

Maja Gerovska Mitev *Editor*

Social Work and Social Policy Transformations in Central and Southeast Europe

 Springer

Social Work and Social Policy Transformations in Central and Southeast Europe

Maja Gerovska Mitev

Editor

Social Work and Social Policy Transformations in Central and Southeast Europe

 Springer

Editor

Maja Gerovska Mitev

Faculty of Philosophy, Institute of Social Work and Social Policy

Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje

Skopje, North Macedonia

ISBN 978-3-031-51231-5

ISBN 978-3-031-51232-2 (eBook)

<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-51232-2>

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s), under exclusive license to Springer Nature Switzerland AG 2024

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are solely and exclusively licensed by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use.

The publisher, the authors, and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, expressed or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The publisher remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

This Springer imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Switzerland AG
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

Paper in this product is recyclable.

“This is an important book for at least three reasons. Firstly, it brings together questions of social policy and social work which tend to be treated separately for reasons that have more to do with academic boundary maintenance than the realities of institutional practice and people’s real lives. Secondly, it compares and contrasts countries that occupy a contiguous regional space but are rarely studied together, namely the Yugoslav successor states, some of which have been marginalized in both social work and social policy research, together with the Czech Republic and Austria. The value of this is, indeed, even greater when we consider that four are EU Member states and three are candidate countries so that the differential effects of Europeanization are also traced. Thirdly, each country case study chapter (and, indeed, given the specificities of its post-Dayton governance structure, Bosnia and Herzegovina is discussed in two chapters each dealing with one entity) is written by specialists working within the country itself as researchers, scholars and advocates who bring deep insider knowledge to their writing. The common themes of transformation, restructuring and crises, synthesized in excellent introductory and concluding chapters, make the book an essential source for an understanding of contemporary policies and practices, the complex role played by historical legacies, and offer a model of what a comparative policy approach should look like.”

—Paul Stubbs,

Senior Research Fellow, The Institute of Economics, Zagreb, Croatia

“Maja Gerovska Mitev’s *Social Work and Social Policy Transformations in Central and Southeast Europe* brilliantly captures the evolving nuances of social policy in a region rich with history and complexity. This edited volume, a collective effort of esteemed academics, offers deep insights into the transformation of social welfare systems, particularly in the face of challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic. It stands not only as an academic cornerstone for scholars and students but also as a guiding light for practitioners navigating the ever-changing landscape of social work and policy in Central and Southeast Europe.”

—Vasilios Ioakimidis,

Professor, University of West Attica, Greece and University of Essex, UK

Preface

This edited volume is a result of a joint effort of the members of the Central European Social Policy and Social Work Network – CESPASWON. The network was formed in 2019 under the Central European Exchange Program for University Studies (CEEPUS). It comprises of eight universities from seven countries from Central and Southeast Europe, including: Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, North Macedonia (coordinator); Carinthia University of Applied Sciences, Austria; Charles University, Czech Republic; University of Ljubljana, Slovenia; University of Belgrade, Serbia; University of Zagreb, Croatia; University of Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina; and the University of Banja Luka, Republic of Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Hence, the focus of the chapters is on the countries represented in the CESPASWON network.

It must be acknowledged that the group of countries encompassed in this volume and analysed under the geographical scope of Central and Southeast Europe is by no means uniform or easily comparable. One aspect of categorisation of countries within this block can be associated with their European Union (EU) membership status. In this respect, the book covers four EU member states (Austria, the Czech Republic, Slovenia and Croatia) and three EU candidate countries (North Macedonia, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina). Among these countries, Austria is well recognised in the welfare state literature as a conservative and familialistic welfare regime. Among the ‘newer’ EU members states, in the Czech Republic, Slovenia and Croatia, the transition from the socialist welfare model has translated into improved employment and poverty rates. Finally, the EU candidate countries, North Macedonia, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, are still fragile welfare states and inconsistent in their welfare trajectory. By critically contextualising existing welfare state categorisations, the book aims to examine the link between the welfare state reforms and implications for social work in Central and Southeast Europe.

The country chapters provide comprehensive analysis of recent developments in social policy and social work (social services), especially trends after the pandemic COVID-19, which necessitated significant welfare modifications. Structure wise, all country chapters tend to: (a) outline the context in which the social policy and social work have developed and map the main changes in the welfare state; (b)

elaborate the country-specific welfare state discourse and discussions, which through literature review depict the conceptual debates about the welfare state, social justice, equality, poverty, entitlements for cash transfer and services, privatisation, accessibility, etc.; (c) indicate the key challenges in social policy and social work; and (d) provide indications about the future perspectives of social policy and social service provision.

Given the scarcity of literature on social policy and social work in Central and Southeast Europe, we hope this volume will be valuable for researchers from all fields of social sciences and that it will provoke wider academic and professional interest.

Last, but not least, the editor is deeply grateful for the constructive comments received from Paul Stubbs, as well as the two anonymous reviewers during the preparation of the manuscript.

Skopje, North Macedonia

Maja Gerovska Mitev

Contents

1	Welfare State Reforms and Their Implications for Social Work in Central and Southeast Europe	1
	Maja Gerovska Mitev	
2	The Austrian Welfare State: A Halfway House	17
	Hubert Höllmüller	
3	Social Policy and Social Work in the Czech Republic: Partners at Fragile Times.	35
	Kateřina Šámalová and Petr Vojtíšek	
4	The Politics of Welfare – From Rights to Obligations: The Case of Slovenia.	57
	Vesna Leskošek	
5	Social Work and Social Policy in Croatia in Times of Continuous Reforms and Crisis	77
	Jelena Matančević and Ana Opačić	
6	Three Decades of Post-Yugoslav Transformation(s) of Social Policy and Social Work in Serbia – Still Between Uncertainty and Failure.	97
	Natalija Perišić and Danijela Pavlović	
7	Social Policies and Social Services in North Macedonia: Between Ideology and Reality	123
	Maja Gerovska Mitev and Suzana Bornarova	
8	Social Welfare Policy and Social Work in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.	143
	Borjana Miković	

9 Social Protection in the Republic of Srpska: Conditions, Challenges and Reforms.	163
Draško Gajić, Andrea Rakanović Radonjić, and Vesna Šućur-Janjetović	
10 Towards a Post-crisis Welfare State in Central and Southeast Europe: Challenges and Perspectives	185
Maja Gerovska Mitev and Natalija Perišić	
Index.	197

Contributors

Suzana Bornarova is a full-time professor at the Institute for Social Work and Social Policy, Faculty of Philosophy – Skopje, at the Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje. As a Fulbright Scholar at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., USA, she conducted a research related to services for the elderly. She is coordinator of the National Center for Continuing Education for Social Development at the Institute for Social Work and Social Policy. She has participated in numerous conferences in the country and abroad and is author of several domestic and foreign publications (scientific papers, evaluations and analyses, programs and strategies), as well as five university textbooks. Her research interests include social policy, social protection and social work; special focus is on social work with family, family policy and policy on demographic ageing, migration.

Draško Gajić is an assistant professor of Social Policy at Department of Social work, Faculty of Political Science, University of Banja Luka. He completed his graduate studies in Social Work in 2004 at the Faculty of Philosophy University of Banja Luka. He finished his master's study at the Faculty of Political Sciences at Belgrade University, and defended his doctoral dissertation in 2021 at the Faculty of Political Sciences at University of Banja Luka. He is professor in scientific field of Social Policy and teaches the following units/subjects: social policy, non-governmental sector in social policy, human rights and social work, poverty and social inclusion, social protection in emergency situations.

Hubert Höllmüller is a professor at the Social Work Degree Program at Carinthian University of Applied Sciences in Austria. His teaching and research focus is on Childhood/Youth, Research on Children and Youth Care in Austria and Slovenia and the Western Sahara Conflict. His recent publications include *Niederschwelligkeit in der Sozialen Arbeit* (Hg. mit Helmut Arnold) Juventa 2017 and *Erasmus goes Westsahara* (Hrsg. mit Lisa Bebek und Franziska Syme) Drava Verlag 2019.

Vesna Leskošek is a professor at the Faculty of Social Work, University of Ljubljana, and her main research interests are in social inequalities, welfare state, gender and poverty. She leads a research project on poverty in old age and participates in the H2020 project on sustainable transition research in social work (ASTRA). Her latest publications include two co-authored chapter in the edited volume *Social Work During COVID-19: Glocal Perspectives and Implications for the Future of Social Work* (Routledge, 2023) and a co-authored book *The Right to Abortion* (Založba FDV, 2021).

Jelena Matančević is an associate professor at the Department for Social policy at the Faculty of Law, University of Zagreb. Her research interests include the role of the third sector in social service provision, welfare mix, non-profit sector, philanthropy and social innovations. She has participated in domestic and international projects, including FP7, Erasmus+, Interreg, ESF. She teaches at graduate, post-graduate and PhD studies in social work and social policy.

Borjana Miković is an associate professor at the University of Sarajevo's Faculty of Political Sciences and a doctor of law. She holds degrees from both the University of Sarajevo's Faculty of Law and Faculty of Political Sciences (Social Work). Her research work is based on studies of the realisation/respect of human rights and human dignity, as well as social policy, i.e. social protection of vulnerable social groups (persons deprived of or limited of legal capacity, children without parental care, families living in poverty, the elderly). She has published one book (translated into English) and numerous articles in national and international journals.

Ana Opačić is an associate professor at the Faculty of Law, Department of Social Work, University of Zagreb. Her major field of teaching and research interest is community development, theory of social work and international social work. Ana Opačić is specifically engaged in research regarding disadvantaged communities, poverty and social services. Alongside research and teaching projects, she is actively involved in developing community-based projects, evaluating projects and providing trainings in action research for field practitioners.

Danijela Pavlović is a PhD student and teaching assistant at the Department of Social Policy and Social Work, Faculty of Political Science, University of Belgrade. She is involved in seminars and colloquia in several courses: comparative social policy, international social policy, social security systems, social policy of the European Union, social work with the elderly, and introduction to social work and social policy. Her scientific and research interests in the migration field are within the nexus between migration and the welfare state, services for migrants provided by the public and civil sectors, and migrants' integration policies. She has participated in several scientific and professional projects, conferences and training. She contributed to several scientific projects, including: "Political Identity of Serbia in Regional and Global Context" project of the Ministry of Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia, and "Migration, integration, governance and research center" within the program Horizon 2020 in the period from 2019 to 2023.

Natalija Perišić is a full-time professor of Social Policy at the Department of Social Policy and Social Work, Faculty of Political Science, University of Belgrade, where she lectures on national and European welfare states, ageing and migration at the undergraduate, master and doctoral studies. She is also a lecturer at the Master in Migration Studies programme at the University of Belgrade and a visiting professor at the Department of Sociology with Social Work, University of Eastern Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. She is a vice-dean for Undergraduate Studies at the Faculty of Political Science and the Coordinator of MIGREC, a project funded under the European Union's Horizon 2020 scheme. Her scientific and research interests include the nexus between ageing, migration and welfare state, national and European social policies and gender perspectives. She has published extensively in national and international journals and contributed to several edited books.

Andrea Rakanović Radonjić is an assistant professor of Social Work at the Department of Social Work, Faculty of Political Science, University of Banja Luka. She is employed at the Faculty of Political Science since 2016. Andrea is engaged in units/subjects in the scientific field of social work. Before her academic career, she gained extensive practical experience in social work in healthcare and social protection. She is member of European Social Work Research Association, and member and president of Board of Directors of Association of Social Workers of Republic of Srpska. As an expert consultant, she is engaged in various national and international projects in her field of interest.

Kateřina Šámalová is an assistant professor at the Department of Social Work at the Faculty of Social Work of Charles University and the Prague School of Psychosocial Studies. Since January 2023, she has been in the position of university ombudsperson. For several years she has been a member of the expert team of the Ministry of Social Welfare in Moldova. Her background is in social work. She is interested in educational inequalities and social inclusion of people with disabilities through education. She also specializes in issues of professionalisation, identity and prestige of social work. In her publications she seeks to highlight the potential of social work in managing and influencing social processes and in eliminating inequalities in access to education for disadvantaged groups.

Vesna Šućur-Janjetović is an associate professor of Social Work and a lecturer at the University of Banja Luka from October 2006. At this university, she held many managerial positions. Vesna also has international teaching experience in Australia. She has been teaching at Australian College of Applied Psychology (Sydney and Melbourne) School of Social Work from September 2018 until September 2020. During this period, she also held the position of the Master of Social Work Course Coordinator. She teaches the following units/subjects: research project, research methods, international social work, critical social work, social work with individuals and families, social work theories, professional practice.

Petr Vojtíšek is an assistant professor in the Department of Social Work at the Faculty of Arts of Charles University. Since 2006, he has worked in managerial positions in social services. Since 2010, he has also been involved as a freelancer in training and consulting of leadership and management in social work and social policy – focus on issues of strategy, evaluation and managerial skills and their application in NGO's and public agencies. He is the author of several professional articles, chapters and publications. Through his professional activities, he effectively connects the world of theory and practice of social policy and social work.

About the Editor

Maja Gerovska Mitev is a professor of Social Policy at the Institute of Social Work and Social Policy, Faculty of Philosophy, Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, North Macedonia. Her research interests are focused on examination of the changing nature of the welfare systems and its impact on poverty and social exclusion, inequalities in access to social protection, as well as essential services for low-income people. She is editor-in-chief of the journal *Ревија за социјална политика/Journal of Social Policy*; a national coordinator for North Macedonia in the European Social Policy Analysis Network (ESPAN); and academic coordinator of the Central European Social Policy and Social Work Network (CESPASWON) within the CEEPUS program.

Abbreviations

AK	Austrian Federal Chamber of Labour
ALMP	Active labour market programs
AMS	Austrian Public Employment Service
BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
BD	Brčko District of B&H
CEEPUS	Central European Exchange Program for University Studies
CSE	Central and Southeast Europe
CESPASWON	Central European Social Policy and Social Work Network
CO	Carbon monoxide
CO ₂	Carbon dioxide
CSE	Central and Southeast Europe
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease of 2019
CSW	Centres for social work
DFID	Department for International Development
ESPROSS	European System of Integrated Social Protection Statistics
HIF	Health Insurance Fund
EU	European Union
EU27	European Union of 27 member states
EU-SILC	EU Statistics on Income and Living Conditions
ESRP	Employment and Social Reform Programme
FB&H	Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina
FBS	Federal Bureau of Statistics
FOI	Forum for Freedom of Information
FPÖ	Freedom Party of Austria
GMA	Guaranteed minimum assistance
GDP	Gross domestic product
ICT	Information and communication technology
IBHI	Initiative for Better and Humane Inclusion
IFSW	International Federation of Social Workers
ILO	International Labour Organization
KM	Convertible mark

LGBT+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and many other
LWA-G	Living and Housing Cost Compensation Act
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MLFSA	Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NIPH	National Institute of Public Health
NPM	New public management
ÖGB	Austrian Trade Union Federation
ÖVP	Austrian People's Party
PAYG	Pay-as-you-go
PDIF	Pension and Disability Insurance Fund
PTSD	Post-traumatic stress disorder
RPILS	Reform Programme for the Implementation of the Lisbon Strategy
RS	Republic of Srpska
RSD	Dinar
RTI	Right to Information Rating
SDSM	Social Democratic Alliance of Macedonia
SRFY	Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
SPÖ	Social Democrat Party Austria
SWCs	Social work centres
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USA	United States of America
US\$	United States dollar
VMRO-DPMNE	Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity
WB	Western Balkan
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organization
WW2	Second World War

List of Figures

Fig. 1.1	Total expenditure on social protection as % of GDP in CSE, 2015–2021	6
Fig. 1.2	Gini coefficient of equivalised disposable income in CSE, 2015–2022	6
Fig. 1.3	Decommodification and stratification proxies in Central and Southeast Europe.	7
Fig. 3.1	Social expenditures in EU countries, 2020.	43
Fig. 3.2	Social protection system in the Czech Republic	45
Fig. 3.3	Proportional and relational scheme of social protection systems in the Czech Republic.	47
Fig. 4.1	Public opinion on differences in incomes, Slovenia, 1975–2022	62
Fig. 7.1	Processed GMA applications in 2020 per CSW in North Macedonia, in %.	139
Fig. 8.1	Average pension and number of pensioners in FB&H, 2018–2021	150
Fig. 8.2	Average number of employees and working age population in FB&H, 2018–2021.	151
Fig. 8.3	Unemployed, workforce and unemployment rate in FB&H, 2018–2021	152
Fig. 10.1	Population in Central and Southeast Europe by age class, 2022	189
Fig. 10.2	Democracy Index in Central and Southeast Europe, 2018–2022	192

List of Tables

Table 1.1	Social protection response to COVID-19 in CSE, 2020–2021	8
Table 1.2	Quality of public services in Central and Southeast Europe, 2016	10
Table 3.1	Number of social workers in respective ministries in the Czech Republic	48
Table 4.1	Average number of recipients of social benefits compared to number of unemployed people in Slovenia, 2009–2014	60
Table 4.2	Attitude towards social cash benefits recipients in Slovenia	64
Table 4.3	At-risk-of-poverty rate by age group and gender in Slovenia, 2021, in %	66
Table 4.4	Pension amounts for persons receiving full old-age, disability, widow's and survivors' pensions in Slovenia, December 2021	67
Table 4.5	Unemployment rate in Slovenia by age group, October 2022	67
Table 5.1	Total expenditure on social protection benefits in Croatia, by function, as % of GDP	79
Table 5.2	Share of social expenditure in Croatia, by function, in %	80
Table 7.1	Fertility rate and at risk of poverty rate among households with three and more children in North Macedonia, 2010–2019	130
Table 7.2	Unemployment rate and at risk of poverty rate, 2014–2022, EU27 and North Macedonia.	132
Table 7.3	Beneficiaries of social insurance and social assistance scheme in North Macedonia	132
Table 8.1	Contribution rates for social insurance in FB&H.	150
Table 8.2	Financial assistance to beneficiaries of social protection in FB&H, 2019–2021.	154

Chapter 1

Welfare State Reforms and Their Implications for Social Work in Central and Southeast Europe

Maja Gerovska Mitev

Introduction

This book provides an attempt to bring together two fields of study: social policy including the broader context of the welfare state; and social work in terms of the provision of social services and cash benefits. In doing so, it aims to trace the welfare state trajectories and social policy patterns in the countries of Central and Southeast Europe (CSE), and also assess whether wider welfare state reforms, as well as the implicit social policy formulation, have an impact on who, how and to what extent is being served by the social work. The focus of the book is on seven countries from Central and Southeast Europe, including Austria, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, North Macedonia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. In terms of social work and social policy traditions, the analysed block of countries is diverse, with many similarities and differences stemming from their cultural, historical, socio-economic and political particularities. Moreover, there are two chapters focusing on Bosnia and Herzegovina, to highlight the specifics of its two entities, i.e., the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Srpska.

The theoretical and conceptual apparatus used in this book derives from the disciplines of social policy and social work. Ideologies of welfare, such as conservative, social-democratic and neoliberal (Esping Andersen, 1990; Abramowitz, 2013) are explored to assess how they shape the policy debates, social policy strategies, and social work practices in the analysed countries. Along with the analysis of agencies, institutions, structures and discourses (Deacon & Stubbs, 2007; Moulaert & Jessop, 2006), the book also examines welfare at the micro-level, addressing

M. Gerovska Mitev (✉)

Institute of Social Work and Social Policy, Faculty of Philosophy, Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, Skopje, North Macedonia
e-mail: gerovska@fzf.ukim.edu.mk

encounters between beneficiaries and social service providers. Also, to the extent possible, the transnational dimension of social policy is scrutinised to investigate the impact of various international actors, such as the International Financial Institutions and the European Union, upon welfare state reforms and approaches to welfare.

Methodologically, the book is based on the comparative case study method (Ragin, 2014), with country case studies that elaborate: the context in which the social policy and social work have developed; the main changes in the welfare state after 1990; the country-specific welfare state discourse and debates; as well as the key contemporary challenges in social policy and social work. The timeframe of analysis focuses on developments post-1990, with a particular focus on developments and reconfigurations undertaken during COVID-19. On the basis of the empirical investigations in the case studies, the book aims to draw analytical conclusions about the interdependence between welfare state reforms and social work practices in Central and Southeast Europe and provide an overview of future perspectives regarding social policy and social service provision in this region.

Welfare State Trajectories and Social Policy Patterns in Central and Southeast Europe

Early welfare regime classifications developed for the Western welfare states (i.e., Titmuss, 1974; Wilensky, 1975; Esping Andersen, 1990) as well as their critics (i.e., Leibfried, 1993; Ferrera, 1996; Bamba, 2007) rarely included the countries from Central and Southeast Europe (with the exceptions of Austria, Soviet Russia and East Germany). Even when they did (i.e., Fenger, 2007; Keune, 2008; Cerami & Vanhuyse, 2009), the variables used to identify the welfare state model have not fully reflected developments at the micro level or have undermined less-measurable social phenomena, such as social justice, social cohesion, etc. Notwithstanding the limitations of the welfare state classifications in the context of diverse historical, political, economic, and social realities in Central and Southeast Europe, the purpose of their use in this section is to provide a bird's-eye view of the welfare state configuration and its ongoing modifications in this region.

In the comparative welfare state literature (i.e., Obinger, 2005; Schubert et al., 2016) Austria is depicted as a corporatist, conservative, continental, or male breadwinner welfare state (Osterle & Heitzmann, 2016). However, as argued by Höllmüller in this book (Chap. 2), while the “basic structure of the Austrian welfare state remained intact over the years, recent trends show that the welfare state is dominated by a paternalistic/expertocratic dominant culture that stigmatizes marginalised groups and maintains economic and social exclusion”.

After the 1990s, there were many attempts to depict the character of the welfare state in post-socialist countries, focusing on similarities and differences with welfare states in the affluent capitalist democracies. Countries from CSE analysed in

this book (particularly the post-Yugoslav states, i.e., Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, North Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina) have been described as a “modified form of conservative corporatism” where the “greater degree of state protection was achieved at the price of less economic growth” (Deacon, 1992).

The Slovenian welfare state was demonstrating characteristics similar to that of the Austrian welfare state. As indicated by Svetlik “the substitution of some social rights by contractual relations, pluralisation of service provision and stress on a subsidiarity principle have not been worked out fully” and the early 1990s tendencies of the welfare system in Slovenia were “in the direction of a corporatist conservative model” (Svetlik, 1993). But as shown by Leskošek in this book (Chap. 4), neoliberal influences have also impacted the Slovene welfare state as, in recent years, Slovene social policies have also become “increasingly restrictive and conditional, encouraging moral judgement and a division between deserving and undeserving recipients of cash benefits”.

The Czech Republic was among the best performers within the post-socialist countries, most notably due to its success in maintaining low unemployment and low poverty rates. Welfare choices favoured by the Czechs after the 1990s as stressed by Potuček focused on “the performance principle and the creation of natural feedback within and between the state, public and privatised corporations and individuals” (1993, p. 224). He saw the possible future welfare state in the Czech Republic as being less redistributive and more corporatist conservative (Potuček, 1993). Despite favourable trends in the Czech Republic, Šámalová and Vojtíšek claim in this book (Chap. 2) that social statistics do not tell the complete story and that “a large percentage of people levitate just above the relative poverty line and that a significant number of employed families are facing in-work poverty”.

Assessing the Croatian welfare state developments post 1990s, Puljiz identifies the welfare trajectory going “from passive to active welfare state” (Puljiz, 2001), hence substituting the older Bismarckian model of the welfare state with elements of the liberal and social-democratic model (Puljiz, 2008). Zrinščak and Stubbs, on the other hand, have stressed the importance of nation state building, and the consequences of war and delayed Europeanisation as important factors shaping welfare arrangements in Croatia, leading to a “complex mix of statism and centralisation, as well as a lack of clear roles of non-state and local government actors” (Zrinščak & Stubbs, 2009, p. 131). Today, as Matančević and Opačić suggest in Chap. 5 of this book, Croatian social policy faces “challenges of adequacy and sustainability, relatively low efficiency in social inclusion and work integration programmes, and inadequacy to answer to new social risks”.

The group of non-EU countries covered in this book (Serbia, North Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina) are even less represented in welfare state mapping and research than the other countries from the CSE region. Analysed also under the term the Western Balkans, these welfare regimes are assessed as “incomplete versions of the liberal welfare regime, with elements preserved of the corporatist regime” (Sotiropoulos, 2014, p. 252). Sotiropoulos also rightly argues that “state socialist welfare regimes have been replaced by assemblages of public, private, and non-governmental welfare institutions, which are under the influence of

international organisations" (ibid, p. 252). As pointed out in the subsequent country chapters of this book, such description still holds true in these countries. Perišić and Pavlović confirm that "Serbia is in a locked-in situation of a passive welfare state, with discourses embedded into the crisis framework", with lack of incentives for innovation and modernisation (Chap. 6). In North Macedonia, welfare state development has been "guided by the specific socio-economic trends, different political ideologies, as well as by the impact of different international organisations" (Gerovska Mitev and Bornarova, Chap. 7). Similarly, Miković (Chap. 8) indicates that in Bosnia and Herzegovina the "residual welfare model seems to prevail, which was mainly supported by the supranational financial agencies, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund". Finally, Gajić, Rakanović Radonjić and Šućur-Janjetović (Chap. 8) conclude that the "welfare model in the Republic of Srpska shows rudimentary evolution and is characterised by a 'elemental-rudimental' moving away from the previous socialist period".

From this short snapshot of welfare state patterns in Central and Southeast Europe, as well as from the more thorough descriptions in the following country chapters, it may be summarised that several factors are relevant for understanding CSE welfare state configurations and reform trajectories:

Historical Roots: The early establishment of contributory social insurance programs, (Austria, post-Yugoslav countries), a strong emphasis on maintaining traditional family structures and provision of family-oriented benefits and support (Austria), the early establishment and equal geographical distribution of social services, i.e., Centers of Social Work (CSWs) (post-Yugoslav countries), and universal healthcare (Czech Republic), have laid the foundations for the modern welfare state in the CSE. These early developments have had a lasting impact on the current structure of the welfare system in CSE, as well as on its capacity to reform.

Political ideologies: While the legacy of conservatism (Austria) and socialism (Czech Republic, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, North Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina) continued to shape the welfare state developments post 1990s in the CSE (notwithstanding the differences between the Yugoslav and Soviet bloc socialism), other political ideologies have also contributed to social policy reforms since. Most prominently, the neoliberal influences swooped across the region, as privatisation of the social services (pensions, long-term care, health, early childhood education, etc.) and limiting welfare spending through narrowing eligibility, targeted and conditional social transfers, public-private partnerships in social service delivery, and so on, were seen as the only alternative. While in some cases the neoliberal turn was a result of a dependence on international donor assistance (Serbia, North Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina) in others it was a result of the orientation of the ruling political parties, as well as using the EU membership as an excuse for free market reforms (Austria, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Croatia).

EU Integration: Aiming to join the European Union (EU) became a driving force for reforms and aligning social policies with EU standards across the post-socialist countries from CSE. EU membership required adherence to certain social and economic criteria, which influenced the development of welfare policies in these countries, including the strategic programming of social policies as well as implementing

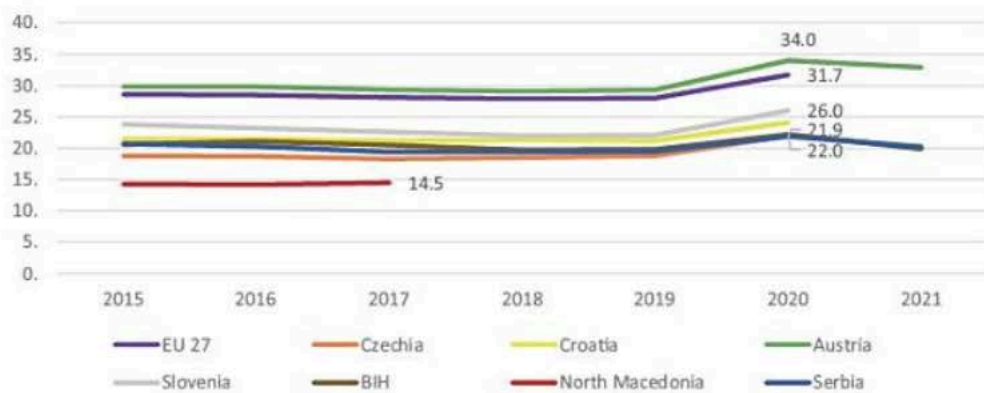
harmonised methodologies for the collection and presentation of social statistics. While the Czech Republic, Slovenia and, to an extent, Croatia succeeded to balance their socio-economic challenges from the transition period with the requirements of EU integration on time, Serbia, North Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina are still navigating the tension between domestic reforms (i.e., rule of law and corruption, ethnic and political divisions, nationalism and identity) and the demands of the EU integration.

International financial institutions: For the post-socialist countries such as Serbia, North Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and to some extent Croatia, policy advice and loan conditionalities coming from the International Financial Institutions, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, were highly influential in shaping social policy reforms in the late 1990s. The introduction of the mandatory fully funded pension insurance in Croatia and North Macedonia is one such example where the World Bank's technical assistance and advice shaped the paradigmatic shift from pay-as-you-go (PAYG) pension schemes towards mandatory pension privatisation. On the other hand, due to their favourable economic conditions, as well as the strong political and expert resistance, Slovenia and the Czech Republic have not followed the World Bank's advice to shift from the PAYG system to the mandatory private-funded system. In general, dependence on international financial assistance, ministries of finance and economy being run by neoliberal economists, and a lack of vocal critical opposition have all contributed to the invasive impact of International Financial Institutions on the social policy landscape in the CSE.

Each country chapter also outlines other immanent welfare state determinants, among which are also: the impact of the wars of the 1990s in post-Yugoslav countries; the role of religion, the deep politicisation, the layered welfare regarding ethnic communities, as well as the balance between centralised and localised responsibilities.

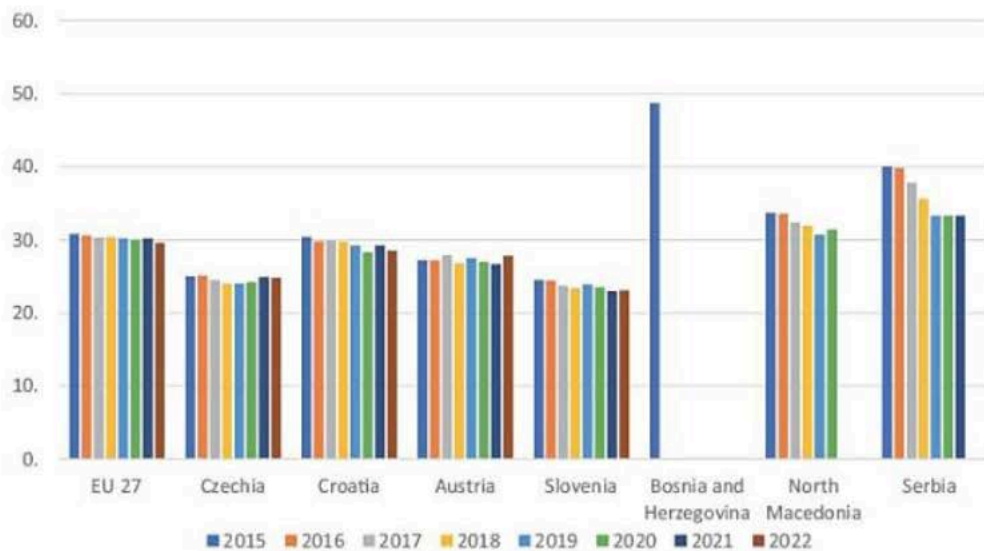
Social policy patterns in Central and Southeast Europe continue to evolve as these countries adapt to changing demographic, political and economic conditions. Welfare state capacity to provide comprehensive social services and tackle social inequalities is also conditioned by the size of social protection expenditure. Based on the available statistical data (Fig. 1.1), it may be seen that among the analysed CSE countries, only Austria, the richest of the countries studied, is a "big" spender, as its social protection expenditure is above the EU27 average and stood at 32.9% of GDP in 2021. Other countries from the region spent significantly less than the EU27 average of 31.7% in 2020. Slovenia is closest to the EU average with 26% of GDP spent on social protection, while North Macedonia is furthest from the EU average as its social protection expenditure stood at 14.5% of GDP in 2017 (latest available ESPOSS data).

Assessment of the income inequality measured through the Gini coefficient (Fig. 1.2) shows that in the Central and Southeast Europe, three of the countries are characterised with higher inequality (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and North Macedonia), while the other four (Czech Republic, Slovenia, Austria and Croatia) have lower income inequality compared to the EU average (29.6% in



Source: Eurostat, 2023a.

Fig. 1.1 Total expenditure on social protection as % of GDP in CSE, 2015–2021. (Source: Eurostat, 2023a)



Sources: Eurostat, 2023b; Statistics Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2017.

Fig. 1.2 Gini coefficient of equivalised disposable income in CSE, 2015–2022. (Sources: Eurostat, 2023b; Statistics Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2017)

2022). Given the significant degree of informal economy in some of the analysed countries, the Gini coefficient does not capture the full extent of inequality in the region.

It must be acknowledged that the lack of timely and harmonised social statistics in most of the post-socialist countries hindered more comprehensive as well as the comparative analysis of these welfare states. Also, lack of more disaggregated data regarding redistribution in the post-socialist countries prevents their comparison in terms of welfare state outcomes.

Index

A

Accession process, 59
 Activation, 9, 10, 60, 64, 65, 72, 73, 82, 88, 99, 102, 103, 110, 119, 133, 187, 191
 Active labour market programmes, 82, 110, 112, 113
 Adaptive social protection, 12, 138
 Ageing, 40, 45, 50, 53, 113, 119, 155, 172, 189, 193
 Assimilation, 36

B

Benefits, 4, 7, 8, 18, 20, 21, 24, 25, 29, 32, 44–47, 49, 51, 54, 60–62, 64, 69, 70, 79, 80, 84, 86, 88, 98, 100–106, 109–111, 113, 114, 118, 119, 126, 127, 130, 131, 133, 134, 136, 138, 145–147, 149, 152–156, 160, 167, 174, 177, 191
 Bottom-up welfare state reform, 190, 191

C

Case management, 10, 11, 50, 53, 98, 102, 116, 127, 135, 191
 Cash benefits, 1, 3, 9, 10, 46, 58–61, 64, 65, 67, 69, 70, 99, 100, 102, 103, 124, 130–132, 134, 139, 161, 167, 193
 Challenges, 2, 3, 5, 12, 20, 49, 50, 53, 54, 59, 68, 77, 82, 83, 89, 91–93, 98, 103, 104, 106, 109, 112–117, 119, 120, 124, 128, 131–136, 144, 145, 149, 151, 163–181, 185–194
 Charity, 9, 20, 37, 61

Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms, 37, 43
 Childcare, 9, 10, 32, 99, 100, 102, 104, 105, 112
 Citizenship, 25, 65, 72, 88, 109
 Civic participation, 41
 Civil society organisations, 60, 83, 87, 100, 104, 107, 108, 118
 Community work, 11, 53, 71, 138
 Conditionality, 5, 8, 60, 65, 125, 191, 193
 Contributory system, 37
 Convergence, 41, 44
 Cost of living, 7, 49, 126, 190
 COVID-19, 2, 7, 8, 11, 26, 52–53, 58, 67, 69–71, 83–84, 93, 98, 104, 106, 110, 112, 117, 118, 120, 128, 131, 133, 135–139, 144, 145, 147–149, 155–157, 161, 172, 178–181, 186, 190
 Crisis intervention centres, 50
 Croatia, 1, 3–5, 8–10, 12, 77–93, 174, 187, 189–193
 Czechoslovakia, 37, 38
 Czech social welfare state, 35–54

D

Decentralisation, 41, 44, 81, 82, 85, 87, 99, 102, 103, 124–127, 139
 Decommodification, 7, 146
 Deinstitutionalisation, 50, 81, 82, 85, 87, 102, 104, 124–126
 Dementia, 50
 Democratisation, 19, 79, 190, 191
 Distraints, 49

E

Early intervention, 53
 Economic expansion, 39
 Efficiency, 3, 10, 36, 44, 65, 83, 93, 129, 153, 156, 160, 166, 177
 Eligibility, 4, 8, 61, 69, 71, 100, 102, 103, 105, 107, 109, 110, 113, 127, 129, 131, 134–137, 186, 189, 193
 Ethnic minorities, 36, 134
 European Social Charter, 37, 193
 European Social Doctrine, 41
 Evidence-based policy, 120, 139
 Expertocracy, 19

F

Field social work, 53
 Fraud, 63, 64
 Freedom, 24, 27, 39, 41, 82, 191
 Free-market economy, 36

G

Gender poverty gap, 59

H

Healthcare, 4, 10, 11, 18, 51, 70, 77, 79, 80, 84, 89, 98, 100–105, 110–113, 124, 145, 146, 149, 150, 155, 158, 161, 186, 187
 Health insurance, 7, 8, 41, 45, 79, 97, 98, 101, 102, 105, 123, 130, 132, 168, 174
 Homelessness, 51, 54, 158
 Housing, 9, 10, 18, 25, 26, 32, 41, 42, 46, 49, 51, 54, 59, 63, 79, 80, 83, 87, 89, 97, 105, 124, 146
 Housing first, 54
 Humanisation, 50
 Human rights, 37, 39, 62, 73, 108, 115, 119, 146, 186, 193, 194
 Human rights perspective, 119, 190, 193

I

Indebtedness, 49
 Individual responsibility, 63, 79, 81, 82, 93
 Informal caregivers, 50, 51
 Innovation, 4, 11, 32, 50, 82, 119, 190, 192, 193
 Insurance in case of unemployment, 97, 99, 105
 International Labour Organization (ILO), 11, 37, 193

K

Key challenges, 24–26, 28–30, 42–52, 65–69, 82–91, 109–117, 131–135, 148–155, 157–160

L

Labour market, 10, 40, 60, 62, 65, 67, 72, 73, 82, 83, 99–104, 107, 113, 119, 132–134, 145, 153, 161, 167, 172, 174–176, 187, 190
 Labour Office, 37
 Legality, 43
 Legislation, 24, 37, 39, 41, 53, 60, 61, 63, 65, 69, 78, 99, 102, 103, 105, 107–109, 125, 134, 144, 160, 161, 193
 Liberal state, 39
 Life expectancy at birth, 50
 Life expectancy in health, 50
 Lifelong learning, 38, 173
 Livelihood, 65, 69
 Long-term care, 4, 9, 10, 50, 51, 53, 57, 97, 112, 119, 131, 161, 188, 190

M

Market economy, 39, 40, 62, 63, 123, 129
 Material poverty, 49
 Media, 11, 50, 52, 114, 117
 Minimum wage, 59, 88, 130–131, 133, 134, 136, 154, 187

N

Non-contributory system, 37
 Non-governmental organisations, 42, 58, 128, 144, 155, 158, 161

O

Old-age and disability insurance, 97, 100, 102, 105, 113
 Ombudsman, 28, 37, 84, 115

P

Paternalism, 19, 30
 Pay-as-you-go (PAYG), 5, 45, 53, 109, 172
 Pension reform, 37, 49, 79, 125, 189
 Policy reforms, 4, 5, 77, 78, 82, 190, 192
 Post-crises welfare state, 190
 Poverty, 3, 20–24, 29, 30, 32, 36, 49, 51, 53, 57–59, 61, 63–69, 71–73, 79, 81, 83,

- 87, 88, 92, 99, 102, 107, 108, 110, 111, 114, 123–125, 128–135, 143, 144, 146–149, 153, 155, 157, 160, 161, 164–167, 170, 172–174, 181, 185–189, 191
- Poverty rate, 3, 49, 67, 68, 99, 101, 110, 124, 130, 132, 134, 147, 164, 166
- Private commercial sector, 35
- Privatisation, 4, 5, 9, 21, 58, 59, 63, 72, 78–82, 93, 101, 102, 107, 164
- Professional organisation, 38, 52
- Public sector, 9, 42, 69, 98, 100, 103, 104, 106, 107, 115, 117, 147, 156, 186, 187
- R**
- Rapid re-housing, 54
- Redistribution, 6, 20, 21, 39–42, 46, 63, 97
- Reforms, 1–12, 24–26, 36, 37, 45, 53, 59, 73, 77–93, 99, 101–105, 107–109, 112, 114, 116, 118, 119, 125–127, 131, 145, 160, 163–181, 186, 188, 189, 191, 192
- Residential services, 36, 50
- Residual social policy, 57
- S**
- Segregation, 51
- Self-governing territorial corporations, 41
- Sickness insurance, 37
- Social and legal protection of children, 36
- Social assistance, 7, 9, 11, 24, 25, 29, 46, 63, 67, 69, 88, 111, 118, 124, 125, 129–134, 138, 146, 147, 149, 156, 157, 159, 160, 186, 187
- Social benefits, 20, 21, 37, 49, 58–61, 64, 84, 146, 156, 157, 159, 166, 177, 181, 191
- Social care, 9, 11, 36, 37, 44, 46, 47, 50, 51, 53, 54, 58, 81, 82, 84–93, 97, 98, 100, 102–105, 110, 115, 118, 178, 186–188, 191
- Social care system, 77, 78, 81–83, 85, 87–93, 101, 102, 104, 191
- Social change, 58, 60, 107, 189
- Social exclusion, 2, 36, 46, 47, 51, 54, 59, 72, 79, 80, 82, 129, 147, 166, 170, 191
- Social functioning, 48
- Social inclusion, 3, 46, 59, 65, 72, 93, 110, 125, 147, 164, 165, 174, 176, 181
- Social inequality, 5, 40, 58, 62–64, 72, 73, 100
- Social insurance, 4, 18, 30, 41, 45, 46, 77, 78, 97–102, 112, 118, 123, 130–132, 136, 145, 149, 150, 152, 155, 160, 161, 168
- Socialism, 4, 58, 62, 98, 144, 159
- Social justice, 2, 27, 40, 73, 97, 186, 189
- Socially excluded localities, 51, 53
- Social peace, 35, 40, 54
- Social policy, 1, 18, 35, 57, 77, 97, 123, 159, 163, 185
- Social policy actors, 36, 42
- Social protection, 5, 37, 58, 79, 107, 123, 143, 163, 191
- Social protection reform, 128, 139, 159, 170, 171, 177–180
- Social protection system, 7, 8, 12, 35, 45, 47, 48, 58, 99, 115, 117–119, 124, 125, 127, 128, 137, 138, 145, 148, 149, 157, 160, 161, 165–177, 179, 181, 190, 193
- Social rights, 3, 21, 39, 41, 43, 44, 62, 64, 77, 80, 81, 91, 124, 129, 130, 160, 193
- Social risk, 3, 18, 36, 39, 40, 42, 45, 47, 77–79, 83, 87, 89, 93, 193, 194
- Social security, 8, 20, 21, 28, 30, 36, 37, 39, 42, 60, 61, 64, 67, 72, 77–79, 82, 93, 124, 126, 131, 144, 146, 148, 160, 164–166, 168
- Social services, 1, 2, 4, 5, 8–12, 17, 28–31, 37, 40, 42, 46, 47, 49–53, 57, 58, 60, 61, 65, 68–73, 80, 81, 83–92, 98, 100, 102, 103, 114–118, 123–140, 157–161, 167, 186, 188, 190, 193, 194
- Social sovereignty, 40
- Social tensions, 35, 40, 129
- Social welfare, 18, 19, 31, 46, 84–88, 90–93, 99, 100, 108, 113, 114, 116, 123, 124, 144–147, 149, 150, 154, 158, 161, 168, 179, 180, 193
- Social welfare policy, 143–147, 157
- Social work, 1, 17, 36, 57, 77, 97, 123, 144, 169, 185
- Social workers, 10–12, 36–38, 47, 48, 52–54, 57, 58, 64, 68, 69, 71, 84, 89, 90, 92, 93, 98, 105, 114–117, 119, 120, 146, 157–161, 171, 178, 186–191, 193
- Solidarity, 20, 38, 39, 41, 54, 63, 108, 146, 172, 186
- Squalor, 36
- Stakeholders, 81, 83, 101, 103, 107, 109, 119, 125, 127, 167, 169, 188
- State social support, 46
- Stratification, 7
- Subsidiarity, 3, 41, 44, 82, 92
- T**
- Telephone crisis intervention, 50

Totalitarianism, 38
 Transition, 5, 37, 40, 58, 62, 63, 65, 72, 78,
 79, 98, 100, 102, 106, 109, 123,
 143–145, 158, 159, 164, 169, 174, 190
 Transparency, 27, 31, 44, 190, 191

U

UN conventions, 37, 193
 Unemployment, 3, 7–9, 18, 20, 21, 31, 32, 37,
 51, 67, 72, 78–80, 83, 88, 99, 104, 108,
 110, 111, 114, 118, 123–125, 129,
 131–137, 144, 146, 148–154, 161, 166,
 168, 172, 174–176, 193
 Unemployment rate, 49, 59, 60, 67, 82, 101,
 103, 132, 134, 147, 151, 152, 164, 174
 User-centred approach, 82, 119, 190, 193

V

Velvet Revolution, 37

Vocational training, 36
 Voluntary solidarity, 42
 Volunteering, 37, 46
 Vulnerable groups, 54, 83, 104, 110, 118, 120,
 144, 145, 157, 159, 161, 180, 193

W

Welfare, 1, 17, 40, 58, 77, 97, 127, 146, 186
 Welfare benefit, 19, 100, 108, 113, 144
 Welfare mix, 9, 58, 81, 82, 85, 92, 93
 Welfare rights, 124, 144–147, 193
 Welfare state, 1, 17, 38, 57, 77, 97, 124,
 146, 186
 Welfare state benefits, 39
 Welfare state trajectory, 1–8
 Workfare, 64, 65, 72, 88

Y

Youth justice, 37

Social Work and Social Policy Transformations in Central and Southeast Europe

This book provides a picture of recent developments in social policy and social work in Central and Southeast Europe, especially trends after the COVID-19 pandemic, which necessitated significant welfare modifications. Through a comparative method, the book draws analytical conclusions about the interdependence between welfare state reforms and social work practices in Central and Southeast Europe and provides an overview of future perspectives regarding social policy and social service provision in this region.

The book covers four EU member states (Austria, the Czech Republic, Slovenia and Croatia) and three EU candidate countries (North Macedonia, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina). By critically contextualising existing welfare state categorisations, the book aims to examine the link between the welfare state reforms and implications for social work in Central and Southeast Europe.

The country-based chapters of this contributed volume:

- outline the context in which social policy and social work have developed and map the main changes in the welfare state since the transition from socialism;
- elaborate the country-specific welfare state discourse and discussions, which through literature review depict the conceptual debates about the welfare state, social justice, equality, poverty, entitlements for cash transfer and services, privatization, and accessibility;
- indicate the key challenges in social policy and social work; and
- provide indications about the future perspectives of social policy and social service provision.

Social Work and Social Policy Transformations in Central and Southeast Europe addresses the scarcity of literature on social policy and social work in this region. The book is primarily intended for social policy researchers and scholars, and students in social work, social policy, political science, and sociology. It is an invaluable resource for researchers from all fields of social sciences and should provoke wider academic and professional interest.

“The common themes of transformation, restructuring and crises, synthesized in excellent Introductory and Concluding chapters, make the book an essential source for an understanding of contemporary policies and practices, the complex role played by historical legacies, and offer a model of what a comparative policy approach should look like”.

—Paul Stubbs, Senior Research Fellow, The Institute of Economics, Zagreb, Croatia

ISBN 978-3-031-51234-6

