

Documentation on the database « publicfinancedata_district.dta »

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Source:

The source is the annual budget accounts (Budgets and “Compte Définitif”) approved by the General Governor of AOF and the Minister of the Colonies for each colony. The period of time is from 1910 to 1956.

The annual budget accounts report all revenue and expenditures at the colony level. In this database, I collected the revenue and expenditures at the district level when available. This explains the many missing values in this database: the decomposition by district was far from automatic and for many variables it was actually very rare.

These annual budget accounts can be found at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France François Mitterrand.

Structure of the Data:

An observation is a year-district. The period is 1910-1956, with all years from 1910 to 1920, and then 1923, 1925, 1928, 1930, 1933, 1936, 1939, 1943, 1946, 1949, 1953, and 1956. These dates were randomly chosen. When the annual budget account was not available for a given year and a given colony, I collected as often as possible data from a close year (the year after or the year before).

Districts changed over the colonial period for administrative reasons: some districts were split while others were merged. The history of each district in the colonies was traced thanks to the information contained in the annual budgets and political reports (see political data). To get the analysis rid of the changes in the territorial division, I kept a constant geographical unit in this data: districts as in 1925. In this database, the districts therefore do not change over time but the original data was adjusted so that revenue and expenditures refer to the same geographical unit every year. For instance, in the case where a district A was split in two districts B and C in 1930, I keep using district A as a unique observation after 1930 and affected the value of the sum of revenue and expenditures of the two split districts B and C to the single original district A. In case of a merge of two districts after 1925, I keep using the two original districts: sometimes the annual accounts gave the decomposition of revenue and expenditures of the two original districts, otherwise I divided revenue and expenditures proportionately to the most recent available decomposition.

Other information:

- The monetary unit is Franc.
- The districts in this dataset are the same as in the political dataset. The two dataset can therefore be merged after creating a year-district identifier.