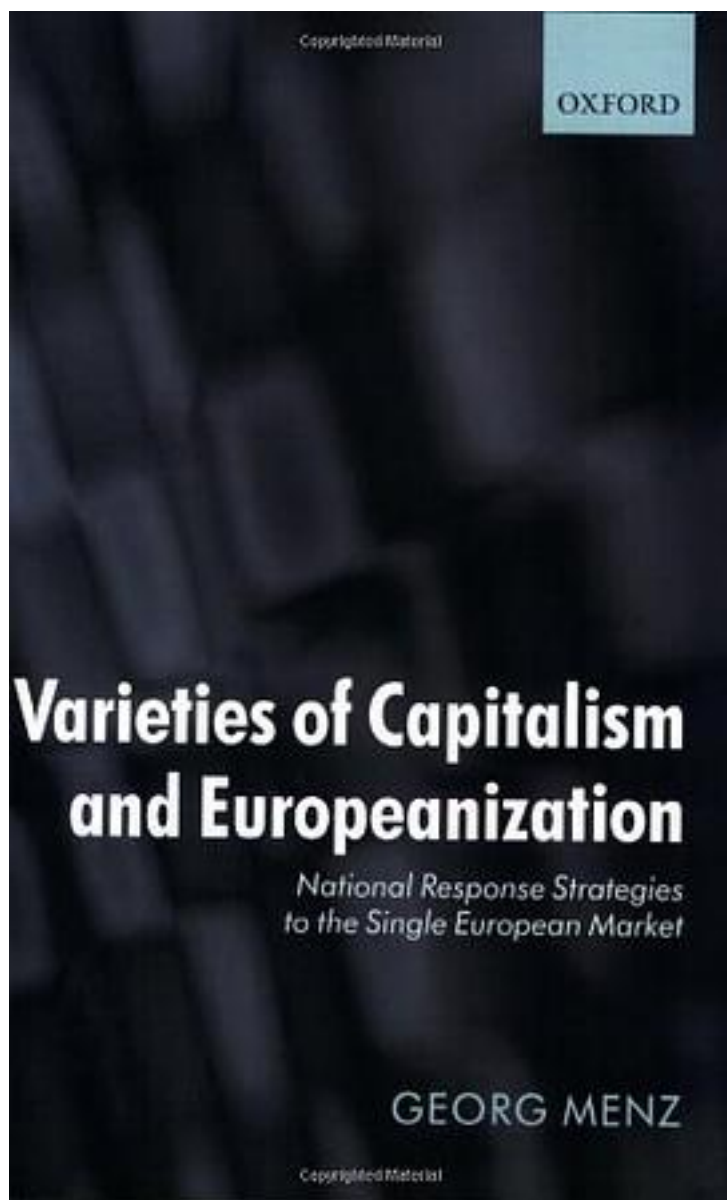


Varieties of Capitalism and Europeanization



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出版者:

出版时间:2008-8

装帧:

Europeanization has often been conceived as a top-down process, necessitating implementation and adjustment at the national level. However, Europeanization can also be conditioned by bottom-up national initiatives. While recent endeavors in comparative political economy have emphasized the resilience of coordinated market economies, few detailed empirical studies have examined to date exactly how different European systems of political-economic governance cope with and respond to an European impetus for liberalization. This original study of the impact of the EU-induced liberalization of service provision on member states argues that innovative national re-regulatory strategies may be implemented in response to Europeanization. In permitting any company registered in an EU member state to provide services throughout Europe, new possibilities were created for the transnational posting of workers from low-wage to high-wage countries. However, high-wage countries could re-regulate the wage levels applicable to such employees. The exact nature of such response strategy is coloured by the respective institutional power that labour market interest associations like trade unions and employer associations command. Therefore, different institutionalised varieties of capitalism generate distinct re-regulations of the Single European Market. Drawing on detailed case studies of ten European countries, this volume bridges the gap between the rapidly unfolding scholarly debate on Europeanization and varieties of capitalism. It argues that both strongly neocorporatist systems of political-economic governance and statist systems are capable of creating swift, comprehensive and thorough national re-regulations. This applies to Austria and France, but also Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Finland, Belgium, and Luxembourg. By contrast, countries with less strongly embedded neocorporatist structures, in which due to organizational deficiencies trade unions face difficulties blocking employer demands, create liberal response strategies, permitting a stratification of wage levels. Hence, both Germany and the Netherlands implemented liberal business-friendly re-regulations. The volume makes the case for important amendments to existing accounts of Europeanization and varieties of capitalism. Scholars of Europeanization need to incorporate bottom-up re-regulation into their conceptual framework, particularly in response to 'negative integration'. Recent strides in comparative political economy have placed great emphasis on continued divergence, yet this study suggests that even within the presumably unified group of 'non-liberal' coordinated market economies important institutional differences produce very distinct responses in the face of European liberalization.

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