

## UNDERSTANDING THE COMPANY

What is the purpose of the company and its role in society? From their origin in medieval times to their modern incarnation as powerful transnational bodies, companies remain an important part of business and society at large. Drawing from a variety of perspectives, this book adopts a normative approach in understanding the modern company and provides insights into how companies should be conceptualized. It considers key topics such as the development of corporate theory, the rights and obligations of the company, and the means and ends of corporate governance. Written by leading experts of different jurisdictions, this book provides important international viewpoints on some of the most pressing corporate governance questions.

BARNALI CHOUDHURY is a senior lecturer at University College London. She is the author of *Public Services and International Trade Liberalization: Human Rights and Gender Implications* (Cambridge University Press, 2012) as well as of over 20 articles and book chapters. She has delivered lectures internationally and her research has been cited by the UK House of Lords EU Select Committee, arbitral tribunals, and nongovernmental organizations. Prior to joining academia, she practiced corporate and international investment law.

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Corporate Governance  
and Theory

Edited by  
BARNALI CHOUDHURY  
*University College London*  
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For Kaya

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## PREFACE

In May 2015, a group of scholars gathered in London to discuss the modern company. Their purpose was to shed light on this familiar, yet often misunderstood entity. Alongside a group of esteemed commentators, the scholars set out to provide depth and breadth to the question of what the corporation is and what its role in society should be.

The day began early and was, for London, unusually warm. Alongside a packed (and often highly engaged) audience, the scholars and commentators converged into a non-air-conditioned and stuffy lecture hall to discuss, debate, and offer their thoughts on key questions ranging from what corporate governance mechanisms are most effective to what constitutional rights a company should have and whether a company is public or private in nature and beyond. Despite the lack of ideal conditions, unique ideas were presented, pivotal topics were discussed and, most importantly, questions in need of answers were given just that.

The outcomes and discussions that began in that lecture hall can now be found as the substance of this book. We are aware that the discussions surrounding the nature of the company and its purpose are still continuing and our hope is that this book helps to engage with those discussions.

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