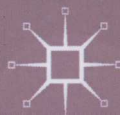


WORK AND WELFARE IN EUROPE

Working Poverty in Europe
A Comparative Approach

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Edited by Neil Fraser, Rodolfo
Gutiérrez and Ramón Peña-Casas



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A Comparative Approach

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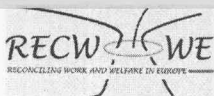
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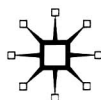
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Working Poverty in Europe

Working poverty is a complex phenomenon that has become increasingly visible in Europe in recent years. It refers to the situation where individuals, despite being employed, are unable to meet their basic needs and maintain a decent standard of living. This is often due to low wages, precarious working conditions, and a lack of social safety nets.

The concept of working poverty is not new, but its prevalence has grown significantly in the 21st century. It is a global issue, but it has particular resonance in Europe, where the welfare state has been under increasing pressure.

Working poverty is not just a problem for low-skilled workers. It can affect anyone, regardless of their education or skills. In many cases, it is the result of a combination of factors, including economic downturns, technological changes, and individual circumstances.

The impact of working poverty is far-reaching. It affects not only the individuals directly involved but also their families and communities. It can lead to social exclusion, poor health, and a cycle of poverty that is difficult to break.

Addressing working poverty requires a multi-faceted approach. It involves improving labor laws, strengthening social safety nets, and providing opportunities for skill development and career advancement.

One of the key challenges is ensuring that workers are paid a living wage. This is not just a moral imperative but also an economic one. Living wages can help to stimulate the economy and reduce inequality.

Another important area is the provision of social services. These can include affordable housing, healthcare, and education. These services are essential for breaking the cycle of poverty.

Working poverty is a complex issue that requires the attention of policymakers, employers, and society as a whole. It is a challenge that we must face if we want to build a more equitable and sustainable future.

The fight against working poverty is a long one, but it is not insurmountable. With the right policies and a commitment to social justice, we can make a difference.

Working poverty is a global issue, but it is one that we can all help to solve. It is a challenge that we must face if we want to build a more equitable and sustainable future.

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Work and Welfare in Europe

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Work and Welfare in Europe

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RECWOWE Book Series: Work and Welfare in Europe

Series Preface

Since the late 1970s, both labour markets and welfare regimes have been under intense economic pressure and have been challenged by profound changes in social and demographic structures, as well as in social norms. The work-welfare relationship has always been key to the modern state, but it has undergone substantial change over recent decades. Approaches to social provision have become more explicit in recognizing the importance of the relationship to employment, such that it is possible to suggest that social policies have become 'employment-led'. However, it is possible to argue that there is a profound 'disconnect' between labour markets and welfare systems, and that this partly explains the socio-economic problems that some countries are facing in terms of high unemployment and low activity rates, in particular. Changes in labour markets, which have often tended to more flexibilization, often pose challenges to the protective goals of social policies; thus the financial and programmatic configurations of social policies are often held to have impeded job creation. These arguments over the nature and effects of the relationships between labour markets and welfare systems have been and are intense and need to be further analysed.

These relationships between labour markets and welfare systems constitute the backdrop for this series, which takes as its starting point the tensions that now characterize this centrally important relationship between 'work and welfare'. Among these tensions, one can mention the tension between employer demands for more labour market flexibility and citizens' need for economic security; the tensions between the increased participation in paid work and the importance of family life, the greater fluidity in family relationships, and the greater flexibility in the labour markets; the friction between quantity and quality of the jobs to be created, between job creation and maintaining or improving the quality of employment and finally the conflicts raised by the need to adapt (industrial) social protection systems to new labour market structures.

This book series has been created within RECWOWE, a European Network of excellence created within the 6th Framework Programme of the European Commission (FP6). The full title for the network's activities is 'Reconciling Work and Welfare in Europe'. Such a reconciliation is an important political objective for most EU member states. In order to meet it we need to improve our understanding of the relationship between work and welfare in very diverse national settings across member states. The RECWOWE series publishes books that analyse work and welfare, and which pay special attention to the tensions that now characterize this relationship. Beyond the four main tensions mentioned above, the series is open to any other forms of analysis of the relationship between work and welfare. It is committed to publishing work that focuses on the gender dimension of this relationship, on the impact of the relationship on migrants, and, on its multi-level – European, national and local – institutional dimensions.

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