

To achieve their objectives, regulators are dependent on the goodwill of those they regulate. That is particularly true of regulators' need of information about business practices. Businesses generate information and hold information. Regulators regularly request information, but whether they are ever fully, or even in part, successful in receiving relevant information, is an open question.

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tion about breaches and failures.

The hostile environment explains why there have been so few safe spaces for business, and why the few examples that do exist have performed so poorly.

There are, however, further factors that have undermined the effectiveness of safe spaces. One of them is industry structure. Safe spaces are likely to work best in homogenous industry sectors which are characterized by stable technologies and a relatively limited number of players (exactly the conditions which facilitate cartel-building). In the chemical industry, chlorine production is one such area.

The main players in this sector developed a reputation for successfully sharing incident knowledge in the 1980s. This led to considerable gains in reliability. Yet, since the 1990s, the dynamic, global and nationalized nature of the chemicals industry has led to industry fragmentation. This dynamic has also undermined the standing of individuals within businesses who would be keen to exchange incident data with their peers.

Another set of difficulties emerges from the variety of motives and levels of commitment that industry representatives bring to safe spaces. Many scholars have seen a 'new industrial morality' spreading across the chemical industry after major accidents in the mid-1980s, notably to shape (and be shaped by) the Responsible Care programme. Arguably, that should be a crucial ingredient for effective sharing of incident data. Yet participants at Responsible Care meetings (a key safe space for chemical firms) appeared to have mixed motives, not all of which could be described as a

form of morality. Indeed, many would come to these meetings to ensure a level playing field is maintained

