

ABSTRACT

The Master's thesis *Political System of Venezuela after 1999: From Democracy to Authoritarianism?* deals with the functional analysis of the contemporary political system of Venezuela. It includes a very complex overview of the crucial legal changes and political events that have shaped the system since 1999. The main constitutional institutions as well as the activities of the civil society are examined from the perspective of the Schumpeter's minimalistic definition of democracy and analyzed more in depth using the qualitative concepts of democracy. The thesis includes a brief introduction to the problematic of the democracy definitions, the hybrid regimes theory and some undemocratic forms of government. On the basis of empirical observations the thesis characterizes the crucial democratic institutions and works with the qualitative analysis of their contemporary functioning. An important part of the thesis is dedicated to the role and space of the civil society, the media and the role of political parties which represent the vital tool of the evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the new socio-economic system of Socialism of the XXIst century. This term introduced by the president of the republic Hugo Chávez Frías comprises the ideas of revolution, social equality and elements of the classical populism. The goal of the diploma thesis is to specify and defend the most appropriate definition of the contemporary political system of Venezuela and to prove that it cannot be described as authoritarian but rather as a specific kind of hybrid democratic régime. For this purpose I operate with the concept of competitive authoritarianism of Levitsky and Waye and the notions of hyperpresidentialism and presidential democracy of Guillermo O'Donnell and René Mayorga.