

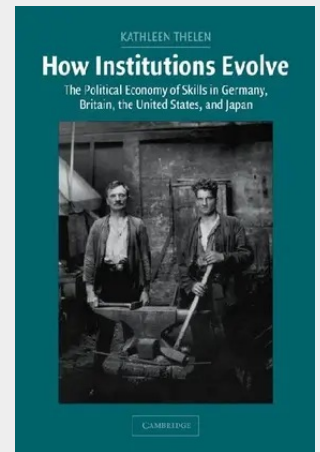
Thelen

How Institutions Evolve

The Political Economy of Skills in Germany, Britain, the United States, and Japan

The institutional arrangements governing skill formation are widely seen as a key element in the institutional constellations defining 'varieties of capitalism' across the developed democracies. This book explores the origins and evolution of such institutions in four countries - Germany, Britain, the United States and Japan. It traces cross-national differences in contemporary training regimes back to the nineteenth century, and specifically to the character of the political settlement achieved among employers in skill-intensive industries, artisans, and early trade unions. The book also tracks evolution and change in training institutions over a century of development, uncovering important continuities through putative 'break points' in history. Crucially, it also provides insights into modes of institutional change that are incremental but cumulatively transformative. The study underscores the limits of the most prominent approaches to institutional change, and identifies the political processes through which the form and functions of institutions can be radically reconfigured over time.

Kathleen Thelen explains the historical origins of important cross-national differences in four countries (Germany, Britain, the United States and Japan), and also provides a theory of institutional change over time. The latter is considered a frontier issue in institutional analysis, of which there are several varieties emerging from economics, political science, and sociology. Thelen's study contributes to the literature on the political economy of the developed democracies that focuses on different institutional arrangements defining distinctive models of capitalism.



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