The Social Impact of Informal Economies in Eastern Europe

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In state socialist societies, informal economies were essential for the functioning of the economy as well as for household provision. Since the beginning of social transformation they have been flourishing better than ever before. They are a main outlet on the market for the newly emerging middle classes, stabilize the situation of many workers and pensioners, and in countries on the downward slope they are essential for the survival of large impoverished groups.

Presenting recent research on the social importance of informal economies, especially in Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Russia, the editors give a short introduction for each country, and a common compilation of basic economic and social data follows in the appendix. Household strategies in the ‘shadow’, groups of informal winners and losers, informal employment in town and countryside, outcomes from informal activities, the macro-economic importance of informal economies, and researching methods are all investigated.

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