The dilemma of informal housing management in Hochiminh City (HCMC), Vietnam

Informal housing is one of the most challenging issues of urban development in Third World cities. However, most scholarly studies focus on formal market, particularly in Vietnam where there has been very little research on this field. Hochiminh city (HCMC) - the commercial capital of Vietnam - has remarkable growth rate as well as rapid urbanization over last two decades; otherwise HCM is also facing with the problem of the speedy spread of informal housing. This city is chosen as an example for analyzing informal housing in Vietnam

Informal housing is often associated with poor quality of life because of lacking several basic infrastructure services such as electricity, water, medical facilities, drainage systems. However, in comparison with some major cities which have even higher urban incomes, HCMC otherwise has some advantages in terms of living conditions of informal settlements. This result due to the government has legalized numerous houses and builds basis infrastructures in these informal areas, that policy properly helps many families in HCMC have pretty good places to live under rapid growth pressures. Thus, HCMC has fewer slums than in other mega cities. On the other hand, a dilemma is created when urban citizens deliberately break the law with expectation sooner or later their illegal construction will be legitimized. Hence, the current outcome so far has been acceptable, but the growing informal settlement in the near future may cause serious problems for the HCMC development. Hence, finding strategic solutions for government in dealing with dilemma of informal housing management as well as sustainable development of HCMC is the target of this research.

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