The Working Poor in Europe
Employment, Poverty and Globalization

Edited by
Hans-Jürgen Andreß
Henning Lohmann
The Working Poor in Europe

'This volume represents a valuable contribution to debates on welfare states, public policy, poverty and social exclusion. It is an empirically rich and analytically robust comparative collection, highlighting the variations between and contradictions of in-work poverty across Europe.'

— Patricia Kennett, University of Bristol, UK

For a long time in-work poverty was not associated with European welfare states. Recently, the topic has gained relevance as welfare state retrenchment and international competition in globalized economies has put increasing pressures on individuals and families. This book provides explanations as to why in-work poverty is high in certain countries and low in others.

Much of the present concern about the working poor has to do with recent changes in labour market policies in Europe. However, this book is not primarily about low pay. Instead, it questions whether gainful employment is sufficient to earn a living — both for oneself and for one’s family members. There are, however, great differences between European countries. This book argues that the incidence and structure of the working poor cannot be understood without a thorough understanding of each country’s institutional context. This includes the system of wage-setting, the level of decommodification provided by the social security system and the structure of families and households. Combining cross-country studies with in-depth analyses from a national perspective, the book reveals that in-work poverty in Europe is a diverse, multi-faceted phenomenon occurring in equally diverse institutional, economic and socio-demographic settings.

With its rich detail and conclusions, this genuinely comparative study will be of interest to academics and researchers of labour and welfare economics, social policy and European studies as well as to policy advisers.

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