Introduction

Michael Zürn, Sonja Wälti and Henrik Enderlein[1]

I.1 INTRODUCTION

Scholarship on multi-level governance has developed into one of the most innovative themes of research in political science and public policy. From 2000 to 2009, multi-level governance has been a central topic of 150 articles in academic journals, with a steady 15 to 20 articles coming out every year.[2] Striking is how research on multi-level governance has broadened over time and spilled over into many different substantive areas. While seven journals featured articles on multi-level governance in 2000, publications about multi-level governance appeared in 15 different journals in 2009, many of which report on different policy fields such as planning and the environment.

Aside from scholarship on European integration, the multi-level governance vocabulary has spread to subfields such as comparative politics, international relations, public policy, political economy, public administration and normative political theory. Multi-level governance has helped scholars of vastly different research traditions; methodological foci, policy interests and geographic specializations develop strikingly similar concepts when researching phenomena beyond the centralized territorial state. Although often labeled differently, their contributions have produced similar insights which point to an interplay between institutions that are differentiated in a functional (as opposed to segmented) fashion. As a result, multi-level governance has contributed to reconnecting somewhat autonomous subfields in political science.

This Handbook takes stock of the vast array of multi-level governance theory and research developed in the subfields of political science and public policy. We have asked the contributors to report on the ways in which their fields of specialization have been or may be affected by multi-level governance, how the related concepts and terminology are used, and how the developments in their field may in turn affect the conceptualization of multi-level governance. This Handbook starts in Part I by introducing different theoretical and conceptual approaches to multi-level governance. It then moves on in Part II to offer a closer look at the use of multi-level governance in the domestic context, thereby reviewing both origins and developments of theories on (comparative) federalism and their multiple linkages to multi-level governance. Part III looks at European integration recognizing that its unique setting served as the key catalyst in the development of multi-level approaches, followed by Part IV that chronicles the spread and use of multi-level governance in other parts of the world. In Part V we shift our attention to global governance. The Handbook concludes in Part VI with a cross-cutting presentation of six policy fields and instruments affected by multi-level governance, including social policy, environmental policy, economic policy, international taxation, standard setting and policing.

This Introduction sets the stage by presenting a common definition and analytical framework that has served as a guide for many of the contributing authors, before

focusing on the central themes and concepts that the contributors report as having marked multi-level governance innovations in the various subfields.

I.2 THE CONCEPT OF MULTI-LEVEL GOVERNANCE

Is it useful to analyse federal political systems, the European Union, other world regions and even global governance under one conceptual roof? More importantly, is it possible? It is useful because, while multi-level governance has helped reconnect increasingly separate fields of political science and public policy, that cross-fertilization will remain limited without a common vocabulary and a reasonably unified conceptual take. It is possible because not only has the terminology become increasingly similar across subfields, the research questions have too. Under what conditions do multi-layered institutional arrangements yield effective regulations and compliance? Which type of hierarchical order and instruments fosters compliance? Is enforcement across governance levels possible? What roles do non-governmental 'spheres of authority' and private actors play in such governance arrangements? How is it possible to maintain representative and democratic accountability in such governance structures? What role do constituent units play within and beyond federations; and what role are nation states to play in global governance structures? In each case, (how) does the concept of sovereignty need to be redefined?

We suggest using the term 'governance' generically to denote the sum of regulations brought about by actors, processes as well as structures and justified with reference to a public problem (see Benz 2005; Mayntz 2005; Zürn 2005; Schuppert 2007). First, governance encompasses the sum of regulations, including policies, programs and decisions designed to remedy a public problem via a collective course of action (minimum wage policy, for example, is understood as a component of labor market governance). Second, a problem is public when the participating actors need to claim to act in the name of a collective interest or the common good. While this definitional component excludes private solutions to private problems – that is, pure market transactions to purchase goods or services – it does not exclude private solutions to public problems (see Ostrom 1990). At the same time, the reference to the public good does not require that there are actors who pursue the public good or that all governance arrangements in fact foster the public good. In our definition, it is only the justificatory use of the concept of the public good that qualifies it as governance. For example, while wage bargaining can be seen as a private market transaction between a firm and its workers, the negotiations, and possibly the outcomes, may be part of a welfare maximizing or equity enhancing economic policy strategy. When this is the case, the actors involved typically argue in the name of the common good that distinguished governance from pure market transactions.

Third, governance encompasses the actors and processes that make up a collective course of action, including the political negotiations, coalition building, lobbying, persuasion and threats that accompany the policymaking and implementation process. Any collective actor, public or private, can be party to these processes. We expect public actors to be commonly present, and indeed often dominant. However, a governance arrangement composed solely of private collective actors – such as corporate governance or associative governance – is conceivable. The aforementioned governance content helps

us distinguish between private governance for private purposes and private governance aimed at solving public problems. For example, a corporate social responsibility agreement between private firms falls into the latter category if the participating stakeholders practice it in the name of the common good.

Lastly, governance encompasses structures, including the comparatively stable institutional, socio-economic and ideational parameters as well as the historically entrenched actor constellations that shape policy processes in a particular context. In order to proceed in defining multi-level governance, it is useful to recall Carl Joachim Friedrich's inclusive definition of multi-tiered structures in federal systems: 'We have federalism only if a set of political communities coexist and interact as autonomous entities, united in a common order with some autonomy of its own. No sovereign can exist in a federal order system; autonomy and sovereignty exclude each other in such a political order . . . . No one has the last word' (Friedrich 1968, p. 7). The multi-level aspect can be seen here as primarily specifying the nature of governance structures. Yet, Friedrich also saw federalism as an adaptive political process rather than an 'iron constitutional principle' (ibid.). His definition thus emphasizes the ongoing interplay between different autonomous entities without assigning sovereignty to any one of them, as do scholars examining multi-level governance today. Regarding actors, too, his understanding differs from traditional state and government-centered perspectives and is indicative of a non-hierarchical understanding of governance. However, by depicting the autonomous entities as 'political communities,' Friedrich implies that the constituent units of a federal polity are local and subnational general-purpose jurisdictions. In contrast, with our governance definition in mind, we claim that multi-level systems may be also composed of non-political, functional jurisdictions whose authority is limited to specific tasks. By the same token, our definition also includes multi-level spheres of authority dominated by private actors.

Broadening the definition of multi-level governance to include functional jurisdictions and private actors is conceptually and empirically interesting; and it is novel compared to both the concept of governance and that of federalism.

It remains to be defined what constitutes a level. According to Friedrich, the decisive criterion for a level to exist is autonomy, which means one level's legitimate decision cannot be reversed by other levels without triggering a political, institutional or even a constitutional crisis. Thus, a meaningful level must be legitimized and capable to govern, with some degree of autonomy in one or more policy areas. Autonomy within the nation state has traditionally been equated with various degrees and forms of federalism. Aside from the irreversibility and roughly dual nature of power-sharing between the central (federal) and the subnational level, federalism places citizens in a Russian-doll-like 'set of nested jurisdictions, where there is one and only one relevant jurisdiction at any particular territorial scale' (Marks and Hooghe 2004, p. 16). Significant variation may exist in the degree of centralization or decentralization, in the degree of interlocking between levels, and in the symmetry or asymmetry of powers jurisdictions may enjoy at any given level.

Autonomy at levels beyond the nation state, where policies can be shaped by means of conventions or supranational organizations such as dispute settlement organs and often including private bodies, can be defined in much the same way. For it to be a distinct level, an international body must enjoy some autonomy that compels individual

nation states to comply with institutional rule. Individual states have no institutionalized legitimacy to veto or disregard a decision, or at least not all states do.

Besides decision autonomy, a level of its own requires a certain degree of organizational identification on the part of those who govern a given level. For example, those who decide at the subnational level or in the name of an international organization must have their primary identification with this organization and must see their purpose in serving the community at that level. In other words, there must be a level-specific understanding of the collective good.

The picture we have drawn so far of different governance levels emphasizes the scope of authority at each level. While this depiction helps to highlight the distribution (and reallocation) of policy competencies across different levels – for example, education policies governed at the local level, university policy governed at the subnational level, defense policy governed at the national level, trade and environmental policy governed at the supranational or global level – it fails to capture the complexity of how jurisdictions and levels connect, interact and, most notably, overlap. It is this interconnectedness of decision arenas that sets multi-level governance apart from the more restrictive definitions of federalism or decentralization.

We can now define multi-level governance as a set of general-purpose or functional jurisdictions that enjoy some degree of autonomy within a common governance arrangement and whose actors claim to engage in an enduring interaction in pursuit of a common good. Such a governance arrangement need not be engrained constitutionally; rather, it can be a fluid order engaged in an adaptive process. However, it is useful to distinguish between those arrangements composed of general-purpose jurisdictions, to which we refer as multi-level polity, and those composed of (overlapping) functional jurisdictions, which we term multi-level regime (see Zürn, Chapter 5 in this volume) This builds on the distinction by Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks (2003, 2004, pp. 16–17) between two ideal types of multi-level governance arrangements. What the authors call Type I describes a general-purpose governance arrangement with a limited number of non-overlapping jurisdictional boundaries at a limited number of levels. Such a governance arrangement follows a relatively stable system-wide architecture. This ideal-type includes, but may not be limited to, federal polities. In contrast, Type II describes a complex, fluid patchwork of innumerable, overlapping and functionally specialized jurisdictions. This governance structure is task-specific and thus not constitutionalized.

We assume a certain durability to distinguish it from mere issue networks emerging across governance levels. We also assume that its actors pursue (or claim to pursue) a common good to distinguish multi-level governance from multi-tiered corporate governance structures with purely private aims. The common good can pertain to any public purpose ranging from tending to common property resources to regulating labor markets or coordinating planning and development efforts. Hierarchies may play a role but are necessarily limited by the autonomy of the other jurisdictions and levels. The decision-making competencies may be shared by many different public and private actors across different levels rather than monopolized by one central actor (see also Schmitter 2004, p. 49). Institutionally speaking, no one has the last word.

This multi-dimensional definition not only delimits what is and what is not multi-level governance but also encourages the development of more differentiated typologies. One can distinguish multi-level governance according to the number of jurisdictions or levels, or the number and type of actors. Are only public actors involved, or does the governance structure include private actors? One may differentiate constitutionalized systems with formal, but limited, hierarchies from adaptive, more or less informal, networks. Moreover, the relationship between jurisdictions depends on the degree to which decision-making powers are overlapping or concurrent. Another underlying dimension is the scope: aside from the distinction between multi-level polities and multi-level regimes, of interest is also to what extent a governance arrangement involves mainly private rather than public actors. Based on these analytic dimensions, a more elaborate typology could provide a helpful heuristic tool to foster comparisons across different areas of research on multi-level governance.

I.3 MULTI-LEVEL GOVERNANCE AS AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO POLITICAL SYSTEMS

Research on multi-level governance has spurred innovation in at least three main subfields of political science: European integration, comparative federalism and international relations. In each of these subfields, multi-level governance has been applied in roughly two different ways. On the one hand, scholars have used multi-level governance as a theory from which they derive falsifiable hypotheses and test propositions, often calling on rational choice, to explain policymaking and its outcomes in a multi-level context. Notable examples include work on fiscal federalism (see Geys and Konrad, Chapter 2 in this volume), the theory of 'joint decision traps' in poorly designed multi-level systems (see Scharpf, Chapter 4 in this volume) and the theory of two-level games (see Mayer, Chapter 3 in this volume). On the other hand, scholars have relied on multi-level governance as a conceptual device to grasp the functioning of newly emerging and mostly national borders transcending spheres of authority in order to explore and understand new polities and eventually develop a full-scale theory. Prominent examples are the conceptualization of the European Union as a multi-level governance system (see Benz, Chapter 13 in this volume), attempts to conceptualize global governance as multi-level politics (see Zürn, Chapter 5 in this volume) and comparative analyses of federalism (see Stein and Turkewitsch, Chapter 11, Braun, Chapter 10 and Wälti, Chapter 27 in this volume). We will review some of the key innovations and findings in each subfield before detailing the contents of this Handbook.

I.3.1 Innovation in the Study of European Integration

In the early 1990s, multi-level governance emerged as a new approach in the analysis of the European integration process that sought to extend its perspective beyond the intergovernmental or supranational perspectives through the inclusions of additional institutional layers. In the early 1990s, Gary Marks described 'the emergence of multi-level governance, a system of continuous negotiation among nested governments at several territorial tiers . . . , as the result of a broad process of institutional creation and decision reallocation that has pulled some previously centralized functions of the state up to the supranational level and some down to the local/regional level' (Marks 1993, p. 392). This perspective marked a move away from focusing on European integration as either

driven by negotiations among states (intergovernmentalism) or by international institutions (supranationalism). This research brought in findings from comparative federalism and depicted the European Union as a unique (quasi-federal) system characterized by a distinctive interconnection among multiple levels of governance (for example, Scharpf 1988, 1999; Börzel and Hösli 2003). Subsequent research on multi-level governance paid close attention not only to the increasingly independent role of European-level actors, the strengthening operation of subnational actors in both the national and the supranational arena, and the continuing upward and downward dispersion of power within the European polity (Marks and Hooghe 2004), but also on the 'interconnected rather than nested' political arenas (Hooghe and Marks 2001, p. 4).

Research on European integration also brought about a focus on new actors, both state and non-state actors. By focusing on horizontal and vertical interactions among state and non-state actors and emphasizing the dynamics of 'power-sharing between levels of government' to better understand European integration (Benz and Eberlein 1999, p. 329). In line with neo-functionalism – or arguably in replacing it (George 2004, p. 112) – its central claim was that the European Commission could form coalitions with subnational public sector actors, thus playing an independent role and circumventing national executives (Hooghe 1996, p. 93). As Benz and Eberlein (1999, p. 329) put it, the rise of the regional level has opened 'viable escape routes from potential deadlock' (see also Bauer and Börzel, Chapter 16 in this volume). If this is the case – or rather, when this is the case – pure intergovernmental dynamics are no longer a credible explanation for policy change.

The main conceptual finding from the research on the European integration process is quite simply that collectively binding decisions are achievable without a hierarchically superior authority, even if those decisions impose losses to some of the actors involved in the joint decision process (see Benz, Chapter 13 in this volume). In trying to explain this finding, most scholars, one way or another, rely on the multi-level approach. What remains a key question is whether the European Union will preserve its *sui generis* character or instead develop into a federation-like polity with its own parliamentary structure (see Rittberger, Chapter 15 in this volume) and own party system (see Hix, Chapter 14 in this volume). Comparative regionalism has emerged recently to challenge this assumption. Comparisons across different processes of regional integration help to identify the differences and commonalities between them. The integration processes in North America (see Sbragia, Chapter 17 and Clarkson, Chapter 18 in this volume), in Asia (see Schreurs, Chapter 20 in this volume) and in post-Soviet Eurasia (see Obydenkova, Chapter 19 in this volume) are clearly different from the European experience, yet prove comparable.

I.3.2 Innovations in the Study of Federal Polities

At the domestic level, equally interesting trends are visible. Earlier definitions saw federalism as 'a political organization in which the activities of government are divided between regional governments and a central government in such a way that each kind of government has activities on which it makes final decisions' (Riker 1975, p. 101). European integration scholars have always rejected this definition because it hinges on an unrealistic delineation of the scope of authority at the central and subnational levels,

and because they have found it virtually impossible to identify the 'highest' level of government in any policy field. Even the term 'confederation,' which is frequently used when 'constituent units join efforts to create a common government that has very limited and well-defined powers and is fiscally and electorally dependent on them' (Beramendi 2007, p. 5), fails to fully account for the multi-level character of current governance practices. Comparative federalism scholars have been more successful at categorizing federal systems in these terms but they, too, have struggled with the complexities of overlapping authority and tasks (see Elazar 1991; Watts 1999).

Multi-level governance has made several innovative contributions to the comparative study of federal systems. First of all, new levels of government shifted into view. Especially in European federal systems such as Germany and Switzerland, multi-level governance points to the increasingly significant interplays between different domestic and supranational governance levels (see Braun, Chapter 10 in this volume). Comparable patterns are conceivable in other parts of the world such as the USA and Canada (see Stein and Turkewitsch, Chapter 11 in this volume). At the same time, multi-level governance research brought a renewed interest in subnational units, departments and urban areas. The subnational levels are seen as 'polycentric' governance arrangements (for example, Hall and Pain 2006) or as 'functional overlapping and competing jurisdictions' (Frey and Eichenberger 1999) that play an important role within a multi-level context (see Sellers 2002).

Second, multi-level governance opened the door for federalism scholars to consider federal systems not only as more or less centralized polities or as being characterized by a certain distribution of authority and resources, but also as driven by varying patterns of interaction. Thus, questions have shifted from the study of federal constitutions to the interplay among actors at multiple governmental tiers and, therefore, to the investigation of such features as the participation of subnational units (see Swenden, Chapter 6 in this volume), parties (see Jeffery, Chapter 8 in this volume) and organized interests (see Hassel, Chapter 9 in this volume). The field of international standard setting (see Büthe and Mattli, Chapter 30 in this volume), for example, demonstrates multi-level interplay between private and public actors in international policymaking. This actor-centered take on federalism contributed to the revitalization of comparative federalism research including a wide variety of federal and non-federal systems (Braun 2000; Keman 2000; Wachendorfer-Schmidt 2000; Wälti 2004).

Third, the focus on multi-level governance spurred an increased attention to individual policy areas and policy performance. Comparative research on economic performance, the political economy of federalism and fiscal federalism took center-stage due to the crucial role of decentralization in promoting economic development and good governance across the globe (see Beramendi 2007; see Rodden 2007 for an overview of the literature; see also Hallerberg, Chapter 7 and Enderlein, Chapter 28 in this volume). Fiscal federalism developed two key prescriptions for effective governance across multiple levels (see Geys and Konrad, Chapter 2 in this volume). First, it suggests a causal link between decentralization and higher overall efficiency (Tiebout 1956; Weingast 1995; Oates 1999, p. 1122). Second, and as a consequence, it advocates a clear separation ('dual sovereignty') between different levels of revenues and expenditures, which should be allocated according to the 'principle of subsidiarity' (ibid.). A similar claim was put forward by Olson (1969) with the principle of 'fiscal equivalence,' which is to prevent

free-riding among jurisdictions and their beneficiaries by aligning the geographical scope of government benefits with their financing. These claims have been called into question by the practical workings of multi-tiered fiscal frameworks, which are in reality often characterized by intertwined patterns of revenue and expenditure sharing and a blurred separation or overlap of authority between governance levels.

I.3.3 Multi-level Governance and Global Governance

Although multi-level governance and global governance have developed largely alongside each other, they have greatly benefited from one another. The two areas have met because of the understanding of a political world in which the separation between domestic and international politics has lost significance.

The analysis of so-called two-level games, a notion introduced into the field of international relations by Robert Putnam (1988), provided the starting point for the engagement between multi-level governance and global governance (see Mayer, Chapter 3 in this volume). In conceptualizing national executives as brokers between the international level and the domestic level, a new line of analysis was born (see also Evans et al. 1993; Zangl 1999). It was shown how national government leaders can use the international level to shift the domestic balance (Moravcsik 1994; Wolf 2000). These powerful yet informal networks raised the question whether such governance arrangements are legitimate and accountable to the voter and public (Zürn 1996). The two-level metaphor helped to overcome the false dichotomy between a mere interstate system (intergovermentalism) and a world state (supranationalism). It triggered research on the interaction between different governmental levels beyond the nation state and provided new avenues to explore governance along the domestic-foreign frontier (Rosenau 1997).

The analysis of international institutions continued. After two decades of research on international regimes (see Krasner 1983; Keohane 1984; Rittberger 1993), we can say that international rules and norms in connection with the respective program activities of international agencies exert a significant influence on international relations (see Breitmeier et al. 2006). Against the background of this research, the concept of global governance gained importance. This perspective looks at the sum of international regulations and goes beyond the issue-area-specific orientation of regime analysis. In doing so, the problem-solving orientation of international regimes was supplemented by a look at their political order (Zürn 1998; Jachtenfuchs 2003). Subsequently, analysts wrote about the 'legalization of international relations' (Abbott and Snidal 2000), the 'internationalization of the rule of law' (Bryde 2003; Zangl 2006) or the development towards a 'constitutionalization of international trade' or even 'constitutionalization of international law' (for example, Hilf 2003) and 'transnational governance' (Joerges et al. 2004). Although the concept of multi-level governance is rarely used explicitly (but see Welch and Kennedy-Pipe 2004), it raises the same questions as it did regarding regional integration, namely, what constitutes a governance level. Thomas Cottier and Maya Hertig (2003) speak of a global multi-level governance system that consists of up to five levels, the local level, the level of the states in a federal system, the federal level, the level of regional integration and the global level. Research points to a growing role of legislation in global governance and problems that arise when different governance levels are involved in lawmaking (Humrich and Zangl, Chapter 22 in this volume). At the same time, the role of

informal arrangements of governance with a growing role of non-governmental actors can be observed (see Scholte, Chapter 25 in this volume), leading either to a variety of forms of self-regulation or to public-private partnerships (see Beisheim et al., Chapter 24 in this volume). Subnational units seem to engage increasingly in transgovernmental networks as part of a new world order (Slaughter 2004; Slaughter and Hale, Chapter 23 in this volume). Common to these analyses is the observation that international norms gain in relevance and constitute a level of their own that is subject to growing autonomy from the constitutive elements of this order, the nation states.

Since global governance is conceived increasingly as a political order, instead of mere issue-specific problem solving, normative aspects have become more important. Important points of contention are what effect international institutions may have on national democracies (Dahl 1994; Habermas et al. 2007; Keohane et al. 2009) and whether and how it is possible to democratize international institutions (Held 1995; Zürn 1996; Archibugi 2008; Koenig-Archibugi 2008). This debate has brought international relations closer to normative political theory, in particular to the study of transnational fairness and justice (Beitz 1979; Rawls 2002; Forst 2007; Pogge 2007).

Although research about the central features of the political order beyond the nation state falls short of a fully developed new theory of world politics – be it normative or positive – it has brought about testable behavioral implications. As a result, applied policy research is often seen through the lens of concepts and theorems developed about the multi-level character of global governance. This holds true namely for economic and environmental policies (see Enderlein, Chapter 28 and Wälti, Chapter 27 in this volume). Yet even the study of issue-area governance in such traditional domains of the nation state such as policing, taxation and social policy show to what extent national policies are embedded in larger governance structures (see Jachtenfuchs and Kohler-Koch 2003; see also Graser and Kuhnle, Chapter 26, Herschinger et al., Chapter 31 and Rixen, Chapter 29 in this volume).

I.4 OUTLINE OF THE HANDBOOK

As multi-level governance has evolved from a descriptive concept about the workings of the European Union into an approach spanning local, urban, regional, national and international governance, the intent of this Handbook is two-fold. It is designed to provide easy access to the various theories about, approaches to, uses, applications and criticisms of multi-level governance. It does so by highlighting the key findings of that literature cutting across different levels of government and different issue areas. Thus, this Handbook covers the various theoretical approaches to multi-level governance, provides entries on the main topics in domestic and European politics, reviews regional integration processes elsewhere in the world, assesses the importance of multi-level processes in international relations and finally presents succinct overviews of multi-level governance in different policy areas.

The architecture of the Handbook follows this simple logic. In Part I, different conceptual and theoretical approaches to multi-level governance are presented. Hooghe and Marks present the concept in its broadest sense, before chapters about fiscal federalism (Geys and Konrad) and joint decision traps (Scharpf) present the most influential

concepts in the modern analysis of federalism. The concept of two-level games (Mayer) and the conceptualization of global governance as multi-level governance (Zürn) present the major theorems that have been introduced by the study of multi-level governance systems beyond the nation state.

Part II presents the state of the art in the study of multi-level governance in the domestic context. This part systematically discusses the most important domestic political actors and how they behave in a multi-level context: subnational units (Hallerberg and Swenden), parties (Jeffery) and organized interests (Hassel). Moreover, two of the best-known European federal systems, Switzerland and Germany, are compared (Braun) as well as the USA and Canada (Stein and Turkewitsch).

Part III takes a closer look at the European Union as a multi-level governance system. Chapters about its overall design (Jachtenfuchs and Benz) are supplemented by chapters that focus on specific components such as parties (Hix), parliaments (Rittberger) and regions (Bauer and Börzel). Part IV focuses on other regional arrangements such as North America (Clarkson and Sbragia), the region of the former Soviet Union (Obydenkova) and East Asia (Schreurs). In Part V different elements of global governance are analysed: the role of non-governmental organizations (Scholte), of transgovermental networks (Slaughter and Hale), of public-private partnerships (Beisheim et al.) and, in a more general fashion, the development of governance through legislation on the international level (Humrich and Zangl).

Part VI offers insight into a number of policy areas that are crucially affected by multi-level governance: social policy (Graser and Kuhnle), environmental policy (Wälti), economic policy (Enderlein), taxation (Rixen), international standard setting (Büthe and Mattli) and policing (Herschinger et al.).

With this content, this Handbook aims at providing a fresh look at politics and policies that have been addressed under related headings from the specific perspective of multi-level governance. In doing so, we aim at bringing the above-mentioned strands of research together and at stressing commonalities between them, thereby developing a deeper understanding of a governance structure which, in a globalized world, has become a common feature of modern politics. Many, indeed probably most, issues of modern politics are handled in a multi-level governance structure, and hardly an individual or societal group is not confronted with rules that have emanated from and are implemented in a multi-level structure. In this sense, multi-level governance seems a *conditio politica* of current world affairs. The crucial variance is not so much whether or not a governance structure contains elements of multi-level governance but what form it takes.

NOTES

1. We would like to thank Gabriele Brühl, Julia Kronberg and Joslyn Trowbridge for their support in writing this chapter and in putting together and editing this Handbook.
2. These figures are based on a count of the number of academic journal articles referenced in Academic Search Premier (EBSCO) carrying 'multi-level governance' (or 'multilevel governance') in their abstract.

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