Preface

This volume has its roots very much in a research committee of the International Political Science Association, Research Committee 38 on Politics and Business, a forum that emerged back in the 1980s. The participation of the editors in RC38 panels at IPSA World Congresses and at smaller meetings on more focused topics, from taxation to sustainability, in places like Konstanz and Hobart, led to a range of other publications.

In addition to presenting and discussing papers, such occasions allowed the development of professional relations and personal friendships, not just between the editors, but with many of the contributors to this Handbook in the Series Handbooks of Research on Public Policy. Such networks are global, and this network allowed us to recruit what we consider to be a stellar list of contributors who are all expert in their fields. We are extremely grateful to them for their contributions, especially because for much of the year before submission we were all dealing with a global pandemic that created new challenges and diversions for university researchers.

Especially because the authors are all expert in their fields, we applied a light editorial hand to the various contributions. Our approach was to let ‘a hundred flowers bloom’, and a hundred schools of thought, approaches and concepts contend. (Well, perhaps fewer – though we have not counted!) That, we consider, is appropriate for a volume that has as its aim to survey the field of business and public policy, which is comprised of many divergent theoretical perspectives and a vast number of empirical studies.

We cannot pretend that we have covered all these, but we consider, and sincerely hope, that we have covered many important examples of this literature – both historical and more contemporary, originating both in the United States literature (which tends to often dominate political science) and elsewhere. We have sought to achieve coverage of the field that is as global as possible. And the global dimension also features in the chapters. Today, Public Policy increasingly includes the field of Global Policy, and we must consider business and business associations as global actors, as well as actors within nation states and in subnational political systems, who are brought together in new and complex ways.

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