

Studien aus dem Max-Planck-Institut  
für Sozialrecht und Sozialpolitik

Ulrich Becker | Irene Domenici [Eds.]

# Life in Dignity

A Comparison of National Approaches  
to Minimum Income Protection



**Nomos**



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## Preface

The present study begins with a seemingly trivial yet fundamental question in view of social reality: Do states guarantee minimum subsistence to individuals under their jurisdiction? Despite the abundance of legal and socio-political promises, combatting poverty remains an unachieved goal to this day. Addressing this question touches on the core responsibilities of the welfare state and reveals the underlying normative conceptions about the relationship between the political community and individuals in need. We explore this question by analysing social benefits designed to ensure a minimum income, which form part of the social protection architecture of many countries. These benefits have grown in importance in the face of the transformations and crises over the past two decades, from the lasting impact of the financial crisis to the pandemic, the rise of non-standard forms of employment, and the current challenges posed by inflation and rising energy and living costs.

The idea for this collective project, bringing together experts from different countries across the globe, took shape building on these reflections. It began with a workshop held in Munich in November 2022 and evolved into a fruitful dialogue. Most of the chapters reflect the legal and policy landscape as of late 2024. The scientific exchange has been very stimulating, and our first heartfelt thanks go to all the contributors. We are deeply grateful for their enthusiastic commitment to this ambitious endeavour and for the smooth collaboration.

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Munich, June 2025

Ulrich Becker, Irene Domenici



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