

*From Local to Upper Capture: The Chinese Experiment of Administrative Courts**

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Abstract

For decades, it has remained difficult for Chinese citizens to challenge government decisions through administrative litigation, as local governments control the crucial fiscal and personnel resources of the courts. In 2014, the Supreme People's Court (SPC) announced the decision to allow the newly integrated railway transport courts (RTCs) to accept and hear administrative cases. Unlike the local people's courts (LPCs), the RTCs are under the direct administration of the provincial high courts. Drawing on a unique dataset of more than 238,000 first-instance judgment records between 2015 and 2019, we study whether the RTCs' incorporation into the adjudication of administrative cases has improved Chinese citizens' chances of winning their cases. Our multi-variate regression analysis shows that only at the primary level are the