

Entangling Land-use Regulations in China's Urban Growth ——The Case of Guangzhou

Wei Yaping, Zhejiang Univ, Dept Regional & Urban Planning, China.

Zhao Min, Tongji Univ, Dept Urban Planning, China.

Presentation index

- Introduction
- The dual construction-land regulatory system and urban growth
- Entangling land-use regulations and urban growth: the case of Guangzhou
- Institutional analysis
- Conclusions

Aim of research

- Use 'land-use regulation' as one of the basic means of urban growth to explore:
- Why there are different forms of land-use institution?
- What interactional effects of which have on urban topology?

Introduction

- China's rapid urban growth has been classified as urban sprawl by many **Chinese scholars** (see, e.g., Fung, 1981; Lin, 2001; Zhang, T. 2000).
- Western: Sprawl should be viewed as a land-use pattern with low density, leap-frog development, and less open space in distinct spatial dimensions (Burchell et al., 1998; Galster et al., 2000).
- China: the urban growth pattern would rather be defined as **a combination of urban spill over (USO) and local urban sprawl (LUS)**.

The dual construction-land regulatory system

- **state-owned & collective-owned**
- Rural construction land : rural industries, rural residence and rural public facilities;
- If urban development needs to use collective land, it must be converted to state-owned through requisition, then the 'state' transfer the land-use rights to land-users.
- **A 'dual-track' system of construction-land:** (i) the price of urban state-owned land rise quickly, (ii) the collective construction land cannot enter the urban land market directly.
- As a result, **stakeholders scramble for the construction-right of collective land**, and formed a spatial consequence of that 'USO' and 'LUS' is coexisting.

Actor-Action

- (1) **City governments**. They have two regulation tools to compete with. The first is land-use planning. The second is urban planning.
- (2) **Collective organizations**. First are known as Collective Economic Development Land. Second, collective organizations usually carry out various illegal construction or illegal land transactions.
- (3) **Peasants**. First, they maximize the use of the allocated residence land. Second, peasants would build houses on their contracted farmland illegally. The same happened to other informal buildings and structures, such as simple huts, pigsties, etc.

Entangling land-use regulations and urban growth: the case of Guangzhou

- In the 1980s and 1990s, Guangzhou, **one of China's largest megacities**, experienced rapid development and urban growth.
- This had made the urban land-space and the transport infrastructure increasingly insufficient for further urban development. The whole urban spatial structure were **locked in a 'embarrassed' situation** (Wei et al., 2006)

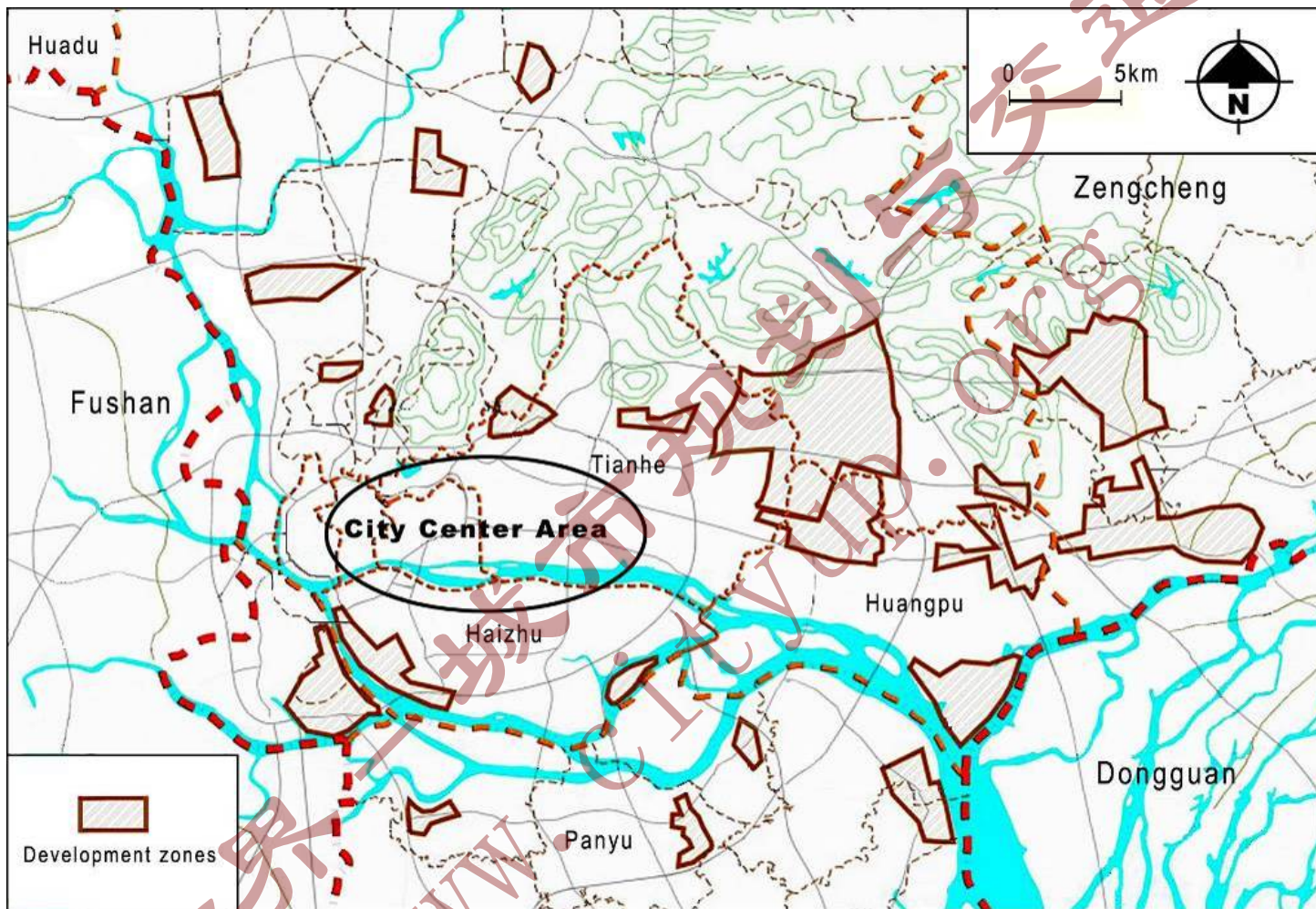


Fig. 1 distribution of development zones in 2003
Source: Guangzhou City Planning Bureau

Yaping Wei & Min Zhao, Entangling Land-use Regulations in China's Urban Growth, 2008.9

- In June 2000, Guangzhou annexed Panyu in the south and Huadu in the north, changed these two county-level cities into its municipal districts.
- This opportunity raised the need to consider a new urban spatial strategy beyond the previous administrative boundaries. In 2000, established “Guangzhou Overall Urban Strategic Plan” .
- The new spatial strategy was summarized as “expanding the south, optimizing the north, advancing the east and coupling the west”.
- Spatial Strategy tries to attract domestic and foreign capitals through large scale infrastructure investments, create a ‘polycentric and networking’ spatial structure. A number of specialized urban growth centers were planned.

USO vs. LUS

- After 2000, Guangzhou has experienced further rapid urban growth, which was more prominent in the new jurisdiction areas.
- the growth direction has changed distinctly:
- (i) During 1996-1999, the dominating growth centers are in the north fringe and the east fringe of urban centre;
- (ii) During 2000-2004, the Southern, the northern, and the eastern area become dominating growth areas, which are mainly influenced by a series of important projects.

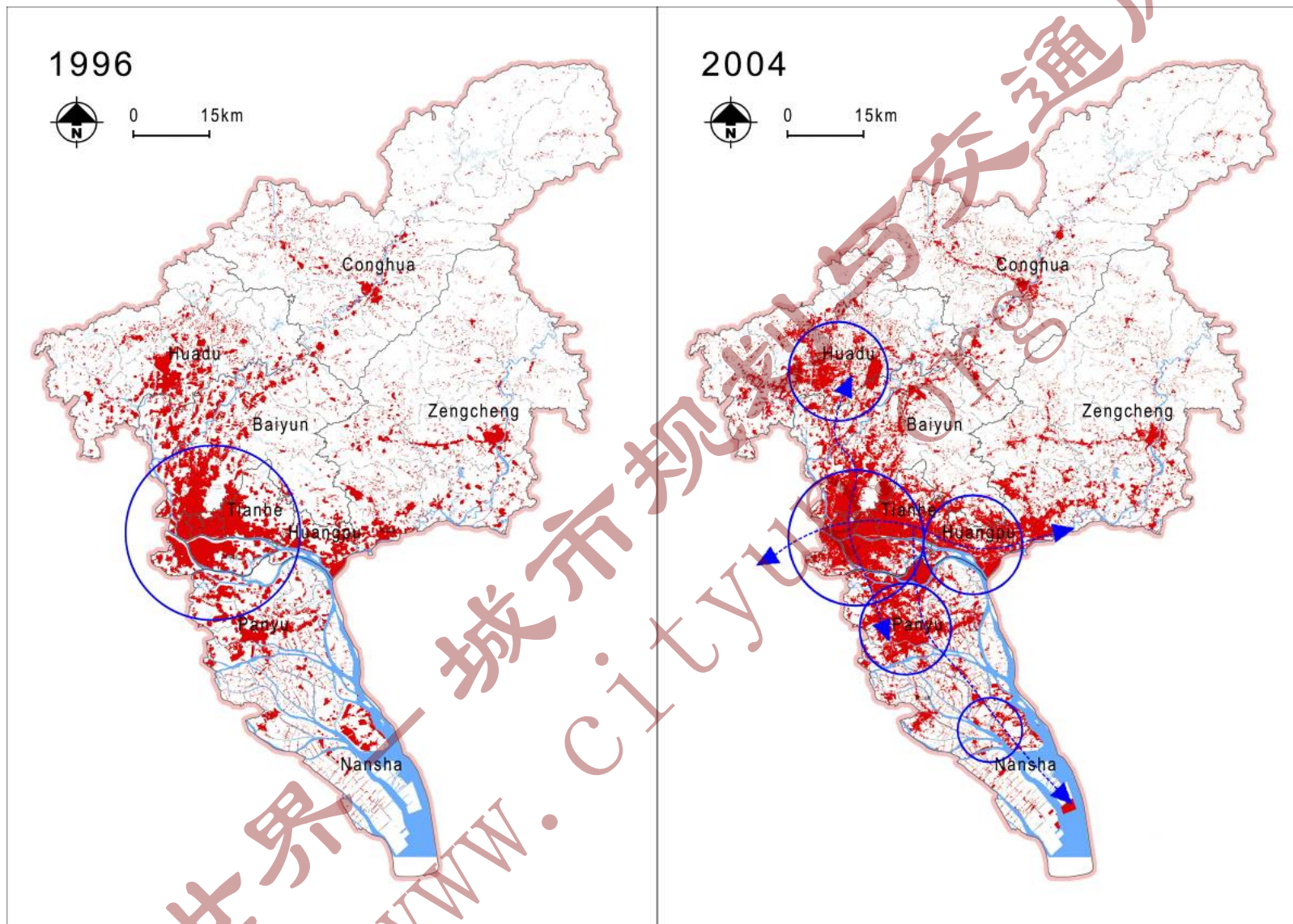


Fig. 2 distribution of construction land in Guangzhou metropolitan area
Source: Guangzhou Land Administration bureau

Yaping Wei & Min Zhao, Entangling Land-use Regulations in China's Urban Growth, 2008.9

- The total amount of built area in Guangzhou had increased from 979.85 km² in 1996 to 1324.43 km² in 2004.
- Totally, 344.58 km² were increased in eight years, with an annually increase of 43.07 km².
- The coexistence of USO and LUS can be clearly observed in the land-use categories:

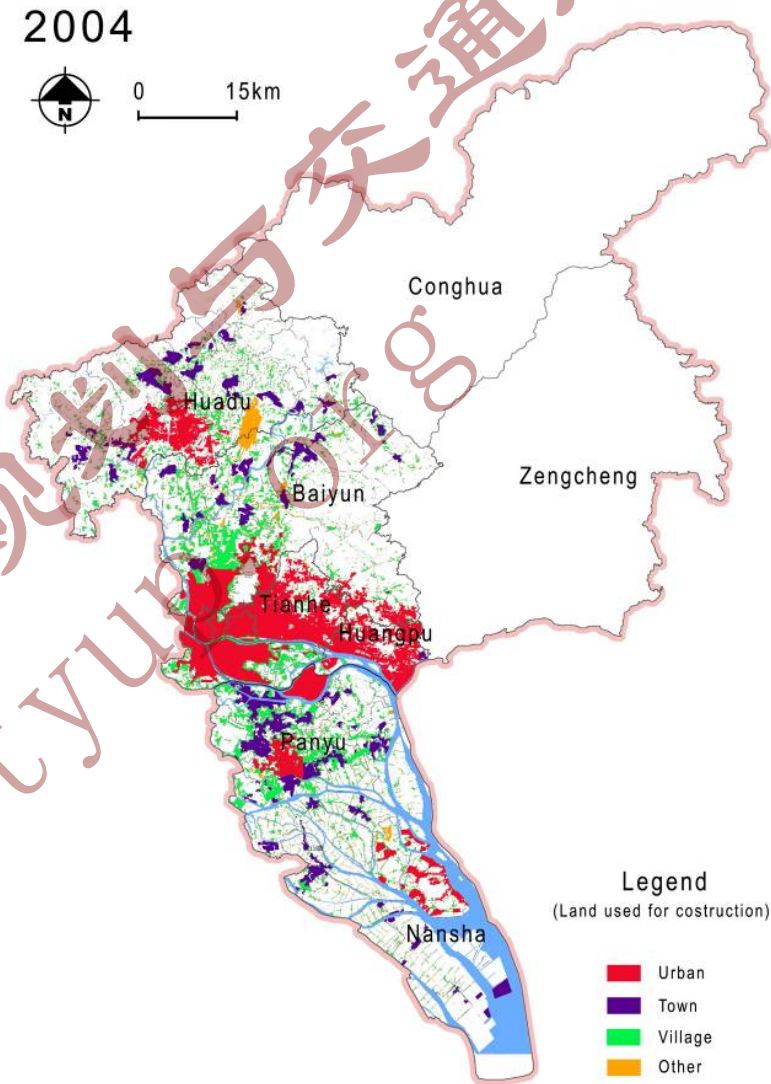
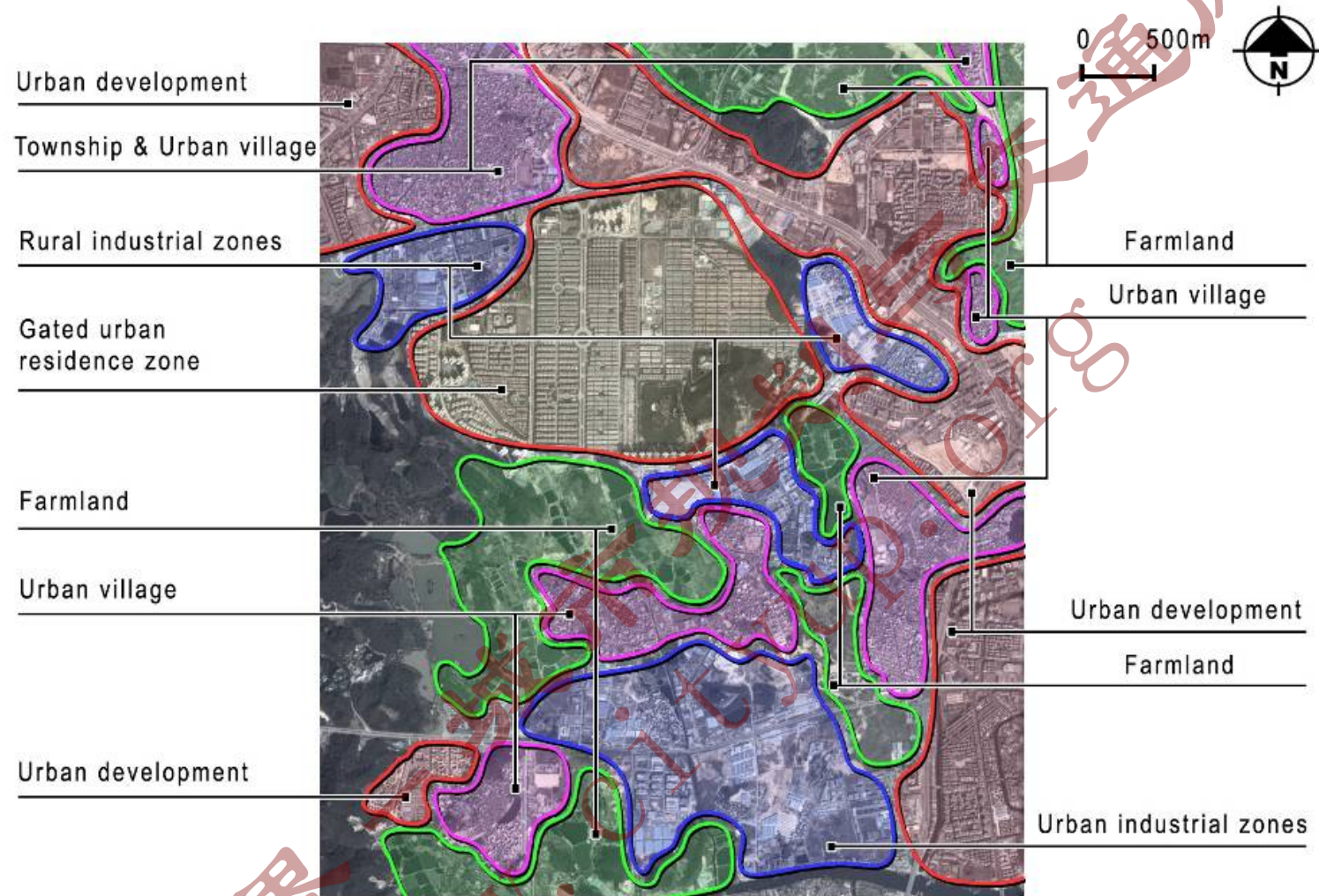


Fig. 3 distribution of construction land in Guangzhou municipal area
Source: Guangzhou Land Administration bureau



- **Fig. 4 a typical hybrid land-use phenomenon in Panyu district, Guangzhou**

Yaping Wei & Min Zhao, Entangling Land-use Regulations in China's Urban Growth, 2008.9

Institutional analysis

China's **rural and urban land reforms** have their political purposes respectively:

- (1) the former aims at promoting agricultural development, raising the income of peasants and guaranteeing peasants from losing their land;
- (2) The latter is to meet the requirements of market economy, mobilize local governments to manage urban land assets, and promote the intensive use of urban land.
- With the urban growth, **USO and LUS have increasingly interwoven together**. In this process, different land administrant intuitions increasingly conflicted with each other.

Land-use planning and urban planning

- the ideas of these two are not the same, as that land-use planning focuses on protecting the current farmland whereas urban planning focuses on meeting the future urban growth.
- In rapid urbanizing regions, there are increasing conflicts between the two forms of planning management:
 - 1) urban planning fails to adjust and rearrange the location of construction lands;
 - 2) the designation of farmland protection zones makes the construction lands ruled by land-use planning may not meet the requirements of urban planning, vice versa.

urban planning and planning management

- (1) Statutory master plan is out of control or being invalidated
- City governments become the direct promoters of local development.
- Compared with the function reorientation of the planning, the master planning system has little changed:
 - First, according to the method of master planning, all the urban land-use functions shall be arranged in the planning range. These physical arrangements for the future 15 to 20 years, however, lack the flexibility in dealing with market changes, and need to be readjusted constantly.
 - Second, master plan needs to be approved by the State Council. This is a long technical and political process. Therefore, while the approval process is carrying through, the city's spatial growth is still rapidly ongoing. Many cities have consumed the land amount in a few years that should be used for at least 15 years scheduled in the master plan.

(2) The conflicts between urban planning levels.

- In the absence of approved or suitable master plans, city governments employed a new planning tool, called the 'strategic planning' or 'concept planning', which has played a role of 'quasi-master planning'
- The new spatial planning also means rearrangement of original spatial interests, for the districts newly merged have their own urban plan, which are formulated in accord with the interests of local communities, and now will be changed according to the new strategy.
- The fact is that city governments are competing for the land resource from township governments or the local communities through the tool of strategic planning. But these 'quasi-master plans' will not be fully complied with by sub-level governments and rural communities.

Conclusion

- Under the entangling land-use regulations, further urban growth of megacities has become increasingly constrained spatially.
- Specifically, the conflicts among different policies all focus on the construction right of rural land, and incur intense competitions among related parties.
- Thus, not only the transaction cost of land-use rights transfer and land administration was increased, but also the urban growth of megacities was distorted. Briefly, entangling land-use regulations will hinder the sustainable development of the whole urban society.

The key institutional issue:

- Who exclusively hold the right of converting collective land into urban use is not clearly defined.

The political dilemma :

- if the right were designated to each rural household, the formal urban growth will suffer unbearable cost, such as that of land assembly, insufficient of cheaper land price to attract industrial capital, and so on;
- If the right were defined to city governments exclusively, the farmers, poorly educated, are likely completely lost capital to make a earning, which will inducing social instability.
- Therefore, in order to ensure the economic development and social stability, as well as to reduce land-use waste, central government can only continually adding new institutional constraints on the land-use, and admitting the existing benefit structures which were formed in the past reform.