Acknowledgements

This book would never have been possible without the support of the staff of the World Bank Russia Office, where I interned in the Human Development Section from May to July 2006. I am thankful to Kristalina Georgieva, Andrei R. Markov, John Litwack, Samir Suleymanov, Maya Gusarova, Gevorg Sargsyan, and Irina Reshetnikova, who privileged me with their sincerest encouragement and support in the study of institutions and economic development. Maya Gusarova and her team inspired me to study the political economy of administrative reform in the Russian regions, and facilitated my contacting and communication with the regional administrations of Lipetsk, Krasnodar, Sochi, and Tomsk. Immense thanks are due to Alexander Dukhanin, Natalia Stepankova, Roman Urnyshev, Christina Utyatina, Sergei Sharonin, and many other senior and junior policy-makers and administrators in Lipetsk, Krasnodar, Sochi, and Tomsk for their continuous institutional assistance and friendly support during the collection of survey and experimental data. I am also extremely grateful to the municipal administrations of Nazareth and Netanya for their generous support in collecting a representative sample from the Jewish and Arab communities of Israel. Many thanks are due to Julia Zimmermann and Roman Bakuradze for their industrious research assistance with the preparation of this book.

Gérard Roland introduced me to the study of comparative economic systems and offered me unique insights into modeling culture and economic development. He has been a unique role model and a central source of inspiration during all steps of my intellectual development at Berkeley and beyond. Under his guidance, I embarked on the joint study of economics and politics as a pure interdisciplinary project, an initiative that changed my professional life and personal mindset. His commitment to the study of the Soviet and Russian economic systems, his powerful analytical narratives of economic reform and political change and his open worldview to scholarship and politics have been and will always be defining me as a person.

Barry Eichengreen has supported me since my first year in the Berkeley graduate program with persistence, kindness, and rigor. The continuous interaction with him throughout my studies in California gave me the
opportunity to delve into economic history and explore the long-run institutional determinants of economic development in Western and Eastern Europe alike. The training he generously offered me in the areas of international macroeconomic policy, global financial crises, and capitalist transformation in Europe’s long 20th century has allowed me to compare economic systems across OECD, transition and developing economies and to identify those crucial economic policy questions that condition the role of institutions for economic transformation and political change.

This project developed upon completion of my Berkeley coursework and it has gained uniquely from my interactions with Steve Fish, Bradford J. DeLong, Robert A. Kagan, Sean Gailmard, Henry Brady, Ned Walker, George Tsebelis, Judith Thornton, Paul Gregory, Ron Hassner, Nick Ziegler, and Beverly Crawford. I am grateful to the Institute of European Studies and to the Institute of Slavic, Eurasian, and East European Studies at UC Berkeley for generously funding my research stays in Berlin and Moscow, during the summers of 2009 and 2010 respectively. I am also fully indebted to UC Berkeley’s Graduate Division for granting me the Dean’s Normative Time Fellowship that paid for my fieldwork and data collection in the Russian regions during the academic year 2010–2011, as well as to the Greek State Scholarships Foundation (IKY) and to the Alexander S. Onassis Foundation for partially funding my living expenses from 2007 to 2010. Living in the Berkeley Student Cooperative System and its two houses, Hillegass-Parker (HiP) House and Rochdale Village, was a formative and amazing experience that shaped my worldview and complemented uniquely the academic rigor of my Berkeley studies.

I have profited greatly from talks and workshops in Mannheim, Leipzig, Berlin, Toulouse, Basel, London, Kiel, Marburg, Regensburg, Munich, Passau, and Piraeus. Keith Hiatt, Kevin Moos, Yvonne Wong, Chloe Thurston, Mark Huberty, Suzanne Scoggins, Francesca Jensenius, Nicole Fox, George Willcoxon, Akasemi Newsome, Jason Anastasopoulos, Alexander Theodoridis, Tyler Krupp, Jason Blakely, Sener Aktürk, Ekrem Karpuzcu, Murat Eröz, Leonid Kil, Yannis Chaloulos, Brandon Schechter, Charles Shaw and James Skee honored me with their collegial friendship during our Berkeley years. I am grateful to Susanne Frank, Nikolaus Wolf, Dirk Uffelmann, Angelos Gerontas, and Jannis Panagiotidis, for innovative ideas, and the intellectual encouragement, and lots of good spirit toward the completion of this project, which facilitated my transition to the German-speaking academic environment. Ted Coulombris and Thanos Veremis honored me with their intellectual friendship and constant belief in my potential in peaceful and critical times. Antonis Makrydimitris offered me useful advice with unique kindness. Thanks are also due to Todd Kaplan, Dan Peled, Omar Nayeem, Vladimir Asriyan, Pascal...
Michaillat, Charles Crissman, David Ahn, Robert Anderson, Shachar Kariv and Jason Wittenberg for making me a better political economist. Lillian Lykiardopoulou, Leonidas Liambeys, Eva Angell, Alex Shupinski, Eleni Stathopoulou, Thanasis Avgerinos and Athina Pavlidou privileged me with their selfless assistance and emotional support in Greece, the United States, Russia and Israel. My Classics and Modern Greek school teachers Alexandra Baira, Niki Bitzidou and Effie Touli were the first to acknowledge my research and learning talents and helped me pave successfully my path from Serres to Athens Law School. For that I am infinitely grateful. Erin Mansur, David R. Cameron, Paul Bushkovitch, W. Michael Reisman and Rita Lipson, all of Yale University, supported me with enthusiasm during my transition from Yale to Berkeley. My parents, Niko and Effie, were constantly on my side and supported me unconditionally in all the difficult steps toward the completion of the Berkeley PhD program. Their love has always been the Lighthouse in my life.

Parts of this book (Chapters 2, 4, and 5) have been published as articles in the following journals:


August 20, 2017
Feast Day of St. Theocharis of Neapolis, Cappadocia Olympiada by Mount Athos, Chalkidiki, Greece