

### POLITICAL SCIENCE WITH DR EVA HEIMS DO INDUSTRIES INFLUENCE GOVERNMENT REGULATORY AGENCIES?

#### TO MAKE THE MOST OUT OF THIS SCRIPT, YOU COULD:

- Stick it in your book as a record of watching Eva's animation
- Pause the animation and make notes as you go
- Add your own illustrations to the sheet
- Create your own animation to accompany it
- Add notes from classroom discussions
- Make notes of areas you will investigate further
- Make notes of key words and definitions
- Add questions you would like answered – you can message Eva through the comment box at the bottom of her article:  
**[futurumcareers.com/do-industries-influence-government-regulatory-agencies](https://futurumcareers.com/do-industries-influence-government-regulatory-agencies)**

---

## SCRIPT:

How do we know that planes are safe to fly, food is safe to eat and water safe to drink?

The answer lies with regulatory agencies.

Regulatory agencies are the government institutions responsible for monitoring a wide range of activities in the country they are based. Regulatory agencies are set up to ensure that the public is treated safely and fairly.

For example, in the UK, the Civil Aviation Authority ensures that planes are safe to fly, the Food Standards Agency checks that food is safe to eat, Ofgem determines the maximum price that energy companies can charge us for electricity and gas, and the Environment Agency monitors our water quality.

Some people worry that the regulatory agencies responsible for monitoring all these aspects of our lives – and more – are being influenced by industries. They worry that this influence enables industries to benefit in some way to the public's detriment. This is what political scientists call 'regulatory capture'.

But how prevalent is regulatory capture? This is the question Dr Eva Heims is seeking to answer with her project Capture Revisited.

Eva is a political scientist based at the University of York in the UK.

She is using a technique called comparative process-tracing analysis. Process-tracing is a research method that requires the researcher to uncover how a cause results in a particular outcome.

For example, the public often imagine that regulators are excessively influenced by industry because of the 'revolving door' concept. A 'revolving door' is when a person with expertise in one particular area moves between jobs in private industry and government regulatory agencies. Using process tracing, Eva can investigate whether the revolving door results in regulatory agencies being captured.

Understanding the factors that may cause regulatory capture is crucial for preventing industry influence. It is also important for preventing blame being unfairly shifted to regulators. Regulatory agencies are responsible for decisions that affect so many aspects of our lives, so it is essential that we feel we can trust them.

Through her research, Eva has discovered that it is very difficult to find evidence of excessive industry influence. It is more likely that regulators make bad decisions when knowledge is limited or when they place too much trust in the companies they regulate.

Eva's work shows how political science is linked to many aspects of our everyday lives. What could you achieve in the field of political science?

---