

OPINION

by Assoc. Prof. Ph.D. Maria Pirgova

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on a dissertation for awarding the educational and scientific degree “**Doctor**” in Higher education field: 3.
Social, Economic and Legal Sciences

Professional Field: 3.3. Political Sciences

Doctoral program: Political Sciences

Author: *Veronika Georgieva Prezhdarova*

Topic: *Evolution of sovereignty in conditions of the Fourth Industrial Revolution*

Research supervisor: *Assoc. Prof. Ph.D. Stoycho Petrov Stoychev - Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"*

The technical characteristics, volume, bibliography, and abstract meet the requirements for obtaining a Ph.D.

The relevancy of the topic is indisputable. It has not been developed in the Bulgarian Political Science precisely because of the recent and explosive invasion of the problems of technological development into the political space. Congratulations on the courage of the Ph.D. student and the supervisor for the choice of topic.

The object of research is sovereignty, the subject is the evolution of sovereignty from the Peace of Westphalia to present day when the digital phase of the industrial revolution unfolds. The work correctly sets the thesis, research hypotheses, and methodology in the system approach mainly of F. Braudel, J. Arrighi, and I. Wallerstein. A good impression is made by the limitations of the research field, which is a prerequisite for its scientific character.

In the first chapter, when defining the central concept in the dissertation - sovereignty - the author leaves the traditional scientific framework and offers a holistic approach to this concept. Through this approach, sovereignty is extended - from its modern perception to digital sovereignty. Modern sovereignty is related to state power - its autonomous formation within the state and its recognition by other states, modern holistic sovereignty contains the "fragments" - state, people, national and digital sovereignty. A "basic definition of state sovereignty is

proposed, which is a supreme state power that is absolute and indivisible within the state, as well as independent of the interference of other states in its internal politics." /Abstract, pp.14-15/ This definition - supreme state power, absolute and indivisible, according to the dissertation, refers to different cycles of sovereignty - state, popular, national, and digital. I do not know how such cycles, which are of different kind, can be sorted out in such order. Sovereignty is a state, absolute, and indivisible state power. Its naming by various authors as the popular /Rousseau/, national /equated to the nation-state/ does not mean that sovereignty can be digital. Digital are the technologies. First of all they are means of management and as such they connect with power.

It is true that when national or state security is breached through digital technology, the sovereignty of the state may be violated in terms of the decisions that the state makes. In this sense, digital technologies are the basis of modern technologies and threaten the economy, culture, and politics. If the state is sovereign, it must provide technologies to counter external digital attacks. The Authority directs, owns, and decides the status of its own digital assets and protections. In the digital economy and communication, digital technologies are used as a weapon and a direct threat to the sovereignty of the state. I cannot agree with placing state sovereignty as a political category on par with the so-called digital sovereignty, which is technology, part of the fourth industrial revolution, affecting power, not constituting power.

The dissertation attempts to connect two problems - state sovereignty and digitization in the context of global processes. The conclusion of the work is the existence of digital sovereignty, which is inversely proportional to the stages of development of capitalism - or the more stable capitalism, the weaker the digital sovereignty of a country in global conditions. The Ph.D. student uses the development cycles of capitalism in various hegemonic states and the cycles of sovereignty that she derives. There is logic in the saying that when a country is strong or even a world hegemon, it has digital and state sovereignty, and when the development of capitalism is regressive, then state sovereignty suffers and digital attacks are more possible.

In my descriptions here, there is a great deal of material for discussion.

The dissertation student examines "The affirmation of the fourth revolution in theory and practice" Many authors who develop the problems of the fourth industrial revolution are involved - Schwab, Casey, Bostrom, Minsky, Simon, V. Prodanov, etc. Today, big data is becoming a major factor in production along with other means of production. Capitalism is now called digital. The author believes that there is a need for digital capitalism to be protected by digital

sovereignty. It is rightly noted that digital sovereignty must be ensured by the state. What is called digital sovereignty in the dissertation should, in my opinion, be called digital security. Sovereignty is power, it is politics and political relations and decisions. Digital technologies do not make decisions.

I emphasize the difference between power, which is an exclusive human resource because soon it will be about artificial intelligence that will want to claim sovereignty. And sovereignty is a category of the rank of the state, and of political power in society, it is a part of humanitarianism, which keeps technology under control for the sake of preserving the human essence.

The author takes the concept of digital sovereignty mainly from Russian authors who are serious visionaries, but sovereignty is used as equivalent to autonomy and independence in philosophical publications as well. And some of them are not very deep in their understanding of power. And the result is a mixing of philosophical and political issues. In the conditions of global hyper-connectivity and dynamics and the exploration of new processes, such transfers are not an exception.

I agree with the author's conclusions in the third chapter, which is dedicated to the digital independence of Bulgaria and Russia after the collapse of the COMECON and the Warsaw Pact. The two countries have a different civilization paths, but they have the same starting position and close strategic tasks in the digitization process.

The practical importance of the dissertation is primarily in the study and description of digital dangers in interstate relations today. Cyber security is a priority for every country, it requires strategic decisions, and guiding policy, for which the country must devote more and more funds and attention, including scientific developments.

I agree with most of the self-assessments of the doctoral student about the scientific contributions of the work.

The methodological criticism that I have addressed in the dissertation does not reduce its scientific and applied importance. As a scientist, I believe that science is born in the discussion, and what we perceive or do not perceive today may be part of our thinking tomorrow. However, I believe that the independence of politics and the state must be guarded against the aggressive push of technologists to usurp state decisions due to the enormous importance of big data. I hope that the doctoral student will continue her work on the thorny path that she herself has chosen.

I propose to the respected scientific jury to unanimously award Veronika Georgieva Prezhdarova the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in professional direction 3.3. Political Sciences.

The Opinion was prepared by:.....

/Assoc. Prof. Ph.D. Maria Pirgova/

Sofia,

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