

Foreword

When John first asked if I could see to it that this collection of essays was published in case his illness took a turn for the worst, I of course accepted, but naturally hoped that I would not have to deliver on that promise. While that sadly turned out not to be the case, John did finish the entire manuscript, including the selection of papers to be included and the revisions he wanted to make to the chapters, as well as writing the Introduction to the volume.

The present collection reflects what to me was the essence of John, which was an almost childlike intellectual curiosity and a desire to learn about the world, combined with an unwavering dedication to apply the new insights he had gained to the field of International Business (IB). As a result of this curiosity, the countless articles and books he published in the course of his many intellectual journeys helped to form the backbone of the field of IB.

In this collection of essays, John's thinking was particularly influenced by the work of institutional scholars, beginning with the economist Douglass North, and extending to organization studies and other related fields. In a manner true to himself, in the Introduction John delights in the richness of the new concepts he has been able to absorb from these scholars, only to deplore the fact that, on their own, these contributions are not sufficient to fully explain complex and evolving phenomena, such as the cross-border activities of Multinational Enterprises. The preoccupation with explaining the whole rather than the parts was of course the initial motivation pushing him to finish his *magnum opus*, and behind our joint efforts in producing the second edition of *Multinational Enterprises and the Global Economy*.

In keeping with the eclecticism with which he gathered new intellectual impulses, John did not seem in the least bit snobbish about the ideas he acquired. While he held many noted scholars in great regard, if he saw something of interest John did not seem to care much about the ranking of the journal it appeared in, or indeed of the stature of the authors themselves. If the ideas were interesting, and at least new to himself, if not to the world, he was happy to employ them to advance his own thinking.

This eclecticism is also reflected in the wide range of outlets in which John's work appeared. While his award-winning articles from the *Journal*

of *International Business Studies* are known and cited by many, he published substantial amounts of work in journals that might be scoffed at by scholars who prefer to confine their attention to the top journals. However, as John explains in the Introduction, in their own way all these papers were important in developing his thinking, and he thought that publishing them periodically in book form would help to bring to light some of this less-known work. As in the present volume, not all the papers are as polished as some of his better-known work, and not all the loose pieces quite fit together. Yet, the collection as a whole offers a picture of how the interrelated themes of institutions and development were beginning to take shape in his recent writing.

To me, this volume encapsulates an important part of the legacy left by John. While we should strive to perfect our knowledge about the things we already have the concepts and language to describe, we should not shy away from thinking about the big picture and the emerging issues, even when we lack the language and precision to fully satisfy our critical minds.

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