

IEUSS REVIEW OF BOOKS

Wallace, H, Pollack M.A, Roederer Rynning, C., and Young, A.R. (Eds.)
***Policy-Making in the European Union*. 8th Ed. Oxford University Press,**
2020.

I (Neill Nugent) must have been one of the first EU specialists to start using this book as a teaching text when it was initially published in the late 1970s. I adopted it because, unlike, other texts then on the market, which focused primarily on the EU's institutional arrangements, this new book was mainly concerned with what the EU actually did in policy terms. It did so by drawing on the expertise of numerous recognized EU specialists across the policy spectrum to produce a truly path-breaking book. The other reviewer (Laurie Buonanno) has required this text in the U.S. for advanced undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in a seminar on EU policymaking.

This long-established, highly regarded, and pioneering text on EU policymaking is now in its eighth edition. Like its predecessors, it has as its core aim to examine the most significant spheres of internal and external EU policies within empirical, conceptual, and comparative settings.

After over a decade of policy transfers from member states to the EU level, a working assumption of the book is that the EU today is less than a state but far more than an international organization. As such, the EU is distinctive both in being able to both adapt and implement policies that go the heart of its member states and also in that it is not only an important forum for international relations but is also an increasingly significant actor in them.

The eighth edition displays all the merits of its predecessors and has been as updated as possible to incorporate reflections on the implications for the EU of the likes of Brexit (which was the first occasion a member state had ever voluntarily left the EU), the 2015 migration crisis, transatlantic relations during the Trump Administration, and (some) coverage of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The book consists of 20 chapters divided into three parts. Part I (four chapters) contains an overview, theory, policy processes, and policy modes. Policy processes can be seen as being (mostly) grouped into five main policymaking types or modes: the Community method, the regulatory mode, the distributive mode, policy coordination, and intensive transgovernmentalism. Part II is comprised of fifteen policy chapters. These chapters have been thoroughly

updated and two new, and much-needed chapters are included: one on development policy and the other on digital policy. Part III, Conclusions, consists of one chapter (Pollack, Roederer-Rynning, Young) that considers EU policymaking trends and contemporary challenges (politicization, Brexit, geopolitical shifts, and the COVID-19 pandemic). The editor/authors conclude that the Community method is in decline and the regulatory policy mode “remains the dominant model for many issue areas, and arguably the predominant mode for the Union as a whole” (p. 474), but that the policy chapters demonstrate “the increasing use of multiple methods of governance *within individual issue areas*” (emphasis in original), even within the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), a policy long associated with the Community method.

All books on the EU are, of course, subject to being outdated by unfolding “real world” events. In four respects this book was especially hard hit in this regard. First, the editors explain that the COVID-19 pandemic “reached Europe just after the manuscript had been submitted,” which resulted in it not being possible for contributors to log and explain the (often) differing reactions of the member states – although “the contributors, where relevant, inserted discussions of the immediate impact of the pandemic on EU policies and the EU’s initial policy responses during the copy-editing phase” (p. xxxiii). So, for example, Brigid Laffan and Johannes Linder in *Chapter 9, The Budget*, do a nice job of explaining the innovative *NextGenerationEU* pandemic recovery instrument, even if the 2021-2027 MFF had not been finalized when their chapter was written. Nevertheless, the substantial policy activities during the COVID-19 pandemic concerning the European Health Union, the European Medicines Agency (EMA), and EU health policy are not covered in this edition. Second, the book was published before the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the European Council’s decision to grant Ukraine candidacy status, and NATO expansion. Third, an examination of major policy priorities of the von Leyen Commission concerning discrimination and inclusion (ethnic, gender, LGBTQI, race, religion, immigrant origins, disabilities) would have strengthened this edition. And fourth, while the policy impacts of European populism/Euroscepticism are considered (notably in the chapters dealing with EMU and migration), we would have liked to see more direct consideration of this trend’s impact on contemporary European policymaking. If the book remains on its approximately five-year publication cycle, 2025 is a long time to wait for these subjects to be covered in more detail.

A criticism that is often made of edited books is that the chapters within them are of varying quality. Such cannot be said of this book, not least given that the revised team of editors and most of the new contributors are highly prominent figures in their respective academic fields.

We consider the current edition of *Policy-Making in the European Union* an essential book for anyone teaching or researching the EU and highly recommend adding the book to one's personal collection.

Laurie Buonanno
SUNY Buffalo State

Neill Nugent
Manchester Metropolitan University (Emeritus)

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