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Home Ownership and Social Inequality in Comparative Perspective

Edited by Karin Kurz and Hans-Peter Blossfeld

“The main contribution of this book lies in each chapter’s excellent discussion of housing policies and historical trends in home prices, interest rates, the construction industry, and a myriad of other factors that determine macro-level access to home ownership. These descriptions not only set the stage for subsequent analyses; they also provide a striking contrast in and of themselves for the vastly different degrees of social planning in housing across Europe, and the sharp contrast of these policies to both the United States and Israel.”

—Chenoa Flippen,
Duke University, Center for Demographic Studies

Although a strong indicator of social status, home ownership has rarely emerged as a topic in social inequality research. This book compares twelve countries—the United States, Germany, Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, Italy, Spain, the United Kingdom, Ireland, and Israel—to determine the interdependence of social inequality and home ownership attainment over the life course. Examining countries that are similar with

respect to socioeconomic development, but different in regard to their housing policies, the authors show that housing policies matter and are largely consistent with a country’s general approach in the provision of welfare.

This book presents a valuable contribution to the social stratification literature, which traditionally has neglected the dimension of home ownership. It goes beyond most housing studies by adopting a life-course framework and longitu-

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Studies in Social Inequality

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dinal approach. The empirical findings provide evidence that in all countries under study—even those of the social democratic welfare regime type—labor market position matters in one’s chances of becoming a homeowner.

STUDIES IN SOCIAL INEQUALITY

Karin Kurz is Assistant Professor of Sociology and Hans-Peter Blossfeld is Professor and Chair of Sociology at the Otto-Friedrich University, Bamberg.

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