In each of these cases, what was different was not the actual risks themselves, but rather the public’s perception of them, which in turn helped shape differences in the extent and intensity of political demands to address them.

The politics of protective regulation in Europe have been no different from that of the United States: firms have typically opposed more stringent consumer and environmental regulations. The only difference is that, after 1990, producers became more successful in preventing their adoption in the United States than in Europe

The relative importance of each of these three factors in explaining any particular policy decision or non-decision varies from policy domain to policy domain, and for some of the policies discussed in this book, other factors have also played an important role, which I discuss. But both separately and often in relationship with one another, they provide a useful framework for explaining the shifts in public policies toward a wide range of health, safety, and environmental risks that took place in on both sides of the Atlantic beginning around 1990.

1. Full citation.  
2. Where did/does the author work, what else has s/he written about, and what are her/his credentials?  (This question only has to be answered once for Vogel.)  
3. What are the topics of the text?

In this chapter, Vogel analyzes possible explanations for the differing approaches to governing environmental risk seen in the US and the EU. He attempts to identify the reasons for this policy divergence, but discards several possibilities, including: difference in actual risks, a global game of “catch up”, economic performance and growth rates, global business competition, public attitudes toward the role of government and political systems, and the role of cultural values. He goes on to identify changes in perception of risk and political prominence, political preferences of policy makers, and regulatory policymaking as the three key contributors to transatlantic policy divergence.

4. What is the main argument of the text?

The main argument presented in this chapter is that although a number of factors have contributed to the greater understanding of transatlantic policy divergence, a clear explanation can only be derived from the following three elements: change in political saliency and public risk perception, change in the political preferences of policy makers, and changes in regulatory policy making.

5. Describe at least three ways that the argument is supported.

Vogel supports his argument by first outlining the “puzzle” presented by transatlantic regulatory policy divergence. He follows with descriptions of a variety of potential social, economic, and political causes and provides counterexamples for each. He then goes on to explain the three factors to which he attributes the differences in risk management policy, giving specific examples and quoting other authors to help prove is point. He also mentions that specific case studies are to come, in the upcoming chapters of the book.

6. What three quotes capture the message of the text?

In each of these cases, what was different was not the actual risks themselves, but rather the public’s perception of them, which in turn helped shape differences in the extent and intensity of political demands to address them.

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7. What three questions about environmental risk and precaution does this article leave you with?

Vogel does not go into great detail regarding the role of the media; how do they impact risk management regulation?

What impact, if any, has the rise of social networking had on the way the public and policy makers view environmental risk?

What is the general attitude of US policy makers toward EU policy makers, and vice versa?

8. What three points, details or references from the text did you follow up on to advance your perspective on environmental risk and precaution? (Provide citations, with a brief explanation of what you learned.  One of these should be fully annotated, as your second required reading for each week.)

* Vogel mentions a global environmental index published in 2002 which ranked countries based on their environmental quality. I was interested to see on what grounds these rankings were based. Vogel cites a book, which I could not find online. However, I did find the study mentioned in the book , the *2002 Environmental Sustainability Index* (ESI). I found that countries were ranked based on 20 “indicators”, which included air quality, water quality, reducing population growth, etc. Using these indicators, the study assigned each country and ESI value.

Source:

*Environmental Sustainability Index: An Initiative of the Global Leaders of Tomorrow Environment Task Force, World Economic Forum*. Yale Center for Environmental Law and Policy, 2002. <http://sedac.ciesin.columbia.edu/es/esi/ESI2002_21MAR02tot.pdf>.

* Following this path, I decided to look at what other researchers had to say about this “Environmental Sustainability Index.” I found an article which criticizes the report, and several other sustainable development indices. It claims that and index must consist of three parts: normalization, weighting, and aggregation, and that in these indices, the methods used for normalization and weighting are too subjective, and that the methods used for aggregation fail to take into account basic scientific rules.

Source: Christoph Böhringer, Patrick E.P. Jochem, Measuring the immeasurable — A survey of sustainability indices, Ecological Economics, Volume 63, Issue 1, 15 June 2007, Pages 1-8, ISSN 0921-8009, 10.1016/j.ecolecon.2007.03.008. (<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science> /article/pii/S0921800907002029)