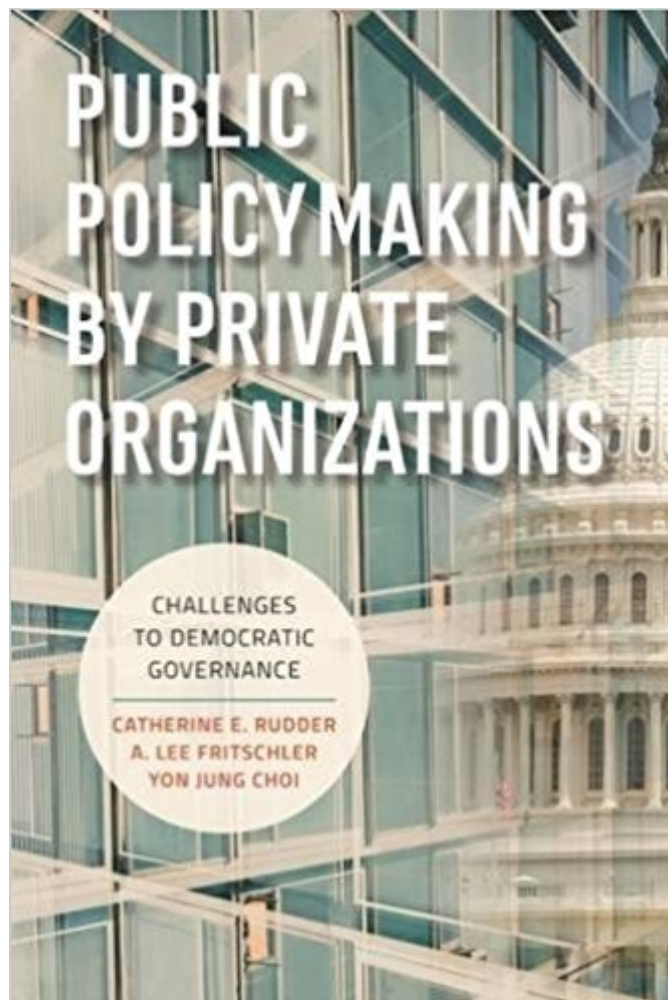




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Public Policymaking By Private Organizations: Challenges To Democratic Governance



Synopsis

How private groups increasingly set public policy and regulate lives—with little public knowledge or attention. From accrediting doctors and lawyers to setting industry and professional standards, private groups establish many of the public policies in today's advanced societies. Yet this important role of nongovernmental groups is largely ignored by those who study, teach, or report on public policy issues. *Public Policymaking by Private Organizations* sheds light on policymaking by private groups, which are not accountable to the general public or, often, even to governments. This book brings to life the hidden world of policymaking by providing an overview of this phenomenon and in-depth case studies in the areas of finance, food safety, and certain professions. Far from being merely self regulation or self-governance, policymaking by private groups, for good or ill, can have a substantial impact on the broader public; from ensuring the safety of our home electrical appliances to vetting the credit-worthiness of complex financial instruments in the run-up to the 2008 financial crisis. From nonprofit associations to multinational corporations, private policymaking groups are everywhere. They certify professionals as competent, establish industry regulations, and set technical and professional standards. But because their operations lack the transparency and accountability required of governmental bodies, these organizations comprise a policymaking territory that is largely unseen, unreported, uncharted, and not easily reconciled with democratic principles. Anyone concerned about how policies are made—and who makes them—should read this book.

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Customer Reviews

Rudder, Fritschler and Choi raise the curtain on a 5th estate in public policy making. The leverage of private organizations making public policy is an issue about which all should be aware; students and practitioners should recognize this increasingly central aspect of how public policy is made, including for higher education. Richard Legon is the President of the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and CollegesA significant contribution to the field because it brings into focus a little understood aspect of the very complex world of governance the role of private organizations. Charles F. Bingman, Fellow, Center for the Study of American Government, Johns Hopkins University

How private groups increasingly set public policy and regulate lives with little public knowledge or attention. From accrediting doctors and lawyers to setting industry and professional standards, private groups establish many of the public policies in today's advanced societies. Yet this important role of nongovernmental organizations is largely ignored by those who study, teach, or report on public policy issues. Public Policymaking by Private Organizations sheds light on policymaking by private groups, which are unaccountable to the general public and often even to governments. The authors provide an overview of this phenomenon as well as in-depth case studies in the areas of finance, food safety, and certain professions. They find that policymaking by private groups, for good or ill, has substantial impact on the broader public; from ensuring the safety of home appliances to vetting the creditworthiness of individuals or complex financial instruments. Private governance comes in so many forms that identifying it can be particularly difficult and perhaps impossible for those who are not already on the alert for it. Ranging from nonprofit associations to multinational corporations, private policymaking groups are everywhere. They certify professionals, establish industry regulations, and set technical and professional standards. Without the transparency required of governmental bodies, these organizations comprise a policymaking territory that is largely unseen, unreported, uncharted, and not easily reconciled with democratic principles. As such, that territory demands to be fully explored, documented, and understood. The goal is to recognize private governance, to see it in its multiple forms, and to make the case that excluding it from the field of public policy gives short shrift to a full understanding of the policymaking universe and the reach of democratic aspirations. Anyone concerned about how policies are made and who makes them should read this book.

Important piece for anyone trying to get a bigger picture on all of the factors influencing our economy. Complex subject presented in a very readable fashion.

Who knew non-governmental groups had so much power!? This book is MUST reading for anyone interested in public affairs and how our so-called democracy really works. Enlightening but a little scary.

Lots of detail, but very well written, so it was a relatively easy read. Authors point out huge quantity of private institutions that effect credentialing, food inspection, and financial regulation at many levels, etc. Fairly impartial in discussing advantages and disadvantages of private world versus public world regulation. Leans towards the government but in a discreet and respectful manner. An easy and valuable exposition of important public issues generally ignored in the past.

This slim volume shines a light on the growing number of private organizations making public policy. The research is impeccable and the analysis even handed. It is a welcome addition to the ongoing national debate on the erosion of our democracy. The authors provide robust examples that detail how private policymaking works and the impact it has on the rest of us. It is a rare example of original scholarship in the area of public policy. The authors conclude by saying that "...private governance needs to be seen. Making it visible is the work of scholars, specialists in think tanks, and the serious press" I couldn't agree more. Let us hope that others continue to shed a light on this dangerous trend.

That professional associations in various fields set standards that are recognized as well by government regulators is reasonably well known, or at least becomes better known where violations are publicized or the associations, or the regulators, fall down on the job. But so much of this work passes under the radar, that how widespread is the practice, in so many areas of the economy, comes as a revelation when you pick up this book. The analysis is a deep dive into several significant areas of concern, as well as into public and politicians' attitudes that create the situation described. The authors have some suggestions, but the American way is not to act on them until something goes terribly wrong.

This is a much needed book detailing and explaining the working of many of the private standard

setting organizations. While I cannot attest to the accuracy of all the research, those organizations of which I have personal knowledge are properly portrayed. This book is well organized and well written as we have come to expect of any of Dr. Fritschler's works.

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