

The political economy of climate policy

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This poster presents three different studies that investigate the role and positions of the business community in Swiss climate policy. First, we study the positions of business interest associations on the Swiss CO₂ law based on the public consultation in 2009. Second, content analysis and social network analysis describe how firms' positions are transmitted into the parliamentary discourse. Third, a case study evaluates effectiveness and motivation for signing the voluntary agreement of Swiss car importers in 2002.

1. Positions of firms on climate policy

What are the positions of firms on climate policy?

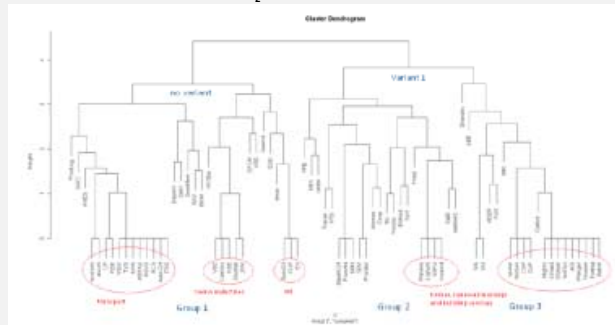
Methods: content analysis; cluster analysis
Data: documents of the 2009 consultation on the Swiss CO₂ law

Results:

- Pluralism: multiple positions on climate change and climate legislation
- opponents and proponents
- peak industry associations, energy intensive industries, oil and road transport rather conservative; tend to overestimate regulatory
- manufacturing, building services, renewable energies, forestry and timber, finance, insurance, and retailers rather open or proactive on climate change



Figure 1: Cluster analysis on the positions of business interest associations and individual firms on the revision of the Swiss CO₂ law



(Reference: Börner, 2009)

2. Influencing the political discourse

How are firms' positions transmitted into the political discourse?

Methods: content-based discourse analysis; social network analysis
Data: word protocols of the Swiss Parliament and the environmental commissions (1997-2007)

Preliminary results:

- Subsidiarity: high degree of collaboration between administration, parliament and private interest groups
- institutionalized collaboration of public and private sector by public consultations, internal hearings, etc.
- 'Milizsystem': close link between members of the Swiss Parliament and private sector
- significant impact of peak industry associations

Figure 2: Social network analysis of members of the Swiss Parliament



3. Case study on the voluntary agreement of Swiss car importers

How to evaluate the voluntary agreement (VA) of the Association of Swiss car importers? What were the motives for participation?

Method: case study
Data: 20 semi-structured interviews; case-study database
Results:

- VA not environmentally effective
- choice of VA vs. tax not rational for car importers
- VA was signed for strategic reasons, maybe coalition with other industries
- Pluralism: diverging positions of members of business association
- high degree of communication within association

(Reference: Börner, 2010)



References

- Börner, Business interest in Swiss climate policy, 2009 Amsterdam Conference on the Human Dimensions of Global Environmental Change, Amsterdam, the Netherlands (2009)
- Börner, Voluntary Agreement of Swiss car importers, International Society for Ecological Economics (ISEE), 2010 Annual Conference, Oldenburg, Germany (2010)