What makes a government spend more on the environment?
The case of Hong Kong

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Under-spending on environmental governance has long been a universal challenge, with U.S. federal government spends no more than 3 percent of its total budget on conservation, US local governments about 2 percent, and Hong Kong, less than 5 percent. The literature on environmental funding mostly adopts the framework of pressure-state-response (PSR), which indicates environmental spending is the result of the ecological pressures and societal demands. What unexplored are the factors within the governing systems that take budgetary outcome as the result of a dynamic political process that involves stakeholder competing interests and how these interests evolve in a forever changing institutional setting. Hong Kong, with its dynamic and evolving democratic institutional development and stakeholder interactions in the development, provides an excellent case to observe how political forces in the governing process influence environmental spending. This study examines how environmental initiatives and spending have been influenced by the dynamic democratic institutional development in Hong Kong in the past 30 years. The longitudinal data provide a unique view into environmental spending patterns and how they were established to reflect stakeholder interactions, competition and compromises. The results of the study add our understanding about political process of environmental policy and suggest ways to improve the process.

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All are welcome!