

**Session Proposal at PLPR Annual Conference
Hong Kong, Feb. 20-15, 2017**

**THE CREDIBILITY OF INFORMAL INSTITUTIONS
RETHINKING “INEFFICIENT” PROPERTY RIGHTS OF LAND, HOUSING AND
INFRASTRUCTURE**

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Informal institutional arrangements are often seen as an impediment to development and planning. Yet, they often produce villages, neighborhoods, businesses, or transportation modes around the globe. Their legal statuses vary considerably from country to country and from case to case: Some are illegal only in “theory” because they arise in countries where the planning and legal systems are grossly dysfunctional and fail to supply reasonable living and employment; others do violate planning or property laws in some ways and degrees.

Informal development is often labeled as inefficient, “perverse”, or at most, “second-best” as compared to “best”, formal and codified property rights. Yet, the experience in various settings – developed and developing alike – has demonstrated that informality might actually perform an important function amongst social actors, which does not substantially detract from the legal, institutional performance in a social, economic, cultural, or even environmental sense.

The proposed session challenges conventional views by posing that such informal arrangements as they have emerged and persist in space and time are, in fact, functional, and thus should be regarded as credible. To this end, the session aims to bring together scholars from various disciplines – planning, law or related disciplines – in order to examine functional informalities in a variety of contexts. We welcome contributions studying land, housing and infrastructure from all parts of the world, regardless whether these are based in the developing “South” or the developed “North.” More information can be obtained by mailing to p.p.s.ho@tudelft.nl or to alterman@technion.ac.il.

For those interested to participate, please submit your abstract via the PLPR2017 website at <http://plpr2017.arch.hku.hk> before Oct 14, 2016. Submit your abstracts under the “General Paper” session. In the “Remarks” section, please indicate that you wish to contribute to the “Credibility of Informal Institutions” session to be chaired by Peter Ho and Rachelle Alterman. Please also send an email to Peter Ho and Rachelle Alterman after submitting your abstract.