Reflections about the role of welfare state in post-industrial society are critical under present conditions of economic crisis. The contributions from different countries in the volume *The Welfare State in Post-Industrial Society: A Global Perspective* edited by Jason L. Powell and Jon Hendricks which are mainly based on the data previous to the latter economic crisis clearly show the effects of various factors on social welfare policies and consequences for the vulnerable groups and individuals. The case studies from various nation-states performed by leading social welfare researchers could be applied as an admonishment concerning imprudent utilization of neo-liberal ideologies while reshaping social welfare policies.

The book is divided into two parts. The first part *Rethinking Social Welfare in a Post-industrial World* is composed of nine chapters addressing social welfare in post-industrial world from various perspectives, some of them (Chapters 1, 5 and 9) focusing on general changes and other, narrower, comprising special fields like ageing, migration, gender, family and health. All of them try to overview the welfare policies in the beginning of the twenty-first century in the post-industrial societies (defined through service based economy, diffusion of national and global capital, mass privatization, and liberalization). Anticipating that for the reader it would be better to have some general information at the beginning the chapters are presented here in the manner ‘from general to specific’ in spite of their sequence in the volume.

Chapter 1 explains the basic terms used in the volume, the background and the intentions of the book. Some general statistic data are presented showing widening disparities between various social groups with common characteristics (people living in rural areas, women, elderly etc.) and some crucial factors exacerbating inequalities (such as absence of government activities to reshuffle the way of governing, proliferation of market-place and neo-liberal ideologies, challenged notions of social justice, solidarity) are deliberated. Authors point out the main question for rethinking the social welfare in various nation-states which could be noticed also in the subsequent chapters: how to manage the balancing of social expenditure with the economic participation in the global world. The answers to this question are many yet some similarities could be observed in changes as: privatization of social services and public provisions, deregulation of labor and currency mar-
Avoided due to higher costs and resources needed to work with them and that quasi-markets increase social segregation.

Chapter 2 has slightly different, narrow focus on the importance of remittances of immigrants (on the financial, individual, family and community level) as the source of external funding for developing countries. Authors utilize a different measure for analyzing the impact of the remittances. They apply social quality theory through the factors of security, social empowerment, social cohesion and social inclusion and argue that international transfer of remittances is an example of international social welfare process.

Chapters 3, 4 and 8 highlight the issue of ageing. In Chapter 3 authors try to extend discussion of impact of ageism reshaping the welfare state and eroding solidarity between generations by conceptualizing the generation struggles, by discussing economic rationalization and highlighting the features of institutions of intergenerational solidarity. Chapter 4 focuses on post-industrialism and its implications for lives of older people. It is argued that social welfare need to evolve the policies for older people in a new way, that active intervention on the part of older people is required and that coalitions of older and younger generations should be based upon a shared interest in ensuring that rights to state and public pensions are maintained. The focus of Chapter 8 is on question of whether young immigrants in the
western countries are willing to support the ageing population of native residents meanwhile the population in the countries of their origin is ageing rapidly in the absence of any institutionalized system for support for the elderly.

Chapter 6 addresses the families’ (in)abilities to perform the functions of reproduction, socialization, economic support, care for the young, the ill and the aged, which have a great impact on potential social problems. Therefore the areas of changes in families and their needs are analyzed under the post-modern conditions.

Chapter 7 explores the neo-liberal and social democratic ideological influences on health care policies showing that while neo-liberal ideas have had an influence on improving management systems and accountability social democratic ideas have impact on patient-centered health systems and the quality of health care.

The second part of the volume ‘Social Welfare in Post-industrial Societies: International Comparisons’ provides an international perspective of contemporary issues of social welfare in various parts of the world (Australia, Canada, England and Wales, Israel, North Europe, South Korea, South Africa, United States) with no clear explanation about their selection. Here, majority of chapters present general information about welfare states while in some of them the focus is narrower.

Chapter 10 presents the reflection on viability of Nordic welfare state model in a time of global changes. It is argued that the notion of social investment state with the activities for the increase of the employment rate and increased investment in human capital is appropriate in the post-industrial societies within the growing threat of market forces.

Chapter 11 (which could be placed also in the part one due to its general theme and not focusing on specific part of the world) explores the importance of promoting active citizenship through education with the aim that citizens’ rights and obligations came from collective human experience with injustice.

Chapter 14 focuses on social welfare policy and privatization in the United States, which have been traditionally relied on the private sector and have decentralized government intervention. This has (in combination with the latest reforms) produced the increase in socioeconomic inequality, precarious employments, decline in the social character of the work and alienation of large segments of population. Welfare benefits no longer enhance individual well-being and the reader will notice the hard consequences for users and workers in the services due to welfare reform in USA which enabled that the critical resources are controlled outside the organizations providing services and the workers in these organizations lack of resources, power and information to promote changes.

Chapter 15 debates on issues of
the social welfare system in Australia which is characterized by strong relation between work and welfare with an expectation of self-reliance of those who are able to work. Yet the evidences show that poverty is not related solely to a lack of jobs.

In Chapter 18 South Korean experiences in balancing social welfare in post-industrial society are described. The Korean government has, similarly as in the majority of the presented countries, followed the neo-liberal ideology, yet it has the same time pursued the expansion and consolidation of welfare programs and accelerated the process of transition to the inclusive developmental welfare state.

Chapters 12, 13, 16 and 17 focus on narrow themes. In chapter 12 the criminal justice system in England and Wales is explored with clear remark that emphasis on cost-effectiveness may conflict with other influences of penal policy. Chapter 13 points out the changes in social assistance programs in Canada where the neo-liberal culture of individual responsibility and free market is in tension with values of just society. The consequence of reforms is that social assistance programs are no longer vital elements in Canada because more emphasis is put on punishment and the state split the obligations between market and worker citizens. Chapter 16 presents a policy framework for social services with children in South Africa emphasizing the importance of preventive actions as a complement to curative programs for children to follow the aims of increasing skills and a knowledgeable society. Chapter 17 focuses on privatization trends in personal welfare services in Israel founding out that the privatization has lead to delivering of services by non-governmental organizations and private enterprises with no clear evidence of decline of welfare state.

The book offers a kaleidoscope of various important information for researchers, scientists, social policy students and also politicians (who usually base their decision on the ideologies rather than on clear empirical data). Despite of the fact that contributions in this volume do not enable direct comparisons between various welfare states they provide up-to-date information on variations of welfare states’ development.

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Chiara Saraceno (ed.)
Families, Ageing and Social Policy: Intergenerational Solidarity in European Welfare States
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Today we speak of an ageing society and many political as well as scientific and research discussions deal with the themes of ageing, its effect on modern society, in particu-