
Preface

Editing the *International Handbook on Informal Governance* has been both demanding and rewarding in a number of ways. Without the constraint of having to limit ourselves to the usual 10–12 book chapters, but instead being able to start with the ambition to include *all* the important authors that have been writing on this subject, implied great freedom in commissioning contributions for the handbook. But the global reach of this project, taking us beyond our usual ‘comfort zone’ of studying European Union politics, also required new research. The result of ‘going global’ (building on the much narrower foundations of Christiansen and Piattoni’s earlier *Informal Governance in the European Union*), allowed – and forced – us to look at the practices in other parts of the world, within global regimes and at the national, local and regional levels. In the process, we have been struck ourselves by both the extent of the work done on informal practices globally, and the diversity of approaches and definitions with which the subject is approached. In selecting and organising the contributions to this handbook, our aim has been to do justice to this range of work being done on informal governance, while at the same time demonstrating the opportunities for further systematic enquiry into phenomena that are too often regarded as elusive or are just being ignored.

The scope and the size of this project also means that more thanks are due than for an ordinary book project. First of all, we owe thanks to Alex O’Connell at Edward Elgar Publishing, who commissioned this volume and who has been a constant source of support during the entire editing process. One could not wish for more understanding and flexibility from a publisher when attempting to bring together such a large number of distinguished scholars. In Maastricht, we could not have done our job as editors without the tremendous assistance we had from several quarters. Josine Polak, Claudia Engelmann and Katharina Dietz not only provided, in turn, excellent research assistance – helping us to identify key authors and potential contributors – but also meticulous project management in making sure the ball kept rolling (and rolling in the right direction) during the many months of this book project. Katharina Dietz also completed the mammoth task of formatting the entire manuscript for submission. Dorothee Pass at the European Institute of Public Administration, and Claudia Bochnia and Laura Gärtner – participants in Thomas’s BA Honours Seminar at Maastricht University – also made valuable

contributions to the research that needed to be done at various stages. Finally, our biggest thanks go to our authors, who have been incredibly generous with their time and their understanding. From first contact to final manuscript submission this project took – inevitably perhaps – much longer than intended, and we are grateful both to those who, sometimes repeatedly, agreed to revise their contributions in order to address our concerns, as well as to those who had delivered their chapter early and waited patiently while the book manuscript was being completed.

We hope that they, as well as the reader, are not only satisfied with the final outcome, but will consider this handbook a valuable resource for their future academic work.

The Editors
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