



Comparative Welfare State Politics: Development, Opportunities, and Reform

By Kees van Kersbergen, Barbara Vis

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Welfare state reform occurs in all advanced capitalist democracies, but it does not occur in identical ways, to the same degree or with similar consequences. In Comparative Welfare State Politics, Kees van Kersbergen and Barbara Vis explain the political opportunities and constraints of welfare state reform by asking 'big' questions. Why did we need a welfare state in the first place? How did we get it? Why did we get different worlds of welfare and do we still have them? What does the welfare state actually do? Why do we need to reform the welfare state? Why is reform so difficult, but why does it nevertheless happen? Can and will the welfare state survive the Great Recession? This book informs the reader comprehensively about the welfare state, while contributing to the ongoing debate on the politics of welfare state reform.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Comparative Welfare State Politics is a major contribution to the debate on welfare state reforms. It is a concise and competent textbook that gives unambiguous answers to big questions, based on empirical research and a masterful overview of the scientific debate. Van Kersbergen and Vis propose an immensely useful re-adjustment of the debate, emphasizing the functional pressures for social policy reform as a starting point for the interaction of ideas, interests, and institutions." - Dr. Klaus Armington, Professor of Comparative Politics and Director of the Institute of Political Science, University of Berne

"Why do we have welfare states? What do they actually do? Why do they differ across nations and continents? How do they adapt to the pace of historical change, globalization, and population ageing? Van Kersbergen and Vis attack all these big questions with truly impressive scholarship and perspective. This book is a tour de force, unparalleled in the large literature on the welfare state; a must-read for any student of modern capitalism." - Dr. Gøsta Esping-Andersen, Professor of Sociology, Universitat Pompeu Fabra

"This fine book tackles sweeping questions about welfare states in industrialized democracies, such as why these welfare states emerged, how they differ, what they do, and why their politicians pursue politically risky reforms ... The book, which includes an extensive bibliography of comparative welfare state research, would substantially benefit research libraries and graduate and upper-level undergraduates interested in political economy and the politics of social welfare. Summing up: highly recommended."

D. B. Robertson, Choice

About the Author

Kees van Kersbergen is Professor of Comparative Politics in the Department of Political Science and Government at Aarhus University in Denmark.

Barbara Vis is Professor of Political Decision-Making in the Department of Political Science and Public Administration at VU University Amsterdam.

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