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.

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