

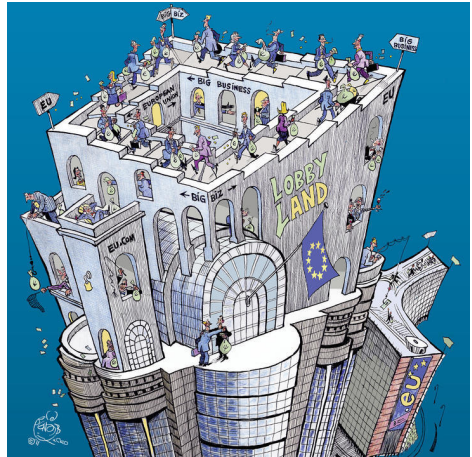
Are business interests more successful than citizen groups?

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Introduction

Overview:

- **Question:** how much influence does business really exert on EU legislation? Who is more successful, business or citizen groups?
- **Argument:** at the decision-making stage, business is less successful than often assumed

A business bias?

Good reasons to expect business influence:

- Business interests command a host of politically useful resources such as money and expertise.
- Business possibly structurally privileged because of its control of investment decisions.
- Business advantage possibly particularly strong in the EU.

Business' defensive fight

The structure of conflict in the EU:

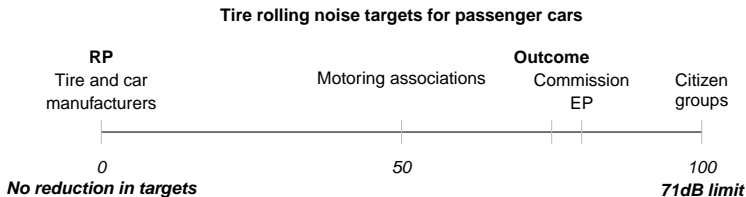
- The European Commission has an interest in a steady flow of EU legislation
- It can mainly propose legislation that regulates the market
- On such proposals, we expect business interests to defend the (low-regulation) status quo, whereas citizen groups favour changes in the status quo → business finds itself in a defensive position
- Business loses to a coalition of citizen groups, the European Commission and the European Parliament

The data

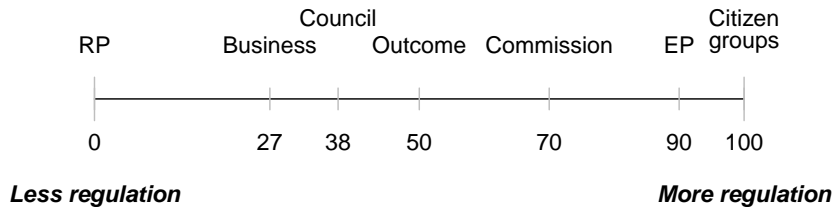
The data:

- Data set with information on 70 legislative proposals
- We used interviews with Commission officials to identify 112 conflictive issues
- For each issue, our respondents identified the positions of a total of 1,043 non-state actors on a scale from 0 to 100

The data



The data



Empirical findings

Multivariate analysis:

- The intuition behind our measure of success: if the new outcome is closer than the status quo to the ideal position of an actor, that actor gains. If the outcome is further away, that actor loses.
- Our key predictor: group type (business interest, citizen group, other)
- Set of control variables: number of interest groups pulling in a direction, the groups' technical knowledge, media attention...
- Finding: business actors' estimated success score about 20 points lower than that of citizen groups.

Conclusion

Key finding:

- At the decision-making stage, business interests are less successful than often expected
- Business was influential in establishing “market-creating policies” 20 years ago. What we now see is a reversal of fortunes as citizen groups and the European Commission join forces in promoting “market-enabling” and “process regulations”.

Many thanks!