

The organization of tax collection and environmental protection in China

This project is based on two datasets from China. One dataset relates to the organization and personnel of tax administration, one of the largest branches of China's civil service. The data covers the period from 1992 to 2013, and thus reflects very large changes in tax policy, bureaucratic organization, and personnel. Because of changing bureaucratic needs, the scope and detailed structure of the data also went through significant variations. For example, in some years provincial level data is available, while in others only national data is available. A first objective of the project is to work with this complex data and visualize, in accessible and appealing ways, the patterns and trends observed in the data, e.g. changes in the age composition and education levels of the work force, changes in the types of tasks they are assigned to, and changes in the organization of tax offices.

The second dataset, spanning a shorter period and more uniform in scope and detail, relates to the organization and personnel of environmental protection agencies (EPAs) in China: another relatively large branch of the Chinese government. Illustrative research questions here include: (i) How are the organization of EPAs and its evolution similar to and different from tax agencies? (ii) At the provincial level, how do both tax and EPA staffing relate to economic and demographic variables, do the latter partially determine government organization? (iii) How do the structure of tax agencies and EPAs reflect the overall personnel structure of the government? Here, both visualization and basic panel regressions will be useful.