



Industrial Relations Unit (IRRU)

Seminar Series – Spring 2021

Speakers:

Virginia Doellgast, Christian Lyhne Ibsen, Lisa Sezer

Title:

Coordinated vs. Organized Employers: Diverging Service Liberalization Trajectories in Denmark and Sweden

Date:

Wednesday 20 January 2021

Venue:

Microsoft Teams Meeting

Time:

14:00 – 15:30 (GMT)

Abstract:

Employers and their associations have become increasingly important actors promoting labor, product, service, and financial market liberalization – even in once highly coordinated European economies. In this paper, we ask how differences in employer association structures relate to liberalization policies and outcomes, based on a comparison of the Danish and Swedish telecom industries. We argue that different representation structures encouraged telecom firms to adopt distinct approaches to institutionalized cooperation in the two countries. In Denmark, inter-firm cooperation was based on a more unstable *logic of coordination*, with employers often switching between competing associations to pursue particularistic interests. In contrast, Swedish telecom employers were compelled to adopt a *logic of organization*, via a more centralized association that aggregated diverse company interests. These logics were associated with distinct trajectories in (mutually reinforcing) patterns of liberalization in service markets and employment relations. Danish employers benefited from a market-enabling ‘regulatory approach’ to telecom liberalization and used threatened exit across competing agreements to discipline unions. In contrast, telecom liberalization in Sweden was characterized by a more ‘developmental approach’, giving employers access to state investments in infrastructure and technology, while they faced limited exit options from encompassing collective agreements. Findings contribute to debates on possibilities for alternative, mutual-gains approaches to collective regulation in liberalizing markets.

Registration:

Please email irruoffice@wbs.ac.uk to express your interest, if you are not on the IRRU mailing list and have not received an email to register for the seminar.