

## Acknowledgments

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The idea for this book came from discussions at kitchen tables in the former Soviet Union. While conducting earlier research, I lived with families who regularly described the struggles they faced as a result of the demise of the Soviet welfare state and, in many countries, the smaller economic roles that their new, market-oriented governments played. No longer did their governments guarantee them employment, housing, higher education, and other necessities. While the families celebrated the political freedoms that the collapse of the Soviet Union brought, they lamented the loss of economic guarantees. After researching the political changes brought about by the collapse, I turned to an examination of how people were coping with the economic transformation. I am grateful to these dear friends and welcoming families for sharing their daily experiences with me.

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