

## OPINION

**by Dr. Yordan Stoyanov Doykov - Associate Professor at New Bulgarian University**

*(title, first name, surname, last name - acad. D. in the university or scientific organization)*

on dissertation for the award of the educational and scientific degree "PhD"

in: field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences

professional field 3.3. Political Sciences

Doctoral Programme Political Science

**Author.** Natalia Krasimirova Tsvetanova - Chilingirova

**Subject.** "Power and Cold War theories after it "

**Research Supervisor:** Prof. Rumen Ivanov Kanchev - Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv

*(Acad. Prof. Dr., PhD, first name, surname, last name - university or scientific organization)*

### **1. General presentation of the procedure and the PhD student**

By the Decision of the Departmental Council of the Department of Political Science and National Security of the Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury for providing the procedure for the defense of the dissertation on "Power and its Theories after the Cold War" for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the field of higher education 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, professional field 3.3. Political Science, PhD programme Political Science. The author of the dissertation is Natalia Krasimirova Tsvetanova - Chilingirova - a PhD student in part-time studies at the Department of Political Science and National Security, Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences, with a scientific supervisor Prof. Rumen Ivanov Kanchev from Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv.

The set of paper materials presented by Natalia Tsvetanova - Chilingirova is in accordance with Art. 36 (1) of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of PU, includes the following documents:

- application to the Rector of PU for the opening of the dissertation defence procedure;
- CV in European format;
- Minutes No. 117/09.01.2025 of the Departmental Council, related to the preliminary discussion of the dissertation, reporting on the readiness to open the procedure and the selection of the scientific jury;
- Dissertation;
- abstract;
- list of scientific publications on the subject of the thesis;- copies of the scientific publications;
- a declaration of originality and authenticity of the attached documents;- certificate of compliance with the minimum requirements for the award of the PhD degree;
- a statement by the supervisor on readiness for preliminary discussion.

The doctoral candidate has enclosed a dissertation together with 3 scientific publications on the topic of the dissertation - 1 article and 2 reports.

It is evident from the submitted curriculum vitae that Natalia Tsvetanova - Chilingirova possesses the necessary educational qualifications in the academic sphere.

## **2. Topical relevance**

The field and the topic of the dissertation are undoubtedly relevant in scientific and scientific-applied terms. I agree with the author's thesis that power is "a topical problem in the field of international relations and foreign policy" This is an empirical factual fact. Power is a natural and social phenomenon and is a constant of life. There is, of course, a fundamental difference between power in either medium of manifestation. Undoubtedly, in the social world and in the dimensions of international relations, it is a factor constituting their determining axis. It is in the social world that power is a component of power as totality. Therefore, in a political sense, power represents the total elimination of the possibilities of action before the subject when he is deprived of choice and treated as a physical or biological object. The field of international relations obeys this instrumental imperative. Therefore, the PhD student's observation that "in the context of the events of recent years, the topic of power occupies a significant place in contemporary scholarly discussions, making it a topical issue..." is not correct.

## **3. Knowledge of the problem**

In the dissertation research Natalia Tsvetanova - Chilingirova makes a thorough literature review, referring to 249 sources, including 169 in Cyrillic and 80 in Latin, including both major scientific works on the issues discussed in the dissertation, as well as official documents and Internet sources. The doctoral candidate demonstrates knowledge of the issues.

#### **4. Research methodology**

The dissertation of Natalia Tsvetanova - Chilingirova stands out with a correct description of the research methodology. The conceptual framework of the research is formed by the sub-approach of classical and neoclassical realism. It is complemented by the method of theoretical synthesis; legal-historical analysis; dialectical-logical synthesis of objective realities, trends and processes; historical approach; comparative sociological analysis; comparative approach, etc. In addition, the doctoral candidate uses some other research methods. In view of the set goals and objectives, I believe that the choice of constellation of approaches and methods of analysis is adequately selected.

#### **5. Characteristics and evaluation of the thesis and contributions**

The dissertation of Natalia Tsvetanova - Chilingirova consists of 217 pages. They include an introduction, five chapters, a conclusion and a bibliography. The dissertation outlines the following research logic, with chapters one, two and three being devoted to basic theoretical issues related to the system of international relations; to power in these relations and the varieties of power. Chapters four and five are applied in nature, tracing the manifestations of varieties of power in foreign policy and diplomacy and their functionality in the early twenty-first century. The dissertation is thus unbalanced in the direction of describing certain theoretical propositions at the expense of the empirical part.

The introduction correctly formulates the main framing components of the dissertation research, namely the relevance of the development, the research problem, the aim and objectives, the author's thesis and working hypotheses. The formulation of the latter is particularly significant in view of the chosen topic. The PhD student sets the limits of her research and strives to adhere to them in the presentation.

In the first chapter of the dissertation Natalia Tsvetanova - Chilingirova lays the foundations of her research by defining the main theoretical issues related to the subject of the system of international relations. She seeks to highlight the relationship between power and the political system, starting from Galbraith's concept. In her justification, other scholarly authors are

also involved in the perspective presented, which demonstrates knowledge of the spectrum of issues. Here, the PhD student traces the origins, development and main representatives of the main theoretical strands in international relations - the theory of realism, the theory of neorealism and the theory of liberalism. Special attention is paid to the debate in international relations between the representatives of neorealism and neoliberalism. Natalia Tsvetanova shows a good knowledge of the subject matter. As the last paragraph of the chapter, the PhD student places the examination of foreign policy. She argues that "foreign policy is one of two varieties of political activity, but unlike domestic policy, it is aimed at satisfying and protecting the foreign policy interests of the state."(p.26) If we accept the statement as true, how the title of the paragraph is noted "Foreign Policy and the Foreign Policy Process in the Context of International Relations" (p.26).Foreign policy is an instrument of the foreign policy process, which is an interaction called international relations! Foreign policy and the foreign policy process are in the TEXT of international relations! They can be in any convenient context of any other social sphere. The subsequent conclusion is problematically worded. Next, the PhD student examines the state of the world political system in the present century, where she presents her interpretation. I accept the latter conclusion satisfactorily.

The focus of chapter two is power in international relations. It outlines the understanding of power from Antiquity to the twentieth century. Historical Retrospective. The doctoral student's interpretation of the chapter demonstrates knowledge in the field. At the very beginning of the chapter Natalia Tsvetanova argues, "In different stages of historical and spiritual development, as well as in different phases of theories of the state, different concepts are used to denote the phenomenon of power. Power, state power, might have been considered. Therefore, there is no single concept to denote the phenomenon of power in different phases of historical development. But this does not mean that such a phenomenon does not exist and that it is not a relatively constant quantity always present in human societies" (p.44). After the Renaissance period, she concludes that "when nineteenth- and twentieth-century theories of power are considered in a period of advanced modern constitutional republics, states with established democratic norms, and governance subject to the separation of powers, these theories often conceive of power as an attribute, an instrument of the organ, body, collective that governs the community or the people" (p.66). In view of the chapter title and the first paragraph, the question to ask is: is it about force or power? One thing is theories of power, quite another is force in theories of international

relations! This theoretical confusion essentially shows an ambiguity in the doctoral student on the issue of power and force! What are the correlations? The differences? And finally: is force power?

Chapter Three treats soft power as a phenomenon in international relations. Initially, a theoretical framework for the analysis is outlined. Natalia Tsvetanova thoroughly and correctly puts forward the concept of soft power justified by Nye and Keohane. She correctly identifies the two main functional consequences of the application of soft power: the influence on elites and the use of their intellectual power and the undoubted long-lasting effect. All three of its main sources are correctly identified. The doctoral student's interpretation of the application of soft power as an instrument of power is adequate. On the issue advocated about the dialectic of soft, hard and intelligent force, we could generally agree with her findings.

Chapter four of Natalia Tsvetanova's dissertation research offers an analysis of the interaction of public diplomacy and power. The PhD student addresses the questions of the place and role of soft power in public diplomacy and foreign policy. Some principal theoretical remarks: first, foreign policy is implemented in two ways - through diplomacy and through war; second, public diplomacy is the "visible part of the iceberg" of diplomacy - 10%. It is the "final" diplomacy; third - substantive diplomacy is the expert, "invisible", secret - 90% of the iceberg. Soft power works in these proportions... There are defensible and/or contestable claims in the chapter. Including through the theories that the PhD student presents in the thesis. For example: 'International law protects common human interests, and therefore, a state that pursues a foreign policy contrary to it and the interests of the international community is in conflict with the community. The international order exists on the condition that force be subordinated to right' (p.128). Along with this, the doctoral student demonstrates knowledge and interpretive skills. I agree with the final conclusion of the chapter.

In the fifth chapter, devoted to the manifestations of soft and hard power in the current century, Natalia Tsvetanova makes a structured analysis of the unipolar (!) model; /There is no phenomenon in the universe characterized by unipolarity!!! - my note!;/ of the correlation of forces along the US-China-Russia axis. The issue of soft power's effectiveness is addressed in a relevant way as the transit from inclusion to contestation is logically justified. The doctoral student rightly points out that "soft power fails to ensure lasting cooperation and understanding among world powers" (p.163). The issue of its application in the context of other conflict points around the world

is also correctly covered. I also accept the analysis of the crisis of the institutions of constructivism and the conclusions outlined thereafter..

The Conclusion provides a summary of the research carried out, as well as main conclusions about the results obtained, complemented by a self-assessment of the contributions of the thesis. From the synthesized conclusions, it is clear that the PhD student has achieved the set goal.

## **6. Assessment of publications and personal contribution of the PhD student**

Natalia Tsvetanova has realized three scientific publications on the topic of the dissertation research - two conference papers and one article. The personal contribution of the PhD student is 100%. The minimum national requirements have been achieved. The presented scientific publications are of scientific and applied character and correspond to the topic of the dissertation without repeating texts from it.

## **7. Abstract**

The abstract contains 32 pages and presents the main results obtained in the dissertation. It correctly reflects the content of the dissertation, the main conclusions, contributions and their approbation in scientific journals and conferences. The abstract gives a good overview of the research and the results obtained. It complies with the formal requirements for a dissertation abstract.

## **8. Recommendations for future use of the dissertation contributions and results**

I consider the title of the dissertation a "rebellion" against syntax and meaning. I categorically recommend that a dissertation with such a title should not be published!

## **CONCLUSION**

The dissertation contains scientific, scientific and applied results that represent an original contribution to science and meets all the requirements of the Law for the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LADASB), the Regulations for the Implementation of the LADASB and the relevant Regulations of Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv.

The dissertation work shows that the PhD student Natalia Krasimirova Tsvetanova - Chilingirova possesses theoretical knowledge in the professional field of Political Science, demonstrating qualities and skills for independent scientific research.

Due to the above, I give my positive evaluation for the conducted research, presented by the above-reviewed dissertation, abstract, achieved results and contributions, and I propose to the

honorable scientific jury to award the degree of Doctor of Education and Science to Natalia Krasimirova Tsvetanova - Chilingirova in the field of higher education "3. 3.3.Political Science" doctoral programme "Political Science".

26.01. 2025

Prepared  
by: .....

*(signature)*

Assoc. Prof. PhD. Yordan Doykov