VARIETIES OF EMBEDDED FLEXIBILITY: INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURINGS OF MARKETS IN DENMARK AND IRELAND

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VARIETIES OF LIBERALISATION (THELEN)

Embedded Flexibilisation

- Service economy
- Encompassing institutions (particularly employer organisations)
- Role of state
- Markets can promote equality
- Dualisms among workers

Deregulation

Dualisation
EMBEDDED FLEXIBILISATIONS

If markets are ‘always embedded’ then all capitalisms are forms of embedded flexibilisations

Flexibilities increasingly arrive as ‘global scripts’

• What are the various forms of embedded flexibilisation?
• Will flexibilities undermine embeddednesses?
• What dualisations are produced by the varieties of embedded flexibilisations?
## Postindustrial Pathways

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>2023</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing, Construction and Transport</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>23.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Producer Services</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>25.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Services</td>
<td>32.2</td>
<td>25.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Services</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>24.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Labour Force Participation (adjusted for part time share)</td>
<td>Denmark (67.1)</td>
<td>Ireland (60.5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

**Global Script: ‘The Silicon Valley Start Up’**

**Denmark**

- Norms of cooperation, legal requirements for some consultation
- Shadow of collective agreements
- The norm of the ‘good manager’
- Work-life balance as a responsibility of the manager
- Intensified work with boundaries negotiated in the shadow of the collective agreements

**Ireland**

- Between US HR strategies and small firm management
- Arbitrary character of management
- Workers strategise to manage work pressures
- Career success within uncertainty and unpredictability
Global Script: ‘24/7 Retail Networks’

**Denmark**

Liberalisation of working hours 2012

Union agreements around extent of part-time work, wages, conditions

*Delicate compromise between protecting ‘standard retail employment’ and expanding use of (mainly student) ‘skilled casual’ workforce*

**Ireland**

Liberalisation of working hours 1980s

Attack on remaining unions in the sectors Embedded within national ‘bargain’ around low wage work – bad jobs facilitated by tax and welfare system

*Degradation of existing jobs*  
*Competition for new positions from more highly educated young workers*
**Health**

**Global Script: 'Lean Healthcare'**

**Denmark**
- Doctors lead hospital governance
- Massive transformational investment
- Doctors enable hospital change (e.g. managing patient flow)
- Nursing Work: partial empowerment under pressurised conditions

*Professional alliance with the state*

**Ireland**
- Doctors protect autonomy from hospitals
- Rising funding on an incremental basis
- Doctors in conflict with hospital change (e.g. doctor authority and patient flow)
- Nursing Work: chaotic, varied experiences

*Professional authority between state and market*
IRELAND: IS LIBERALISM A FORM OF EMBEDDED FLEXIBILISATION?

Less ‘encompassing coordination’, in that sense it is ‘deregulated’ (and more chaotic)
However, the kinds of flexibilities that emerge are shaped by social and institutional actors and practices

Embeddednesses:

- Hierarchies within markets — MNCs, managers, lead firms in supplier networks, professionals (doctors)
- Resistance is sporadic and disruptive — networked strategies and outbursts of conflict
- State involved — regulation through rules, using state instruments directly (tax and welfare in low wage; developmental state in IT)

Dualisms: Segmented around hierarchies and protective strategies
DENMARK: DO FLEXIBILITIES UNDERMINE EMBEDDEDNESS?

Continuing role for bargaining, strong norms supported by national institutions

The ‘embeddedness’ is variable and at places tenuous

- Individualisation at the top
- ‘Encompassing institutions’ less densely networked and interdependent than before

Dualism: The state as the lowest level of collective provision with ‘high end benefits’ provided through middle class employment
## Can We Rethink Varieties of Liberalisation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Embed Flex: Rule making</th>
<th>Deregulation: Individualisation</th>
<th>Dualisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>‘Social Democratic’</strong></td>
<td>Negotiated collective institutions</td>
<td>‘Drift’ at top - Wages - Welfare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>‘Liberal’</strong></td>
<td>Hierarchical authorities (esp. Corporate)</td>
<td>Extensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>‘Christian Democratic’</strong></td>
<td>Negotiated collective institutions</td>
<td>Growing at bottom, less than in Liberal?</td>
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