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BOOK REVIEW

ROBERT WISZNIOWSKI (ED.), CHALLENGES TO REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY. A EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE, PETER LANG EDITION, FRANKFURT AM MEIN-BERN-BRUXELLES-NEW YORK-OXFORD-WARSZAWA-WIEN 2015, P. 270

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A state, treated as a research category, is subject to many, often uncontrolled, transformations. Although the contemporary changes are very intensive and therefore take place at various levels, they do not lead to the total erosion of a state. On the contrary, a state introduces new, previously unknown mechanisms of governing and satisfies the needs of citizens by counteracting negative tendencies. The monograph "Challenges to Representative Democracy: A European Perspective", edited by Robert Wiszniowski, deals with these transformations and classifies them. Furthermore, it not only attempts to answer the question concerning a state's ability to preserve its current traditional functions but also the level of the responsiveness of a state's bodies and institutions.

Robert Wiszniowski is a professor, the head of the Department of Research for Political Activities of the Institute of Political Science at the University of Wrocław, and the editor-in-chief of the "Polish Political Science Review (Polski Przegląd Politologiczny)". He is the author and editor of several monographs devoted to political marketing, public administration, European political systems, and, at the same time, the leader of a few international and national research projects. The reviewed monograph is a summary of a two-year research project conducted by Robert Wiszniowski and financed by the National Science Centre and the *Marshal's Office of Lower Silesia*.

"Challenges to Representative Democracy: A European Perspective" contains sixteen chapters. They deal with various but closely-related aspects of the functioning of a state at many levels: regional, national, international and transnational. The chapters are accompanied by the table of contents, an introduction, a subject index, and names index.

The value of the publication lies in its thorough, interdisciplinary analysis of the key transformations of the functioning of a state in a turbulent international environment. The chapters are written by researchers with widely recognised, well-established academic achievements in the three scientific disciplines: political science, law, and economics. The researchers represent not only Polish universities but also British (University of Edinburgh), Spanish (Universidad Carlos III de Madrid), and Italian ones (Università degli Studi di Genova).

Although the reviewed publication is divided into sixteen chapters, their arrangement creates three, internally consistent, but not directly specified, parts. The first part deals with theoretical analyses and begins by the research paper by Jerzy Juchnowski and Jan

R. Sielezin devoted to the ways of understanding the essence of a state in ancient and medieval political thought. The article is a cognitively rich but, at the same time, synthetic review of major concepts and attitudes. An extremely important and current issue of the functioning of authoritarian regimes is presented by Roman Bäcker in his article. Marek Bankowicz compares authoritarian and democratic regimes and adopts the mechanism of gaining and exercising power as a starting point for his research. The article by Teresa Łoś-Nowak constitutes an in-depth analysis of the currently observed transformations of a state on a postmodern international arena. The change of the status and the role of a state, as well as the wide range of its functions, proves to be especially important for the author's considerations. The article by Wiszniowski closes the first, not directly specified part of the publication. The scholar presents, on the one hand, the traditional, well-established conditions and frames of the functioning of a nation state but, on the other hand, the possible trajectory of the transformations of its classic form.

The second part consists of case studies. James Mitchell, one of the leading researchers of the political system of contemporary Great Britain, elaborates in his article on the widely-discussed issue of Scottish identity and Scottish aspirations for independence. The author considers the conditions and possible consequences of the postulates which are not articulated but also increasingly frequently institutionalised. Agnieszka Kasińska-Metryka analyses the main conditions and stages of the formation of Spanish statehood. She presents the synthetic review of the conditions influencing the shift from an authoritarian system to a democratic one. Patrizia Magarò, who represents Università degli Studi di Genova, discusses in detail the importance of regions for the stability of the Italian political system. Arkadiusz Żukowski and Marcin Chelminiak elaborate in their article on the conditions, perspectives, and dangers connected with the functioning of the Kaliningrad Oblast. They formulate the list of not only the chances but also the challenges for the Russian enclave, especially while considering the experiences and perspectives for the cooperation of authorities and citizens of the Kaliningrad Oblast with Poland. Jacek Sroka analyses the process of public governance at the level of Polish provinces.

The third and the final part of the publication comprises of chapters devoted to various, current aspects of the functioning of contemporary democracies. The chances and dangers related to the development of the communication processes at the level of a state are discussed in the articles by Teresa Sasińska-Klas and Javier Lorenzo-Rodríguez. Sasińska-Klas elaborates on the consequences of the phenomenon of the mediatisation of the politics for the functioning of a state and its institutions. Lorenzo-Rodríguez of Universidad Carlos III de Madrid presents the analysis of the connections between the development of information *and* communication technologies, including e-government, and the level of the transparency of a state's actions. Maciej Herbut and Ryszard Herbut analyse the functioning of the European Union, asking to what extent one can call it a regulatory regime. Marek Wróblewski discusses the conditions, reasons, and possible consequences of the financial crisis for the stability of the Eurozone. The chapters by Katarzyna Sobolewska-Myślik and Robert Alberski concentrate on the internal dimension of the functioning of a contemporary state. The analysis by Sobolewska-Myślik comprises the current and more widely-discussed phenomenon of the crisis of inner-party democracy. Alberski considers the challenges and barriers of the functioning of political groups representing regional, often individual interests and expectations on the election market.

The chapters of the monograph fully develop the thesis of Robert Wiszniowski concerning the redefinition of the current aims, mechanisms and perspectives of the functioning of a state in its contemporary form.

The reviewed monograph is a significant publication in the already rich academic achievements of Robert Wiszniowski. What is important, it broadens, systematises and updates the current state of knowledge concerning the multilevel and multi-entity transformations of a contemporary state. Taking into account not only the validity of the issues in question but also the decision to publish the monograph in English, one may hope that it will attract the interest of a wide range of readers.