

Abstract in English Language

The Suitability of a Statewide Electoral District in Relation to the Principles of Democratic Political Competition: A Case Study of the Slovak Constitutional and Political System

This thesis is a case study that includes comparative elements and examines the effect that a statewide electoral district has on the constitutional principles collectively securing the democratic nature of the political system.

The thesis is divided into five chapters, with the first two being theoretical, the third including methodology, and the last two parts being empirical.

In the first chapter, I present the concerned constitutional principles, which are: (1.) equality and proportionality of elections, (2.) free competition of political parties, (3.) the right to participate in public affairs, (4.) government for the people (rule of majority and protection of minority), and (5.) the principle of a free mandate.

In the second chapter, these constitutional principles are then applied to political theories, resulting in five hypotheses subsumed under two research questions. The first research question aims to examine the effect that a statewide electoral district has on the quality of voter representation (from more perspectives – e.g. representation by place of residence, gender, nationality, etc.), while the second research question examines the effect that a statewide electoral district has on the party system and intra-party function.

The third chapter describes the research methods, which include quantitative descriptive statistics (primarily for the first research question) and qualitative content analysis (applied mainly to the second research question). Together, these two methods form a case study, with the studied case being the Slovak constitutional and political system, particularly in relation to the parliamentary elections in 2023.

The fourth chapter, which contains the results of the research, shows that many of the presumed negative effects of a statewide electoral district on the presented constitutional and political science principles were confirmed.

Regarding the first research question, it is apparent that the statewide electoral district has a negative effect primarily in the geographical dimension, i.e., in the representation of peripheries and national minorities, but also extends to the substantive aspect of opinion representation.

Regarding the second research question, it was confirmed that the statewide electoral district amplifies negative tendencies towards personalization in political parties. The statewide

electoral district indeed at least helps to make personalities the main political battlefield at the expense of electoral programs, which further fragments the political spectrum on a personal basis, thereby weakening political competition.

In the discussion included in the fifth chapter of my thesis, I deal with a more detailed analysis and interpretation of the results, concluding that the adoption of a statewide electoral district cannot be recommended, as it would negatively affect the quality of democracy and political competition in the Czech Republic.

Key Words

Elections, statewide electoral district, political competition, political parties, representation, Slovakia.