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Political turnover and economic performance: the incentive role of personnel control in China

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Abstract

In this paper, we provide empirical evidence on the incentive role of personnel control in post-reform China. Employing the turnover data of top provincial leaders in China between 1979 and 1995, we find that the likelihood of promotion of provincial leaders increases with their economic performance, while the likelihood of termination decreases with their economic performance. This finding is robust to various sensitivity tests. We also find that the turnover of provincial leaders is more sensitive to their average performance over their tenure than to their annual performance. We interpret these empirical findings as evidence that China uses personnel control to induce desirable economic outcomes. Our study adds some basic evidence to a growing theoretical literature emphasizing the role of political incentives of government officials in promoting local economic growth.



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H11; H7; J63; P3

Keywords

Political turnover; Economic performance; Personnel control

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