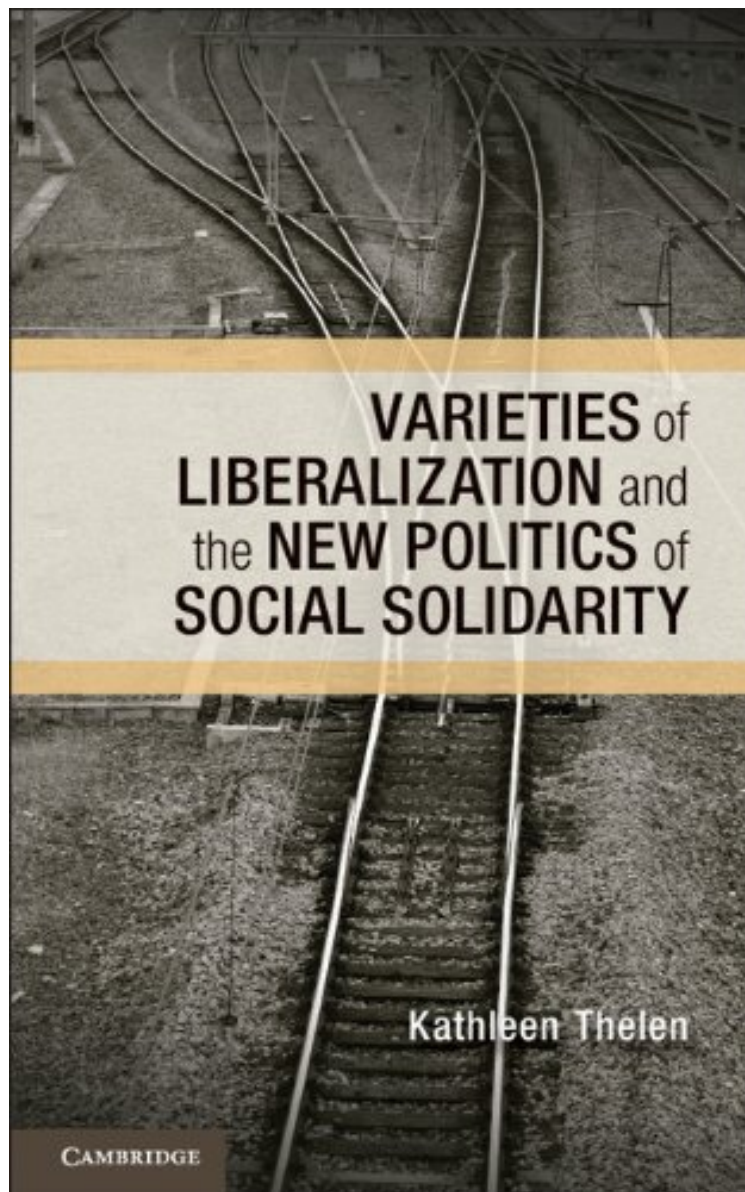


(Read now) Varieties of Liberalization and the New Politics of Social Solidarity (Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics)

## Varieties of Liberalization and the New Politics of Social Solidarity (Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics)

*Kathleen Thelen*

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**Kathleen Thelen : Varieties of Liberalization and the New Politics of Social Solidarity (Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Varieties of Liberalization and the New Politics of Social Solidarity (Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics):

5 of 6 people found the following review helpful. A must for everyone who wants to go beyond the "cliche" when it comes to understand neo-liberalism  
By E. Balbachevsky  
This is one of the best books analysing the effects of the processes of market liberalization present in all countries since the last decade of the XX century. Its argument is centered in identifying the distinct trajectories of change produced by the interplay of the common liberalization pressures present in all societies and the variety of the institutional fabric that organize the capitalism in different countries. One of the most intriguing results is finding that in many cases, the "successful defence of traditional institutions and policies has often been a recipe for institutional erosion and rising inequality" (Kindle ed. pos.253). On the other hand, the author also shows how, in some situations, and depending on the way it is conducted, liberalization is not only compatible with equality, but a even a tool to protect it. I enjoyed reading it, and I hope, many of us will enjoy as well

This book examines contemporary changes in labor market institutions in the United States, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, and the Netherlands, focusing on developments in three arenas - industrial relations, vocational education and training, and labor market policy. While confirming a broad, shared liberalizing trend, it finds that there are in fact distinct varieties of liberalization associated with very different distributive outcomes. Most scholarship equates liberal capitalism with inequality and coordinated capitalism with higher levels of social solidarity. However, this study explains why the institutions of coordinated capitalism and egalitarian capitalism coincided and complemented one another in the 'Golden Era' of postwar development in the 1950s and 1960s, and why they no longer do so. Contrary to the conventional wisdom, this study reveals that the successful defense of the institutions traditionally associated with coordinated capitalism has often been a recipe for increased inequality due to declining coverage and dualization. Conversely, it argues that some forms of labor market liberalization are perfectly compatible with continued high levels of social solidarity and indeed may be necessary to sustain it.

"As union membership and the manufacturing sector have shrunk, the institutions built around them have become the locus of political conflict over inequality and inclusion in the world's rich countries. Kathleen Thelen elegantly argues that the course of these struggles hinges on the extent to which unions have succeeded in organizing broad parts of the population, and to which states themselves have the capacity and political will to intervene in conflicts over redistribution. Returning the political coalitions identified by Esping-Andersen to the heart of institutionalist political economy, Thelen's book is a trenchant statement of the ongoing struggles that lie behind the apparent stability in models of capitalism." Pepper D. Culpepper, European University Institute  
"In this remarkable book, Kathleen Thelen makes sense of the striking diversity of national paths of adjustment to a rapidly changing economic environment. Drawing skillfully on decades of research but wonderfully fresh and innovative in its formulations, this is comparative politics at its very best." Paul Pierson, John Gross Endowed Chair, University of California, Berkeley  
"Carefully researched and tightly argued, this exemplary book illustrates the enduring potential of comparative case studies as a source of theoretical insights. Thelen persuasively takes us beyond the current stale and unsatisfying debate on varieties of capitalism by disentangling "coordinated capitalism" and "egalitarian capitalism" and by identifying multiple trajectories of liberalization." Jonas H. Pontusson, Universiteacute; de Genegrave;ve  
"Thelen examines three aspects of labor markets - wage bargaining, education and training policy, and labor market policy - focusing on the cases of the United States, Germany and Denmark. She argues convincingly that though global and postindustrial change brought liberalizing pressures to all countries, they produced straightforward liberalization only in the United States, with Germany moving toward dualization and Denmark continuing the Nordic pattern of egalitarian capitalism. Thelen again produces a major breakthrough in our understanding of the processes of change in contemporary capitalism; the book represents the finest in comparative historical political economy." John D. Stephens, Gerhard E. Lenski, Jr, Distinguished Professor of Political Science and Sociology, University of North Carolina  
About the Author  
Kathleen Thelen is Ford Professor of Political Science at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a Permanent External Scientific Member of the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Societies in Cologne, Germany. She is the author, among other books, of *How Institutions Evolve: The Political Economy of Skills in Germany, Britain, the United States and Japan* (Cambridge, 2004), winner of the Woodrow Wilson Foundation Award, and winner of the Mattei Dogan Award of the Society for Comparative Research. She also writes extensively on historical institutionalism and theories of institutional change, including, most recently, *Explaining Institutional Change: Ambiguity, Agency and Power* (Cambridge, 2010, co-edited with James Mahoney) and *Beyond Continuity: Institutional Change in Advanced Political Economies* (2005, co-edited with Wolfgang Streeck). Thelen has held appointments as a research fellow or visiting professor at the Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin fuuml;r Sozialpolitik, the University of Gothenburg (Sweden), Nuffield College (Oxford), Sciences Po (Paris), and the Copenhagen Business School, among others. She has served as Chair of the Council for European Studies (2002-6) and as President of the Society for the Advancement of Socio-Economics (2008-9). Currently, she is President of the APSA organized section for Comparative Politics. In 2009 Thelen was elected to the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities

in Berlin.