

Preface

Beste Kees, Dear Kees, Kære Kees,

Happy Birthday! For us, your birthday is a unique opportunity to honor a dear friend, colleague, and mentor. To us, you are all these things at the same time. Our present for you is a testimony to your fantastic scientific journey over the past 40 years. Geographically, your mobility has taken you from Florence to Amsterdam, to Nijmegen, back to Amsterdam and then to Aarhus, not to mention your shorter excursions to North Carolina and Konstanz. Your academic journey has taken you from graduate student to full professor. At every place and in every role, you have picked up friends who want to honor you by contributing to this book. Some got to know you as a promising graduate student, others as an engaged supervisor, and others as a great colleague, but no matter your role, they got to know a fantastic person who became a friend.

The book's title – *No normal science!* – is inspired by Thomas Kuhn according to whom normal science 'does not aim at novelties of fact or theory and, when successful, finds none' (1962: 52). Consequently, normal science is puzzle solving, focusing on puzzles that can be solved. Much research, including our own as well as some of yours, as you noted in a co-authored publication with one of us – is normal science. Yet luckily, much of your research over the years has been anything but 'normal'.

The title is intended to honor your scientific originality. Initially, you worked on the role of Christian democracy in the development of European welfare states. The capstone of that work was published as *Social capitalism: A study of Christian democracy and the welfare state* in 1995 and has become a true classic within the field. Although you easily could have remained safely with that topic and become 'Mr. Christian Democracy', your great curiosity has pulled you in many other directions. You have explored a variety of issues related to the welfare state: from social investment to welfare chauvinism to reform strategies. But your interests are much broader than that. Already 20 years back, you became engaged in the question of how

democratic politics is best organized to deal with the rising complexities of modern society. In some of this work, you contributed to the then rapidly emerging literature on ‘governance’. In other work around the same time, you originally explored new themes, for example in one of your personal favorites on quasi-messianism and the disenchantment of politics. In more recent years, you have once again have taken an original turn by engaging with a series of new bodies of literature, which made you among other things one of the pioneers in studying the effects of social acceleration on representative democracies. The question of how to best organize democratic politics is today even more salient with the massive digital transformations we are witnessing – and you are once again at the forefront, helping us all to better understand the world we live in.

Aarhus and Utrecht, June 2023

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