

Public participation in urban governance

JIANG Jie, ZHOU Pingwan

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This paper analyses the importance of public participation in urban governance. The author emphasises that public participation guarantees the protection of public interests, equality and efficiency within the urban governance framework. In China, public participation is a weak link in the current urban management system. In most cities, it is nothing more than a rudimentary display of measures already in place and its inadequacy has resulted in the following problems: a weak sense of civic responsibility and a lack of public awareness concerning the importance of participation; the lack of diversity on both the organisational and functional levels and the mismanagement of operations due to too many participants and too little input; the failure to institutionalise public participation and problems with this system. This situation has had a negative impact on urban governance which is manifested in the “superficial projects” organized in each city, especially concerning urban planning and distribution and other non-statutory economic activities, and in the government’s violation of the interests of the underprivileged and the public.

This paper proposes measures that the government should take to encourage public participation in all areas, including adopting a new mentality, setting up organisations and channels for public participation to develop and become more widespread, and especially creating adequate decision making and supervisory systems allowing this public participation.

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