
Preface

Controversy over the conduct and coordination of international trade policy has become a politically charged issue in current times. At the World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference in Seattle in 1999, groups from civil society went to the barricades to protest various facets of 'globalization'. Similar spectacles have been repeated around the world frequently since that time. The debates over international trade policy are no longer the exclusive purview of academic economists, trade lawyers, bureaucrats and politicians. Suddenly, discussion concerning trade policy and trade agreements has burst out of the back rooms and into the limelight.

This handbook on international trade policy includes a comprehensive spectrum of trade-policy topics that should be attractive to both practitioners and interested observers alike. The coverage ranges from very general issues, such as why trade agreements exist, to highly specific issues, such as how politics affects the administration tariff-rate quotas. The contributors bring considerable expertise and insight to their topics, and they have set themselves an ambitious agenda that goes far beyond a simple review of academic literature. The intention throughout the volume has been to analyze how trade policy works and to assess the issues and controversies that have arisen in practice. Further, the volume is addressed to a broad policy audience. It has been designed to be accessible to those who have only an introductory knowledge of economics, and come to trade policy from a wide variety of occupational and academic backgrounds. The emphasis has been on readability. While diagrammatic methods of analysis are used to help systematically present some topics, the authors have avoided resorting to mathematical arguments in the text of their chapters. Where useful, appendixes have been provided.

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