Urban Management and China’s Municipal Pattern
Ling Zheng, Yaping Wei, Kang Cao, Zheng Huang, and Songpo Shi

Abstract—Not only is municipal pattern the institution basement of urban management, but it also determines the forms of the management results. There’s a considerable possibility of bankruptcy for China’s current municipal pattern as it’s an overdraft of land deal in fact. Based on the analysis of China’s current municipal pattern, the passage proposed an assumption of a new pattern verified legitimacy by conceptual as well as econometric models. Conclusion is: the added supernumerary value of investment in public goods was not included in China’s current municipal pattern, but hidden in the rising housing prices; we should set housing tax or municipal tax to optimize the municipal pattern, to correct the behavior of local governments and to ensure the regular development of China’s urbanization.

Keywords—Urban management; China’s municipal pattern; land financial institution; housing tax; Public goods.

I. INTRODUCTION

AND financial institution in China brought considerable urban construction overall by monopolizing the first degree land market. As a result, infrastructure in many large and medium-sized cities can compare favorably with those in developed countries [1].

However, with land revenue being the major income, local governments pay more attention to maximizing current income while ignoring the long-term development of urban public services. Hidden in the great deal of land transaction was an overdraft of urban public services in the next 50-70 years [2], as well as huge gaps widening between regions, urban and rural areas [3].

In January 2011, Chongqing and Shanghai began collecting housing tax to alleviate the excessive dependence on land finance. Figures indicated that, senior housing transactions in Chongqing were effectively constrained by housing tax, while the Shanghai market was little affected [4] [5]. And this year, Chongqing were effectively constrained by housing tax, while ignoring the long-term development of urban public services. Hidden in the great deal of land transaction was an overdraft of urban public services in the next 50-70 years [2], as well as huge gaps widening between regions, urban and rural areas [3].

In January 2011, Chongqing and Shanghai began collecting housing tax to alleviate the excessive dependence on land finance. Figures indicated that, senior housing transactions in Chongqing were effectively constrained by housing tax, while the Shanghai market was little affected [4] [5]. And this year, housing tax becomes the focus again as everyone’s concerned about whether it will be collected all over China. But all this is not the most important, the crux is, can housing tax replace land revenue and become the major income for local governments?

What special logic is the current urban management following for? How to optimize China’s municipal pattern?

The paper is composed by, (1) analyzing China’s current municipal pattern, pointing out the gap between expectation and reality, (2) proposing an assumption of an ideal municipal pattern, and analyzing its economic special logic, (3) verifying the assumption by econometric models with appropriate factors and data of 35 large and medium-sized cities in China, (4) putting forward key points to optimize China’s housing tax as well as municipal pattern.

II. ANALYSIS OF CHINA’S CURRENT MUNICIPAL PATTERN

A. Municipal Pattern and Urban Management

Municipal pattern is the provision and operation of urban infrastructure and public utilities [6]. As urban management is the management of urban public goods and services, we can believe that, municipal pattern is just the operation pattern of urban public goods in its broadest sense.

A city is a collection of public goods, including education, health care, green space and transportation etc [7]. All this provided by governments together is often the most efficient way as it reduced the major transaction costs [8]. When urban economic factors can or at least relatively free flow, "voting by feet" [9] will come out, in this way, municipal operational efficiency is a very important factor affecting urban competitiveness.

Thus, in the narrow sense, municipal pattern is the institution foundation of urban management; meanwhile it decides the representation forms of urban management results, also the pricing methods of urban public goods.

B. Current Municipal Pattern in China

The following discussion of municipal pattern will emphasize the concept in its narrow sense. Before exploring an optimized method, we need to define current municipal pattern in our cities. As statistics in small cities are not perfect, the paper takes 35 large and medium-sized cities in China as the objects of observation. By analyzing the maintenance and construction data of sample cities in 2008, we summarize a basic municipal pattern in China[10].

Statistics showed that, urban maintenance and construction income (UR) of local governments is composed of three parts: urban maintenance and construction tax (UT); land transfer income (UF); land transfer income (LT). Urban maintenance and construction expenditures (UE) are mainly...
used for permanent assets investment (PI) and urban construction and maintenance (MC).

Accordingly, we can draw posture (1) and (2):

\[
\begin{align*}
UR &= UT + UF + LT \\
UE &= PI + MC
\end{align*}
\]  

Posture (3) is the current municipal pattern in China. In this pattern, urban construction tax (UT) and urban financial appropriation (UF) cannot pay for the massive amount of money in urban maintenance and constructions, so, land transfer income (LT) of local governments is almost used as urban maintenance and construction funds.

Posture (4) and (5) means: in urban construction and maintenance funds, land transfer income (LT) deals with permanent assets investment (PI), urban construction tax (UT) and the urban financial appropriation (UF) pay for municipal maintenance costs (MC).

If urban maintenance and construction funds can be that like posture (4) and (5), then, the current controversial land municipal pattern is a sensible and sustainable pattern. That is, even when land resources is depleted in future, or urban growth stagnates, the city cannot carry out new permanent assets investment anymore, and will have to face a huge municipal maintenance funds gap with the absence of LT\(_2\). There is considerable municipal bankruptcy in the current municipal pattern.

### III. BUILD A NEW MUNICIPAL PATTERN

#### A. Seek a Sufficient Sustained Income

Follow the logic above: if land is inexhaustible and city can keep rapid growth all the time, then the current municipal pattern will always go on well. However, as municipal pattern is a basic institution, current pattern is not sustainable during actual operation.

The reasons are: ① there’s technical difficulties to discount exactly the foreseeable and unforeseeable maintenance costs if the one-time land transfer income (LT\(_2\)) is used for the long-term maintenance of urban public goods; ② local governments are more concerned about current incremental investment with fewer reserve funds for future maintenance of public goods. ③municipal pattern performs as an overdraft of land transfer in the form. And the result is: it increase burden on the subsequent land with rising intensity of urban development; put urban municipal public goods in an insufficient state, and make current pattern reasonable.

The key issue above is: how to optimize our municipal pattern in existing conditions? According to posture (8), we can conclude: if we add a certain sustained income replacing the one-time land transfer income (LT\(_2\)), like housing tax in developed countries, to the current pattern, then all the problems will be solved. In other words, in the framework of the existing institution, if we try to learn from foreign housing tax system, what a new municipal pattern can we design?

#### B. Where does the Sustained Income Hide?

According to "input - output" model, the value of municipal input will not dissipate, but only perform in different forms. The core assumption of this article is: the sustained income replacing LT\(_2\) is not in current municipal pattern, but hides in the rising housing prices; and the income is not a specific fund, but in decentralized transactions funds among a number of
housing merchant and purchaser residents, and that among residents.

Based on the conceptual model (Figure 1) below, the paper will simulate the dynamic process of urban development, and explain this sustained income that should have charged.

Environment of the model is supposed to be: ① In addition to ordinary residents, there’s only one government representative and one housing merchant in the city; ② only four pieces of land, A, B, C and D, they are adjacent and homogeneous distributed; ③ A and C for real estate development, B and D for municipal public goods; ④ house owners needn’t continuously pay for municipal services, and land transfer income is mainly used to construct and maintain public goods.

Model operation: urban development process can be simplified into four stages with time goes on.

① Time point 1: Government transfers block A to merchant, and receive land transfer income LT_A, then pay LT_A for public goods in block B as PB_B. According to posture (7), LT_A = PB_B, at the same time, housing merchant begins to build houses once he accessed block A.

② Time Point 2: Block A and B are completed almost simultaneously. At this point, block B has positive externalities on block A and C by increasing value of land in C and value of houses in A. ③ Time point 3: Despite receives a higher LT_C, but the government needs to pay this income not only for maintaining the existing public goods in block B (MC_B), but also for constructing public goods in block D (PL_D), that is LT_C = MC_B + PL_D. ④ Time point 4: By completion of public goods in block D, value of houses in A and C will be increased. In reality, land management will hold on to keep municipal system smooth. So, a typical land development cycle is time “2-3” stage. Conclusion is: new land transfer income will be eventually translated into housing prices including those in new sales and being sold; (2) the value transferring medium is public goods, that is, value of real estate includes the current investment and maintenance costs of public goods, as well as the maintenance costs for future.

C. Analysis of Public Interest during Value Transferring

Public interest is the key point to judge whether the transferred value should be included in city revenue, and be a sustained income for governments.

① Land overdraft showed that current municipal pattern is land financial pattern essentially. Local governments are more concerned about operations at present, but less care about future long-term maintenance. As a result, the greater the municipal public goods is, the greater the maintenance gap is.

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has relationship only with current investment and stock maintenance of public goods, and if housing prices related not only to construction and maintenance of current public goods but also the future maintenance of it, then the assumption above is reasonable.

A. Model Design
Take city as a homogeneous whole, and public goods has no difference in it. As the independent variable involved can be characterized by numeric data, we choose multiple linear regression models: 

\[ Y = f(X_i) \]

\[ Z = f(X_i, Y) \]

\[ Y = \beta_{a0} + \beta_{a1}X_1 + \beta_{a2}X_2 + \beta_{a3}X_3 + \beta_{a4}X_4 + \ldots \]  

(9)

\[ Z = \beta_{b0} + \beta_{b1}Y + \beta_{b2}X_1 + \beta_{b3}X_2 + \beta_{b4}X_3 + \beta_{b5}X_4 + \ldots \]  

(10)

B. Data Selection
Owing to the availability of statistic, we study data of 35 large and medium-sized cities in China in 2008. The selected indicators are:

① Construction and maintenance indicators of public goods (CM): permanent assets investment (PI), municipal maintenance costs (MC), land transfer income (LT)

② Real estate related indicators (RE): total real estate sales (RS). The city added value brought by public goods can be reflected in both house sales volume and housing prices, we take total sales for convenience.

③ Data of municipal public goods (PG): data on education, culture, medical treatment, green space, transportation, water, electricity, communications and so on. There’s a need for further selected.

C. Model Process
① Factor selected and correlation analysis.
First, take all data into SPSS for correlation analysis to remove non-statistically significant factors and indicators, filter variables represented a same meaning. Observe trend from the variables and do pretreatment with independent variables.

Secondly, select the appropriate factor of public goods. Factors after selected contain education, health care, employment and green space; the more specific are number of general secondary schools in municipal districts (SN), number of beds in hospitals (HN), the employment of state-owned units (EU), and park green space (PK).

② Multiple linear regression simulation
Take the data selected into SPSS multiple linear regression equation for simulation. Observe the statistical indicators generated by regression model; make sure the equation has a strong statistical significance by residual analysis, the strong point of diagnosis and multi-collinearity determination.

D. Model Results
① Linear regression model of land transfer income
The regression result is:

\[ Y = -9.973 + 0.849 \, MC + 1.111 \, PI \]

Among them, MC is city maintenance costs, PI is permanent assets investment.

This result above verified the previous assumption: in all construction and maintenance funds in cities, land transfer income has only relationship with maintenance costs and permanent assets investment, and maintenance expenses has greater influence on land transfer income. As the future maintenance factor is not involved in the final model although we took it during process, we can come to the conclusion that government pay more consideration on its current effect during land transfer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE I</th>
<th>LINEAR REGRESSION MODEL OF LAND TRANSFER INCOME</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Model summary</td>
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<tr>
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<td>a. Predictors: (Constant), MC, PI.</td>
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Anovab

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<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
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<tr>
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<td>1155.047</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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<td>a. Predictors: (Constant), MC, PI.</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Dependent Variable: LT</td>
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Coefficienta

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<tr>
<td>PI</td>
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<td>353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MC</td>
<td>849</td>
<td>544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Dependent Variable: LT</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

② Linear regression model of real estate sales
The regression result is:

\[ Z = -137.062 + 1.213 \, MC + 0.014 \, HN + 0.031 \, PK \]
Among them, MC is city maintenance costs, HN is number of beds in hospitals in municipal districts, and PK is park green space.

Public hospitals and parks represented long-term maintenance costs of public goods in cities. It also verified the previous assumption: housing prices has relationships with not only the current construction and maintenance but also the long-term maintenance of public goods, and public goods has stronger effect on house sales.

V. CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The argument in the paper is not very fresh as housing tax has been carried out in China. But through inference and validation of the relatively rigorous model, we come to the following conclusions on policy analysis and policy design:

① There is a large possibility of municipal bankruptcy in China’s current municipal pattern. Once the high growth of the urban development stagnated, the city will then hardly put any new investment in public goods; meanwhile face a huge fund gap on municipal maintenance.

② China’s current municipal pattern is an overdraft of land transfer in fact. The problem is: First, increase the burden on the subsequent land and come to a rising intensity of urban development; public goods in city are always in an insufficient state and usually overload.

③ The added value of investment in public goods is not included in current municipal pattern, but hides in the rising housing prices, and come to a performance of decentralized transactions funds among a number of housing merchant and purchaser residents, also among residents. All this makes “latecomers pay” on public goods maintenance, and make the urbanization process unfair.

④ Lack a certain sufficient sustained income in current municipal pattern and combined with the financial classification of local governments, all this brings out the short-term behavior of the two levels of governments, the city and the district (street, town). As a result, urban construction land is decreasing and land use is more extensive.

Compared with the huge maintenance costs of municipal public goods, housing tax token in Chongqing and Shanghai is only symbolic. In order to improve the current urban development system, to optimize the current municipal pattern, we should have a comprehensive collection of housing tax and do more on municipal area management and urban institution:

① Set small municipal areas according to basic public services. A small municipal area is the minimum division unit of urban public services, which can be combined with the school district, community etc, and the services is impartial in the same district. Once the housing tax is levied on the basis of small municipal district, fair competitions will be taken among different municipal areas and enhances the overall municipal public service level in the end.

② Take the quality of public service as standards of housing tax. This will not only completely change the over-reliance on short-term land financial behavior for governments, but also greatly promote the city government to a service-oriented one, and change the relationship between government and residents to a services provider and services payer.

③ Establish an open transparent system on municipal public goods, services spending and budget. By the bottom-up approach, make the budget an effective means of restricting short-term behavior of the two levels of governments, the city and the district (street, town).

REFERENCES


