

Scott Burchill et al.: *Theories of International Relations, Third Edition.*

New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, pp. 310. ISBN: 978-1403948663 (1403948666).

Reviewed by Oldřich Bureš

Like its two predecessors, the third edition of *Theories of International Relations* provides a comprehensive survey of leading theoretical perspectives in the field. In contrast to the second edition, the reviewed text contains an entirely new chapter on Realism written by Jack Donnelly, the chapter on Rationalism has been replaced with a chapter on the English School, and the Feminism and Introduction chapters have been substantially revised. Perhaps most importantly, however, all chapters have been updated to take into account the recent development in the 'real world', especially concerning the impact of the events of '9/11' on International Relations theory. As such, the book makes a worthy contribution to the burgeoning literature in the field.

The introduction, co-authored by Scott Burchill and Andrew Linklater, explains the nature, diversity and fundamental points of disagreement in International Relations the-

ory. After a brief exploration of the foundations of International Relations as a separate academic discipline they offer some explanations for the ever-increasing diversity of IR Theories. They point out that until today, practitioners in the field '...do not agree about what is involved in theorizing international relations' (pp. 12). As in many other social sciences, IR has been traditionally divided on the very basic question of its *subject matter* and fundamental differences persists regarding the appropriate *methodology*. Unlike in other social sciences, however, the end of the Cold War and more recently the 9/11 attacks, have led to a proliferation of competing epistemological and ontological standpoints, as well as the importance of ethics in the study of IR. According to Burchill and Linklater, it is therefore possible to argue that there is a fundamental division within IR between theories, which seek to offer explanatory accounts of world politics, and

perspectives, which regard theory as *constitutive* of that reality (pp. 3).

Chapter 2 offers an exhaustive overview of both the well-known basic concepts shared by most (neo-) realists and the sometimes-overlooked points of division within the Realist school. Donnelly is correct to point out that the writings of the early realists such as Carr and Morgenthau remain the key reference points in IR, more than fifty years after their publication. He also offers a succinct summary of the imperfect nature of neorealist structural theory predictions and argues that sometimes 'exogenous variables' are decisive in determining outcomes, thus overwhelming the otherwise theoretically correctly predicted pressures. Unlike several other chapters, however, Donnelly's account of Realism directly addresses neither the significance of 9/11 for realist IR theory, nor the reverse. Regarding the latter issue, for example, the outspoken critique of leading realist scholars to the US war in Iraq in 2003 is merely noted in one short sentence (pp. 37).

Scott Burchill in Chapter 3 discusses the liberal theory of IR and its development. While recognizing the importance of free trade for both the early liberal thinkers and contemporary neo-liberal accounts of the world market, Burchill also highlights the salience of the evolving human rights culture and the immensely important discussion of the liberal peace thesis. The chapter also contains a timely treatment of several current hot topics, including a discussion of globalisation, impact of foreign investment and ways of addressing the post 9/11 phenomenon of non-state terrorism. For example, Burchill points out the irony of economically neo-liberal governments expanding both the

reach and size of the state in the name of national security after the 9/11 terrorist attacks (pp. 80).

In Chapter 4, Andrew Linklater analyses the English School of IR. Also known as International Society, this approach has a long tradition but it has not enjoyed much influence outside of Great Britain. Since the beginning of the new millennium, however, there has been much interest in the English School and its idea of international society as a mid- or third-way between the arguably excessive pessimism of realism and, at times, too idealistic forms of idealism. From the contemporary hot topics, Linklater assesses the contributions of the leading figures of the English School (Hedley Bull, John Vincent and Martin Wight) to the analysis of human rights, humanitarian intervention and the use of force in international relations.

Linklater is also the author of Chapter 5, which offers a detailed account of Marxism. Building on the famous contention by Karl Marx that his interest was not only to explain the world but to change it, Linklater summarizes not only the well known Marx's reflections on the development of capitalism as a modern form of production but also the less known analysis of globalisation by Marx and Engels. Lenin, for whom globalisation and fragmentation were interrelated as capitalism continued to spread in the world unevenly, also pursued the latter topic. This line of analysis was subsequently pushed a step further by dependency and world-system neo-Marxists who shifted their analyses from the relations of production to unequal exchange between, and exploitation of, the third world 'periphery' by the first world core. Moreover, by pushing this line of argument yet another

step further, Linklater also noted that: 'Classical Marxism may have defended the ideal of universal human emancipation, but its vision of the future assumed the non-European would and should become the same as the modern West. The issue then is whether its project of emancipation was always at heart a project of domination and assimilation.'

In Chapter 6, Richard Devetak took up the uneasy task to find common points in the writings of a rather disparate group of actors who subscribe to critical theory. He contends that the only idea that is shared by all critical theorists is 'that the study of international relations should be oriented by an emancipatory politics' (pp. 137). Little consensus, however, exists even when it comes to the understanding of emancipation. Devetak traces the normative interest in identifying immanent possibilities for social transformation back to Kant and argues that through neo-Marxism it became closely associated with the Frankfurt School. Until recently, however, the representatives of the Frankfurt School never addressed international relations. Critical IR theory has become more associated with Robert Cox's critique of the traditional IR theories, which he described as "problem-solving" due to their legitimisation of the prevailing social and political structures. Devetak also examines the contributions of Linklater, including his efforts to undertake a 'sociology of states-system' – a comparison of state-systems across time on the basis of how they deal with harm. In particular, Linklater is concerned that the developments since 9/11 could un-do the civilizing gains made by modern state-system in the last century. As Devetak noted, implicit in Linklater, and explicit in the writings of

other critical IR theorist, 'is the argument that the greatest threat to world order may not be the terrorists who perpetrated such inexcusable harm, but the reaction by the United States' (pp. 154).

In Chapter 7, Richard Devetak the contributions of postmodernism, which he considers to be one of the 'most controversial of theories in the humanities and social sciences' (pp. 161). Devetak also noted that after 9/11, postmodernism was charged with 'a dangerous tendency towards moral equivocation or even sympathy towards terrorism' (pp.161). To most postmodernists, however, these accusations only confirm that knowledge claims are intimately connected to politics and power. Devetak then proceeds to review the post-modernist critique of the 'Enlightenment project' of human emancipation, with a special focus on the writings of Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault and Jean-Francois Lyotard.

Christian Reus-Smit begins his synopsis of constructivism in Chapter 8 by noting, that since the end of the cold war, the hitherto dominant debates between neo-realists and neo-liberals and between the rationalists (both the neo-theories as well as some of the English School theorists) and critical theorists have been displaced by two new debates: between rationalists and constructivists, and between constructivists and critical theorists. After examining the origins of constructivism and its principal theoretical premises (an emphasis on the importance of normative as well as material structures, the role of identity in shaping political action and the mutually constitutive relationship between structures and agents), Reus-Smit distinguishes between several competing construc-

tivist approaches. While some constructivists share the neo-realist focus on analysis of state processes (especially Alexander Wendt and his systemic approach), others see the statesystem in connection with a range of national, cultural and political phenomena (holistic approach). Interestingly, however, according to Reus-Smit, the 9/11 events 'have not sparked a tectonic shift in the nature of constructivism, or in the general terrain of International Relations theorizing' (pp. 208–209). The US-led 'war against terrorism' has, nonetheless, prompted some constructivists (including Reus-Smit) to articulate a social conception of power that accommodates the complex relationship between norms, legitimacy and hegemonic power.

In Chapter 9, Jacqui True sheds light on feminist IR scholarship. Pointing out that there is no distinctive feminist IR theory, True proceeds to summarize the key contributions made by empirical feminism, analytical feminism and normative feminism. She stresses that none of these approaches is simply interested in the place of women in world politics and IR and argues that feminism 'shifts the study of international relations away from singular focus on inter-state relations toward a comprehensive analysis of

transnational actors and structures and their transformations in global politics' (pp. 213). As such, according to True, feminist perspectives on IR bring 'fresh thinking and action in the post-9/11 decentred and uncertain world' (pp. 213).

The last Chapter, written by Matthew Paterson, is devoted to analysis of arguably the newest IR perspective – Green Politics. The chapter offers a discussion of two main streams of the Green positions on IR – Green political theory and 'global ecology'. The defining characteristics of the former are ecocentrism (the rejection of an exclusively anthropocentric world-view) and the argument that 'the exponential growth experienced during the last two centuries ... is the root cause of the current environmental crisis' (pp. 237). The latter approach has also two central themes – 'development as the root causes of environmental problems, and the protection and reclamations of "commons" as central to the Green vision' (pp. 238). Together, the diverse Green politics literature provides 'an explanation of the destruction of the rest of nature by human societies, and a normative foundation for resisting this destruction and creating sustainable societies' (pp. 236).

Giorgio Napolitano:

Altiero Spinelli e l'Europa. (Altiero Spinelli's Europe)

Bologna: Il Mulino, 2007, 94 pp. ISBN: 978-88-15-11936-0.

Reviewed by David Rettura

Giorgio Napolitano became the 11th President of Italy in May of 2006. He was the first member of the former PCI (Italian Communist Party) to be chosen for this honoured, but largely honorific, office. Born in Naples in 1925, President Napolitano very soon became an important member of the party, linked especially to Giorgio Amendola, the leader of the 'right' inside the PCI, who worked for a collaboration with the moderate PSI (Italian Socialist Party). Early on he was persuaded that the PCI had to change its political nature evolving more toward a European Socialist Party, and after the PCI changed its name to the PDS (Democratic Party of the Left) he became minister and President of the Italian Senate.

As president he succeeded Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, former Central Bank Governor as well as Finance Minister and Head of Government. Mr. Ciampi mixed the constitutional and official style of President Einaudi (1948–

1955) with the popular and sometimes populist orientation of President Pertini (1978–1985). He was the most loved in the history of the Italian Republic. So it was difficult for President Napolitano to impose his own idea of the presidency, also remembering that part of the Italian right was quite suspicious of him at least when he was first elected.

The book we are writing about is his latest and it is a collection of nine papers published by Mr. Napolitano between 1986 and 2006 concerning the political, cultural and human figure of Altiero Spinelli, the Italian theorist of European unification who wrote the well-known *Manifesto di Ventotene*. In this work, written in 1941 on a small island near Rome, he imagined how to avoid future continental wars by integrating the specific political aspects of national sovereignty in an international organization which would not be nominated by governments but would rather be an expression of popular will.

We can divide Napolitano's essays in two groups: in the first one we have pages written before the PCI changed both its name and political nature; in the second there are pages dedicated to Altiero Spinelli from a man who was becoming year after year a more prominent national leader, respected even by a large part of the Italian political Right.

Initially it was important to link Altiero Spinelli and his fight for political and social European integration to the PCI experience. President Napolitano could not deny that Spinelli's experience inside the PCI was dated and completely closed well before he even started to think about European integration. He made, however, efforts to find in Spinelli the seed of a pretended communist moral attitude to honesty. For Napolitano, Spinelli came closest to PCI because of the changed attitude of the party toward Europe in the middle 1970s.

In 1987, in *Il combattente federalista, la costituzione europea e il rinnovamento delle sinistre*, the Italian President, then an important member of the PCI, remembering the dialog between Spinelli and the Communists, stressed the autonomous reflection made by the party, as Enrico Berlinguer had done in 1975, when talking about the European Union. Napolitano suggested a political integration to face the USSR, but especially the USA and the upper classes, but did not mention Spinelli in his report to the PCI Central Committee preparing the XVIth Party Congress in 1975 (later published by Einaudi as *La proposta comunista*). However, in his autobiography, published in 2005 by Laterza Publishing, Mr Napolitano pays a larger and deeper tribute to Spinelli's ascendance into the European conversion of the PCI and into his own personal one as well.

His latest writings published after the fall of the Berlin Wall, as already stated above, focus on Spinelli's importance as a founding father of contemporary Europe and as an ideological pillar of the new Italian Left.

The progressive shift, or at least the pretended one, in the building of Europe, from the functionalist approach to a more political and social one, put Spinelli's works in a new light with a blossoming of studies about them, with the *Manifesto di Ventotene*, or even Spinelli's autobiography, *Come ho tentato di diventare saggio*, reprinted by several publishing houses. For Giorgio Napolitano any occasion was a good one to recall the importance of Spinelli's reflections and usefulness in the present moment. The intervention *Il debito dell'europeismo italiano* is a perfect example: in this work Napolitano links, quoting Jean Monnet's words, Spinelli's intuitions and dreams with De Gasperi's pragmatism. Alcide De Gasperi, Italian Head of Government from the fall of the Fascism to the early 1950s and the DC (Christian Democrat) leader, is widely recognized as a founding father of the European Union, as is Schumann or Spaak. But Italy and Italian politicians often feel a lack of importance inside Europe, perceiving that other countries such as France, Germany or even the United Kingdom and Spain, which are not among the six founders, may retain more influence or power over the decision process, so it is always important to stress the importance of Spinelli's legacy, which is considered more attractive than De Gasperi's.

In the same way, even if it isn't possible to find a specific intervention about it, in recent years Spinelli's figure has become an iconic one for the new Italian Left. With the two

major Italian Leftist parties losing their moral legitimacy in the early 1990s, it was natural for the new Italian Left to try to find new heroes to build up a new moral Pantheon. And Spinelli, with his lonely fight for European unification seemed a perfect figure for this political operation. The same happened on different basis with Ernesto Rossi, Piero Calamandrei and even Carlo Rosselli, all of them forgotten for a long time by the traditional Italian Left.

This book is the second concerning Europe published by President Napolitano in 2007. Helped by anniversaries such as the 50th of the Treaty of Rome, or the 100th of Spinelli's birth, Napolitano, a real supporter of Europe and probably the best one coming from the PCI, is focusing a part of his presidency on European issues hoping that this can help build a sympathetic image of him in the same way that this helped his predecessor Ciampi.

Lubor Lacina et al.:

Měnová integrace – náklady a přínosy členství v měnové unii (Monetary Integration: Costs and Benefits of the Membership in the Monetary Union).

Praha: C. H. Beck, 2007, pp. 970. ISBN: 978-80-7179-560-5.

Reviewed by Daniel Marek

This well-researched book offers a helpful and thorough analysis of the latest phase of European economic integration – Economic and Monetary Union (EMU). It is arranged in two sections. The first section in its four chapters interprets the theoretical framework of EMU. The aim of this section is to empower readers not familiar with the economic theory and macroeconomics with knowledge of those concepts and approaches that are essential for understanding of EMU. The section includes chapters on the theory of optimum currency areas, asymmetrical shocks theory, and approaches to the analysis of the costs and benefits of EMU membership. While this part of the book does provide a rich contribution to the theoretical debate on EMU and the economic integration process in general, the chapters on the EMU development that form the second part of the book (chapters 5 through 12) seem even more relevant.

In the first chapter of the second section of the book (chapter 5), Zdeněk Sychra presents the historical development of monetary cooperation in the EC/EU from the beginning of the European Community (EC) to the last phase of the EMU. He draws reader's attention to the asymmetry between the economic and monetary part of the integration process where the supranational monetary policy is not supplemented by full-fledged economic integration with common fiscal policy and other instruments such as a federal budget, or common labour market policies. In his chapter on EMU convergence criteria (chapter 6), Robert Plaga argues that these criteria despite reservations over their calculation methods (inflation), level of the reference threshold (budget deficit and public debt), width of the fluctuation limits (exchange rate), or even their meaningfulness (long-term interest rates) remain the main instruments to measure economic perform-

ance of both existing and aspiring members. The chapter 7 by Lucie Tunkrová focuses on the reasons for non-membership of the UK, Denmark, and Sweden in the EMU. She offers an in-depth analysis of these countries' attitudes toward the EMU project, and points out to the inability of the governments to explain the pros and cons of EMU membership to the public. In their chapter on the European Central Bank (ECB) and its monetary policy (chapter 8), Svatopluk Kapounek and Jan Přenosil claim that despite the fact that the ECB is a strong and trustworthy player and the euro a stable currency, it can not still be considered for its diversity in its economic, political, and cultural views, a full-fledged, comparable actor with other central banks. In their stimulating chapter dealing with the EU budget and fiscal policy (chapter 9), Robert Plaga and Hubert Smékal present the pros and cons of the bigger EU budget, and discuss the importance and various options for the regulation of fiscal policy in the EMU. The final section of their chapter analyses the Stability and Growth Pact. The fiscal policy issues are further elaborated in the following chapter 10 authored by Danuše Nerudová. She, when analysing the harmonization of the EU member states' tax systems, argues that full harmonization

proved to be unrealistic, and that partial harmonization was achieved only in the field of non-direct taxation due to the completion of the Single Market. Chapter 11, by Jan Bureš, examines the role of the euro in the global monetary system. The euro, according to the author's arguments, can be seen as the one and only future competitor to world domination of the US dollar. However, factors influencing the strengthening of its future position should be carefully examined. Speedier substitution of the dollar with the euro would be possible only due to a significant crisis of the dollar. In the following chapter 12 on financial and capital markets, Jan Bureš makes a plea for a consistent implementation of the Financial Services Action Plan as the key condition for free and efficient cross border competition among the providers of financial services.

Lubor Lacina has gathered a number of valuable contributions to the discussion of EMU, covering both theory and practice. Both the editor and contributors to this book are to be congratulated on the structure and clarity of its presentation. Altogether this is a very valuable volume, which should be useful reading for students and experts interested in the EMU and European integration process in general.

Shanto Iyengar and Jennifer McGrady:

Media Politics: A Citizen's Guide.

New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2007, pp. 361. ISBN: 978-0-393-92819-8.

Reviewed by Petr Novotný

The role and the importance of mass media in democratic societies have been a hotly debated issue not only in the Czech Republic, but also across the borders. The most essential part of the discussion on this theme is the relation between the media and politics. The most frequent criticism heard from politicians concerns the objectivity and impartiality of journalists and reporters, while the other side defends the principle of independence of the media and points out that their role is that of the watchdog. Obviously, the boundary between the independence of the media and high-quality but not objective journalism is rather vague. The question is, who is right in this dispute? Are our leading politicians really so bad or is the mass media partly to blame for the general cynicism and scepticism about politics? The book by Shanto Iyengar and Jennifer McGrady *Media Politics: A Citizen's Guide* answers many of these questions.

The name of S. Iyengar is well known to anyone dealing with political communication, media studies, agenda-setting, public opinion or cognitive psychology. Among others it was Iyengar, who at Stanford University in the 1980s began to intensively study the influence of television on the information of the general public in political issues and trials. In his most important work, *'Is Anyone Responsible? How Television Frames Political Issues'*, published in 1989, he convincingly and in great detail outlined the possible cause of the public being poorly informed about political problems by means of 'issue framing', which in many respects laid the foundation for the next studies. Jennifer McGrady specializes in research in new communication technology and its influence on democratic processes, especially election campaigns, and this dimension is emphasized in *Media Politics*.

At the outset it should be pointed out that the book is no revolutionary innovation but, in most part, depends on the previous work of the two authors. As the name suggests, it is not meant solely for scholars but wants to serve general audiences as well--to become the 'citizen's guide' in the world of the media. And in this sense it does not matter that the data presented in the book are a picture of the American medial spectrum. Naturally, the US system has some specific features as compared to the European standards, still, many of the conclusions arrived at by Iyengar and McGrady can be applied to Czech conditions.

The authors divided the book into eleven chapters, each of which is a follow-up to the previous, although at first sight each has a different theme. Iyengar and McGrady start from the central thesis that the contemporary political representation or candidates inadequately, overmuch and harmfully use the mass media to improve their own image, self-representation and to gain political points. What is even more important is that reporters and journalists have accepted this game and in many respects began to serve as 'loudspeakers' for political views, which the politicians want to pass to the citizens. Instead of being the 'watch-dog' in politics, television and the press have become a suitable instrument for producing the image of the image-makers and the candidates, who in this way can easily and cheaply spread their views among potential voters. The authors believe that media politics are harmful for the state of the society. The unceasing media struggles and conflicts between politicians result in the voters' cynicism towards democratic processes and especially toward politi-

cal parties. Voters thus turn into spectators and observers rather than into active, thinking subjects. For political representatives this media rivalry creates the loss of the will for a consensus, which can finally paralyse the capacity of ruling in quality and with reason.

While disregarding the division into chapters, the work can be divided according to four major themes or approaches. The first is the theoretical part (especially the second chapter), where the author outlines three fundamental roles of the media in a democratic society and in its political processes. First, press, television and radio should give room to candidates so that they can present their views to a wide public. Second, the media creates the 'public sphere', where citizens can choose and decide according to the wide range of opinions presented to them. Finally, media should side with the public by monitoring and supervising the political representations. Iyengar and McGrady come to the conclusion that the majority of American media fail to meet the demands of democratic theory. The main cause is found in the private ownership of television stations and newspapers, which leads to friction between economics, with its desire for profit, and the fulfilling of civic duties.

On this theoretical basis we get, in the next two chapters, an assessment of the 'performance' of American media. Iyengar and McGrady come forward with a thought, which is heretical for some, but is based on prolonged research, that through the independence of the journalists, interpretative and analytic journalism was born, contrasting with the formerly much valued descriptive journalism. In other words, modern journalists prefer their own, usually would-

be professional assessment or analysis of the action of political candidates or they turn to 'experts' selected by them. The general public thus gets, under the veil of objectivity, views and interpretations that often can do harm to natural judgement and eliminate the voter's own opinions. The boom of private media in the United States has brought greater pressure for effectiveness of journalists and reporters, thrifty budgets and increased production. Jointly with this, the ability of the media to meet the role of the government's watchdog decreases since the media are increasingly dependent on official sources. This happens now not only in the period of serious state crises, e.g., in conflicts of war, but this phenomenon has become current practice. The halls in the White House and in the Congress, every day crowded with journalists prove that. For this reason probably, as late as the summer of 2004 almost 30 % of all Americans believed that weapons of mass destruction were really found in Iraq.

After an evaluation of the performance of American media there comes the question, which candidates and interest groups influence mass media in their favour and in what way. The authors describe the wide range of media strategies, by which private goals can be achieved using TV channels and newspapers. As Iyengar writes, the contest between journalists and campaign advisers is a classic instance of a collective-action dilemma. If parties did cooperate, the journalist would only communicate what the candidates say and the candidates would concentrate on the particular issues and not on the strategies to be used for victory. Modern reporters, however, prefer to uncover the political strategies of the politicians, which detracts attention

from the substance of the issues and leads to scepticism about election campaigns among people.

When admitting all that has been said so far, next comes the logical question. Do modern media really have the power of influencing public opinion: The book answers, yes. The 'media effects' range from influencing the themes thought to be important by the people, i.e., agenda setting, through the formation of opinions on public issues--framing, to the changing of criteria by which the citizens select the candidates--priming. Election campaigns thus decidedly have an importance. Not only do they help to form the voters' opinions about the personal qualities of rival politicians, but they also can affect in a major way the importance of each problem, on the basis of which a public debate goes on. Lastly, in election campaigns they influence voter turnout in both directions.

The present trend in media policy is due to two major factors: the declining role of political parties in the American political system in the selection of and finding support for candidates and the general boom in television broadcasts. It is unlikely that in the near future either the Republicans or the Democrats will restore their strength in the sense of the classic political party with all the functions exerted by the party. The chance for improving the present state of affairs consists only in stricter regulation and securing at least a minimum of what in this country is called public broadcasting. It is exactly in this direction that the authors of *Media Politics* call for reforms.

From an academic point of view, the negative aspect of this book is that it does not bring new facts or conclusions from the lat-

est research. In this sense the content of the book will decidedly be no surprise for anyone knowledgeable in the field of communication studies. In one thing, however, the book exceeds the current standard, namely in its systematic and practical character and its emphasis on a profound and easy-to-understand analysis preceding the applicable

conclusions. A very clever element is the appendix in the form of a DVD, with interesting pictures explaining and practically illustrating the terminology. It is especially owing to these positive features that the book can be true to its title and become a real 'citizen's guide' for the world of modern media.

Grigorij Mesežnikov, Olga Gyárfášová

and Miroslav Kolár:

Slovenské voľby '06. Výsledky, príčiny, súvislosti.

(Slovak Elections of 2006. Results, Causes, Connections).

Bratislava: Inštitút pre verejné otázky, 2006, pp. 254, ISBN 80-88935-90-3.

Reviewed by Lucia Pastirčíková

The Institute for Public Issues (IVO) in Bratislava is an independent think tank, associating specialists from various branches, who analyse social, political, sociological, cultural, legal and foreign political issues. In their edition of 'Studies and Opinions', IVO, between 1997 and 2006, published more than thirty items with the aim of supporting an open society and a democratic political culture in Slovakia. Traditionally since 1998, after regional, communal and parliamentary elections, the Institute has been publishing large studies in which specialists in various subjects analyse the election campaign, the results and the consequences of the elections.

After the books on parliamentary elections, *Slovak Elections of 1998. Who? Why? How?* and *Slovak Elections of 2002. Results, consequences, connections*, IVO, six months after the elections of the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovakia, published a third book of its kind, named *Slovak Elections of*

2006. Results, Causes, Connections, a collection of fourteen separate analytical studies, grouped into five thematic sections.

The first deals with the possible implications of parliamentary elections in Central Europe. The author of the first chapter, Martin Bútora, gives a brief description of parliamentary elections since 1994 in the introduction to his paper, discusses the regional repercussions of parliamentary elections in Slovakia in 2006 and outlines their international context. In the second chapter, Soňa Szomolányi deals with the stability of democracy in Slovakia and with the political transition of the country, describes the variants of the governmental coalition and the reasons for creating the SMER – SNS – HZDS coalitions and other options, e.g., why the governmental continuity of the Cabinet of Mikuláš Dzurinda failed. The authors Radovan Ďurana and Juraj Karpiš in the chapter “The Tatra Tiger” after the 2006 elections – what

will happen to the reforms?’ assess the reforms after six months since the elections and the exchange of government members and at the same time tries to evaluate objectively the impact of the existing reforms, introduced in the preceding election period. Although the authors present accurate information, the reforms are not analysed in a neutral way, the authors’ opinion can be seen from the almost poetic titles of the chapters, for instance: ‘The blemished tax reform’ or from the formulation: ‘There is no doubt about the advantages of the accepted tax reform with a single tariff as compared to the previous system’ (pp. 55). The lack of objectivity in this paper does harm the scholarly standard and accuracy of the text, in spite of the considerable analytical features of the chapter. In the next chapter, Peter Novotný analyses in detail and in a chronological way the development of the electoral system in Slovakia since the parliamentary elections of 1990, dividing it into three stages: creation and consolidation of electoral rules (1989–1996), struggle for the change of the rules from the position of power (1997–1998), and the gradual remedy of deformations (1999–2006). In the conclusion of the chapter he compares it with the electoral rules in the member countries of the European Union. The text contains tables of legislative proposals for a change of the electoral law and the development of its definitive legal alteration. It is therefore surprising that in the nine pages of this chapter there is no reference to sources of information, which were the base for the author’s statements, even though in the Bibliography nine publications and five internet sources are listed.

The second part deals with the development of the political stage in Slovakia prior

to and after the parliamentary elections in 2006 (Grigorij Mesežnikov – *Parliamentary elections in 2006 and the development of the system of political parties*) with an attempt at explaining such phenomena as the growth of populism (Peter Učeň – *Populistic appeals in Slovak politics*) and the election success of the leftist party Směr (Andrej Orogváni – *Attempt at a new definition of the Slovak Left*). All three chapters in this part of the book register in detail the political phenomena, referred to above, and do not even neglect presenting their theoretical framework (for instance how populism is defined by Cas Mudde or Ben Stanley), applied to the conditions in Slovakia.

In the third part, named *Society and voters*, Zora Bútorová and Olga Gyarfašová analyse the trends in public opinion and the electoral behaviour of the voters and Vladimír Krivý analyses the changes in patterns of the distribution of votes. These chapters contain the results of the opinion surveys carried out by IVO analysts, who asked citizens about their opinion as to the introduction of reforms in the preceding election period, the level of their living standard, perception of regional differences in the country, the lack of equality in the labour market, but also discussed the key themes in the preceding election campaign, i.e., the fate of the reforms, the principles of the functioning of the state and the economy, the position and rights of national minorities, agenda of culture and civilization, political style and abuse of power (p. 119). Next comes the development of electoral preferences of relevant political subjects since the parliamentary elections in 2002, assessment of the trustworthiness of politicians and profile of voters of each po-

litical party, the development of electoral attendance, and regional success rate of groups of political parties in Slovakia. Both these chapters, based on empirical research, are the core of the whole book and the results presented here are a contribution especially to the academic community because it provides valuable data for further research.

Part Four treats *Select themes of the pre-election discourse*, where the author, Miroslav Kollár, again analyses the introduced reforms (tax burden, social security and health care), this time, however, not from the aspect of voter satisfaction as it was done in Part Three of the book, but from the aspect of political subjects taking part in the pre-election contest. This period brings verbal conflicts and controversies between the representatives of the former opposition and the coalition, whether to keep or modify the reforms. This chapter delimitates precisely the attitude of political parties to these subjects, which, together with the problem of national minorities, predominated the pre-election campaign. Miroslav Kusý in the chapter *National minorities* explains why the issue of minorities (he restricts it to the Hungarian and partly to the Gypsy minorities) was topical before the 2006 parliamentary elections and played a major role in the establishment of the governmental coalition. This part of the book contributes to the overall picture of the 2006 parliamentary elections deals in detail with the victory of the party Směr-SD and the creation of the coalition with HZDS-LS and SNS.

The last, fifth part, is again about the pre-election period, in particular political communication and transparency of financing and professionalisation of election campaigns of political candidates in Slovakia.

In the first chapter, *Media and elections* by Miroslav Kollár, we are first told about the legislation adjusting the activities of the media before the elections, and then the author assesses the media in connection with parliamentary elections in 2006. Vladislav Doktor in the chapter *Election campaigns of political parties: between professionalization and caution* analyses the electoral communication of select political subjects - in what ways they tried to address the voters, how much they invested in the campaign. On the financing itself, legal measures and their deficiencies are described in greater detail by Wienk in the paper *Financial transparency of the election campaign*. No less interesting is the last part of this chapter, on the monitoring of the campaign, where the author discovers some interesting facts.

The thematic division of the chapters is clear, but does not agree with the chronology of the elections: in the first chapter, '*Contexts and implications*', analysts evaluate the character, course and results of parliamentary elections in Slovakia in 2006 and their link with the parliamentary elections in the neighbouring V4 countries, and in the last two parts of the book the authors deal with the pre-election campaigns. There is no conclusion in the book, on the other hand, the first two chapters (*Slovak elections and Central European connections* – Martin Bútorá and *Parliamentary elections in 2006 and the stability of the democracy in Slovakia* – Soňa Szomolányi) meet the role of concluding thoughts and assessment of the elections.

Another objection can be the fact that the level of each chapter is different, which may be because the authors work in various spheres of society, such as journalism, eco-

nomics, financial analysis. Contributions of the other authors, sociologists, political scientists, university teachers or postgraduate students do not lack the necessary methodology. The book is meant, as the editors say, for specialists, journalists, students and politicians, i.e. for a general public rather than for academics because the book does not have all academic features, some chapters (e.g., “*The Tatra Tiger*” after the 2006 elections – what will happen to the reforms?’ – Radovan Ďuraňa – Juraj Karpiš) are written in

a journalistic style, which lacks objectivity; the personal views of the authors are clear from the beginning to the end of their respective chapter. IVO books are generally received very positively by the general reading public and even though some papers lack the theoretical framework, the analytical part in each chapter is strong, sufficient, for giving the readers the needed information as well as an analysis of select features of the 2006 elections of the National Assembly of the Slovak Republic.