

Preface and Acknowledgements

The transition from a centrally planned to a market-based economy in Central and Eastern Europe has been one of the fundamental transformations of the 1990s. The ‘shock therapy’ effectively dismantled the state-owned economy and state institutions. The profound transformation no doubt has major economic, social and political implications for post-socialist societies and is reflected in the restructuring of national housing systems.

The purpose of this book is to explore both theoretically and empirically the impacts of housing reforms on housing system performance in post-socialist countries. In exploring this phenomenon, it views housing systems as a set of institutions organised in the process of promotion, production, allocation and consumption of housing as socially embedded in political, social and economic contexts. The work, based on a comparative analysis of housing policy reforms in nine countries in South East Europe, seeks to identify major patterns of change in the housing systems in the context of the transition from planning to markets. The conceptual framework for this comparative evaluation is designed to offer insights into policy intervention to achieve more efficient and equitable performance of housing systems. Although housing policy in the region was ‘lost’ in multiple transitions, the book argues for more strategic policy reforms that enable market institutions to work more efficiently in national and local contexts.

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