

REGIONAL ELECTIONS TO THE COUNCIL OF THE KOŠICE SELF-GOVERNING REGION IN 2022

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Abstract

The study analyses the results of the 2022 elections to one of the bodies of the Košice Self-Governing Region (Košický samosprávny kraj, KSK). Its main objective is to find out the success rate of candidates for the KSK Council in selected groups of candidates (independent candidates, candidates of political parties representing the Hungarian national minority and candidates of other political parties) and to find differences between them with respect to selected socio-demographic characteristics (gender, age, education, occupation) in the 2022 regional elections. An important source of data is the official electoral statistics published by the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic. Based on the data obtained, it can be concluded that the voters of Hungarian political parties vote differently, especially regarding the education and occupation of the candidates they choose. Voters for independent candidates voted the same as the majority of voters in KSK in terms of the education and occupation of candidates.

Keywords: Regional elections, Košice self-governing region, Council, Hungarian political parties, Independent candidates, Political parties.

INTRODUCTION

Although a number of research articles and monographs have been written on elections, electoral issues and electoral mechanisms in Slovakia over the last two decades, elections to the European Parliament and elections to the Self-Governing Regions remain in the background. Even less attention has been paid to analyses of elections in specific regions, and it is rather sporadic (e.g. Maškarinec, 2018). This study is devoted to the analysis of the results of the 2022 elections to the Council of the Košice Self-Governing Region (KSK) and its main objective is to determine the success rate of candidates among three groups of candidates and to find differences with respect to selected socio-demographic characteristics. The groups looked

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at were: A) independent candidates; B) candidates of political parties representing the Hungarian national minority, SZÖVETSÉG-ALIANCIA (Alliance) and Magyar Fórum-Madžarské forum (Hungarian Forum) and C) candidates of other political parties. The following research questions were posed: *What were the success rates of these groups of candidates in the 2022 KSK council elections in the individual categories covering socio-demographic characteristics? How did the groups specified differ with respect to their socio-demographic characteristics?*

We chose the three groups of candidates for various reasons. Independent candidates are important because in regional (and local) elections the number of successful independent candidates has gradually increased, as pointed out by several authors (Klimovský, Maškarinec, 2016; Sloboda, 2017; Šutajová, 2018). The number of independent deputies elected to regional councils has been steadily increasing since the first elections in 2001, when they won a total of 4.49% of seats across Slovakia. In the 2005 election they won 9.46%, rising to 13.48% in 2009 and 17.89% in 2017. However, the most significant increase occurred in 2017, when 38.70% of seats were won by independent candidates (Šutajová, 2018).

The second group monitored, candidates from Hungarian political parties, was chosen because they were the second most successful group of deputies elected (hereinafter ed) in the 2022 KSK elections after the independent deputies. According to the 2021 Population and Housing Census, Hungarians were the largest national minority in the Košice region (66,210 persons, or 8.46% of the region's population). The largest concentration of Hungarians inhabits the southern border constituencies of the region: Rožňava, Košice-okolie, Trebišov and Michalovce (SO SR, 2021). In 2022, three political parties representing the Hungarian national minority competed for votes in the regional elections in Slovakia as a whole, but in the Košice region only Alliance and Hungarian Forum stood.

Candidates of other political parties formed the third group in the KSK elections, but no single party won more than 10% of the seats.

The success of each group of candidates is measured by several parameters, namely:

1. The proportion of seats on KSK Council won by each group of candidates;
2. The proportion of seats won compared to the number of candidates who stood for each group;
3. The proportion of KSK Council seats won in terms of gender, age, education and occupation;

4. The proportion of seats won in terms of gender, age, education and occupation for the three groups of candidates under consideration;
5. The proportion of seats won in terms of gender, age, education and occupation for each of the groups of candidates compared to the number of candidates in each group.

The research processed relevant secondary data, and an important source of data was the official electoral statistics published by the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic (SO SR).

This article consists of two parts, which are further subdivided. The first part consists of a literature review while the second part deals with the 2022 elections to the KSK Council and the success of candidates from the three groups with regard to their socio-demographic characteristics.

1 LITERATURE REVIEW

For this research topic, monographs on regional self-governing bodies and on specific elections to regional self-government bodies are of particular benefit (e.g. Machyniak ed., 2018; Mesežnikov ed., 2006a). The Institute for Public Affairs has published several articles analysing the results and context of regional self-governing elections in Slovakia (Mesežnikov, 2009; Mesežnikov, 2017) and until 2011 it also published annual reports on the state of society (Kollár, Mesežnikov eds., 2001; Kollár, Mesežnikov, Bútora eds., 2006), although only in 2009 was there a separate chapter devoted to the regional elections (Krivý, 2010). The other reports analysed the elections in the chapters on internal political developments in Slovakia (Mesežnikov, 2001; Mesežnikov, 2006b; Mesežnikov, 2010).

When analysing regional elections, a number of foreign and domestic authors use the concept of second-order elections (e.g. Šaradín, 2008; Brtník, Havlík, 2009; Havlík, Hoskovec, 2009; Šaradín, 2012; Vašát, Čermák, 2016; Majcherkiewicz, 2018; Marušiak, 2018; Hajek, 2020), which was elaborated by Reif and Schmitt (1980). It was created primarily to explain the results of European Parliament elections, but it is also used for other types of second-order elections (regional, municipal). According to Šaradín (2007), second-order elections are those in which legislative and executive bodies are not decided at the national level.

Similarly, Krivý (2009, p. 3), looking at the 2008 ISSP research on Slovakia, discusses “important” and “unimportant” elections. While the survey respondents considered municipal, parliamentary and presidential

elections to be “important elections”, elections to the European Parliament and to regional self-governing bodies were considered “unimportant elections”. The secondary importance of these elections is confirmed by the lower voter turnout in these types of elections not only in Slovakia but also in other European states (Hajek, 2020; Maškarinec, 2018; Foltýn, 2005).

However, the second-order concept is not the only frequently used approach to studying regional elections. Similarly to our study, some research has analysed election outcomes based on selected socio-demographic characteristics. This approach is not only found in research on Slovak elections. For example, the analysis of election results from a gender perspective has been addressed by Maškarinec (2018) and Cichosz and Tomczak (2019). Maškarinec (2018) analysed the representation of women in Czech and Slovak regional elections from 2000/2001 to 2016/2017. He noted the low success rate of women in regional elections compared to municipal and national parliamentary elections in Slovakia. However, the representation of women was higher in more economically developed regions than in regions with more Catholics and Hungarians, where women were less likely to be elected. Women who are already established in politics also influence the willingness of other women to enter politics, according to Maškarinec (2018). Cichosz and Tomczak (2019) analysed regional council elections in Poland between 2010 and 2018 and looked at how effective women were in winning the available seats, what their position on candidate lists were, and which parties managed to get the most women on to councils.

In general, more attention has been paid to socio-demographic characteristics at the municipal level (Bernard, 2012; Ryšavý, Šaradín, 2010). Bernard (2012) focuses on two types of individual characteristics of candidates in municipal elections, those that are clearly known to voters because they are listed on the ballot paper (gender, age, university degree, party affiliation, occupation) and the incumbency effect (i.e. the advantage that candidates running for re-election may have over their opponents), and he examines their impact on electoral outcomes. According to Bernard, the impact of the individual characteristics examined is broadly consistent with findings from other (mostly foreign) studies. These confirm that incumbency has a positive effect on the chances of being elected, and they identified having a university degree and median age as socio-demographic characteristics that increase a candidate’s chances of being elected to the council.

Ryšavý and Šaradín (2010) in their study of municipal elections in Czechia between 1990 and 2006 focused on three types of candidates

(members of political parties, non-partisans on political party lists, and independent candidates) and examined them in terms of socio-demographic characteristics (age, gender, education, occupation). The authors concluded that as the size of the municipality increases, the success rate of political party members increases significantly and the representation of non-partisans and independent candidates decreases. The authors further found that the representation of women in municipal politics ranged from 24-35% over the period under study. In terms of age, they found that younger candidates are more likely to succeed in small municipalities. Educational levels, according to their findings, were slightly lower for party candidates than for non-partisans and independent candidates.

Electoral research can also be categorised geographically. While some studies focus their attention on elections in general and thus on the whole territory of the country (e.g. Ivančík, 2021), some studies focus only on certain parts of the territory, e.g. regions, districts or constituencies within a specific region or district, either, in comparison with each other or in an individual perspective (e.g. Krno, 2018; Kopúnek, 2018; Meluš, 2018). A specific approach to studying regional elections is the microanalysis of a specific constituency (e.g. Balík 2005). This study has taken a similar approach, focusing not only on the results in the Košice region as a whole, but also in analysing the differences between the individual constituencies in the region.

In these and other publications, authors with an interest in Slovak elections mainly analyse the election results and examine issues such as low voter turnout (e.g. Marušiak, 2018), the legitimacy of elected representatives (e.g. Horváth, Urc, 2021), the issue of independent candidates (e.g. Šutajová, 2018), the process of forming pre-election coalitions (e.g. Marušiak, 2018; Vojtovich, 2023) or defects in legislation (e.g. Domin, 2017; Bardovič, Mihálik, 2023; Onufrák, 2022). Authors have also dealt with the positive and negative effects of regional and local elections taking place on the same day (Benkovičová, 2006; Ivančík, 2021; Domin, 2017; Horváth, Urc, 2021; Onufrák, 2022). All authors conclude that such a coupling of elections is not only confusing for the voter in several ways, but also brings about unintended consequences in practice, both in the act of voting and in the processing of election results. However, all authors predicted increased participation in regional elections would be one of the positive effects of holding two elections at the same time.

A further issue is discussed by the Spáč, Voda and Zagraban (2016) who examine the effect of the order of candidates on candidate lists. They

concluded that the electoral system used for regional elections in Slovakia has certain shortcomings as it creates inequality between candidates resulting from their placement on the candidate list in alphabetical order. The theoreticians of constitutional law, Domin and Orosz, have also focused on the legislative dimension of regional elections in their publications. In his commentaries, Domin (2018) tries to analyse the individual provisions of the Electoral Code in a systematic and clear manner. Orosz et al. (2015) view electoral law as a relatively independent part of constitutional law. They discuss the issue of regional elections in both a contemporary and also a historical context.

2 ELECTIONS TO THE COUNCIL OF THE KOŠICE SELF-GOVERNING REGION

On 29 October 2022, the first combined municipal and regional elections were held as a result of an amendment to the electoral legislation. This also affected the Košice Self-Governing Region, which is the second largest of Slovakia's regions in terms of population (SO SR, 2021) and consists of 11 districts, within which 440 local self-governing units operate, 17 of which are run as towns. The population of Košice city itself makes up 31% of the total population of the region (SO SR, 2021). For the election of the Self-Governing Region Chairman (predseda samosprávneho kraja), the region comprises a single-mandate electoral constituency. For the election of members of the regional council, the Košice region is divided into 11 electoral constituencies (hereinafter EC), which follow the boundaries of the individual districts of the region.

A total of 477 candidates (hereinafter ca) stood in the KSK Council elections in 2022. Of these, 82 (17.19%) ran as independent candidates, 34 (7.13%) as candidates of Hungarian political parties and the remaining 361 (75.68%) candidates ran for other political parties.

Based on the election results, the current composition of the Council is fairly heterogeneous. In Table 1 we can see that the most successful candidates are clearly independent candidates, who won 23 seats (40.35%). If we measure the success of candidates through the ratio of the number of mandates won by each group of candidates compared to the number of candidates running for the that group, the most successful group was the candidates from Hungarian political parties, where 35.29% won a council mandate. Independent candidates were slightly less successful, with 28.05% of them winning a council mandate.

Table 1: Number and proportion of candidates, seats won and success rate in the KSK Council election for each group of candidates monitored

Groups Parameters	A		B		C		Total	
	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%
Candidates in each group in relation to the total number of candidates	82	17.19	34	7.13	361	75.68	477	100
Seats won by each group in relation to the total number of seats	23	40.35	12	21.05	22	38.60	57	100
Success rate of candidates in each of the groups monitored in relation to the number of candidates in the respective group		28.05		35.29		6.09		

Source: SO SR, 2022; authors' calculations

Among all the political parties, the most successful candidates were from Alliance, one of the two Hungarian parties. It nominated 30 candidates, who stood in eight of the 11 constituencies. Hungarian Forum nominated four candidates in three constituencies (Table 2). While Hungarian Forum was unsuccessful in the elections, Alliance won 12 deputies, which was 21.05% of the total (two in EC5 Košice-okolie, three in EC8 Rožňava and seven in EC11 Trebišov).

The candidates of other political parties won the remaining 22 seats (38.60%). The coalition Smer-SD (Direction-Social Democracy) and Sme rodina (We are the Family) won five seats, Kresťanskodemokratické hnutie (KDH - Christian Democratic Movement) won four seats, Starostovia a nezávislí kandidáti (Mayors and Independent Candidates) and the coalition Dobrá voľba a Umiernení, Progressívne Slovensko and Sloboda a solidarita (Good Choice and Moderates, Progressive Slovakia and Freedom and Solidarity) won three seats each. The remaining seven seats were divided between Hlas-sociálna demokracia (Voice-Social Democracy); Slovenská národná strana (SNS - Slovak National Party); Občianska konzervatívna strana (Civic Conservative Party); the broad coalition OĽaNO, Nova, Kresťanská únia, Zmena zdola, Za ľudí and Demokratická únia Slovenska (Ordinary People and Independent Personalities, Nova, Christian Union, Change from Below, For the People and Democratic Union of Slovakia); the coalition Demokratická strana, ODS-Občianski demokrati Slovenska, Spolu and Šanca (Democratic Party, ODS-Civic Democrats of Slovakia, Together and Chance). As can be seen in Table 2, within the group of 'other political

Table 2: Composition of the KSK Council by political affiliation and electoral constituencies

Groups/Political Party	Electoral Constituency																							
	EC1 Košice I		EC2 Košice II		EC3 Košice III		EC4 Košice IV		EC5 Košice-oholie		EC6 Gelnica		EC7 Michalovce		EC8 Rožňava		EC9 Sobrance		EC10 Spišská Nová Ves		EC11 Trebišov		Total	
	ca	ed	ca	ed	ca	ed	ca	ed	ca	ed	ca	ed	ca	ed	ca	ed	ca	ed	ca	ed	ca	ed	ca	ed
Σ	10	3	9	4	1	1	10	3	15	3	3	2	6	3	5	1	5	1	4	2	14	1	82	23
A	4		2		1		4		7	2		2		5	3						9	7	34	12
B	4		2		1		4		5	2		2		4	3						8	7	30	12
Alliance																								
Hungarian Forum									2						1						1		4	
C	47	2	49	2	12	2	17	1	52	4	10	51	5	26	13	1	46	5	38	361	22	45	5	
Direction-Social Democracy, We are the Family	5		5		1		4		7	1	1	8	3	1	2		6	1	5				45	5
Christian Democratic Movement	2		4	1			2		6	2	1	3		1	1		4	1	4				28	4
Mayors and Independent Candidates	5	1	2		2	1	1	1	3		2	2			1								16	3
Good Choice and Moderates, Progressive Slovakia, Freedom and Solidarity	2		2	1	1				3	1	1	8	1		2	1	7		4				30	3
Voice-Social Democracy	5		6		2		3		5	1	1	7	1	3	1		4	1	4				41	2
Ordinary People and Independent Personalities, Nova, Christian Union, Change from Below, For the People, Democratic Union of Slovakia	5		6		1	1			6	1		4		4	1		4		5				36	2
Slovak National Party									3		1			1			1		1				7	1

Democratic Party, ODS-Civic Democrats of Slovakia, Together, Chance	5	5	1	2	2	1	2	1	2	2	1	3	1	1	25	1
Civic Conservative Party	1	1	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	2				5	1
Political parties that did not win any mandates	17	18	4	5	16	4	17	4	12	12	4	17	14	14	128	
Total	61	5 60	14	2 31	4 74	9 13	2 59	8 36	4 18	2 50	7 61	8 477	57			

Source: SO SR, 2022; authors' calculations

parties', the largest number of candidates stood for the joint electoral coalition Direction-Social Democracy and We are the Family (45), followed by the Voice-Social Democracy (41). Political parties that did not win any seats had nominated 128 candidates.

2.1 Elections to the KSK Council in terms of gender

The total number of male candidates was 387 (81.13%) and the number of female candidates was 90 (18.87%). Looking at individual groups, the number of male running as independents in 2022 exceeded the number of female candidates. Among the 82 candidates who ran as independents, there were only 18 women (21.95%). Of the 64 men running as independents, 19 won a seat (a 29.69% success rate), while of the 18 women running as independents, four women (22.22% success rate) were elected. So female independents accounted for 21.95% of all independent candidates and won 17.39% of the seats gained by independent candidates. If the gender distribution of candidates were more proportional and more women were encouraged to run for office, the representation of women might increase.

The number of male candidates in both Hungarian political parties in 2022 also significantly exceeded the number of female candidates, and only 17.65% of candidates were women. Men running for the Hungarian political parties were the most successful candidates in the election. Out of 28 candidates, ten won a mandate, a 35.71% success rate. Of the six women running for Hungarian political parties, two women made it to the council, which was a 33.33% success rate.

The number of male candidates from the other political parties also significantly exceeded the number of female candidates. The success rate of candidates from other political parties was in general relatively low. Of the 295 men standing, only 17 won seats (a 5.76% success rate) and of the 66 women, only 5 won seats (a 7.58% success rate).

The ratio between male and female candidates is similar in all three groups, 78.05-82.35% for males and 17.65-21.95% for females. This is also matched by the ratio of successful males and females in all groups. Men gained 77.27-83.33% of the seats and women 16.66-22.73%, as can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3: Summary by gender in the three selected groups

Groups		A		B		C		Total	
		Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%
Gender / Parameters		Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%
Males	Candidates in each group	64	78.05	28	82.35	295	81.72	387	81.13
	Seats won by candidates in each group	19	82.61	10	83.33	17	77.27	46	80.70
	Success rate of candidates in each group		29.69		35.71		5.76		11.89
Females	Candidates in each group	18	21.95	6	17.65	66	18.28	90	18.87
	Seats won by candidates in each group	4	17.39	2	16.66	5	22.73	11	19.30
	Success rate of candidates in each group		22.22		33.33		7.58		12.22
Total		82 23		34 12		361 22		477 57	

Source: SO SR, 2022; authors' calculations

Table 4 shows that in absolute terms the highest number of women ran in EC2 Košice II (15 candidates / 25%) and EC7 Michalovce (14 candidates / 23.73%). In the other constituencies, the percentage of women candidates was even lower. The total number of women elected was 11. In percentage terms, this represents 19.30% of the 57 member council. However, this was the highest representation of women in the KSK Council to date. Compared to the results of the previous regional elections held in 2017 (5)³, this is more than a twofold increase.

2.2 Elections to the KSK Council in terms of age

In terms of age, the highest number of candidates (153) was in the 41-50 age group. Of these, 22 were elected. The second largest number of candidates was in the 51-60 age group (135), of whom 13 were elected. We would like to draw attention to one more age category of candidates, those aged 61-70. Ten candidates out of 63 in this category became deputies, which this is the highest number of deputies in this age category elected in any of the 8 self-governing region councils. As can be seen in Table 5, in two age categories - 18-30 and over 71 - none of the candidates managed to win a seat on the KSK Council.

³ Representation of women in the KSK Council after the regional elections: 2001 (6), 2005 (9), 2009 and 2013 (10), 2017 (5), 2022 (11).

Table 4: Gender composition of candidates and deputies elected to the KSK Council by electoral constituencies

Gender	Electoral Constituency																		Total					
	EC1 Košice I		EC2 Košice II		EC3 Košice III		EC4 Košice IV		EC5 Košice-okolie		EC6 Gelnica		EC7 Michalovce		EC8 Rožňava		EC9 Sobrance		EC10 Spišská Nová Ves		EC11 Trebišov			
	ca	ed	ca	ed	ca	ed	ca	ed	ca	ed	ca	ed	ca	ed	ca	ed	ca	ed	ca	ed	ca	ed	ca	ed
Σ	48	3	45	4	13	2	24	3	65	7	11	2	45	6	31	3	15	2	39	6	51	8	387	46
Males	8	2	6	3	1	8	3	11	2	4	3	4	1	5	1	3	1	3	1	11	1	64	19	
A	3		1		1		3		6	1		2		4	2					8	7	28	10	
B	37	1	38	1	11	2	13		48	4	8		39	3	23		10	1	36	5	32		295	17
C	13	2	15	2	1	7	1	9	2	2	2	14	2	5	1	3	11	1	11	1	10		90	11
Females	2	1	3	1		2		4	1		2		2		1				1	1	3		18	4
A	1		1			1		1	1					1	1						1		6	2
B	10	1	11	1	1	4	1	4		2	2	12	2	3		3	10	6	10	6			66	5
C	61	5	60	6	14	2	31	4	74	9	13	2	59	8	36	4	18	2	50	7	61	8	477	57
Total																								

Source: SO SR, 2022; authors' calculations

The highest number of independent candidates were aged 41-50 (30). Eight of them were elected, a 26.66% success rate. The second most numerous category of candidates based on age were candidates aged 31-40 (21), who won five seats, a 23.81% success rate. The most successful category was the 61-70 age group, where out of eight candidates, three candidates gained a mandate (a 37.5% success rate), and the second most successful category was the 51-60 age group, where out of 20 candidates, seven candidates gained a mandate (a 35% success rate).

The highest number of candidates for Hungarian political parties were aged 41-50 (12), and seven were elected (a 58.33% success rate). The second most numerous category of candidates based on age were 51-60 (9), but this age category won only two seats (a 22.22% success rate). The second most successful category in terms of gaining a mandate were the 61-70 age group, where out of four candidates, two gained a mandate (a success rate of 50%).

In the group of candidates from other political parties, the highest number of candidates were aged 41-50 (111), and seven of them were elected (a 6.31% success rate). The second largest category of candidates were 51-60 (106), but this age category won only four seats (a 3.77% success rate). The most successful category was the 61-70 age group, where out of 51 candidates, five won a mandate (a 9.80% success rate). The second most successful category in terms of gaining a mandate was the 31-40 age group, where out of 70 candidates, six were successful (8.57% success rate).

As can be seen in Table 5, in all three groups, the highest number of candidates (between 30.75 and 36.59%) was in the 41-50 age range. Candidates from this category also won the highest number of seats (31.82-58.33%).

Table 5: Summary by age in the three selected groups

Groups		A		B		C		Total	
Age	Parameters	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%
18-30	Candidates in each group	1	1.22	1	2.94	14	3.88	16	3.35
	Seats won by candidates in each group	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Success rate of candidates in each group		0		0		0		0

31-40	Candidates in each group	21	25.61	8	23.53	70	19.39	99	20.75
	Seats won by candidates in each group	5	21.74	1	8.33	6	27.27	12	21.05
	Success rate of candidates in each group		23.81		12,5		8.57		12.12
41-50	Candidates in each group	30	36.59	12	35.29	111	30.75	153	32.08
	Seats won by candidates in each group	8	34.78	7	58.33	7	31.82	22	38.60
	Success rate of candidates in each group		26.66		58.33		6.31		14.38
51-60	Candidates in each group	20	24.39	9	26.47	106	29.36	135	28.30
	Seats won by candidates in each group	7	30.43	2	16.66	4	18.18	13	22.81
	Success rate of candidates in each group		35		22.22		3.77		9.63
61-70	Candidates in each group	8	9.76	4	11.76	51	14.13	63	13.21
	Seats won by candidates in each group	3	13.04	2	16.66	5	22.73	10	17.54
	Success rate of candidates in each group		37.5		50		9.80		15.87
Over 71	Candidates in each group	2	2.44	0	0	9	2.49	11	2.31
	Seats won by candidates in each group	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Success rate of candidates in each group		0		0		0		0
Total		82		34		361		477	
		23		12		22		57	

Source: SO SR, 2022; authors' calculations

Table 6 shows that candidates in three age categories (41-50, 51-60 and 61-70) stood in all 11 constituencies. This was not the case in the remaining three age categories, with the least represented age category being candidates over 71 years of age, who did not stand at all in five constituencies (Košice III and IV, Gelnica, Michalovce and Sobrance).

2.3 Elections to the KSK Council in terms of education

Regarding the educational composition of the candidates, 343 candidates (71.91%), had at least one university degree listed on the ballot paper. Of these, 64 candidates had at least two different degrees listed next to their names, and five of them were Associate Professors (Doc.). Table 7 shows that the remaining 134 candidates (28.09%) did not indicate any academic degree, and 11 of these were elected.

The highest number of candidates with a university degree – 154 - had the title 'Engineer' (Ing.), which is a form of Masters' degree. Candidates

within this category were also the most successful in these elections, and 17 of them became members of the KSK Council. A further 14 candidates with the title Mgr. (Master) also won seats.

The highest number of independent candidates (34 / 41.46%) claimed the degree of Engineer, with the second largest category (18 / 21.95%) having other forms of Masters degree. The third largest category (10 / 12.20%) had no degree. Independent candidates with an Engineer's degree were the most successful, and won 43.48% of the seats gained by Independents (10 seats). However, Table 7 also shows that the most successful group of independent candidates were medical doctors: three out of four candidates with a 'MUDr.' degree made it on to the Council, which was a 75% success rate.

Of the 34 candidates from Hungarian political parties, the highest number of candidates from Hungarian political parties (11 / 32.35% of the candidates) did not list any degree. The second largest category of candidates (10 / 29.41) had an Engineer's degree, followed by candidates with other Masters degrees (6 / 17.65%). The most successful category were those without a degree, who won seven mandates, which was 58.33% of the seats won by Hungarian political parties. Thus, the success rate of candidates who did not claim any academic degree was significantly higher in the Hungarian parties than in the other groups: seven candidates out of 11 without a degree were elected, which was a 63.64% success rate. However, the most successful candidates for Hungarian political parties were candidates with the degree of Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (MVDr.), who had a 100% success rate.

Of the 361 candidates standing for other political parties, the highest number (113 / 31.30%) did not indicate any academic degree. The second largest category had an Engineer's degree (110 / 30.47%), followed by candidates with any other Master's degree (70 / 19.39%). Candidates with Masters degrees (Mgr.) were the most successful, winning eight seats, which was 36.36% of the seats won by the other political parties. Slightly fewer seats (5) were won by candidates with the title of 'Engineer'. The largest category of candidates, those without a degree, was not very successful and won only two mandates. However, the most successful candidates from other political parties had a RNDr. degree - meaning they were doctors of the natural sciences - and two out of seven candidates with this degree won a seat (a 28.57% success rate).

Comparing the different groups in Table 7, while in the Hungarian political parties and the group of other political parties the most numerous candidates were those without a degree, in the group of independent

candidates the most numerous candidates were those with an Engineer's degree. The largest group of independent and Hungarian political party candidates also won the most seats (engineers for independent candidates and candidates without a degree for the Hungarian political parties). For the candidates of the other political parties, the master's degree (Mgr.) holders won the most seats, although they were second to those without a degree and engineers in terms of the number of candidates.

Table 7: Summary by academic degree in the three selected groups

Groups		A		B		C		Total	
Academic degree / Parameters		Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%
No degree	Candidates in each group	10	12.20	11	32.35	113	31.30	134	28.09
	Seats won by candidates in each group	2	8.70	7	58.33	2	9.09	11	19.30
	Success rate of candidates in each group		20		63.64		1.77		8.21
Bachelor (Bc./Dip.I.F)	Candidates in each group					10	2.77	10	2.10
	Seats won by candidates in each group					0	0	0	0
	Success rate of candidates in each group						0		0
Masters (Mgr./M.A./Mgr. Art./Dis. Art./MMF)	Candidates in each group	18	21.95	6	17.65	70	19.39	94	19.71
	Seats won by candidates in each group	5	21.74	1	8.33	8	36.36	14	24.56
	Success rate of candidates in each group		27.77		16.66		11.43		14.89
Engineer (Ing./Ing. arch./CA)	Candidates in each group	34	41.46	10	29.41	110	30.47	154	32.29
	Seats won by candidates in each group	10	43.48	2	16.66	5	22.73	17	29.82
	Success rate of candidates in each group		29.41		20		4.55		11.04
Doctor of Medicine (MUDr.)	Candidates in each group	4	4.88	1	2.94	18	4.99	23	4.82
	Seats won by candidates in each group	3	13.04	0	0	2	9.09	5	8.77
	Success rate of candidates in each group		75		0		11.11		21.74

Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (MVDr.)	Candidates in each group	4	4.88	1	2.94	5	1.39	10	2.10
	Seats won by candidates in each group	0	0	1	8.33	1	4.55	2	3.51
	Success rate of candidates in each group		0		100		20		20
Paedagogicae Doctor (Paedr./Ing. Paed. IGP)	Candidates in each group	4	4.88	2	5.88	9	2.49	15	3.14
	Seats won by candidates in each group	2	8.70	0	0	1	4.55	3	5.26
	Success rate of candidates in each group		50		0		11.11		20
Doctor of Philosophy (PhDr.)	Candidates in each group	5	6.10	1	2.94	11	3.05	17	3.56
	Seats won by candidates in each group	2	8.70	0	0	1	4.55	3	5.26
	Success rate of candidates in each group		40		0		9.09		17.65
Doctor of Natural Sciences (RNDr.)	Candidates in each group			1	2.94	7	1.94	8	1.68
	Seats won by candidates in each group			0	0	2	9.09	2	3.51
	Success rate of candidates in each group				0		28.57		25
Doctor of Laws and Doctor of Public Administration (JUDr./LL.M./DPA)	Candidates in each group	13	15.85	2	5.88	25	6.93	40	8.39
	Seats won by candidates in each group	1	4.35	1	8.33	1	4.55	3	5.26
	Success rate of candidates in each group		7.69		50		4		7.5
MBA/MPH/MPA	Candidates in each group	9	10.98	2	5.88	9	2.49	20	4.19
	Seats won by candidates in each group	1	4.35	0	0	0	0	1	1.75
	Success rate of candidates in each group		11.11		0		0		5
Philosophiae Doctor (PhD./CSc.)	Candidates in each group	5	6.10	4	11.76	26	7.20	35	7.34
	Seats won by candidates in each group	1	4.35	1	8.33	3	13.64	5	8.77
	Success rate of candidates in each group		20		25		11.54		14.29

Assoc. Prof. (Doc.)	Candidates in each group	1	1.22			4	1.11	5	1.05
	Seats won by candidates in each group	0	0			1	4.55	1	1.75
	Success rate of candidates in each group		0				25		20
Total		82 23		34 12		361 22		477 57	

Source: SO SR, 2022; authors' calculations

From Table 8 we can see that three educational categories – those without a degree, and those with masters and engineers degrees – were represented in all constituencies. As engineers were the most numerous category overall (154), it is not surprising that this academic degree was the most frequent in EC2 Košice II and EC5 Košice-okolie, where it appeared 24 times in both cases. The highest number of candidates without a degree was in EC5 Košice-okolie (26) and EC11 Trebišov (24). Three of Košice's constituencies (I, II and IV), EC5 Košice-okolie and EC7 Michalovce had one candidate each with an Associate Professor's title.

2.4 Elections to the KSK Council in terms of occupation

The final socio-demographic characteristic covered by the research is the occupation of the candidates. The occupation listed on the candidate list may not correspond with the actual employment status of a given candidate. Examples include the occupations of director, manager, district deputy and so on. Some candidates gave a different occupation to the one they actually exercise. It is a completely new phenomenon that some candidates have started to indicate more than one occupation (e.g. artistic blacksmith/guildmaster, manager/member of parliament, disabled pensioner/operator, international referee/entrepreneur, etc.). This may be related to the fact that more and more people are doing multiple part-time jobs and not just one main job. On the other hand, their current occupation and the occupation for which they are trained may be different.

The data in Table 9 show that the highest number of candidates across all 11 constituencies worked in Economics and Management (93), of whom nine were elected (a 9.68% success rate). Five of these report their occupation as Director. The second largest category of candidates were Self-Government employees (79), and 31 of them were elected. Of the 31, 14 are mayors of villages, nine are mayors of towns, three are deputy mayors and the remaining five work in various other positions (controller,

Table 8: Educational composition of the candidates and elected deputies of the KSK Council by electoral constituency

Academic degree	Electoral Constituency											Total								
	EC1 Košice I	EC2 Košice II	EC3 Košice III	EC4 Košice IV	EC5 Košice-okolie	EC6 Gelnica	EC7 Michalovce	EC8 Rožňava	EC9 Sobrance	EC10 Spišská Nová Ves	EC11 Trebišov									
Without	12	13	1	3	6	1	4	15	4	4	13	1	24	4	134	11				
A	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	2	1	3	10	2	3	10	2					
B		1		1	1	1	1	3	3	5	11	7	5	4	11	7				
C	11	11	3	5	24	1	4	10	4	13	1	16	16	113	2					
Bachelor (Bc.)	1				1		4	2		1	1	1	1	1	10	0				
A															0	0				
B															0	0				
C	1				1		4	2		1	1	1	1	1	10	0				
Masters (Mgr./M.A.)	12	3	1	1	11	2	12	2	2	11	2	10	1	3	1	15	8			
A	6	2	2	1	4	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	1			
B	1	1			1		1	1	1	1		1								
C	5	1	6	2	1	6	10	1	1	11	2	8	1	1	14	7	70			
Engineer (Ing.)	18	3	24	9	10	2	24	3	7	2	16	7	7	7	12	2	20	2		
A	2	2	4	2	5	1	10	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	5	3	10	
B	2				1		3										3	2	10	
C	14	1	20	8	4	1	11	1	5	15	15	5	5	5	11	1	12	110	5	
Doctor of Medicine (MUDr.)	3	3		1	1		1			8	4		1	3	1	2			23	5
A											2	2		1	1	1			4	3
B				1															1	0
C	3	3			1		1			6	2		1	2	1	2	1		18	2

administrative worker, municipal employee). The success rate of candidates in this category was 39.24%. In the 2017 elections, 67 candidates were in this category, of whom 20 were successful (29.85%). Consequently, 35.09% of the members of the KSK Council worked for Self-Government (20 out of 57 members) (SO SR, 2017).

Health care employees were also relatively successful. Out of 32 candidates, seven were elected, five of whom were medical doctors. Candidates working in other jobs, in transport, security, agriculture and services, and economically inactive persons accounted for just over 11% of the total number of candidates (54 in total). Only one of them managed to win a council seat. Most of these candidates were running for political parties at both extremes of the political spectrum such as Komunistická strana Slovenska (Communist Party of Slovakia), and the far-right parties Kotlebovci – Ľudová strana naše Slovensko (Kotlebists – People’s Party Our Slovakia), Hnutie Republika (Republic Movement), Slovenské hnutie obrody (Slovak Revival Movement) and Slovenský patriot (Slovak Patriot).

Candidates who listed their occupation as “Member of the National Council of the Slovak Republic” (that is, members of the Slovak national parliament) were equally unsuccessful. In total, there were eight of them. Five were nominated by the broad OĽaNO coalition, one by the Christian Union, one by Direction-Social Democracy and We are the Family jointly and one by Voice-Social Democracy.

The largest number of independent candidates (24 / 29.27% of the independent candidates) worked for Self-Government. 13 of them were elected as members of the KSK Council (a 54.17% success rate). Therefore 56.52% of the independent deputies elected work in local government. The second largest category of independent candidates (18 / 21.95%) worked in the field of Economy and Management, of whom four (22.22%) were elected. This was 17.39% of the seats won by independent deputies.

The largest number of candidates from Hungarian political parties (9 / 26.47% of the candidates from Hungarian political parties) worked for local councils. Eight were elected, a 88.89% success rate, which meant they gained 66.67% of the seats won by the Hungarian political parties. They were mayors of villages and in one case the mayor of a town, a deputy mayor, the head of a municipal office and a municipal employee. The second largest category of candidates from Hungarian political parties (7 / 20.59%) worked in the field of Economy and Management. Only one of them was elected – a 14.29% success rate. The candidate concerned listed their job title as “Director”. Candidates in this group working in the field of the Executive

and legislative also fared well. One of two such candidates, who represented 5.88% of all candidates in the group, was elected – a 50% success rate.

The highest number of candidates from other political parties (68) worked in the field of Economics and Management, which represented 18.84% of candidates from other political parties. Only four of them were elected – a 5.88% success rate – which meant that they occupied 18.18% of the seats won by other political parties. The second largest category of candidates from other political parties (59) said they worked as an ‘Entrepreneur’, which accounted for 16.34% of the candidates of other political parties. However, none of these candidates won a seat. The third largest category of candidates from other political parties (46) worked for Self-Government, accounting for 12.74% of the candidates from other political parties. Ten of them were elected, which was a 21.74% success rate. Thus, 45.45% of the elected deputies from other political parties work in self-governments.

Comparing the different groups, it can be seen that while most independent candidates and candidates for Hungarian political parties worked in the field of Self-government, in the group of candidates from other political parties the most numerous candidates worked in the field of Economy and Management. Among independent candidates and candidates from the Hungarian political parties, candidates working in Self-government also won the most seats, but although candidates from other political parties who worked for Self-Government also won most seats, they were only third in terms of the number of candidates in this group, behind the candidates from Economy and Management and candidates who were Entrepreneurs. Table 9 shows that in all three groups, candidates from the Self-government field proved to be the most successful, so that 54.39% of all those elected work in this field.

Table 9: Summary by occupation in the three selected groups

Groups		A		B		C		Total	
		Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%
Occupation / Parameters		Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%
Executive and legislative	Candidates in each group	7	8.54	2	5.88	29	8.03	38	7.97
	Seats won by candidates in each group	1	4.35	1	8.33	0	0	2	3.51
	Success rate of candidates in each group		14.29		50		0		5.26

Self-government	Candidates in each group	24	29.27	9	26.47	46	12.74	79	16.56
	Seats won by candidates in each group	13	56.52	8	66.67	10	45.45	31	54.39
	Success rate of candidates in each group		54.17		88.89		21.74		39.24
Entrepreneur	Candidates in each group	7	8.54	2	5.88	59	16.34	68	14.26
	Seats won by candidates in each group	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Success rate of candidates in each group		0		0		0		0
Economy and management	Candidates in each group	18	21.95	7	20.59	68	18.84	93	19.50
	Seats won by candidates in each group	4	17.39	1	8.33	4	18.18	9	15.79
	Success rate of candidates in each group		22.22		14.29		5.88		9.68
Healthcare	Candidates in each group	6	7.32	1	2.94	25	6.93	32	6.71
	Seats won by candidates in each group	3	13.04	0	0	4	18.18	7	12.28
	Success rate of candidates in each group		50		0		16		21,88
Social Care	Candidates in each group					8	2.22	8	1.68
	Seats won by candidates in each group					0	0	0	0
	Success rate of candidates in each group						0		0
Education and Training	Candidates in each group	5	6.10	4	11.76	31	8.59	40	8.39
	Seats won by candidates in each group	1	4.35	0	0	2	9.09	3	5.26
	Success rate of candidates in each group		20		0		6.45		7.5

Social Science	Candidates in each group	6	7.32	4	11.76	23	6.37	33	6.92
	Seats won by candidates in each group	1	4.35	1	8.33	2	9.09	4	7.02
	Success rate of candidates in each group		16.17		25		8.70		12.12
Technical Professions	Candidates in each group	7	8.54	2	5.88	23	6.37	32	6.71
	Seats won by candidates in each group	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Success rate of candidates in each group		0		0		0		0
Safety and Security	Candidates in each group					5	1.39	5	1.05
	Seats won by candidates in each group					0	0	0	0
	Success rate of candidates in each of group						0		0
Transportation	Candidates in each group	1	1.22	1	2.94	7	1.94	9	1.89
	Seats won by candidates in each group	0	0	1	8.33	0	0	1	1.75
	Success rate of candidates in each group		0		100		0		11.11
Manual Professions	Candidates in each group			2	5.88	8	2.22	10	2.10
	Seats won by candidates in each group			0	0	0	0	0	0
	Success rate of candidates in each group				0		0		0
Economically Inactive Persons	Candidates in each group	1	1.22			29	8.03	30	6.29
	Seats won by candidates in each group	0	0			0	0	0	0
	Success rate of candidates in each group		0				0		0
Total		82 23		34 12		361 22		477 57	

Source: SO SR, 2022; authors' calculations

Looking at the occupational composition within electoral constituencies (Table 10), only three occupational categories – Self-government, Entrepreneur, Economics and Management – were represented by candidates across all 11 constituencies. However, only candidates working in Self-government won at least one seat in all constituencies. While in EC3 and EC4 Košice and also EC9 Sobrance it was just one seat, in the case of EC5 Košice-okolie it was eight seats.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, looking at the success of candidates through the ratio of the number of seats won by each group of candidates in the KSK Council compared to the number of candidates from the respective groups, the most successful were candidates from Hungarian political parties. 35.29% of candidates in this group won a seat on the Council. Independent candidates were slightly less successful, with 28.05% of them winning a seat. In the group of other political parties, the success rate was only 6.09%.

In terms of socio-demographic characteristics, the ratio between male and female candidates was similar in all three groups. This is also matched by the ratio of successful males and females in all groups. Men won 77.27-83.33% of the seats across the 11 electoral constituencies, and women won 16.66-22.73%. In terms of age, in all three groups, the highest number of candidates was in the age group 41-50. Candidates from this age group also won the highest number of seats - 31.82-58.33%. In terms of education, in the group of Hungarian political parties and the group of other political parties the most numerous groups of candidates were those without a degree, while in the group of independent candidates the most numerous group of candidates were those with the degree of 'Engineer'.

While for independent candidates and candidates of Hungarian political parties the most numerous category also won the most seats (engineers for independent candidates and candidates without a degree for candidates of Hungarian political parties), in the case of candidates from other political parties the most seats were won by holders of Masters degrees, although in terms of the number of candidates they were the third most numerous, behind candidates without a degree and those with the degree 'engineer'. In terms of occupation, we can see that while in the group of Hungarian political party candidates and the group of independent candidates the most numerous candidates were those working in the field of Self-government, in the group of candidates from other political parties the

Table 10: Occupational composition of candidates and elected deputies of the KSK Council by electoral constituency

Occupation	Electoral Constituency																		Total																	
	EC1 Košice I			EC2 Košice II			EC3 Košice III			EC4 Košice IV			EC5 Košice- okolie			EC6 Gelnica			EC7 Michalovce			EC8 Rožňava			EC9 Sobrance			EC10 Spišská Nova Ves			EC11 Trebišov					
	ca	ed	ca	ca	ed	ca	ca	ed	ca	ca	ed	ca	ca	ed	ca	ca	ed	ca	ca	ed	ca	ca	ed	ca	ca	ed	ca	ca	ed	ca	ca	ed	ca			
Σ	3	3		4	1	4				6	6	1				3	3	3	6	1					3	9					3	7	38	2	2	7
Executive and legislative		1		2	1	2																				2							7	1	1	2
A				1																													2	1	1	2
B																																	2	1	1	2
C	3	2		2		2				1	2		2			2			5			6						3	7				29	0	0	7
Self-government	6	2	9	3	1	1	2	1	2	25	8	2	2	2	2	2	7	3	2	7	3	3	1	10	3	1	10	3	7	5	79	31	31	31	31	31
A	3	2	3	1						8	3	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	24	13	13	24			
B										3	2					2	2		2	2		2	2		2	2		4	4	9	8	8	9			
C	3		6	2	1	1	2	1	2	14	3					5	1	3	1	3	1	1	1	9	2	2	2	2	2	46	10	10	46			
Entrepreneur	6	11		2	4		4			12		3	3			8			3			1	1	9	1	9	9	9	9	68	0	0	68			
A	1									2						1								1		2				7	0	0	7			
B			1													1														2	0	0	2			
C	5	10		2	4		4			10		3	3			6			3			1	1	8	7	7	7	59	0	59	0	0	59			
Economy and management	9	1	8	3	6	1	9	1	8	8	4	4	4	10		6			8			8	8	12	2	13	1	93	9	93	9	9	93			
A	1		3	3	1		4	1	2	2	1	1	1			1			2			2	2	3	3	3	3	18	4	18	4	4	18			
B	1						2			1						1			1			1	1	2	2	2	2	7	1	7	1	1	7			
C	7	1	5		5	1	3	5	3	5	3	3	3	10		4			6			6	6	12	2	8	1	68	4	68	4	4	68			
Healthcare	5		3		1					4	1					9	4	2	1	4	2	1	1	4	1	3	1	32	7	32	7	7	32			
A																2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	6	3	6	3	3	6			
B																														1	0	0	1			
C	5		3							4	1					7	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	25	4	25	4	4	25			
Social Care			1							1						1			1			1	1	2	2	2	2	8	0	8	0	0	8			
A																														0	0	0	0			
B																														0	0	0	0			
C			1							1						1			1			1	1	2	2	2	2	8	0	8	0	0	8			

most numerous candidates were those working in the field of Economics and Management. However, candidates working in Self-government not only won the most seats among independent candidates and candidates of the Hungarian political parties, but also among the candidates of the other political parties, even though this group had more candidates from Economy and Management and Entrepreneurship. Therefore 54.39% of all elected members of the KSK Council work in self-government, indicating a close personal interdependence between local and regional government in Slovakia.

It can be concluded that there are no significant differences between the three groups of candidates in terms of gender and age. The biggest differences can be observed in terms of candidates' education and occupation. Voters who chose independent candidates voted in the same way as the majority of voters in KSK. In terms of education, candidates with an 'Engineer' degree were preferred by voters of independent candidates, in line with the overall election results. In terms of the occupation of candidates, candidates working in the field of Self-government were the most successful among voters of independent candidates, again corresponding to the preferences of voters in the region as a whole.

However, voters of Hungarian political parties voted differently from the majority of voters in the region. In terms of education, candidates without a degree were the most successful among voters of Hungarian political parties, while overall engineers were the most successful. In terms of candidates' occupation, candidates working in the field of Self-government and Executive and legislative were the most successful among the voters of Hungarian political parties. This also corresponds to the preferences of KSK voters as a whole, but in the case of candidates of Hungarian political parties working in self-government the success rate was as high as 88.89% and for candidates working in Executive and legislative 50%.

Voters of other political parties preferred candidates with Masters degrees, but the most successful in the group of candidates for other political parties were candidates with a Doctor of the Natural Sciences degree (RNDr.), as out of seven of them, two were elected – a 28.57% success rate. Candidates working in the field of Self-government were the most successful among voters of other political parties, which also corresponds to the preferences of voters in the region as a whole.

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