

STATEMENT

From

D.Sc. Maya Bedros Keliyan, Professor at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology – BAS

on

Dissertation for awarding the educational and scientific degree "Doctor"

by field of higher education 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences

professional field 3.3. Political Science

PhD program Political Science

with author Natalia Krasimirova Tsvetanova-Chilingirova

on the topic "Power and Theories for It after the Cold War"

with scientific supervisor Prof. D.Sc. Rumen Ivanov Kanchev – University of Plovdiv

"Paisii Hilendarski"

1. General presentation of the procedure and the PhD student

The set of materials presented by Natalia Tsvetanova - Chilingirova is in accordance with Article 36 (1) of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of the University of Plovdiv, including all necessary documents. The PhD student has also attached 3 publications. She has a Master's degree in Law and also in International Relations, and in the period 2021-2024 she is a full-time PhD student in Political Science at the University of Plovdiv "Paisii Hilendarski". When announcing and proceeding the procedure, all requirements of the Academic Staff Development Act in the Republic of Bulgaria have been complied with. I have no conflict of interest related to the procedure.

2. Topicality of the topic

The relevance of the topic of power is justified by the author with "the significant place it occupies in scientific discussions" (p. 5). It is associated with the importance it acquires in modern international relations in the context of armed conflicts, global and local confrontations, and its influence on the behavior of global superpowers and weaker states is increasing. The dissertation candidate points out that she is looking at the theory of soft power and its applicability in order to clarify its role on this basis, while comparing it with hard and intelligent power. The author argues

the reasons for her research choice, proceeding from the changes in international relations that affect the dynamics of the application of hard and soft power. The purpose of the dissertation logically follows the socio-political changes described by the dissertator in global terms, namely "to establish the way in which the concepts of power are reflected in the relations between states on the global stage after the end of the Cold War" (p. 6). The goal formulated in this way is decomposed into 10 tasks, which are aimed at studying international relations and political systems after the end of the Cold War, the main theories of power, the essence, role and function of hard, intelligent and soft power as concepts, institutional policy and practice, their influence on foreign policy and diplomacy, as well as studying the activities of some international institutions and military alliances and reaching a forecast for their further role in regional security, which will allow the author to establish which theory of power is most relevant to contemporary international relations.

3. Knowledge of the problem

The object of the study is power, and its subject is its dynamics in international relations in the post-Cold War period. The main research problem and the main question that the dissertation tries to solve are logically derived and adequately formulated. The main thesis of the study is that the world is returning to the use of hard power, which is fully consistent with geopolitical realities and international relations in the modern world. 5 working hypotheses are presented, which show an in-depth knowledge of the studied problems and the author's ability to conceptualize them. The dissertator correctly sets the limitations of her work, which are determined by the specifics of the researched object, subject, main research problem, thesis and hypotheses.

4. Methodology of the study

Natalia Tsvetanova – Chilingirova logically and reasonably describes the methodology and methods of her work. The methodological basis of the dissertation is the theory of classical and neoclassical realism, understood as a tool for the study of power. The author points out that the methods of theoretical synthesis and legal-historical analysis, dialectical-logical synthesis of objective realities, trends and processes, the historical approach, as well as comparative sociological analysis are used. She also works with methods such as desk research of documents and other sources, comparative analysis.

5. Characteristics and evaluation of the dissertation and contributions

The dissertation consists of an Introduction, five chapters, Conclusion and Literature.

Chapter One presents the system of international relations in the period after the end of the Cold War, as well as the factors for its change, the changes in relations and dependencies between individual countries are indicated. Natalia Tsvetanova-Chilingirova examines the main theoretical directions studying international relations (idealism, liberalism, neoliberalism, realism, neorealism, etc.), and dwells on some characteristics of the theory of conflict. It examines foreign policy as a tool for achieving national interests on the international stage, the relationship between power and the political system and their impact on international relations in their entirety.

The Chapter Two presents the basic understanding of the concept of power and traces them in the period from Antiquity to modern times and the 20th century, as the individual theories, those of Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Rousseau, Kant, Pareto, Weber, Arendt, Foucault, Dahrendorf, are presented on the basis of their understanding of power.

Chapter Three examines the specifics of the different types of power, the ways in which they act and are applied by states as subjects of international relations. The three types of power are studied in a comparative way, presenting the concepts of them in the theoretical directions of realism and liberalism. The foreign policy of individual states, as well as the theoretical principles by which it is guided, are the basis for generalizations about the effectiveness of the use of the three types of power.

Chapter Four examines the relationship between power and public diplomacy: the goals that power sets for foreign policy, as well as the ways in which public diplomacy applies power in international relations.

Chapter Five analyzes the structure of international relations before the Cold War under the unipolar model, presents the bipolar model established in its time, as well as the unipolar model that followed it. The last two models of government are compared, as well as the way in which power is present in them through its three manifestations. The role of international organizations and their function as a guarantor of world peace in the context of military conflicts in the last decade is indicated. The question is considered whether states are able to function as a community in solving problems that have arisen or rather they independently defend their national interest through power rather than through international institutions, which makes it a key and insurmountable factor in the formation of foreign policy and the protection of national interests.

The Conclusion presents the author's generalizations and contributions. In the course of the presentation, the dissertator achieves the goals and tasks set by her, her conclusions are reasoned and followers are deduced, the working hypotheses and the author's thesis are proven.

Natalia Tsvetanova – Chilingirova knows very well the main theoretical schools and authors in the field of her dissertation, and she also shows indisputable skills for independent work and achievement of her own and original conclusions and those that she skillfully justifies.

4 scientific contributions to the dissertation are deduced, which adequately reflect her achievements.

The dissertation of Natalia Tsvetanova – Chilingirova has a scientific and scientifically applied contribution, which can be defined as proving by new means essential new aspects of existing scientific problems and theories.

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

Natalia Tsvetanova-Chilingirova has presented three articles on the topic of her dissertation: "Soft Power in the Discourse of Contemporary Events", "Application of Hard and Soft Power in International Relations" and "The UN in the Context of the Events in Ukraine". The last two articles were also presented as papers at scientific conferences, which shows the author's efforts to promote her work among the academic community. Her dissertation and these publications are entirely her personal contribution and merit, and there is no evidence of plagiarism.

7. Abstract

The abstract correctly and fully reflects the dissertation, its main results and thesis, fully complying with the requirements.

8. Recommendations for future use of dissertation contributions and results

As with any dissertation, questions can be asked, notes and recommendations can be made. The author points out that she uses comparative sociological analysis as a method, but in fact it is more about comparisons of individual phenomena, concepts, trends, and comparative sociological analysis is developed with other methods and means, such as complexes of indicators, different types of analytical methods, etc.

It is necessary to specify in more detail the similarities and differences between force and power as phenomena and concepts, which in some places are used as synonyms, and in others as distinct. The work would benefit if the presentation of the individual theoretical directions and the views of the main authors led to the derivation of a theoretical framework of the research, which would enrich the contributing moments. Linguistic, stylistic and grammatical editing is necessary in some places in the text.

The notes made in no way detract from the achievements in the dissertation, and their purpose is to be useful for the future work of Natalia Tsvetanova – Chilingirova.

CONCLUSION

The dissertation contains scientific and scientifically applied results that represent an original contribution to science and meet the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for the Implementation of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the relevant Regulations of the University of Plovdiv "Paisii Hilendarski". The dissertation shows that the PhD student Natalia Krasimirova Tsvetanova - Chilingirova has in-depth theoretical knowledge and professional skills in a scientific specialty Political science, demonstrating qualities and skills for independent scientific research. In view of the above, I confidently give my positive assessment of the research carried out, presented by the above-reviewed dissertation, abstract, results achieved and contributions, and propose to the honorable Scientific Jury to award the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" to Natalia Krasimirova Tsvetanova - Chilingirova in the field of higher education 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, professional field 3.3. Political Sciences, PhD program Political Science.

13. 02. 2025 г.

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Prof. D.Sc. Maya Keliyan