countries, there are almost no slums in the cities of China, This phenomenon related to China's population management system, land system and urban management system. In China's cities, the informal housing exists in the form of work shed and shanty down, and in rural areas, the farmers illegally occupied land to build house for sale or illegally sale their homestead to build house, these kind of house is called limited property house. All of these informal housing has brought great difficulty to land management, in addition, the living conditions of the informal housing residents have aroused public concern, both the central and city government has taken measures to solve the problem.

Based on the above background, the paper uses literature research and case study research method, analysis the cause of China's informal housing first, and then from five cities of typical cases, explains China's informal housing phenomenon and the different policies of the city government.

The paper reviews China's urbanization process and how the people flowed from their hometown to another area, analyzes China's household registration system, housing system and land management system, points out that the reason for China almost has no slums in the cites is the restrictions on the household registration system of the rural population into the city and the urban land system that the urban land is

state-owned. Migrant workers who engaged in the construction industry living in container housing provided by the employers, migrant workers who has other profession searching for house of low rent or shanty area that of less supervision, they usually living in old house that need rebuilding, in basement, in dormitory that transform from office building, in illegal structures that build on the roof, in shanty towns on the edge of the town—above these are the source of informal housing in the cities. In rural areas, informal housing mainly refers to limited property house.

Then the paper analyzes typical cases of five cities.

Shanghai, the city is facing great population pressure therefore has the most strict population policy. We investigated the shanty areas in Hongkou District, the government transform the shanty areas since 2010, and the owners of the houses can get a reasonable compensation, but in fact, migrant workers that really living in the shanty areas have to leave and searching for another residence.

Nanjing, the capital city of Jiangsu province, In the process of urban built-up area expansion, a lot of limited property house was built in the rural-urban fringe zone. After 2003, the government began to tackle with the limited property house, and this action has limit the increase of the limited property house. But cleaning up all these informal housing is very difficult, it's impossible to remove all these houses, if the government recognize the houses that already built legitimate, that will encourage more.

Guangzhou, the capital city of Guangdong province, has different problems. Some villages was surrounded by urban areas in the process of urban built-up area expansion, these villages gradually become the place where can provided housing for the floating population, and the villagers also build houses sale to those floating population. The government can't dismantle the informal housing because the villagers can use violence against the government. But finally, they reached an agreement.

Hengyang, an inner city in Hunan province, also facing the problem of limited property house, but the city is still in the expansion, the city government is weak and lack of money, so the limited property house is still in development.

Yiwu, a small but wealthy city in Zhejiang province, many people have a homestead so they can build house by they own, in order to supervise those self-built

houses, the urban planning department made an overall plan that specifies the position of the housing and the form of the outer facade, these specific regulation help reduce the informal housing.

Finally, the paper came to conclusion, China's special population system and land system is the reason why China has different forms of informal housing with other countries. To solve the problem of informal housing, Chinese government has to reform their system, and the city government need an overall housing plan. From the cases we can see government that is wealthy and strong did better in informal housing problem, but negotiation played the most important role. In addition, big cities in China are facing great population pressure and can't provide housing for anyone who wants to live there, thus to solve this problem, the Chinese government needs to search for answers from the regional development policy and the population policy in big cities.

The paper illustrates the reasons for the existence of informal housing in China, and proposes some methods by comparing the government's responses of different cities. It can help the government official and urban planners in China who was troubled by this problem and can also provide experience information for urban planners from other countries.