

Abstract

At the end of the 20th century, a power conflict emerged between the ambitious Prince of Liechtenstein and the elected representatives which wanted to curb the prince's considerable powers. This development culminated in the 2003 constitutional amendment, in which the prince prevailed and gained powers at the expense of the democratically elected institutions. The aim of this thesis is to analyse the 2003 constitutional amendment and its impact on the constitutional and political system of Liechtenstein and to determine the reasons behind the prince's success in the constitutional referendum. To achieve these goals, a case study analysis is conducted. Concepts such as the king's dilemma are used to interpret the results within the framework of political science research on monarchies. The hypothesis suggests that despite the strengthening of the prince's political power, the country has not turned into an absolute monarchy, and that the main reason for the prince's success was his influential status rooted deeply in the historical traditions and sentiments of the population. The thesis utilizes primary sources, most importantly the constitution, supplemented with insights from secondary literature in the fields of political science, history, and law. The thesis concludes that the prince's considerable gain in political power did not lead to the disintegration of the democratic parliamentary system and the country has not turned into an absolute monarchy due to the existing safeguards against the monarch's possible autocracy, such as the abolition of the monarchy by plebiscite. However, the identity of the small principality and its people is closely linked to the popular figure of the monarch. The incumbent prince Hans-Adam II. was able to use the public's sentiment effectively to win over the electorate in the referendum vote.