

OPINION

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In Professional field 3.3.

On dissertation on the following topic **“Power and Theories for it After the Cold War”**
for obtaining the scientific degree of “Ph.D.” in the professional field 3.3. “Political Sciences”;
with candidate Natalia Krasimirova Tsvetanova-Chilingirova

In the presented dissertation of the applicant Natalia Tsvetanova-Chilingirova, a topic of indisputable significance from a scientific point of view has been investigated. This topic is of contemporary significance because the theoretical debate on the use of power in foreign and international policy and its different shapes – hard power, soft power and smart power is significantly active at the beginning of 21 century. Definitely original, as in the Bulgarian scientific research literature, there is no such thorough and versatile analysis on the different theoretical schools and concepts of the nature and use of power in international relations in historical and contemporary contexts.

The objectives, tasks and methodology of the study have been successfully deduced in accordance with the academic requirements. The aim of the present dissertation study is to establish the way in which concepts of power are reflected in the relations between states on the global stage after the end of the Cold War. It has been successfully implemented. The sole wording of the purpose of the study, allows the Ph.D. candidate Natalia Tsvetanova-Chilingirova to conduct an in-depth and original one, consistent with processed and considerable factual evidence, and with convincing conclusion and summaries being made.

The chosen methodology is appropriate and enables the achievement of a convincing political science analysis. The methods used by Natalia Tsvetanova-Chilingirova are appropriate and have been successfully applied to achieve the goal set and solved the scientific research tasks. The political science approach has also been defended successfully, as the various chapters have been organized on a foreign history principle and they deduce consistent aspects for the thorough elucidation of the topic examined in the dissertation. By means of these aspects which have been organized in separate chapters, there is a convincing accumulation of arguments through detailed and comprehensive information about the different concepts and interpretations of power and its varieties in a broad chronological framework – from ancient philosophers to modern researchers. There is comparability in the internal structure of the separate chapters, made by the representation of three main aspects – (1) how power is applied; (2) what results its use leads to; (3) what power is in international relations.

This multi-layered comparative perspective definitely makes the perception of the dissertation more profound as a compelling scientific research product of its author. The theoretical model of the study also stands out with the appropriately structured inferences in every chapter. On one hand,

they are distinguishable in the text itself and on the other they are skillfully structured and emphasized. This approach is an argument to be pointed out to defend the assertion that a clearly-distinguishable, well-investigated and well-grounded theoretical model underpins the study of Natalia Tsvetanova-Chilingirova .

I agree with the main thesis of the study, which is that soon after the end of the Cold War the world returned to the use of hard power. And although players on the international stage expected the triumph of soft and smart power, hard power is once again on the agenda and is dominant.

I accept three from the five research hypotheses, which are quite successfully formulated and well developed in the chapters – 1) Hard power will be permanently established in the foreign policy of states, as a result of which the rivalry between the Great Powers will intensify. (Chapter 3 and 5) 2)When using hard, soft and smart power, no ascending order and evolution can be established and they are not subject to a hierarchical arrangement (Chapter 4 and 5) 3) International institutions and organizations, which should be guarantors of peace and cooperation and expressions of soft power, fail to work effectively enough and prevent or manage international conflicts(Chapter 5)

In her dissertation, Natalia Tsvetanova-Chilingirova has made a comprehensive overview of the studies, tracing various theories and ideas about power in the main theoretical lines, as well as the relationship between them. The main authors on the topic examined have been mentioned on an analytical and differential basis. The number of authors used is convincing and representative as a sample (The literary sources used are 249, of which 169 titles are in Cyrillic and 80 - in Latin). The main bibliography sources have been thoroughly examined, as well as a multitude of studies, reports and scientific papers of renowned specialists in this field. The study contains a very well organized scientific apparatus. The authors used have been cited correctly and entirely compatibly with the academic requirements. The bibliography referenced has been drafted accurately and meets the requirements as well.

The structure of the dissertation of Natalia Tsvetanova-Chilingirova is well-balanced in five chapters, which have logical connection with each other and consistently derive the various emphases of the study. There is a convincing analytical part which is focused on the specific definition. The arguments for asserting the definition „power“ and his variations „hard power“, „soft power“ „smart power“ have been accumulated through critical analysis of the studies of various authors (Bulgarian ones and foreign ones; historical ones and contemporary ones) with an emphasis on an evaluation component by the author of the dissertation.

The assessments made so far of the dissertation work of Natalia Tsvetanova-Chilingirova makes it easier to appreciate the contributions made by her in the abstract. Yes, we can definitely state that the study has major contributions by virtue of examining a specific case – the phenomenon of power, the evolution of the understanding of power after the Cold War, as well as the evolution of the theory of power during this period. The term “soft power” has been convincingly derived in broad sense and successfully “imposed” on the different foreign-political approaches. Substantial and convincing conclusions and summaries, that increase the analytical level of the proposed text, have been formulated through it. A unique contribution to Bulgarian political science is the comparative analysis, made between studies by other authors on the leading role of hard power after the end of the Cold War.

The abstract has been drafted in accordance with the academic requirement and is consistent with the necessary structure and volume. It presents in a convincing manner the dissertation work of the candidate and contains the contributions made by the author, which I already had the pleasure of assessing, as well as her publications on this topic. The publications themselves – four of them altogether – are sufficient as quantity, according to the academic requirement, are related to the topic of the dissertation and published in reputable publishing sources.

Conclusion: I very confidently give a favorable evaluation to the dissertation of Natalia Tsvetanova-Chilingirova on the topic of “Power and Theories for it After the Cold War” and I recommend to the Well-Respected Commission to award her the educational and scientific degree of PhD in the major area of specialization 3.3 “Political Science”.

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Signature:

Associate Professor Sonia Hinkova, Ph.D.