

# Report on Bachelor / Master Thesis

Institute of Economic Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University

<b>Student:</b>	<b>Štěpán Čejka</b>
<b>Advisor:</b>	<b>PhDr. Miroslav Palanský, M.A., Ph.D.</b>
<b>Title of the thesis:</b>	<b>Let the young vote: Potential effects of lowering the voting age on elections in Czechia</b>

## **OVERALL ASSESSMENT** (provided in English, Czech, or Slovak):

### **Short summary**

This thesis presents an empirical analysis of the potential effect of lowering the voting age in Czechia on the election results in the last few elections. As far as I know, this is the only analysis of this kind. I find the argument for lowering voting age very convincing (especially coupled with the trends in populism and the rising level of discrepancies in voting patterns of the young and older generations), and therefore I find that the thesis is a valuable addition to the policy debate around this topic. There were many data limitations along the way, however, Štěpán has been able to carefully analyze the available data and presents a convincing set of estimates. The results suggest that even the closest recent elections would not have seen large changes in final outcomes – which is however not at all an argument against lowering the voting age.

### **Contribution**

While lowering the voting age is not a topic of a serious policy debate at the moment in Czechia, I believe there is a compelling argument for it, and this thesis presents a valuable contribution for when the debate is actually on the table. As such, I view the contribution of this thesis as relatively high. A more comprehensive study would examine the effects on all elections and provide a more detailed discussion of the results, including the potential effects of some parties potentially not passing the 5% threshold, which could have a large effect on the distribution of mandates. But as mentioned, there are also some data limitations, and so ultimately, I think that Štěpán's choice of focusing on the narrow elections is sensible for the scope of a Bachelor thesis.

### **Methods**

Štěpán has used suitable methods in this thesis, with the main empirical challenge being estimating the voter turnout, which Štěpán was able to do with a at the county level. I applaud his effort to collate extensive datasets to deal with the limitations on data availability. I believe he has done a good job of making plausible assumptions whenever necessary.

### **Literature**

Štěpán has identified well the existing relevant literature on the effects of lowering the voting age, which is a reform that was relatively recently passed in several countries. The context of each country is highly specific, and so comparisons are relatively hard to make, but Štěpán has done a decent job on this.

### **Manuscript form**

The text itself could have been significantly improved. Typos, redundancies, and lack of clarity are unfortunately not uncommon, which negatively impacts the readability of the thesis. Similarly, I could think of many improvements to tables and figures. This is a pity, as it significantly limits the value of the thesis for future use.

### **Overall evaluation and suggested questions for the discussion during the defense**

It was a pleasure to collaborate with Štěpán on this thesis. and I believe he has done a good job carrying out this extensive empirical exercise.

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In my view, the thesis fulfills the requirements for a bachelor thesis at IES, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University, I recommend it for the defense and suggest a grade B.

The results of the Turnitin analysis do not indicate significant text similarity with other available sources.

## **SUMMARY OF POINTS AWARDED** (for details, see below):

CATEGORY	POINTS
Contribution (max. 30 points)	26
Methods (max. 30 points)	28
Literature (max. 20 points)	19
Manuscript Form (max. 20 points)	8
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b> (max. 100 points)	<b>81</b>
<b>GRADE</b> (A – B – C – D – E – F)	<b>B</b>

**NAME OF THE REFEREE:** PhDr. Miroslav Palanský, M.A., Ph.D.

**DATE OF EVALUATION:** 5.9.2023

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**Referee Signature**

## **EXPLANATION OF CATEGORIES AND SCALE:**

**CONTRIBUTION:** The author presents original ideas on the topic demonstrating critical thinking and ability to draw conclusions based on the knowledge of relevant theory and empirics. There is a distinct value added of the thesis.

**METHODS:** The tools used are relevant to the research question being investigated, and adequate to the author's level of studies. The thesis topic is comprehensively analyzed.

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**LITERATURE REVIEW:** *The thesis demonstrates author's full understanding and command of recent literature. The author quotes relevant literature in a proper way.*

**MANUSCRIPT FORM:** *The thesis is well structured. The student uses appropriate language and style, including academic format for graphs and tables. The text effectively refers to graphs and tables and disposes with a complete bibliography.*

**Overall grading:**

TOTAL	GRADE
91 – 100	A
81 - 90	B
71 - 80	C
61 – 70	D
51 – 60	E
0 – 50	F