Preface

The subject of the response of urban economies to the increasing pace of internationalization or, to use a word that has gained great popularity in recent years, globalization, is receiving a great deal of attention by scholars and by local officials during the past two decades. Perhaps it was the shock of the ten-fold increase in the price of crude petroleum that forced the economies both of developed and less-developed nations to comprehend that they have to restructure their economic activities on a new footing, with new power relationships and new actors in all areas of the economy. National governments imposed constraints on their capacity to intervene in their own economies on behalf of negatively affected constituents, and lower barriers to movements of capital, goods and services have made all economies vulnerable to new threats and challenges but also to new opportunities. It should be noted parenthetically that movement of workers in response to economic incentives has been limited by both national policy and the various attractions of place. In this environment cities have found themselves, on the one hand, to be the governmental entity that is most affected by these developments and, on the other hand, the governments that are most suited to formulate responses to them. This book is an examination of the several aspects of this situation in which local governments now find themselves.

First a word about terminology. We have chosen to use the word internationalization in the title rather than the obvious alternative – globalization. International firms are thought to be those which have linkages, through production, distribution and so forth in other countries or parts of the world; firms that have globalized their activities are those that have established multiple centers of activity in countries other than the firm's home country. Analogously, it must be noted that cities have established linkages to entities throughout the globe but they have not merged with foreign cities or adopted any of the other operational initiatives used by globalized firms. Hence, we prefer to conceptualize our subject matter as that of internationalization of the economic activities of urban economies. The latter term, urban economy, is also used as a general term that covers municipal economy as well as that of the several forms of city – central city, city plus suburbs and edge cities, consolidated metropolitan statistical area (CMSA) and metropolitan statistical area (MSA), although these other words will on occasion be used when it is appropriate.

Fry wrote the introductory chapter and those on municipal diplomacy and governance (Chapters 1, 3 and 5); Kresl was responsible for the other five chapters. Each of us has, of course, reviewed the entire text and the final product is indeed a joint effort.