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Subject Review Habilitation Martin Lux



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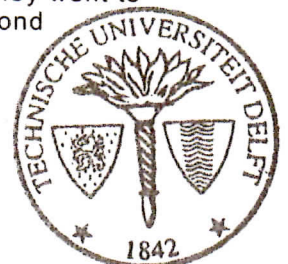
Review Habilitation Martin Lux

The thesis

This thesis, focuses on an impact that an early transitional profound reformulation of housing regime (consisting of property restitution and mass public housing privatization) in the Czech Republic had on recent housing preferences, labour migration patterns, housing policies; in short the recent Czech housing system. In other words, I tried to show intended and unintended consequences of these reform measures and in this way explain the peculiarities and traps of recent Czech housing system, based especially on dominant position of homeownership and thus dominant role of family and market.

The thesis includes ten research questions that are then addressed in four separate sections. The first section aims to show how housing policy changes after 1990 influenced housing preferences and labour migration of Czech adult population. The second section focuses on analysis of main factors that explain differences in housing restitution policies and recovered social rental housing policies among post-socialist countries after 1990. The third section again turns to the specific situation in the Czech Republic and provides an evaluation and more detailed overview of changes in the segments of private and social rental housing in this country. The final section of the thesis relates to the problem of lack of social housing in the Czech Republic and growing homelessness among Czech population. Although the second section is comparative in nature, the main goal of this collection is to uncover an impact of reformulation of housing regime and policy after 1990 on the Czech housing system specifically, including housing preferences, labour migration, and homelessness. Martin Lux in his papers shows both intended and unintended consequences of reforms and explains traps of recent Czech housing system, especially when it concerns dominant position of homeownership after 1990.

The thesis is a very interesting collection of journal articles and book chapters. The papers and chapters are published by renowned journals and publishers: they went to through a serious peer review. Therefore the quality of the chapters is beyond discussion.



The collection of chapters demonstrates the wide knowledge and experience of Martin Lux. The three parts are nicely put together and provide a treasure of knowledge on the effects of the huge transition that took place in Eastern Europe on housing and people. Martin demonstrates to be a social scientist with a wide interest and wide knowledge. He succeeded in putting this knowledge and interest into research and good publications. His work is known and recognised in the field of housing research.

The thesis demonstrated that he is able to apply and write about the results of different research methods. I really appreciate the way he and colleagues combine the different research methods. I really appreciate his combination of qualitative and quantitative research.

What I like the most about this thesis is the extended overview and thorough analysis of the impacts of the transition in the early 1990's in the decades following. This all leading to the conclusion that even after 26 years there is no new equilibrium yet. It is new to read in such a clear division in the effects of the transitions at the end of the book: the privatisation trap, the paradox of privatisation, the black economy, the socialist legacy in allocation schemes, the non-profit schemes and a general lack of public finance.

My main critical remark is the sudden end of the thesis. I would have liked to read more about the reflection of the author on his work and about ambitions for the future both content and methodology wise. I also hoped for a section that puts the results into a global perspective of the Habitat III that puts housing at the centre of urban development.

The person

Martin Lux is a known and respected colleague in the field of housing. He is very visible in the European Network of Housing Research and he demonstrated his ambitions for a well informed and up to date network by establishing the journal for Critical Housing Analysis. He was successful in finding editors and running the journal. This is a great achievement.

Martin has a recognisable line of research and is an invaluable source of information for the European housing research community. He is a real expert in housing developments in Eastern Europe and the Czech Republic more in particular.

Conclusion

Martin Lux and I are part of the same networks, however I have no formal connections to him. I did never co-author in his publications or cooperate in any of his research projects.

The habitation thesis and my knowledge of the person Martin Lux demonstrate the capability of Martin as a promising lecturer. For me this is a clear case: it is a full and convincing yes!

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