

Explaining variations in regulatory regimes: a case study of two food sectors in China

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Introduction Analytical Framework Data Results

Regulatory regimes vary largely in the same policy area in different regions. Even within a country, it is never the case that regulatory regimes are consistent in different regulatory areas or within the same targeting sector

E.g. in China, food regulatory regimes vary between the agricultural and manufactured sectors, and between locally-consumed and exported food

Research question
Why do regulatory regimes vary in control tools and styles in different food sectors?

Empirical study
A comparative case study of food safety regulation between two food sectors in a Chinese province

Research areas

- ❖ Regulation, especially those from the political science perspectives
- ❖ Regulatory enforcement
- ❖ Regulatory styles based on the grid/group cultural theory

Research gap and significance

- ❖ Explain the linkage between cultural theory on regulatory styles and political science explanations
- ❖ Assess The goodness of fit of the well-established Western theories in a new context – China

Explain the variations in control tools and styles from four perspectives:

- Four Potential Causal Factors**
- Opinion-responsiveness / Media attention
 - Private interest
 - Institutional setting
 - International obligation

determine

- Variations in**
- Control tools
 - Control styles (oversight, competition, contrived randomness, mutuality)
- Of the three control components (e.g. standard-setting, information-gathering, behaviour-modification) in different regulatory regimes**

Methods

Comparative case study between the agricultural and manufactured food sectors.

Data collection:

- Primary sources: laws, rules, government documents, interviews with government officials, the regulated actors, relevant NGOs
- Secondary sources: academic literatures, media reports, scientific reports

Agricultural Products

- Lower local and international media attention
- Very low industry concentration
- Lower fragmentation of regulatory bodies
- Lower international scrutiny
- Higher export amount

versus

Manufactured Food Products

- Higher local and international media attention
- Medium industry concentration
- Higher fragmentation of regulatory bodies
- Higher international scrutiny
- Lower export amount

	Standard-setting	Information-gathering	Behaviour-modification
Oversight	Hierarchical ordering	Subpoena-style	Response to authority
Competition	Developing through 'natural selection'	Incentive-style	Quest to be high in a league
Mutuality	Participative	Network-style	Exposure to mutual influence or persuasion
Contrived Randomness	Unpredictable /disorganised	Lottery-style	Pay-offs of action unpredictable

Opinion-responsiveness / Media attention

Opinion ↑ → Regulatory Aggressiveness ↑ (oversight + mutuality styles)
(Remarks: regulatory officials also control the public opinions through media censorship)

Private interest

Industry concentration ↑ → Regulatory Aggressiveness ↓ (mutuality style)
Local economy and employment ↓ → Regulatory Aggressiveness ↓

Institutional-setting

Fragmentation of regulatory power ↑ → aggressive ↓ (competitiveness style)

International obligation

Export-orientation ↑ → Regulatory Aggressiveness ↑ (oversight style)
A separated regulatory mechanism is established for exported food, which is directly supervised by the central level government

Conclusion

- ❖ Control tools are more oversight alike for sector with higher media attention; but the sole impact of media is difficult to assess since the relationship is interdependent and interactive to each other
- ❖ The choice of institutional setting is affected by the force of international obligation
- ❖ Exported food is regulated by a separated regulatory mechanism
- ❖ Inspection and examination measures for exported food are more stringent