1. Full citation.
   1. Vogel, D. *The Politics of Precaution: Regulating Health, Safety, and Environmental Risks in Europe and the United States*. Princeton Univers. Press, 2012.
2. What are the topics of the text?
   1. The topics of this text include a historical background of environmental policy in the United States and Europe, the strong partisan polarization within the American Federal Government and the strength of the European Union and benefits of such governance.
3. What is the main argument of the text?
   1. This chapter of Vogel’s work attempts to finally shed some light on why the United States and the European Union had experienced significant policy divergence. In his opinion, the cause of the shift can be broken down into two factors: the extent and intensity of the public’s demand for regulations and the interest of policy makers in supplying that demand. Prior to the 1990’s, American risk regulation was backed by the public demand for rectifying environmental backwardness and poor regulations. The post 1990 period showed a shift though in which Americans felt sufficient regulations had been passed and preferred not to alter the status quo. In Europe, failure of the governments to make decisions which protected the people at the expense of economic gains led to a highly vocal population. This translated to a more risk-averse populace in the post 1990 period with the expectations of valuing the safety of the people over economic gains.
4. Describe at least three ways that the argument is supported.
   1. “After peaking around the twentieth anniversary of Earth Day in 1990, public concern about environmental problems began to decline steadily. While in 1991, a record 23 percent of those polled had mentioned pollution of air and water as among the two or three issues about which they personally were most concerned, by 1992 this figure had declines to 16 percent; a year later it stood at 15 percent, and by 1994 it was only 12 percent – an almost 50 percent drop in three years. A survey taken in 1994 reported that 78 percent of Americans now rated the “overall health and quality of the air, water, land and wildlife where respondents lives” as either “excellent” or “good” – a dramatic shift from the widespread public dissatisfaction with environmental conditions reported by public opinion surveys only a few years earlier.”
   2. “In 1990, Republicans and Democrats expressed roughly comparable levels of concern about a wide range of environmental problems including water pollution, air pollution, drinking water pollution, the loss of tropical rainforests, and global warming. But by 2000, Democrats were more likely to be concerned about each of these issues than Republicans….These partisan differences in environmental policy preferences are also reflected in patterns of regulatory policymaking at the state level. Barry Rabe has classified the fifty American states into two categories, based on how many policies each has adopted to address climate change and restrict the growth of greenhouse gas emissions. Of the twenty-six states he classifies as having adopted a “high” number of policies, all but four, namely Arizona, Iowa, Utah, and Texas, are typically Democratic states. By contrast, the only state that falls in his ”low” classification and does not typically vote Republican is Michigan, an unsurprising finding given that the state’s economy is heavily reliant on auto manufacturers.”
   3. “The public’s growing unease with environmental conditions in Europe was linked to a steady stream of environmental disasters. These included the Seveso chemical spill in 1983, the nuclear power plant accident at Chernobyl in 1986, which spread radioactive fallout to the European Union, and a massive chemical spill of toxins into the Rhine River that destroyed half a million fish in four countries that same year. A poll taken in 1986 reported that 52 percent of the German electorate regarded environmental quality as the most important issue facing their nation.”
5. What three quotes capture the message of the text?
   1. “In short, an important part of the explanation for the marked slow-down in the rate at which new, more stringent risk regulation’s enacted by Congress after 1990 was that there was less public demand for them. In effect, the gap between the public’s perception as to what the government needed to do to adequately protect them and what it was actually doing – or had already done – had diminished: after roughly two decades, public policy had finally caught up with the public’s expectations.”
   2. “…Gallup also reported in 2007: “The environment is a latent concern. The American public does not have a sense of urgency about the environmental issues at this time. It is not a hot political issue and does not appear in any meaningful way on any of the Gallup’s open-ended probes of the public’s concerns.” Accordingly, “It is proving harder to rejuvenate environmentalism in post-9/11 America than it was in the early 1980s.” While “Americans are not opposed to policy initiatives aimed at improving the environment…they are not pressing for them at this time.”
   3. “The EU has become “the driving force behind environmental policy across the majority of the continent.” Its highly limited fiscal capacities mean that the EU is essentially a “regulatory state”. Whatever the complaints of European citizens and national politicians about the EU and the discussions among academics about the EU’s “democratic deficit,” its increased role with respect to health, safety, and environmental protection has been strongly supported by most Europeans.”
6. What three questions about environmental risk and precaution does this article leave you with?
   1. What population do these surveys target? How is American satisfaction with the state of the environment measured?
   2. Why did the Obama administration not follow through with environmental legislation after criticizing the Bush administration for the lack of any in their platform?
   3. Is it possible for the US to replicate the EU’s achievements in environmental regulation with its current structure or is this chapter insinuating that the EU’s structure is necessary?
7. 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.)
   1. 1986 Single European Act (SEA)
      1. The SEA’s objective was to add new momentum to the process of the European construction to complete the internal market. The major obstacle to such a task was the unanimity of the Council for passing of legislation, which was addressed in several major ways. First, this act allows the council to make decisions by a qualified majority rather than unanimity in a larger number of cases, specifically those which regard establishing a single market except for taxation, the free movement of persons, and the rights and interests of employed persons.
   2. “Up and Down with Ecology – the “issue-attention cycle”
      1. Full citation.
         1. Downs A. The Public Interest.
      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.)
         1. Anthony Downs is a scholar in public policy and public administration and has been a Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institute in Washington D.C. since 1977. He received a B.A. from Carleton College and a Ph. D. in economics from Stanford University. His most notable books are *An Economic Theory of Democracy* and *Inside Bureaucracy.* In 1985 his work *The Revolution in Real Estate and Finance* predicted a long-term housing slowdown and drop in prices. In 1967 President Lyndon B. Johnson appointed him to the National Commission on Urban Problems.
      3. What are the topics of the text?
         1. The topics of this chapter are the dynamics of the “issue-attention cycle”, which issues are likely to become involved in the cycle and how environmental problems are interpreted by the public and incorporated into this trend.
      4. What is the main argument of the text?
         1. The main argument of the text is that in the United States a very specific trend is seen in that national social issues tend to go through cycles of attention and passing. Determining whether these issues die down relies on a combination of political and social factors in the populace which must be analyzed.
      5. Describe at least three ways that the argument is supported.
         1. “Will the issue of environmental quality then move on into the “post-problem” stage of the cycle?...My answer to this question is: Yes, but not soon, because certain characteristics of this issue will protect it from the rapid decline in public interest typical of many other recent issues. First of all, many kinds of environmental pollution are much more visible and more clearly threatening than most other social problems….Pollution is also likely to be kept in the public eye because it is an issue that threatens almost everyone, not just a small percentage of the population…A third strength of the environmental issues is that much of the “blame” for pollution can be attributed to a small group of “villains” whose wealth and power make them excellent scapegoats…The possibility that technological solutions can be devised for most pollution problems may also lengthen the public prominence of this issue.”
         2. “Another aspect of anti-pollution efforts that will strengthen their political support is that most of the costs can be passed on to the public through higher product prices rather than higher taxes…Still another reason why the cleaner-environment issue may last a long time is that it could generate a large private industry with strong vested interest in continued spending against pollution…Finally, environmental issues may remain at center stage longer than most domestic issues because of their ambiguity.”
         3. “Young people form a highly unstable base for the support of any policy because they have such short-lived “staying power.” For one thing, they do not long enjoy the large amount of free time they possess while in college. Also, as new individuals enter the category of “young people” and older ones leave it, different issues are stressed and accumulated skills in marshaling opinion are dissipated. Moreover, the radicalism of the young has been immensely exaggerated by the media’s tendency to focus attention upon those which extremist views. In their attitudes toward political issues, most young people are not very different from their parents.”
      6. What three quotes capture the message of the text?
         1. A problem must be dramatic and exciting to maintain public interest because news is “consumed” by much of the American public largely as a form of entertainment. As such, it competes with other types of entertainment for a share of each person’s time. Every day, there is a fierce struggle for space in the highly limited universe of newsprint and television viewing time. Each issue vies not only with all other social problems and public events, but also with a multitude of “non-news” items that are often far more pleasant to contemplate.
         2. The combination of alarm and confidence results in part from the strong public pressure in America for political leaders to claim that every problem can be “solved”. This outlook is rooted in the great American tradition of optimistically viewing most obstacles to social progress as external to the structure of society itself. The implication is that every obstacle can be eliminated and every problem solved without any fundamental reordering fo society itself, if only we devote sufficient effort to it. In older and perhaps wiser cultures, there is an underlying sense of irony or even pessimism which springs from a widespread and often confirmed belief that many problems cannot be “solved” at all in any complete sense. Only recently has this more pessimistic view begun to develop our culture.
         3. Many more Americans are now able to participate in certain activities that were formerly available only to a small, wealthy minority…the tremendous increase in smog does not result primarily from larger population, but rather from the democratization of automobile ownership…The elite’s environmental deterioration is often the common man’s improved standard of living.
      7. What three questions about environmental risk and precaution does this article leave you with?
         1. Do you believe the democratization of privilege is a bad thing? Isn’t it inevitable?
         2. Are environmentalists who identify these “wealthy scapegoats” simply pointing fingers or are their criticisms legitimate?
         3. How is cost measured when considering why the public has lost interest in a specific issue due to the cost?