Editors’ preface

This book is the fruit of a collaborative research network that links scholars of the politics of regulation. The impetus for the establishment of the network is the belief that the politics of regulation is an under-researched area, especially outside the United States. The issue became especially important following the rise of the regulatory state and the diffusion of regulatory reforms around the world. The aims of the collection are twofold. The primary aim is to develop sound conceptual and analytical studies that shed light on the politics of regulation. In this, we hope the book will make a contribution in the tradition of Marver Bernstein, Theodore Lowi and James Wilson, who made influential contributions to the study of the politics of regulation. The second aim of the book is to shed light on the politics of regulation in the age of governance. We suggest that the economic, social and political context of regulation has been radically transformed in the last two decades. The spread of regulation as a mode of governance around the world obliges us to re-examine our theories and to develop new tools of analysis. The contributors to this collection have taken significant steps in these directions.

In order to stimulate scholarly and interdisciplinary dialogue, we organized a series of research workshops with the primary support of the European Science Foundation (ESF). The first workshop was held at Nuffield College, University of Oxford, on 25–26 May 2002, and the second at the Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona, on 29–30 November 2002; a third workshop was held in the Centre for Study of Law and Society, University of California at Berkeley, 25–26 April 2003. Most chapters in this book were originally presented and discussed in these workshops. The papers were reviewed by the editors and other scholars, and were subsequently reworked and revised in three editorial sessions. We wish to thank all the participants in the workshops and the reviewers, who contributed greatly to the quality of the present volume. We are also indebted to the authors for their willingness to answer all our numerous requests and comments.

A project like this would not be possible without financial support from a number of organizations. We would like to express our indebtedness to the European Science Foundation, the Spanish Ministry for Science and Technology, the Department of Political and Social Sciences (Universitat Pompeu Fabra), the Centre on Regulation and Competition (IDPM, University of Manchester), the Centre for Study of Law and Society (University of...
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California at Berkeley), the Department of Politics and International Relations (University of Oxford), Nuffield College Politics Group (University of Oxford), the Department of Political Science (University of Haifa) and the Generalitat de Catalunya. All these institutions were very encouraging to our collaborative work, and their generosity allowed us to organize the workshops. In these institutions it is a pleasure to acknowledge the help of John Darwin (chair of the Politics Group at Nuffield College), Mark Philp (Department of Politics and International Relations, Oxford), Philipe Row and Kerstin Sahlin-Andersson (European Science Foundation), and Paul Cook and Martin Minogue (Centre on Competition and Regulation, University of Manchester).

David Levi-Faur would like to express his thanks to Professor Jeremy Richardson, former head of the Centre for European Politics, Economics and Society of the University of Oxford, where he was originally based, and also to his colleagues at the University of Haifa, and especially the Chair of the Department of Political Science, Professor Avraham Brichta, who allowed him generous leave and sabbatical during 2000–2004. The project was also facilitated by a seven-month research position at the Centre on the Study of Regulation and Competition, the University of Manchester.

It is our pleasure to name some of the scholars who encouraged and helped us with this project. We would like to thank the following, who generously commented on particular aspects of the project: Ian Bartle (University of Bath), John Braithwaite (Australian National University), Fabio Franchino (University College London), Sharon Gilad (University of Oxford), Fabrizio Gilardi (University of Lausanne), Ken Hanf (Universitat Pompeu Fabra), Peter Humphreys (University of Manchester), Martin Lodge (London School of Economics), Michael Moran (University of Manchester), Bronwen Morgan (University of Oxford), Ulrika Morth (Stockholm University), Anthony Ogus (University of Manchester), Colin Scott (Australian National University and London School of Economics), and Raphael Schapiro (University of Oxford).

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Barcelona and Oxford
August 2003