Regional resilience and interconnectedness: a multilevel approach

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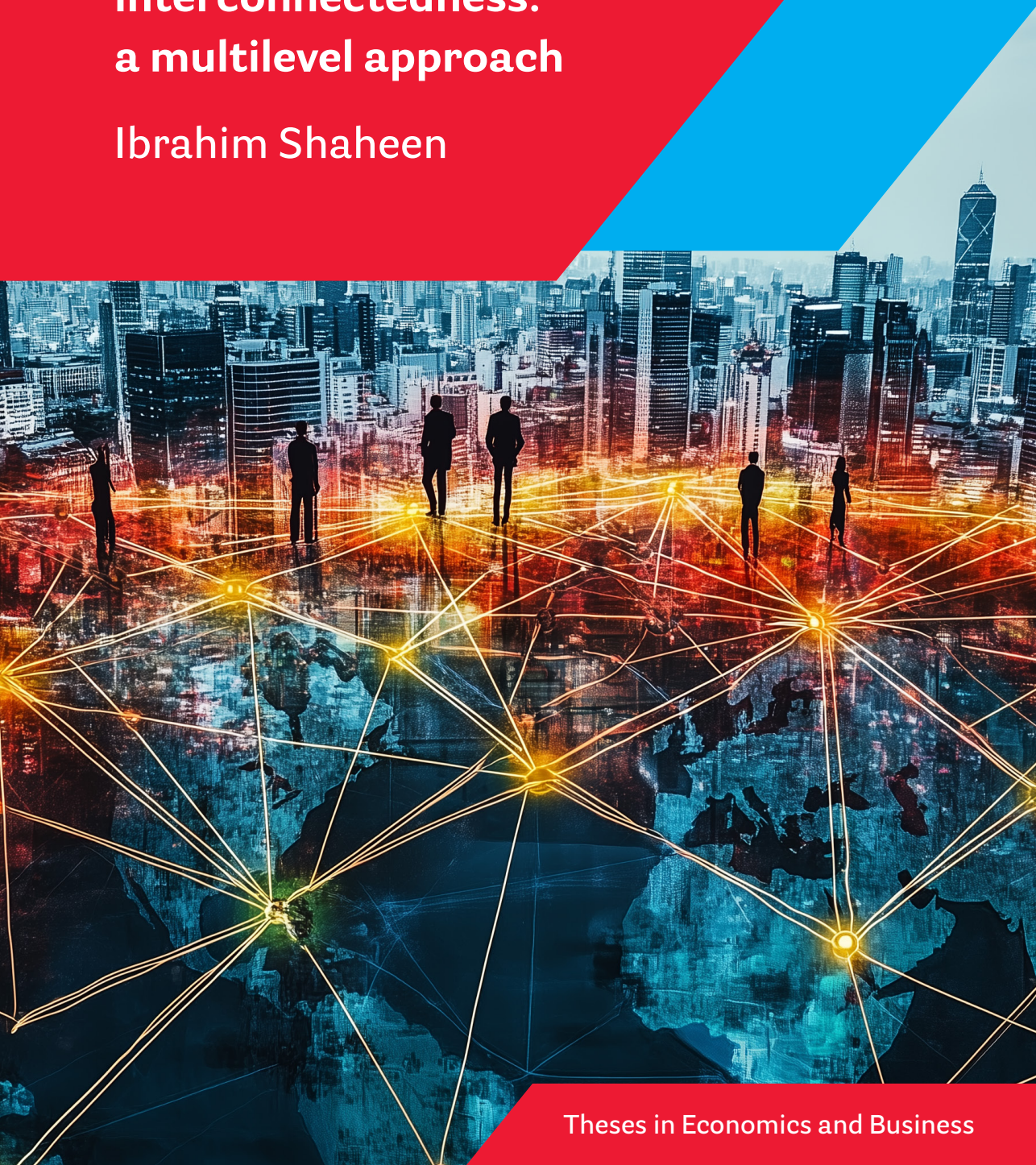

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the decision by the College of Deans.

This thesis will be defended in public on

Thursday 12 December 2024 at 14.30 hours

by

Ibrahim Shaheen

born on 26 May 1988 in Syria

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In loving memory of my father Jamil Shaheen, who left us just before watching me defending this dissertation. Your wisdom and kindness will always guide me.

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As a kid, I was truly intrigued by the fact that Earth looks like a football. I had serious doubts about it, and I wanted to become an astronaut to see with eyes whether the world was flat or not. When I realized that we do not have astronautics in the Syrian universities, I decided, with soreness, to abandon my childhood dream and rely on a sophisticated methodology to pick the discipline that I will be studying for the next 50 years or so. I did a random draw and picked economics! Back then, I had no idea that in the years to come, I would be studying the economic resilience to crises in my Ph.D. dissertation at a moment in which my home country, Syria, has been suffering a devastating crisis for over a decade. Thinking of the Syrian crisis and the future of that lovely country made the notion of resilience captivating for me. Although I was not able to verify by eyes whether the Earth is flat or not, however, I consider myself very lucky to have accumulated a lot of knowledge in previous years that would allow me to understand that the world is flat, round, and spiky at the same time. It is a matter of what lenses you put when you take a look at it.

My learning journey in the Ph.D. would never have been as rich without my supervisors, Steven, Harry, and Jacopo. I owe you a lot, and I consider myself truly lucky to have you all. Steven, your Dutch directness has enriched me as a person and as a researcher. You are a brilliant supervisor and a true mentor that I am proud to have. Without your sharp feedback and insightful critiques, I would have never made it. I am so grateful to you. Harry, I had never believed that one supervisor could know everything until I met you. Your immense knowledge across multiple fields has profoundly enriched my research journey. During the previous years, you taught me how to see the whole picture and the hidden connections and how to think about them. My sincere gratitude to you. Jacopo, when I came from Italy to the Netherlands to start my Ph.D., I was incredibly

fortunate to have you as my day-to-day supervisor. You brought a lot of Italy with you to Groningen. Your encouragement, practical advice, availability, and your rich feedback immensely helped me. I learned a lot from you during the previous years. Grazie infinite.

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P.S. A unique thank you to my secret co-authors, our cats Leah and Nina.

Ibrahim,
Rome, November 4, 2024

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