

Abstract

The central themes of the thesis are the limits of democracy, the qualities that distinguish it from other political regimes, the criteria necessary for its existence, and the character of the regimes that arise if one or more of these criteria are not met.

The first part of the thesis presents fundamental concepts and theories that deal with these questions, the goal of the second part is to apply these theoretical considerations to a particular case, namely Hungary.

The first part focuses primarily on the definition of democracy and non-democracy, on the functioning and characteristics of regimes in the “grey area“ between democracy and authoritarianism, on the definitions of relevant terms and on the ways in which various theories of democracy, authoritarianism and hybrid regimes approach these concepts and definitions.

The first chapter presents the theories of democracy that are relevant to the discussion about hybrid regimes: the minimalist concept, the procedural minimum and the extended procedural minimum. The second chapter focuses on the definition of the opposite of democracy, the third chapter presents a cognitive-linguistic approach to the links between democracy and authoritarianism.

The last two chapters of the first part offer a brief overview of the theories of hybrid regimes and present two concepts of key importance for the second part of the thesis: the theory of competitive authoritarianism of Levitsky and Way and the theory of abusive constitutionalism of David Landau.

In the second part of the thesis, I focus on recent political events in Hungary in light of the presented theories of hybrid regimes.

In the first chapter of the second part, I analyze the method by which the current political regime was created: the Hungarian constitutional development in light of the theory of abusive constitutionalism. The second chapter analyzes the Hungarian political regime in relation to the theory of competitive authoritarianism. It deals primarily with the electoral system and with the state of basic civil rights, namely the right to free speech, free press and free association in Hungary.

As a conclusion and based on the presented factors, the current Hungarian political regime is classified as competitive authoritarianism.