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Boekbespreking van: A Theory of Freedom: From the Psychology to the Politics of Agency
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hardly justifies the new subtitle of the book (*new challenges* in the study of elections and voting).

A third disappointment is the claim that all chapters will try to study the micro- and macro relationship using data from 58 countries, unless "complete information is not available for the countries under comparison." This is a huge understatement. Blais and Mascotte present data for 58 countries, LeDuc for 39 and Franklin for 30 or 40. But most other chapters concern only a few countries (or parties within countries). Some chapters, for example the otherwise well-written chapter on voting behaviour, do not even present an analysis of data, but provide us with a survey of the existing literature. I do not claim that this is an omission that can be solved easily, but the standards set in the first chapter were far too high.

Setting aside the partly unfulfilled promises set forth in the first chapter, the book is still well written and highly informative. It also seems to reflect the state of the affairs in empirical studies of democracy and some of the chapters will remain or become a starting point for new studies on voting and elections. Given the book's broad scope on fundamental subjects, I hope the authors will present a fully updated version of the book in five years time, including all chapters and include some chapters on subjects like cultural change, legitimacy, participation (beyond turnout) and democratic stability. Maybe they can also stimulate the authors to end their chapters, not with a conclusion, but with a new set of questions, thus taking up a much-needed agenda-setting role. If they succeed in doing so, they could also change the subtitle into *A handbook for the study of democracy*.

Henk van der Kolk

Philip Pettit, *A Theory of Freedom: From the Psychology to the Politics of Agency*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001, ISBN 0-7456-2094-9, £14.99, ISBN 0-7456-2093-0, £50.00

Among political scientists and political philosophers Philip Pettit is probably best known for his contemporary renewal of republican theory and his incisive plea for a contestatory model of democracy. His *Republicanism. A Theory of Freedom and Government* (1997) has been described by many as 'landmark work' on the republican model of political life. Even if he had only done this work Pettit's intellectual achievement would be considerable, but his research in fact covers far more topics than just republican political theory. His vast body of work includes such topics as phenomenology, philosophy of mind, rational choice, social philosophy, consequentialism and criminal justice. One of the more characteristic features of Pettit's work is that he uses a holistic methodology. Questions of human intentionality and thought, for instance, are not isolated from questions of social ontology and political institutions.

A Theory of Freedom has to be considered against this background. In the first few lines of the introduction Pettit claims that a comprehensive theory of freedom in the line of Thomas Hobbes and Immanuel Kant will be developed. Unlike other standard treatments of freedom, his theory does not discuss issues of metaphysical and political freedom as belonging to two separate disciplines, but tries to provide a connected discussion of the two. But why do we need a comprehensive theory of freedom? Pettit gives a conceptual and a methodological answer to this question. The first argument builds on the conceptual observation that we normally use the word 'freedom' in the psychological and political contexts in a related fashion. In both domains someone is free to the extent that he can be held responsible for his actions. If someone lacks freedom of will or certain political liberties, we normally do not hold them responsible for what they do. The second, the methodological, argument deals with the observation that the intuitions that are relevant in the two domains together will give us more constraints on a satisfactory theory of freedom than if we take the intuitions in each of the domains separately. Domain-specific intuitions are consistent with many contrasting theories of freedom and may leave the choice of such a theory "severely underdetermined". But, if we combine both sets of intuitions we get more constraints on a satisfactory theory and thereby reduce the number of plausible candidates (p. 2). So, it is precisely because we face the risk of underdetermination that we have to choose for a holistic methodology. Pettit's claim that he will construct such a single, unified theory of freedom in the spirit of Kant and Hobbes may seem very admirable, and in some respect even groundbreaking, but at the same time the encompassing nature of his aspiration has to strike a note of caution, because Pettit only partially succeeds in his intention.

Pettit wants to avoid being tied to the compartmentalized language that is being used in psychology and political science to talk about freedom. He therefore prefers to speak about 'freedom in the agent' instead of 'free will' and of the ideal that this freedom in the agent would support as a target for political action instead of 'political liberty'. In the first chapter Pettit tries to analyse what this notion of freedom in the agent entails. Free agency has three different aspects. First of all, it covers freedom of the *action* performed by the agent. Secondly, it covers freedom of the *self*. The agent must be compelled to identify with the action as something he has done. If I have acted freely then that action must bear my signature: I cannot be detached from it. Finally, freedom in the agent involves freedom of the *person*. It refers to the social status we enjoy in freely choosing something. An action is only truly ours when the decision to act was not made under the pressure by others. According to Pettit there is a single concept of freedom at issue when we speak of these three different aspects or *domains of freedom* in the agent. But what kind of concept of freedom is able to unite our talk of freedom in the domains of free action, free self and free person?

Pettit tries to answer this question by making a distinction between three *connotations* that freedom normally has, that is: responsibility, ownership and underdetermination. To say that someone is free, normally implies: (a) that he can be rightly held responsible for his actions; (b) that he is able to identify with the action he

freely chose; and (c) that his choice was truly his and not fully determined by certain antecedents (p.7). Pettit's aim in this book is to unite our talk of freedom in the three domains by prioritizing the responsibility connotation. Responsibility exemplifies the most basic way in which we apply the concept of freedom. The free action, free self and free person are the kind of action, self and person that are compatible with the agent being fit to be held responsible for his actions. To be fit to be held responsible for certain choices "is to be such that no matter what you do, you will fully deserve blame should the action be bad and fully deserve praise should the action be good" (p.12). However, this neat equation between freedom and fitness to be held responsible needs some further qualifications. Agents, for example, are not fit to be held responsible simply because we treat them as if they are.

What further kinds of conditions one must meet to be fit to be held responsible is explained briefly in the first chapter, and is then fully spelled out in the following three chapters. In these chapters Pettit tries to give a more specific outline of what fitness to be held responsible involves by looking at three theories of freedom that have a dominant position in contemporary debates. Chapter 2 discusses and rejects the idea of *freedom as rational control* of which Donald Davidson is one of the more prominent defenders. Freedom as rational control is inadequate as a theory of what makes for freedom in the agent. The fact that we need to be in rational control of our beliefs and desires to act freely, does not guarantee that our beliefs actually tell us what we ought to do. Rational control does not require of us that we recognize certain moral standards. A similar kind of criticism also holds for the idea of *freedom as volitional control* that is discussed in chapter 3. According to this kind of theory it is not enough to be in rational control to be free, we also need to identify with the rational desires that move us. The only theory of freedom that seems to be adequate as a comprehensive and unifying theory is *freedom as discursive control*. Agents are free as persons "so far as they are engaged in discourse by others, being authorised as someone worthy of address, and they will be reinforced in that freedom so far as they are publicly recognised as having the discursive control it involves" (p.73). Freedom as discursive control implies that persons have a voice that needs to be heard and publicly recognized. It is precisely at this point that we can finally address the politics of agency that Pettit tries to work out in the last two chapters of the book.

Strangely enough, Pettit does not develop his conception of freedom as a political ideal from the ideas of mutual respect and recognition that are implicitly presupposed in the concept of freedom as discursive control. Although Pettit starts out by asking which ideal of liberty the state should foster if the idea of freedom as discursive control is to be taken seriously, he almost immediately introduces his ideal of freedom as non-domination as the only viable answer. He does not really consider what kind of implications freedom as discursive control has for the republican political theory that he developed in earlier works. Pettit's stylized 'aversion' to freedom as non-limitation and non-interference (positive and negative freedom in Berlin's dichotomy of political freedom) only leads him to just another account of dominium and imperium. But we have to ask ourselves if freedom as discursive control could not

lead just as well to a different kind of republican political philosophy. This question is especially relevant for the idea of contestatory democracy. According to Pettit a viable democracy rests on two pillars: authorization and contestation. The *authorial or electoral dimension* of democracy points to the fact that the people are the indirect, electoral authors of the policies that legislators put forward in office. In this way democratic institutions will be forced to track the common avowable interests of the people. The *contestatory or editorial dimension* of democracy, on the other hand, deals with the fact that democratic institutions should also provide us with ample opportunity to criticize candidate policies and policy implementation that do not advance common interests.

Both dimensions are necessary to secure a well-ordered democratic society. But by themselves they only sketch an impoverished view of democratic politics. Sound democratic institutions do not only depend on elections and a counterfactual responsiveness to the possibility of contestation, but also on the unconstrained exertion of freedom as discursive control in civil society and the public sphere. Active consent there is just as important as contestability. Without a strong commitment of the state and its citizens to the discursive relations that take place in the informal political sphere, we cannot deal with the democratic deficit of our political institutions (for a similar kind of criticism see Stefan Rummen's contribution in: Xavier Vanmechelen ed., *Afhankelijkheid zonder dominantie. Over de sociale en politieke filosofie van Philip Pettit*, Acco, 2002). Some of these difficulties with this book could have been removed, however, if Pettit had spent more time substantiating the equation he makes between freedom and fitness to be held responsible. Nevertheless, despite this shortcoming, anyone who is interested in the topic of democracy will find *A Theory of Freedom* a worthwhile read.

Ronald Tinnevelt

Paul Pierson (ed.), *The New Politics of the Welfare State*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001, ISBN 0-1982-9753-X, £ 40.

This edited volume is a most welcome corrective to the sweeping globalization literature that argues the general retreat of the welfare state in an era of economic and financial internationalization. Pierson has succeeded in bringing together an impressive range of leading welfare state scholars. The result is a rich collection of essays that represents the cutting edge of political science-oriented welfare state research and constitutes the most important contribution of its kind in the field today.

The contributions display a great variety of theoretical arguments. They share, however, what Pierson summarizes as a sceptical attitude to the "grossly-oversimplified vision of national welfare states under siege from the rising forces of footloose global capital" (p. 104) and the view that this pressure – almost automatically – results in