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Corporate Governance in a Changing Economic and Political Environment

Trajectories of Institutional Change

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For Adam Ferran and Dariusz

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Preface and Acknowledgements

If social sciences are to meet the challenge of understanding East European transitions, with particular regard to the simultaneity of economic and political transitions, it is necessary to re-examine the methodological principles and models of explanation of the main approaches, or “paradigms”, competing within the field of research.

Michel Dobry (2000: vii)

This book bridges two different kinds of experience that grew up in the Western and Eastern parts of Europe, which were symbolically separated by the Berlin Wall. The period of almost a decade and a half that has followed the physical dismantling of the Wall has demonstrated how difficult the integration process has been, and how individual national responses to new challenges and opportunities have differed. At the same time, Western European countries also confronted a new wave of integration processes, as well as global challenges, and, in turn, responded in their individual ways. This book examines the evolution of economic institutions that affect corporate governance, but to do so in a comparative way it necessarily refers to political evolution as well. The lesson from this exercise is that key concepts and “models” are to be reconsidered in order to satisfy cross-country comparative studies.

This comparative exercise results from more than symbolic cooperation between East and West, namely between the Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin (WZB) and the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology (IFiS PAN) Warsaw. In this regard, the authors and editors of the volume address special thanks personally to Dr Georg Thurn who is *spiritus movens* of this cooperation and to both institutions. Michal Federowicz is also grateful to the Kościuszko Foundation for its generous funding of his individual study program in the United States, a good place to study Europe as Europe looks more integrated from there than from the inside. The idea of the volume was conceived in that period. Ruth Aguilera is grateful for the support received from the Center of Advance Study and CIBER at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign. The authors of the Bulgarian, Czech Republic, Hungarian, Polish, and Ukrainian case studies acknowledge significant support from the Research Support Scheme in Prague that funded field research in these countries.

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M.F. R.A.

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Context, in *Sisyphus: Social Studies*, (Vol. XIII/XIV, 2000); "Anticipated Institutions: the Power of Path-finding Expectations, in *Democratic and Capitalist Transitions in Eastern Europe. Lessons for Social Sciences* (2000).

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