

The Politics of Precaution: Regulating Health, Safety, and Environmental Risks in Europe and the United States. By David Vogel. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012. 332p. \$39.50. doi:10.1017/S1537592713000248

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David Vogel's latest book is an example of the author at his best. In signature style, he opens with a simple empirical observation: In the forty years before 1990, the United States led the world in regulating social risks caused by businesses, with European countries and later the European Union often following the United States's model when adopting their own regulations. Starting after 1990, there was a great pivot that reversed these roles. Europe became the source of new and more stringent regulations with the US federal government lagging behind.

Vogel offers a three-part account for why the 1990 trans-Atlantic regulatory pivot occurred. First, public opinion changed on both sides of the Atlantic, with Europeans perceiving the threats of increased risks from businesses' activities and advocating for more government action to counter those risks. Second, the political preferences of influential policy makers showed a similar shift to that of public opinion. A clear example of this shift can be seen among Republican politicians in the United States. Starting around 1990, pro-environmental Republican politicians became increasingly rare. Third, scientific standards used to determine how and when to respond to risk changed in the US and Europe. After 1990, politicians in the US wanted more scientific evidence to justify new regulations while politicians in Europe were more willing adopt regulations when the science was unsettled.

Vogel's empirical case for the 1990 trans-Atlantic pivot comes with a few careful caveats. First, some policy areas provide exceptional cases where the United States currently regulates risk more vigorously than Europe. These days the United States has more stringent policies in the areas of crime and national security. US politicians justify these policies in precautionary principle terms, whatever the actual merits of background checks for daycare teachers, long prison sentences for felons, and the War on Terror. The country of the Wild West seems more afraid of criminals than does coddled old Europe. Likewise, US and European pharmaceutical regulations became increasingly harmonized after 1990, contrary to the general trend Vogel reports. Second, in this book, Vogel is focusing only on regulations of harms caused at least in part by business activities, such as food and drug safety and environmental pollution. (Readers interested in areas beyond these would be advised to start with Sheila Jasanoff's work.) Vogel's final caveat is that the *Politics of Precaution* does not address how much these risks should be regulated and what policy instruments would best regulate them.

The bulk of the book documents the existence of the Europe-United States regulatory pivot and tries to explain why it happened. Vogel starts by debunking candidate explanations, many of which are superficially appealing in their account of half the puzzle, but fall short in accounting for the other half. A good explanation must account for why the US was at the forefront of regulations prior to 1990 and why Europe took the lead thereafter. Thus Vogel skillfully debunks what had been my personal favorite among the candidate explanations. I naively expected governments to take the lead in adopting new regulations when the threats posed by the risks are great. In this view, the US adopted its early pollution regulations because it had more pressing pollution threats as it was industrializing more quickly than Europe during the 1960s. Vogel's skillful analysis puts this argument to rest in ways that prove very illuminating. It turns out that pre-1990 pollution risks were no greater in the US than in Europe. Furthermore, Vogel summarizes a strong body of research showing (somewhat depressingly) that true risk severity really doesn't play much of a role in getting governments to adopt more stringent regulations.

This is an impressive empirical book. Vogel starts with the trans-Atlantic regulatory pivot as an empirical phenomenon and then works his way down through the historical record to build and evaluate arguments for how it occurred. The book provides the heavy empirical grounding such an analytic approach requires. The book's policy domains are food safety and agriculture (Chapter 3), air pollution (Chapter 4), chemical and hazardous substances (Chapter 5), and consumer safety (Chapter 6). Chapters 7 and 8 take on respectively the changing attitudes towards regulating risk in the US and Europe and the evolving use of scientific evidence to justify risk regulations. Vogel's analysis of the latter is particularly interesting because questions of scientific certainty and the precautionary principle have been so central in discussions about climate change.

But my fear is that this approach might miss some opportunities for fuller analytic explanations. I found myself at times wishing Vogel had considered alternative analytic approaches that begin more with theoretical foundations and work their way up to the empirical phenomenon. Perhaps as a result, I finished the book wanting a deeper explanation for issues such as why public and elite preferences changed in Europe and the US. The framing of environmental problems in US public opinion has shifted over the years, as George Akerlof and others have pointed out. US environmentalists talked during the 1960s about pollution as a source of risk to human health. The 1968 Democratic Party Platform framed environmental protection in terms of its value to humans, saying, "We must assure the availability of a decent environment for living, working and relaxation." Environmentalists shifted in recent years to framing the environment as a moral good to be protected and pollution as a sin to be overcome. The

2000 Democratic Party Platform stated, “We have to do what’s right for our Earth because it is the moral thing to do.” The politics of regulating sin are different than those of regulating risk. If this framing shift has broadly occurred in the US, perhaps the 2010 climate change regulation failed in part not because of differing perceptions about the risks of climate change between Democrats and Republicans but because sins are not easy subjects for legislative compromise.

Once again, David Vogel has given us an important book. It offers a provocative empirical phenomenon and the depth and breadth of Vogel’s analysis rewards the patient and careful reader. Whether or not one agrees with all of the argument in the end, the book shows the importance of social and political factors in shaping the business environment. It’s a vital text for business strategy and comparative public policy scholars and a rewarding one for nearly everyone else.

The Petroleum Triangle: Oil, Globalization, and Terror. By Steve A. Yetiv. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011. 256p. \$35.00.
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The Petroleum Triangle: Oil, Globalization, and Terror is an interesting but also a frustrating book. The book demonstrates the advantages of an in-depth investigation of one case but also illustrates the disadvantages when one pushes the theoretical conclusions drawn from the single case study a little too far. At the same time, Steve Yetiv does a good job of showing how globalizing technologies have changed the global security calculus and how America’s attachment to Middle East oil comes at a high price. Yetiv’s goal is to investigate how Al-Qaeda was able to become such a large threat to the United States and to have such a large impact on America’s view of the world and her behavior. His answer focuses on the interactions between oil and globalization and how these have facilitated transnational terrorism in new and dangerous ways. Yetiv argues that oil is the key enabler of Al Qaeda and other extremists in the Middle East and that the technological tools associated with globalization have allowed Al Qaeda to operate on a global scale that would not have been possible 30 years ago.

Yetiv identifies oil as a multifaceted culprit in the empowerment of Al Qaeda. He points out that oil was a key factor in inspiring the United States to support repressive regimes in the Middle East—thus creating a wellspring of grievance. As I will discuss later, he also argues in contradictory fashion that Al Qaeda’s grievances against the US are a result of a “distorted religious prism” (p. 76). According to Yetiv, oil both spurred a regional anger that Al Qaeda was able to tap into, and served as a key resource in

funding the growth of the Taliban and Al Qaeda in its earlier years and facilitating the creation of a safe haven that was exploited to such a great effect in Afghanistan. Yetiv makes a strong case that the growing interconnection of the world was a key facilitator of Al Qaeda’s power to inflict damage and to market its anti-American message. In other words, oil increased the resources of Al Qaeda and globalization lowered the costs of exploiting those resources to inflict damage and market itself globally. Thus Yetiv argues that the best way for us to understand 9/11 and the impact of Al Qaeda is by understanding the dangerous situation created by mixing Middle East oil with the changes brought by globalization.

Yetiv does a good job of providing evidence for what he calls the “butterfly effect” (p. 189) of globalization and how such things as the internet and air travel facilitated terrorist coordination. While Yetiv focuses primarily on Al Qaeda as the main actor of interest, he also provides very strong evidence of the baleful effects of Saudi Arabia’s oil wealth and its extremist state ideology, which combined to fund the Taliban and the antecedents of Al Qaeda. Yetiv is convincing when he describes the powerful incubation power of oil in the hands of the Saudi government. Yetiv also makes very clear the high costs that the United States has incurred—and will continue to incur—through its dependence and that of its allies on Middle Eastern oil.

Despite these strong points the book also has some important weaknesses. One of the key problems with the book is that Yetiv pushes too hard to sell oil as the primary enabler of terrorism. Al Qaeda was enabled by Saudi funding but other terrorist organizations have been enabled by all sorts of governments drawing on different resources, and moreover, other dangerous terrorist organizations have been able to fund themselves without being dependent on oil or on state governments sustained by oil. As Yetiv himself acknowledges: “Oil money has not been important to the terrorist acts themselves . . . Nor is oil money critical to particular elements of the infrastructure of terrorism . . .” (p. 6). In some ways Yetiv treats oil as the hammer to hit every (theoretical) terrorist nail. This is particularly true when he argues that oil is a key facilitator of WMD terrorism. Yetiv starts to talk about how oil is facilitating nuclear proliferation by states like Iran, but this does not mean that oil as a resource is specifically tied to the danger of nuclear terrorism. Pakistan—a state unlike Iran that already has nuclear weapons but no oil—has a large terrorist problem and serious nuclear security issues of its own. Yetiv conjectures that terrorists could “use oil money to buy nuclear material” (p. 128). True, but terrorists could also use drug or diamond money. Yetiv seems to be trying too hard here. He also seems to be pushing for the key causal factor to be oil when one could make an equally strong argument that the key causal factor in accounting for the empowerment of Al Qaeda was not the oil but the willingness of the state sponsor to use its resources (in this