

**PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT, PUBLIC PARTICIPATION, OR BOTH?
EVIDENCES FROM ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACROSS CHINESE
PROVINCES**

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ABSTRACT

Performance measurement matters or not has been paid to attentions for year, especially in the field of environmental protection. However, the role of public participation needs to be explored since public demands and environmental NGOs are playing a more important role in the global environmental governance

Based on China's 31 provincial panel data from 2004 to 2011, this paper studied how environmental assessment and public participation influence environmental governance. Findings show that whether complete environmental assessment objectives or not, the top-down environmental assessment can effectively improve environmental governance effects at the provincial governments, but there are obvious features: In terms of the target completion of the binding environment indicators, Officials will take a compliance strategy to complete the targets (such as SO₂) while manipulating strategy exists in the target of Chemical Oxygen Demand (COD) completion. Compared with binding environmental indicators, for the high visibility of the non-binding environmental indicators (such as industrial waste water emissions), environmental assessment had significant influence, while for the low visibility of the non-binding environmental indicators (such as industrial waste gas emissions) had no significant influence. Therefore, there might be different kinds of games in pollution control and governance priority in the pollution control strategies.

More importantly, we find public participation has a totally different function mechanism in environmental governance. Specifically, public participation has significant effect not only for the binding environmental indicators, but also play an important role on the non-binding environmental indicators. In terms of environmental petition, both the binding environmental pollution indicators (chemical oxygen demand, sulfur dioxide emissions) and the non-binding environmental pollution indicators related to public life health indicators (such as industrial waste gas and industrial wastewater emissions) have a positive effect on the reduction of pollutant emissions. With the increase of the environmental NGOs, it gradually plays a role in the reduction of the specific environmental pollutant emissions (such as sulfur dioxide, industrial waste gas).

Keywords: performance assessment; public participation; governance effectiveness; panel data