

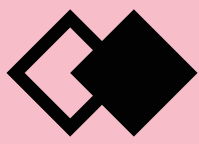
us and them

MAPPING DISCOURSE COALITIONS IN THE EU COPYRIGHT DIRECTIVE DEBATE

The European Parliament approved the most recent Copyright Directive in March 2019, a reform aiming to make copyright law fit for the information age. Its adoption ended a 3-year legislative process punctuated by a fierce debate

between its proponents and critics. Exploring the different ways copyright legislation is being justified and negotiated, this research combines Hajer’s argumentative discourse analysis framework with quantitative social

network analysis to comprehensibly map the discourse coalitions engaged in this debate, scrutinise their characteristics, and appraise their influence over the policy process and outcome.



CONTENTIOUS ELEMENTS

Article 3 - Text and data mining

Establish a EU-wide copyright exception for text and data mining only applicable to research institutions.

Article 11 - Link tax

Regulate the use of snippets of news stories by granting publishers direct copyright over their content.

Article 13 - Upload filters

Make commercial online platforms and news aggregators more liable for the copyrighted content hosted or passing through their platforms.

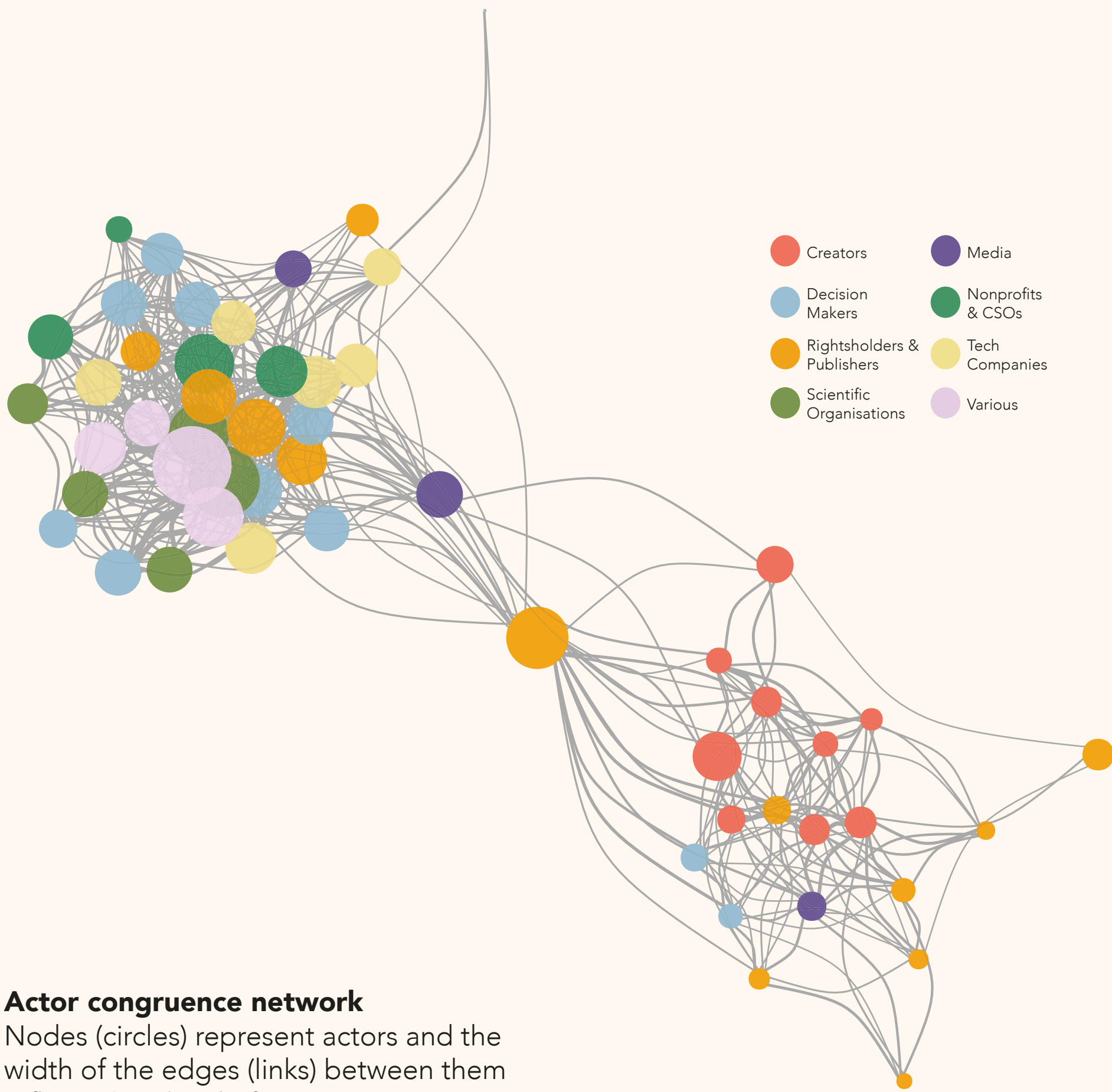
methods

Content analysis

Text sources (open letters and opinions) are qualitatively annotated and coded as ‘statements’ containing information about the person/organisation, the concept, and the sentiment.

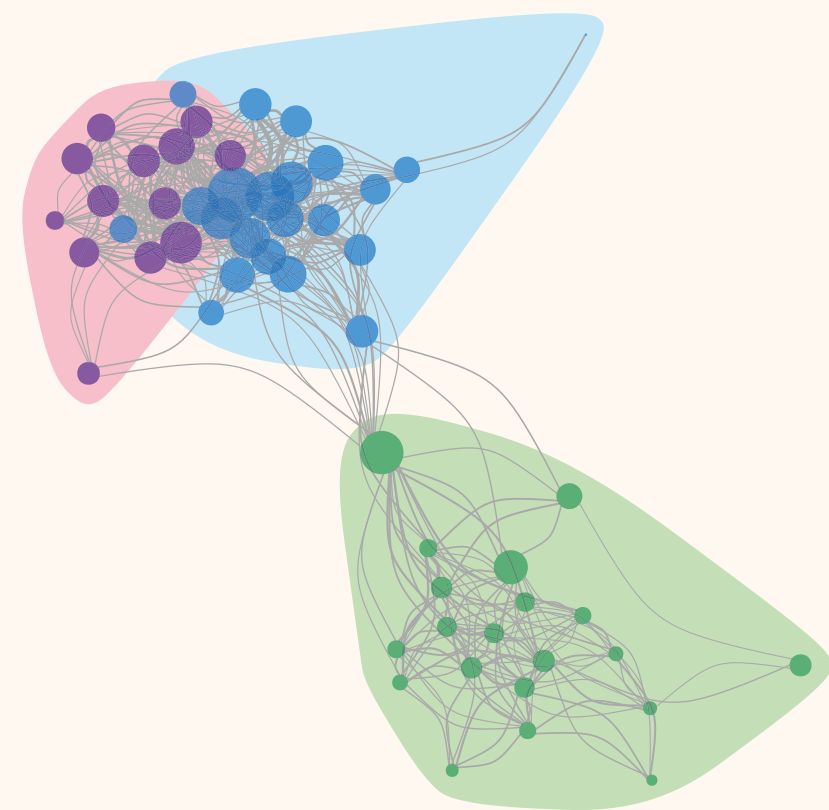
Network analysis

The resulting data is explored using tools from network analysis. Discourse coalitions and their characteristics are identified, which reveal important properties of the debate.



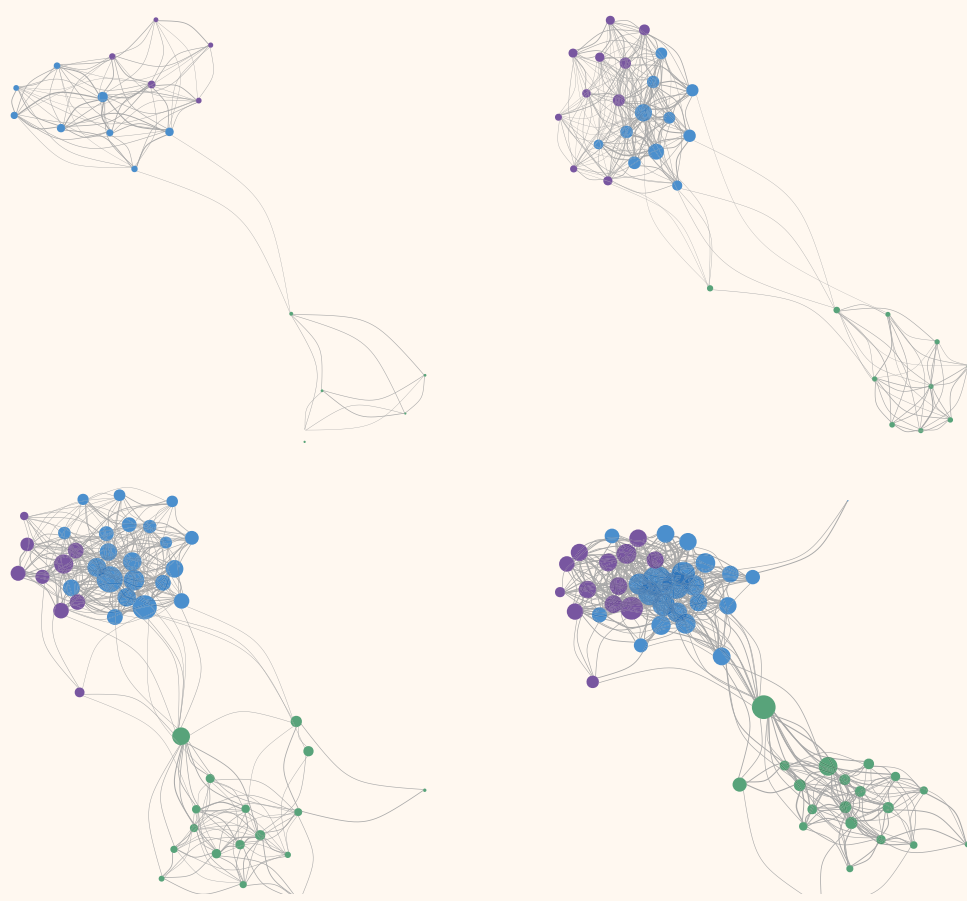
Actor congruence network

Nodes (circles) represent actors and the width of the edges (links) between them reflects their level of agreement on issues.



Detection of discourse coalitions

Opponents of the directive are divided in two different coalitions and its proponents mostly assembled in one group.



Dynamic evolution of discourse coalitions

Between 06 April 2017 and 26 March 2019.

findings

1

This research provided empirical evidence of the existence of a polarised debate featuring, on the one side, two discourse coalitions who argued against the directive on the basis of its threats to civil and digital rights, and on the other side, one coalition in favour of the reform stressing the importance of protecting the creative sector and reducing the market power of online platforms.

2

The analysis showed that no coalition achieved ‘discursive hegemony’ over the process. No coalition dominated the discursive space and saw its discourse adopted by a majority of stakeholders (*discourse structuration*), with the debate remaining polarised until the end.

3

Although opponents of the directive displayed a higher discursive congruence throughout the debate, the adopted law mostly reflected the discourse of the pro-directive coalition (*discourse institutionalisation*), with the two most contentious elements preserved in the final text. This finding calls for further research on interest groups and the determinants of policy influence.