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**Boekbespreking van: Social capitalism: a study of Christian democracy and the welfare state**  
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Frankrijk, maar net zo groot als Portugal en de Republiek der Zeven Verenigde Nederlanden. Dat is een rare vergelijking. De Republiek was inderdaad niet groter, maar de republiek kan moeilijk worden opgevoerd als een staat zoals Frankrijk of Engeland. De Republiek was een 'raar ding', dat, zou je kunnen volhouden, en dat zou je tot het einde van de achttiende eeuw kunnen volhouden, minder op een staat leek dan de stadstaat op een staat leek. Je zou het verschijnen van de Republiek wel kunnen beschouwen als het resultaat van mislukte staatsvorming. Dit betekent evenwel slechts dat er na de opkomst van de drie behandelde kandidaten voor nieuwe soorten (12e eeuw: staat, stadstaat en Hanze), maar nog vóór het selectie-proces was voltooid, en voltooid betekent altijd voorlopig voltooid, een vierde mededinger verscheen, die het met de Hanze en de stadstaat uiteindelijk ook tegen de staat heeft afgelegd.

Spruyt sluit zijn boek af met hoofdstuk 9 over 'Character, tempo and prospects for change in the international system' (p.183-194); sprekend over de toekomst verliest het boek echter zijn kracht en biedt Spruyts evolutionair perspectief weinig steun meer.

J. Oversloot

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K. van Kersbergen, **Social capitalism: a study of Christian democracy and the welfare state**. Routledge, London 1995, £ 40.00

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*Social capitalism* is a study on a topic which has been neglected in the comparative study of public policy: its author focuses attention on the impact of Christian Democracy on the welfare state and traces the historical and intellectual origins of the Christian democratic middle way between laissez faire capitalism and social democratic welfare state capitalism. The book is divided into four major parts. Chapters 1 and 2 introduce the starting point of the author's journey through theories and data of the welfare state: he departs from the limits of the social democratic explanation of welfare state differences. Long term trends in political entrenchment of Christian democracy in Western Europe in 1870 to 1960 and the results from a closer overview of Christian democracy in Germany, Italy and the Netherlands in the post-1960 era are presented in the next two chapters. Chapters 5 to 8 explore from a comparative angle the extent to which the strength of Christian Democracy and interaction effects between Christian Democracy and Social Democracy parties have impacted upon the size and the structure of the welfare state in eighteen economically advanced democracies. The trend from charity to status oriented social justice and the intellectual origins of Christian Democracy and Social Capitalism are in the center of the discussion of chapters 9 and 10. The last chapter concludes and opens a new research frontier through the view that the exhaustion of social capitalist arrangements is currently draining the Christian Democracy movement's power resources.

The overall result of *Social capitalism* is that a distinctly Christian democratic variety of welfare state regimes is to be distinguished from the liberal and the social democratic varieties. That regime ('social capitalism') resembles the social democratic welfare state in its generous spending on social protection but it differs from its more leftist oriented counterpart in several important aspects, such as 1) the preference for social security transfers rather than for labour intensive social services, 2) the limits imposed on state intervention and the preference for subsidiarity rather than etatist interventionism, 3) the inclination to support families and status groups rather than social classes, 4) the emphasis on traditional rather than progressive gender relationships and 5) the use of private property as social policy.

*Social capitalism* is a well argued, concise treatment of the relationship between Christian democracy and social policy. It has something fresh to say by focusing attention on the impact of variables which have been neglected so far in most of the comparative contributions to the study of the welfare state. Moreover, the theory advanced in the book follows convincingly from the evidence. And the evidence is derived from a large body of English, Dutch, German and Italian literature and a rich data base; comprising highly aggregated data on eighteen OECD nations, qualitative data from more detailed analysis of three major cases – Germany, Italy and the Netherlands –, and the fruits from reading and reconstructing documents on the intellectual origins of social capitalism. Last but not least, the author has presented his contribution in a well-argued and accessible fashion. My only reservation concerns the final ten pages of the book in which the author hypothesizes the 'decomposition of Christian democracy'. According to Van Kersbergen, that decomposition is largely due to the 'exhaustion of social capitalist arrangements'. However, the data presented in this section is not sufficient to prove that view. Moreover, that view should be checked against the hypothesis (which can be derived from Social Capitalism) that the Christian democratic welfare state has been in several ways a major inhibitor of what the author regards as the 'decomposition of Christian democracy' (p.235).

That reservation should not divert attention from the major message of this review: *Social capitalism* is an important scholarly contribution to the field of comparative public policy, and it will doubtlessly be soon regarded as a milestone in the literature on the impact of political parties on public policy.

Manfred G. Schmidt

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C.J. van Montfort, **Institutionele hervormingen in theoretisch perspectief: civil society en de herstructurering van de beleidssectoren arbeid, gezondheidszorg en onderwijs**. Proefschrift, ISOR, Utrecht 1995

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In zijn boek *Institutionele hervormingen in theoretisch perspectief* tracht C.J. van Montfort het concept van de 'civil society' nader vorm te geven. Hij probeert in de eerste plaats te komen tot een conceptuele afbakening van het begrip 'civil society', hierbij voort-