

More than Mere Dead-Weight: The Variety of Ways that Regulators, Innovators, and Entrepreneurs Coproduce Disruptive Innovation

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Introduction

More than Mere Dead-Weight challenges the fundamental assumption among many innovators and entrepreneurs that regulations are nothing but a challenge to be overcome in order to succeed. While it draws on a project ten years in the making, this book's themes are distinctly and increasingly relevant today, particularly in light of the current American presidential administration and the increasing influence of tech on politics and political economy in the United States, Europe, and beyond. The central message of the book highlights the vital constructive contribution of the ordinary workings of public employees, the harmful mantras of the tech industry, and how the ways they choose to interact *can* lead to the dystopias we have recently seen far too many signs of, but they do not *have* to do so. The book provides a variety of alternative models which have before, are now, and can again guide regulators, innovators, and entrepreneurs towards more productive interactions and demonstrate once again how regulation is so much more than merely a dead-weight loss on markets.

Rationale, Scope, and Selling Points

This is *not* a book about artificial intelligence (AI), but it *is* a book that draws upon decades of economic and technology policy to inform our current moment of AI policy discussion. It does not leave these connections implicit for the reader but instead directly applies an intellectual framework developed *before* AI came into the public discussion to an analysis of our AI policy moment. In so doing, it engages with the right (and wrong) steps that policymakers have taken, are taking, would like to take, and may not have even considered.

So this is a book that's *also* about AI, not a book that's *only* about AI. It draws upon, builds upon, and contributes to a long literature on industrial policy, innovation policy, technology policy, and the political economy of production, business, and technology. It places the AI moment in the

context of past (and future) moments of exceptional technological change to dampen the hype and encourage careful consideration of what steps to take next. It comes from an author trained in the epicenter of the technology (Berkeley), who works in the epicenter of the AI boom (San Francisco), and who draws upon a strong background on both the core literatures of political economy and the salient discussions of the tech industry.

I am writing this book because it's a book that I would like to read as a scholar who lives at the intersection of social science, natural science, technology, and industry. As someone who also travels between these spaces, I am also keenly aware that most other participants in these spaces are not participants in *all* these spaces; this book is to help them gain a fuller picture of the discussions around the social and policy implications of technology and innovation.

Intended Readership & Users

More than Mere Dead-Weight is intentionally crafted to demonstrate that common understandings of the relationship between regulation and innovation are unnecessarily limited. As such, it directly addresses folk theory (everyday understandings) as both an object of inquiry and as a conversation to contribute to. The main chapters are written approachably and with frequent concrete examples and careful explanations for a non-expert audience of students, businesspeople, policymakers, and public employees.

However, as it is based on my dissertation research, *More than Mere Dead-Weight* also represents a serious work of scholarship which was approved in May 2023 by four Berkeley scholars of political science, political economy, public administration, and public health. As such, it should be well suited to current debates in the academic literature and policy community as well as courses teaching both historical and contemporary topics in any and all of those fields.

As a work of political economy, *More than Mere Dead-Weight* is intrinsically interdisciplinary and directly applicable to political science, public administration, public policy, and economics courses. With rising interest in political economy through movements such as the Law and Political Economy Project (lpeproject.org) as well as the related fields of economic sociology and economic history, the book should be well suited for adoption in business schools, law schools, sociology departments, and history departments as well. I have already used dissertation manuscript chapters in courses I have taught in economics and political economy departments, and the students (undergrad and masters level) found the writing approachable and informative.

I am fully committed to participating in the marketing of the book through presentations at universities, public seminars, blog articles, op-eds, and short articles targeted at relevant publications. As a frequent consumer of podcasts and audiobooks, I would also be excited to contribute to interviews or an audiobook adaptation as well to help increase the accessibility of the work if that is of interest to your press.

Relationship to Existing Works

More than Mere Dead-Weight adds to a growing literature on the relationship between *thinking* about the political economy of innovation governance and the *actual reality* of the political economy of innovation governance.

More than Mere Dead-Weight employs the method of Bayesian Inference as developed for the social sciences by Tasha Fairfield. The seminal guide to this novel method was recently published by Cambridge University Press in the Strategies for Social Inquiry series as Tasha Fairfield and Andrew E. Charman's *Social Inquiry and Bayesian Inference* (Cambridge, 2022). I developed my own variation on Fairfield's approach in consultation with her prior to the publication of the 2022 Cambridge volume and have presented earlier versions of the dissertation chapters in workshops she has hosted. The current version of the manuscript already reflects Fairfield's latest innovations as well as my own contributions.

Jeffery Ding's *Technology and the Rise of Great Powers: How Diffusion Shapes Economic Competition* (Princeton, 2024) shows the relevance of different understandings of the relationship between innovation and governance to different policy approaches taken by countries such as China and the United States around current and past highly salient technologies. Stylistically, it is the most similar to *More than Mere Dead-Weight* in that it draws on both historical and contemporary evidence of technology governance to develop a theory that challenges status-quo understandings. While my work focuses on a comparative political economy perspective and Ding's adopts an international political economy perspective, both challenge the pernicious assumptions which lead governments to unproductive interactions with the economy, entrepreneurs, and innovators.

James Kwak's *Economism: Bad Economics and the Rise of Inequality* (Pantheon, 2017) provides direct evidence of the harmful influence of what I call the folk model of economic regulation and justifies the need for a book like this one which documents viable alternatives in a systematic manner. It also demonstrates that the topic is relevant to a broad audience as well as a scholarly one.

Steven K. Vogel's *Marketcraft: How Governments Make Markets Work* (Oxford, 2018) demonstrates the market-institutional perspective which forms the underpinning of the analysis in this book which asks not whether markets should be governed but instead observes that all markets *are* governed. This approach has been taken up in later popular audience books such as *Marketcrafters: The 100-Year Struggle to Shape the American Economy* (Simon & Schuster, 2025)

Jacob S. Hacker, Alexander Hertel-Fernandez, Paul Pierson, and Kathleen Thelen's edited volume *The American Political Economy: Politics, Markets, and Power* (Cambridge, 2021) demonstrates the current relevance of political economy perspectives on the United States. *More than Mere Dead-Weight* contributes directly to this growing literature which studies the United States in comparative political economy perspective.

Author's Qualifications

This book is based on my dissertation filed in May 2023 at the University of California, Berkeley in the Political Science Department. It builds on seven years of archival, methodological, and interview work which I completed as a PhD candidate in consultation with experts including my committee: Christopher K. Ansell (Chair), J. Nicholas Ziegler, Steven K. Vogel, and Ann C. Keller as well as Marion Fourcade, Neil Fligstein, John Zysman, and Kathleen Thelen.

For the book project, I intend to add to the existing manuscript a discussion of large language model based artificial intelligence (LLM based AI) as well as revisit the presentation of evidence in the existing cases to increase their accessibility for undergraduate and popular audiences. I have designed and taught classes at the graduate and undergraduate level on the political economy of AI at both the University of San Francisco and Berkeley, participated in USF AI policy discussions, mentored students engaged in research projects about the policy implications of AI, and am a coordinator for the Bay Area Tech Economics Seminar (BATES) series organized between USF and Stanford University around the social science of the tech industry and AI in particular. Based on this preparation, I can quickly leverage immersion in the AI industry into the necessary archival and interview data to add AI as a fourth case to the existing discussions of gene editing, self-driving cars, and electronic health records.

A full description of the intended structure and the changes from the existing dissertation manuscript are detailed in the Table of Contents & Chapter Descriptions section below.

Beyond my direct experience with the subject matter of the book based on three years of pre-qualifying and seven years of PhD candidate work on this project, I have considerable experience in both publishing research and in designing courses based on my expertise. I have published three papers as a primary co-author in peer-reviewed journals on regulation, technology, and pedagogy. In designing and teaching eleven different courses as primary instructor, I have had extensive experience translating my scholarly expertise into accessible insights for both undergraduate and graduate students. My course reviews reflect that students find me to be particularly approachable and my teaching to be particularly accessible as compared to that of other courses they have taken. I am confident that this style will translate well into a book that has scholarly, instructional, and general appeal as I have presented my work to numerous scholarly and general audiences (a full list of conferences and general audience presentations may be found on my website: konradposch.com)

A full CV may be found on my website: konradposch.com

Proposed Length & Illustrations

200,000 Words Total (130,000 Main Text and 70,000 in Appendices, References, etc.)

50 Tables (Black & White, Author Provided)

5 Figures (Black & White, Author Provided)

Table of Contents & Chapter Descriptions

Chapter 1 – Introduction: More than Mere Dead-Weight

The introduction opens with an evocative set of questions about imagined innovations that never arrived and unexpected innovations that changed the world. It then lays out the core argument about the negative character of the folk model of economic regulation and the six alternatives which this book will deductively define and inductively verify. It concludes with a discussion of case selection based on everyday technologies rather than esoteric examples to provide the strongest evidence that alternatives to the folk economic model have before, are now, and can against help entrepreneurs and innovators to see regulators as so much more than merely dead-weight.

Chapter 2 - A Genealogy of Disruptive Innovation and Regulatory Imaginaries: How Disruptive Technological Innovation Cast Regulation as a Villain

This chapter provides a quick but targeted crash course in the history of American industrial and innovation policy since World War 2. It sets the reader up to understand the intellectual history and policy developments that led to the idea of “disruptive innovation” as used in scholarly and popular discussions. It also serves as an intellectual history of the folk economic model.

Chapter 3 - A Deductive Typology of Regulatory Imaginaries: The Variety of Regulatory Imaginaries that Shape how Regulators, Innovators, and Entrepreneurs Coproduce Disruptive Technological Innovation

A core contribution of the volume, this chapter draws upon two influential works in regulation and industrial policy (Stigler 1971’s *The Theory of Economic Regulation* and Streeck 1997’s *Beneficial Constraints*) to develop a deductive typology of regulatory imaginaries that shape innovation happens in practice. A careful discussion is given to how the deductively derived categories align with the existing literature on innovation policy and sets up the reader for the empirical chapters which inductively verify the typology.

Chapter 4 - Someday We’ll Be Safer: Beneficially Constraining Autonomous Vehicle Regulation in the United States & Europe, 2016 to Present

The first empirical case chapter discusses autonomous vehicle (AV or “self driving cars”) regulation in the United States and Europe. It discusses how the disruptive nature of AVs lies in their challenge to existing regulatory structures that separate the regulation of the vehicle and the regulation of the driver. It concludes that both the EU and US have developed regulatory structures that their societies would consider beneficially constraining, even though the EU system is more stringent while the US system is more permissive.

Chapter 5 - Recombinant Pasts and CRISPR Futures: Beneficially Constraining Gene Editing Regulation in the United States & Europe, 1975 to Present

The second empirical case chapter focuses on a classic case from the regulatory literature: gene editing (GE or “GMO”) regulation in the United States and Europe. In the classic analyses of the

case, much is made of how *different* the US Coordinated Framework is from the EU Precautionary Principle in outcome. However, based on my focus in this project on the structural form of regulatory systems (the regulatory imaginary or “inspiring vision”), I draw upon policy documents and elite interview to argue that both systems are structurally attempting to achieve the same thing: beneficial constraints. Beneficial constraints seek to place guardrails against known harms to allow space for innovators to discover unexpected benefits without falling off technologically, socially, and politically dangerous cliff along the way. In applying my framework to a classic case and uncovering an unexpected angle, the GE case allows me to demonstrate the value of regulatory imaginary analysis beyond just new, underdefined, or understudied cases like AVs, EHR, and AI.

Chapter 6 - Innovation Beyond the Imagination of the Market: Catalyzing the Adoption of Electronic Health Records in the United States and Europe, 2009 to 2021

The third empirical case chapter focusses on electronic health records (EHR or “eCharts”) in order to illustrate the most provocative regulatory imaginary from my typology: adoption catalyst. While the transition from paper charts to EHR has been widely discussed in healthcare literatures and occasionally in policy literatures, it has not been widely discussed as an industrial policy or political economy of business case. Nevertheless, in both the EU and US, EHR was used not just to increase efficiency in medical care and recordkeeping but also as a chance to stimulate the information technology industry in a critical moment after the 2008 Global Financial Crisis. It therefore demonstrates how regulation can drive innovation beyond what the market would ‘naturally’ seek, challenging the basic understanding of entrepreneurs as the innovators and regulators as the old guard of established incumbents.

Chapter 7 – Corraling the Vibes Machine: Early Movements towards Beneficial Constraints of Artificial Intelligence in the European Union, 2021 to Present.

New for the book project! In this chapter which has been newly added since the dissertation was filed, I address how my typology of seven regulatory imaginaries can help us to understand about what the European Union has done (and what the US has failed to do) about the most promising and troubling technology of the next decade: artificial intelligence (AI). I open with a discussion of the political economy of the underlying features of AI, stressing the influence of big tech, the distinction between AI Maker firms and AI Taker firms, and the challenges of AI’s physical and economic needs. I then discuss how the EU’s AI Act aims to beneficially constrain the development of AI and what the US’s inaction tells us about how they are approaching this latest technological moment.

Chapter 8 – Conclusion: Beyond the Zero – Economically Beneficial Regulation for Innovation

The conclusion returns to the core claim from the introduction: that innovators, entrepreneurs, and regulators interact to produce disruptive innovations. When they work together well, we get better innovation than we might otherwise expect. When they work together poorly, we get poor outcomes and a great deal of unnecessary and wasteful antagonism. It then takes the next step to

propose that we (as scholars, as innovators, as entrepreneurs, and as regulators) embrace this lesson to topple the narrative of the disruptive innovator who ‘overcomes’ adversity and replace it with a narrative of the co-production of innovation by regulators, entrepreneurs, and innovators. The chapter, and the book, seek to push the discussion of regulation “beyond the zero” of minimizing harms into the positive of maximizing gains.

Works Cited

Appendix A: Specific Bayesian Type Validation Evidence Selection and Analysis Criteria for this Project

A methodological appendix discussing the novel method of incorporating archival evidence into the analysis. A paper on the method is under development for *Political Analysis* and is intended to be published contemporaneously with the book.

Appendix B: Supplement to Chapter 4 – Explicit Bayesian Type Validation (BayesTV) of How Confident Can We Be that Perpetual Guidance in the US and Regulation (EU) 2022/1426 represent a Beneficial Constraints Imaginary for Autonomous Vehicles Regulation

The specific long-form application of the Bayesian Type Validation method to the evidence from Chapter 4. The chapter discusses the findings and insights, but the appendix illustrates the full reasoning for future scholars who wish to engage with the details of the method and analysis.

Appendix C: Supplement to Chapter 5 – Explicit Bayesian Type Validation (BayesTV) of How Confident Can We Be that the Coordinated Framework (US) and Precautionary Principle (EU) represent a Beneficial Constraints Imaginary for Gene Editing Regulation

The specific long-form application of the Bayesian Type Validation method to the evidence from Chapter 5. The chapter discusses the findings and insights, but the appendix illustrates the full reasoning for future scholars who wish to engage with the details of the method and analysis.

Appendix D: Supplement to Chapter 6 – Explicit Bayesian Type Validation (BayesTV) of How Confident We Can Be that HITECH (US) and Directive 2011/24/EU represent an Adoption Catalyst Imaginary for Electronic Health Records Regulation

The specific long-form application of the Bayesian Type Validation method to the evidence from Chapter 6. The chapter discusses the findings and insights, but the appendix illustrates the full reasoning for future scholars who wish to engage with the details of the method and analysis.

Appendix E: Supplement to Chapter 7 – Explicit Bayesian Type Validation (BayesTV) of the EU AI Act of 2004 and Proposed US Policies

The specific long-form application of the Bayesian Type Validation method to the evidence from Chapter 7. The chapter discusses the findings and insights, but the appendix illustrates the full reasoning for future scholars who wish to engage with the details of the method and analysis.

Proposed Timeline

Initial Drafts of Chapters 1,2,3,4,5,6 and 8 as well as Appendices A,B,C,D are already completed as part of my dissertation. I intend to review and revise them to better suit a broader audience of scholars as well as the public, but the research, analysis, and initial prose are complete. The revised existing chapters will be ready by December 2026.

Chapter 7 and Appendix E are in early stages and are the major additional work to be completed. I anticipate a draft of these by March 2027.

With reviews completed in Late Spring 2027, I can have revisions completed during Summer 2027 for final publication in Late Summer/Early Fall 2027.