

## REVIEWS

### **JIŘÍ BÍLÝ ET AL.: EUROPEAN VALUES - TRADITION AND ITS CHANGES IN THE 21ST CENTURY**

University of European and Regional Studies, České Budějovice,  
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The reviewed monograph is very well structured into two basic chapters that show a logical continuity and are further divided into smaller text sections. The aim of the text is highly topical and, in addition, aims to provide theoretical assistance to those who want to be knowledgeable in the implementation of state identities at various levels within the European region. It can be stated in advance that those goals have been fully achieved. Great advantage stems out from a constant effort of the authors to approach and understand global changes in the field of social relations. The book summarizes views and attitudes that could contribute to solving the problem of a development a state on the scientific basis as well as the mechanisms, culture and the functioning of the welfare state in practice.

The aim of the monograph is to familiarize the reader with the characteristics, essence, principles and methods of social activities of Europe as a region full of changes that arise from the current global and political issues as well as from the overall systems of individual member states and their national and supranational policies. The bibliographic references are adequate to the substance of the publication and fully comply with the current quotation standard. The text identifies very well the priorities of a welfare state in realizing the identity and stability of the European Community, which are important in implementing the set-out principles. These standards are based according to their significance to the most important socio-economic and political issues. The chosen priorities take into account both the historical situation as well as the need to overcome significant contradictions, the resolution of which contributes to the simplification of relations between the state and a civil society. The authors appropriately specify both a modern welfare state and the individual changes in understanding not only political but also overall transformational elements, which should combine the rule of law, liberal and political democracies, proper functioning of the state that reconcile the interests of all public actors, including various elements of market relations as well as the overwhelming need for a modern, democratic state. They consider this combina-

tion necessary for a transformation of a backward state into a truly welfare one, which not only declares its intentions, but also performs its basic functions in practice. One can appreciate the emphasis on the form of government having been designed to ensure the law and the vital interests of all categories of citizens.

In general, the text fully meets all the attributes of a scientific monograph. This publication quickly spread among the reading public as a very successful, professional and easily understandable literature and covers all levels of contemporary interpretations. A similar literature of this focus understands a civil society as both a judge as well as the mediator between the main interest groups. Such an approach does not allow for the whole and complex set of the social development to be taken into account in a narrow, ideally typical model of a representative democracy, and completely ignores the possibilities of alternative forms. Within their perspective, a civil society is seen as a form of „both the expression and protection” of interest groups and as a kind of a system that, including individuals, defends private interests and political structures of common interest. In the case of the representative democracy, the system covers, together with public administration bodies and subjects of social policy, also civil society institutions - not only nominally, but in real practice. That model emphasizes very well the high social importance of this policy. This means that its content, main components as well as its implementation mechanisms need to be reviewed. For this reason, the authors also aimed to present to readers the methodological foundations of a social policy theory, their origin and substance, as well as their rank in the overall system of social and political relations, and, last not least, the guidelines and means for the transition of a society to market relations. From low corporate social responsibility, the text concludes that there are very few cases of a sufficient consolidation in the world of welfare states. Also, the text relies on the fact that the crisis will help to address the world's political and economic elites who recognize the common interest of a majority population, and the need to address the internal developments. If such a case occurs, it will result in changes in the socio-economic policy of states and their fiscal priorities, respectively. In particular, the antitrust law together with the readiness to use already developed mechanisms and tools for income redistribution in all areas should have an impact on the current and prospects for the majority population. Lastly, the types and characteristics of the state, the relations between the state, social policy and civil society are described in a very precise way.

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