Preface

The following book makes an attempt to rethink economic liberalism from the perspective of political liberalism. It thus contributes to contemporary liberal thought and deals with an issue which lies between economics and political theory. The main parts of the book were written during my one-year research stay as a fellow at the interdisciplinary Max Weber Institute in Erfurt where I met with colleagues from sociology, political science, history, religious studies and philosophy. I am indebted to the Max Weber Institute and its director, Professor Hans Joas, for having this opportunity as well as for the stimulating atmosphere at the Institute.

Chapters of this book have been presented to several workshops and conferences, among them research workshops at George Mason University, Fairfax (Virginia, US), Freiburg University (Germany), Andrassy University, Budapest (Hungary), the economics department at Kassel University (Germany), and the workshop on Contemporary Issues of Evolutionary Economics, St Gallen (Switzerland). For discussions and comments I owe thanks to Peter Boettke, Winfried Brugger, Kurt Dopfer, Wolfram Elsner, Gangolf Hübinger, Daniel Klein, Marco Lehmann-Waffenschmidt, Peter Leeson, Stefan Okruch, Stephan Panther, Reinhard Penz, Ingo Pies, Ringa Raudla, Wolfgang Reinhard, Viktor Vanberg, Richard Wagner, Ulrich Witt and Michael Wohlgemuth.

I am indebted to Wolfgang Kerber, Pavel Pelikan, Helge Peukert and Sebastian Schäfer who read the whole manuscript and made numerous comments and suggestions. Discussions with Michael Schefczyk were very helpful in taking account of philosophical aspects which are relevant to a theme which transgresses the boundary between economics and political theory. A large proportion of my thanks goes to the staff of Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd, in particular to Alexandra O’Connell and David Fairclough who have been most professional, efficient and understanding throughout the entire process of preparing the manuscript for publication. I am most indebted to Mark Peacock who was much involved in the making of this book; he carefully read earlier versions and made many comments and suggestions for presenting the arguments as concisely as possible. Of course, all remaining errors are mine.