

# Understanding Taiwan's Agricultural Protectionism

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## Abstract

The following article aims to discern whether partial protectionism in Taiwan's meat markets can still be explained as a function of Taiwan's 'strong state argument', which was developed to understand the nation's policies between the 1960s and 1980s. In spite of a weak international position, Taiwan has been able to sustain a policy of agricultural protection, based on the unitary rationality of its domestic bureaucratic units and a centralised process of decision-making. The institutional path dependence witnessed in agricultural trade policy can help explain why, for example, Taiwan is able to ban imports of agricultural items from the United States and Japan, which are two of Taiwan's largest supporters in the international arena. The article analyses the domestic structure of agricultural market access decision-making, in order to shed light on how this structure is used to leverage trade-offs in other areas where Taiwan's bargaining position is weaker, given its international status; and thus it revises Taiwan's strong state argument as causal towards explaining agricultural protectionism.

**Subjects:** Asian Studies

**Keywords:** Agricultural trade policy; protectionism; liberalisation; trade policy; Taiwan; historical institutionalism