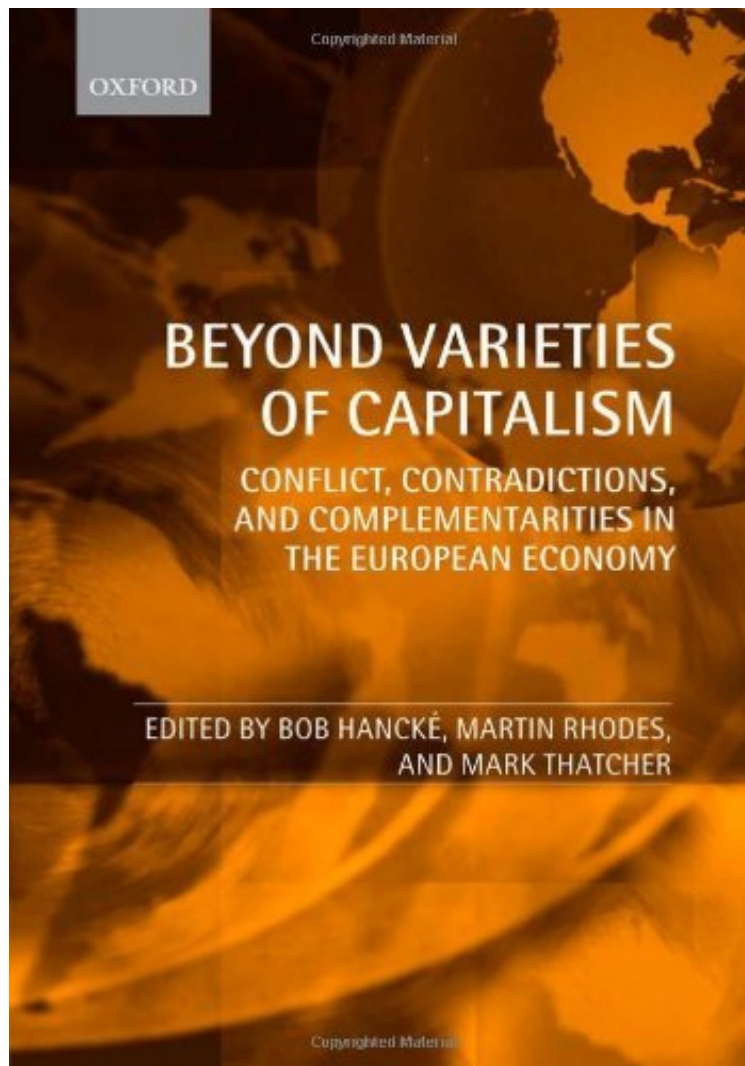


[Library ebook] Beyond Varieties of Capitalism: Conflict, Contradictions, and Complementarities in the European Economy

Beyond Varieties of Capitalism: Conflict, Contradictions, and Complementarities in the European Economy

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From Oxford University Press : Beyond Varieties of Capitalism: Conflict, Contradictions, and Complementarities in the European Economy before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Beyond Varieties of Capitalism: Conflict, Contradictions, and Complementarities in the European Economy:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A parsimonious and insightful logic able to explain many thingsBy borjaclavThe VoC literature is a jewel. The social and economic world is a messy place; millions of heterogenous agents interact, many things are happening at the same time (a parallel, distributed system), and it is very easy to get

lost and overwhelmed when someone describes this apparent mess in a simplistic narrative/descriptive way. One needs some clarity, some underlying logic. I crave for analytical frameworks that help me understand the world, and I am not pleased easily. For example, I find many books too messy and lacking coherence, too 'descriptive'; on the other hand, I despise analyses that are too abstract. There is a very delicate balance between parsimony, abstractness, logical coherence on the one hand ... and empirical richness, heterogeneity, depth, etc. VoC strikes this balance perfectly. I find the VoC framework simple, intuitive, coherent, grounded at the appropriate level of analysis (at the 'meso' level, in the sub-spheres of the political economy; not too vague at the macro level, neither too myopic at the micro level), and at the same time, it helps make sense of many things that happen in a political economy. With the help of only a handful of concepts (calibration, coordination, complementarities), the framework is able to accommodate and explain many things. Perhaps the most surprising finding to me is that political economies DO have some inherent logic; not a deterministic/mechanistic one, but some broad pattern or tendency that works somewhat uniformly across many sub-spheres of the system. I strongly recommend this book to those who want some clarity when looking at the messy social and economic world.

Since the early 1990s, Europe's economies have been facing several new challenges: the single market programme, the collapse of the Berlin wall and eastward enlargement, and monetary unification. Building on the influential Varieties of Capitalism (VoC) perspective, first elaborated in detail in the book Varieties of Capitalism (OUP, 2001), this book critically analyzes these developments in the European political economy and their effects on the continental European economies. Leading political economists from Europe and the US debate how VoC can help understand the political-economic challenges that Europe is facing today and how understanding these new challenges can in turn enrich and enhance the VoC perspective. Thematically, the contributions to this volume are organized in four sections: * how the macro-economics of EMU have influenced different European models of capitalism, * how the Single Market programme was received in the different institutional regimes in European capitalism, * how welfare and labor market reforms are debated and implemented, * how European capitalism travelled east after 1989. Preceding this is a spirited defence of the VoC approach by Peter Hall, and an introduction from the volume editors, considering the approach, and proposing extensions and amendments. This book demonstrates that the VoC approach remains, as the editors put it in their introduction, a rich seam to mine, capable of accommodating new developments, and theoretically flexible enough to produce new and innovative hypotheses and arguments.

About the Author Bob Hancke is a Reader in European Political Economy at the London School of Economics and Political Science. Previous appointments were at the Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin, at the J.F. Kennedy School and the Center for European Studies at Harvard University, as a Jean Monnet Fellow at the EUI in Florence, and as a doctoral researcher at MIT. He wrote *Large Firms and Institutional Change* (Oxford University Press 2002), and participated in the project that led to *Varieties of Capitalism*; edited by Peter Hall and David Soskice (Oxford University Press 2001). His research interests are the political economy of advanced capitalist societies, the relation between institutions and macro-economic policy, and labour relations. Martin Rhodes is a Professor of Comparative Political Economy, Graduate School of International Studies, University of Denver, Colorado. Until December 2005, he was Professor of Public Policy in the Department of Social and Political Science at the European University Institute in Florence. He has written widely on issues of comparative European political economy, including social pacts and welfare and labour market reform, and is currently directing a project on pensions systems and pension reforms in Europe. He is the scientific director of the European research consortium on 'New Modes of Governance' and within that consortium is running a new project on social pacts and tripartism in western and eastern Europe with Jelle Visser of the University of Amsterdam. Mark Thatcher is a Reader in Public Administration and Public Policy at the London School of Economics and Political Science. He read Philosophy, Politics and Economics at Balliol College Oxford, then qualified as a Barrister, and took his doctorate at Nuffield College, Oxford. He spent five years researching and lecturing in Paris (Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Communications, Paris III-Sorbonne Nouvelle, Sciences-Po Paris), before joining LSE in 1995. He has been a Fellow at the Robert Schuman Centre, European University Institute, Florence. His research interests are Comparative Public Policy and Regulation in Europe; Telecommunications and other utilities; Independent Regulatory Agencies.