

Post war universalism in the contemporary social security debate in the Netherlands

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The Western European social security systems are founded on the need to offer universal social protection, as was for example advocated in the Beveridge report of 1942. The universalistic endeavour has led to the development of the all-embracing welfare states of to date, but already for many decades dissatisfaction with the direction of the welfare state has led to a diversion of the universalistic pretention. In the current debate, universalism seems to be on the rise again. The Dutch think tanks CPB, WRR and SCP increasingly pay attention to the divide that is becoming manifest between those with better chances in the society and who are left behind. The think tanks have all formulated policy options in order to address this divide by offering better social security protection for excluded groups. In this article we discuss whether the options presented fall back upon the post-war notion of universality or whether there is something fundamentally different in the recent proposals.