

THE POLITICAL REGULATION WAVE

Why has there been uneven success in reducing air pollution even in the same locality over time? This book offers an innovative theorization of how local political incentives can affect bureaucratic regulation. Using empirical evidence, it examines and compares the control of different air pollutants in China – an autocracy – and, to a lesser extent, Mexico – a democracy. Making use of new data, approaches, and techniques across political science, environmental sciences, and engineering, Shen reveals that local leaders and politicians are incentivized to cater to the policy preferences of their superiors or constituents, respectively, giving rise to varying levels of regulatory stringency during the leaders' tenures. Shen demonstrates that when ambiguity dilutes regulatory effectiveness, having the right incentives and enhanced monitoring is insufficient for successful policy implementation. Vividly explaining key phenomena through anecdotes and personal interviews, this book identifies new causes of air pollution and proposes timely solutions. This title is also available as Open Access on Cambridge Core.

Shiran Victoria Shen is a Stanford-trained political scientist and environmental engineer currently based at the Hoover Institution. Her research explores the intersections of political science, public policy, environmental sciences, and engineering, with a particular interest in how local politics influence environmental governance. This is her first book.



Montage of pollution during five consecutive days in Beijing when the city government tested pollution control in preparation for the Olympics, August 3–7, 2007. Reprinted by permission from Jacobson (2012, 199).

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The general editor of the series is Professor Jorge E. Viñuales, the Harold Samuel Chair of Law and Environmental Policy at the University of Cambridge and the Founder and First Director of the Cambridge Centre for Environment, Energy and Natural Resource Governance (C-EENRG).

The Political Regulation Wave

A CASE OF HOW LOCAL INCENTIVES SYSTEMATICALLY
SHAPE AIR QUALITY IN CHINA

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CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA

477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
New Delhi – 110025, India

103 Penang Road, #05–06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

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www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781009100144

DOI: [10.1017/9781009103664](https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009103664)

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When citing this work, please include a reference to the DOI [10.1017/9781009103664](https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009103664)

First published 2022

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-1-009-10014-4 Hardback

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