Housing and Welfare in Southern Europe

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Preface

This book was born from a shared interest in housing in Europe. Collectively, we have several decades' experience of housing research within our individual countries and on a comparative basis across Europe. The scale of our interests ranges from housing systems as a whole to households. Their scope embraces economic, sociological and political aspects of housing. When starting this book we were, however, frustrated that despite the now voluminous literature arising from the comparative housing research of the past two decades, little had been published on southern Europe, either in English [and therefore accessible to a wide audience], or adopting the cross-national research perspectives found in work on the northern countries. Indeed, there is more comparative research on housing in the transitional economies of central and eastern Europe than on the southern European countries.

Our individual experiences in our home countries made us aware that the relationships between the state, the market and civil society are rather different in the south from those in the north. This should, we felt, mean that the way housing is provided and consumed would be distinctive in southern Europe. We therefore embarked on a journey to explore this question, a journey that has led to this book, but one that proved far longer than any of us initially expected. This was for two reasons. First, the complexity of the relationships between possible explanatory variables led to lengthy debates, conducted with many other researchers and in many contexts. Second, this was compounded by a lack of readily available data on each country. The story we tell in this book therefore describes only part of the picture. We hope that readers will be stimulated to engage in these debates and help fill the holes. Readers from a variety of different backgrounds should find material within this book that points to new research avenues and sheds new light on the links between housing and other features of contemporary economies in general.

This book is likely to be of most direct interest to academics, policy makers and students involved in housing issues. However, the core themes, focusing on the relationships between housing and welfare policy models, will also be of interest to those interested in areas such as the convergence of welfare systems, the changing role of the family in welfare provision and comparative European politics.
From the beginning, our intention was that this book should not be an edited volume of chapters, each written by a different author and loosely bound together around a common theme. Many books purporting to undertake cross-national comparative research take this form. Many are unsatisfactory. Our aim, therefore, was to develop an argument to which we could all contribute, using our specific skills and interests, and which would unfold in the specific chapters. Nevertheless, different voices can be heard throughout, often within a single chapter. This is inevitable, given our various perspectives and our differing disciplinary backgrounds, embracing geography, sociology and economics. Still, any complex piece of work requires some division of labour. Leal was responsible for preparing Chapter 2 and part of Chapter 5. Maloutas took responsibility for Chapter 3 and Chapter 5. Allen prepared Chapter 4 and Padovani looked after Chapter 6. Allen and Barlow have written the introductory and concluding chapters, and Allen has taken responsibility for the continuity and, we hope, coherence of the final product. If our individual voices can be heard, we hope we are singing in harmony around the same tunes which run throughout this book: urbanisation, political and economic change, the nature of the labour market, family and state.

This book reflects five years of dialogue among us. Much of this involved discussions among the southern authors, Leal, Maloutas and Padovani, comparing their countries’ experiences, while their northern counterparts, Allen and Barlow, listened. This proved enormously beneficial in allowing us to uncover the similarities and differences among the southern countries. We were all familiar with the comparative housing literature originating in northern Europe. The dialogue helped each of us to identify conventional wisdoms and taken-for-granted assumptions, northern and southern. It also allowed us to develop a collective southern perspective on housing which seemed different from a northern perspective.

Very early on, we discovered the need for help in producing this book. This came in a number of forms and from many people. We benefited enormously from a conference on housing in southern Europe, organised by Leal and held in Madrid. Our thanks go to the sponsors, Banco Argentaria [now BBVA] and Facultad de Ciencias Politicas y Sociologia de la Universidad Complutense de Madrid, and to all those who presented papers and engaged in the debates. Some appear in our bibliography. Early findings from our work were presented at a conference organised by Aurora Pedro and the Department d’Economia Aplicada, Universitat de Valencia, and we gained a great deal from a workshop on Reconceptualising Welfare, organised by Jim Kemeny and Tom Burns at the European University Institute in Florence. The Planning Department at the University of Thessaly in Volos generously
supported our work at two workshops organised by Maloutas. Many people also helped us on an individual basis. We are indebted to them all. It is also appropriate to say that, in what has been a collective work, we are grateful to each other for stimulation and critical support throughout the project. Very special thanks go to Sue Balding for editorial support in the final stages of the project. The usual disclaimers apply. Responsibility for any misinterpretations is entirely down to us.

Finally, we began the journey with a Portuguese co-researcher, Teresa Costa-Pinto. She was unable to participate fully in this book because she started a family. We gained hugely from her contribution in the early stages of the research.

If writing this book together has been a journey, then its publication represents arriving at some sort of destination. We hope this is, somehow, an intermediate stop and not the final destination, and we hope that others will join us in continuing the journey.
The Authors

**Judith Allen** is Principal Lecturer in Housing at the University of Westminster in London. Her main interest is in neighbourhood dynamics, and she is currently managing two cross-national studies funded by the European Commission, one on innovations in neighbourhood management and the other on neighbourhood governance. The results of a previous project on neighbourhoods and social exclusion have been published in *Social Exclusion in European Cities* (London, The Stationery Office, 1998, with Ali Madanipour and Goran Cars) and are available at http://improving-ser.sti.jrc.it. She has worked as a consultant on housing issues in Poland, Estonia and Sweden.

**James Barlow** is a Professor of Technology and Innovation Management at Imperial College, London, where he co-directs the Built Environment Innovation Centre. He has been involved in research and consultancy on housing, planning and construction issues in Europe and Japan for many years. His housing-related publications include *Success and Failure in Housing Provision: European Systems Compared* (Oxford, Pergamon, 1994, with Simon Duncan), *Public Participation in Urban Development: The European Experience* (London, Policy Studies Institute, 1995) and *Property, Bureaucracy and Culture: The Middle Classes in Contemporary Britain* (London, Routledge, 1992, with Mike Savage, Peter Dickens and Tony Fielding).

**Jesús Leal** is a Professor and Director of the Department of Sociology II in the Faculty of Sociology and Political Sciences at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, where he is also the Chairman. He has also been the director of the Housing Plan for Madrid and is the author of numerous books and articles about housing. He co-ordinated the *White Book on Housing* for the Spanish Government in 1992.

**Thomas Maloutas** is Professor of Urban Social Geography at the University of Thessaly in Volos and currently the Director of the Institute of Urban and Rural Sociology at the National Centre for Social Research (EKKE) in Athens. His work is focused on housing and changing social structures in urban areas. He is the author of several books and articles, including *Housing and Family in Athens: An Analysis of Post-War Housing Practices* (Athens, Exantas, 1990) and his recent publications include the first volume of the *Social and Economic Atlas of Greece* devoted to the cities, for which
he was editor, and co-published by the University of Thessaly Press and the National Centre for Social Research in 2000, and the *Atlas de la Grèce*, which he also co-edited, published by the Documentation Française (2003a).

**Liliana Padovani** is Associate Professor in Urban and Regional Policies at IUAV, University of Venice, Italy. She is a member of the European Urban Research Association’s Executive Committee. From 1989 to 2002 she was active as a member of the Coordination Committee of the European Network for Housing Research, ENHR. She has been involved in many housing research projects and has acted as consultant in Italy and abroad. Her publications include *Urban Change and Housing Policies: Evidence from Four European Countries* (Venice, Collana Daest, 1995), the chapter on Italy in *Housing Policy in Europe* (ed. P. Balchin, London, Routledge, 1996) and ‘Le partenariat pour rénover l’action publique? L’expérience Italienne’ (*Pole Sud*, no. 12 [May], pp. 27–46). She is a member of the editorial advisory board of the *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment*. 
Introduction

Scope of this book

Since the early 1980s a literature on comparative housing research has emerged which focuses on northern European countries. This has been enormously helpful in overcoming received wisdom about alternative models of housing provision. The work has informed intellectual debates about the relationships between the state, the market and civil society. It has also informed housing policy by drawing attention to alternative practices which may be transferred across borders.

Although research has begun on welfare systems and the development of political systems in southern Europe (cf. Gunther et al. 1995; González et al. 2000), there has been little comparative research published in English on the provision of housing, where the relationships between the institutions shaping housing systems are rather different from the north (van Vliet 2000). What does exist tends to be in surveys of housing in all European countries – relatively generalised, repetitive and fitted into a framework which rests on housing tenure and housing policy – or scattered articles arising from debates internal to a specific country. Thus the Italian literature, dominated by a few authors, reflects a coherent dialogue among them. The Greek literature is dominated by economists and is concerned with the outcomes rather than the formulation of policy. The Spanish literature tends to reflect the random nature of what gets published in English-language journals, although Spain has also received some attention from British specialists. There is little on Portugal, other than a few pieces in specialist publications focusing on very specific problems. At the same time, there are vibrant debates within these countries which are not accessible to those who do not read the four languages. The bibliography at the end of this chapter sets out the existing English literature and a selection of the literature covering the most important debates within each of the southern European countries.