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Local governance and public goods provision in rural China

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Abstract

In developing countries, identifying the most effective community-level governance mode is a key issue in rural development; therefore, empirical evaluation of these different modes is desperately needed. Since the 1980s, tens of thousands of villages in rural China have held local government elections, providing a good opportunity to investigate the effect of democratization on the level of public goods provision. Using a recent village survey conducted over a significant period of time, this article compares two different governance modes. It finds that elections affect little on the size of revenue but significantly shift the distribution of taxation from individuals to enterprises if possible. However, privatization has made taxation or levies on rural enterprises more difficult. It also shows that elections and power sharing are conducive to improve the allocation of public expenditures.



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Keywords

Governance; Democracy; Public goods provision; China

JEL classification

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