

Duncan Gallie (Editor)

Economic Crisis, Quality of Work, & Social Integration: The European Experience

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Economic Crisis, the Quality of Work, & Social Integration: the European Experience provides a cross-national and comparative view of European countries in period before and after the onset of the Great Recession of 2008. The volume offers an empirical analysis into the ways in which quality of work has been affected by the economic crisis and its implication for social integration. *Economic Crisis* contributes towards an understanding of whether and how institutional contexts have mediated the impacts of the crisis on individuals' work and family experiences.

The volume is an eleven-part study of nineteen European countries before the initial onset of recession and in the period of economic crisis that followed. The nineteen countries selected were those for which good comparative data was available in both time periods. The countries under investigation include the two North Western countries – the UK and Ireland; four Nordic countries – Finland, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark; four Continental countries – Belgium, France, Germany, and the Netherlands; three Southern countries – Greece, Portugal, and Spain; and six Eastern countries – the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia, and Slovakia. The data used throughout the volume is from the European Union Labour Force Survey Series (EULFS) from 2004 to 2010, and the European Social Survey (ESS) in 2004 and 2010.

Each chapter offers its own comparative assessment of the impact of the recession on a particular dimension of individuals' experiences of working life. While each chapter is comprehensive enough to stand alone, the chapters are organised in fashion where each contributes to a greater understanding of the next. In the first chapter, Gallie presents an overall view of the economic crisis and possible implications for the quality of jobs. This provides the theoretical framework for the rest of the volume, but it is presented in a way that is accessible for readers with and without prior knowledge of the comparative institutional theories or quality of work literature. Tåhlin (chapters 2 & 3) provides an in-depth analysis of the impact of the recession for employment rates, considering skill level and occupational

structure. The subsequent chapters (chapters 4 to 6) assess issues of quality of work, focusing on in-work training opportunities, work intensification, job control, and job security. These chapters follow into an investigation of the consequences of these changes for social integration (chapters 7 to 10). The latter chapters focus on work-life conflict, work commitment, and political legitimacy (trust and satisfaction in democratic institutions).

The volume finds that the economic crisis has impacted the quality of work and in turn, undermined social inclusion through increased job insecurity (Gash & Inanc, chapter 6), and reduced trust and satisfaction in democratic, political processes (Polavieja, chapter 10). Tåhlin (chapter 2) finds an overall boom and bust pattern between the countries, whereby the magnitude of economic expansion before the recession is mirrored in the degree of economic contraction in the downturn. The crisis accelerated, to some degree, the overall process of upskilling seen across pre-recession Europe. At the same time, Tåhlin (chapter 3) finds that all countries saw some increase in the degree of occupational polarization, moderated by the strength of equality promoting labour market institutions. Dieckhoff (chapter 4) finds a pattern of reduction in training provision, with variations between countries. Continental countries saw an increase in training incidences; Nordic countries remained stable, while training provision fell heavily, most notably in the Liberal and Eastern European countries. Gallie & Zhou (chapter 5) find Southern and Eastern countries experienced an overall rise in job control, but in Liberal countries, those in semi-skilled and non-skilled work saw the level of job control deteriorate relative to those in higher managerial and professional work.

The analyses in this volume offer aggregate views of cross-national trends and comparisons between institutional country clusters. This volume does not explore specific national-level policies nor does it offer within-country analyses. Instead, the volume focuses on the overall patterns of change across Europe. It provides empirical, quantitative analyses of the changes to employment with respect to dimensions of quality of work and social integration. The analyses present a platform for others to further investigate country-level policies and cross-national policy comparisons.

Economic Crisis, Quality of Work, & Social Integration may be relevant to those interested in comparative institutional studies, and for those with an interest in issues of quality of work, and political and social integration. The volume may also be of interest to academic and policy audiences interested in understanding the implications and consequences of the 2008 Great Recession for individuals' work and family lives.