

REVIEW

by Prof. Dr. Sc. Todor Georgiev Galunov

On the dissertation submitted for the award of the educational and scientific degree "**Doctor**" in the field of higher education: **3. Social, Economic, and Legal Sciences** Professional Direction: **3.3.**

Political Sciences Doctoral Program: "**Political Sciences**"

Author: Nataliya Krasimirova Tsvetanova-Chilingirova
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"Political Sciences and National Security"

Topic: POWER AND ITS THEORIES AFTER THE COLD WAR

Scientific Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Rumen Kunchev, Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski"

1. General Description of the Submitted Materials

By Order No. **RD-21-1492 of 17.01.2025**, issued by the **Rector of Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski" (PU)**, I have been appointed as a **member of the academic jury** to oversee the **defense procedure** for the dissertation entitled "**Power and Its Theories After the Cold War**" for the attainment of the **educational and scientific degree "Doctor"** in the **field of higher education**:

- **3. Social, Economic, and Legal Sciences**
- **Professional Direction: 3.3. Political Sciences**
- **Doctoral Program: "Political Sciences"**

The author of the dissertation is **Nataliya Krasimirova Tsvetanova-Chilingirova**, an **independent doctoral student** in the **Department of Political Sciences and National Security**, under the supervision of **Prof. Dr. Rumen Kunchev** from **PU "Paisii Hilendarski"**.

3. Social, Economic, and Legal Sciences

Professional Direction: **3.3. Political Sciences** Doctoral Program: "**Political Sciences**"

The author of the dissertation is **NATALIYA KRASIMIROVA TSVETANOVA-CHILINGIROVA**, an **independent doctoral student** in the **Department of Political Sciences and National Security**, under the supervision of **Prof. Dr. Rumen Kunchev** at **Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski"**.

The set of materials submitted by **doctoral candidate Nataliya Chilingirova** in electronic format complies with **Article 36 (1) of the "Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at PU"** and includes the following documents:

- Application to the **Rector of PU** for initiating the dissertation defense procedure;
- Curriculum vitae in **European format**;
- Protocol from the **Departmental Council**, related to the **readiness for opening the procedure** and the **preliminary discussion of the dissertation**;
- Dissertation manuscript;
- Abstract;

- List of **scientific publications** related to the dissertation topic;
 - Copies of the **scientific publications**;
 - **Declaration of originality and authenticity** of the submitted documents;
 - Three **articles published in referenced NACID-indexed editions**;
 - **Compliance report** with the **national minimum requirements** for the PhD degree;
 - Protocol from the **preliminary discussion of the dissertation** in the **Department of National Security and Political Sciences**.
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2. Brief Biographical Information on the Doctoral Candidate

Doctoral candidate **Nataliya Chilingirova** obtained her **Master's degree in Law** at **PU "Paisii Hilendarski"** between **2003 and 2009**. Between **2019 and 2021**, she completed a **second Master's degree in Diplomacy and International Relations**. Since **2021**, she has been a **full-time doctoral student** in the **Department of Political Sciences and National Security** at the **Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences, PU "Paisii Hilendarski"**. She currently works as a **lawyer in her own law firm**.

3. Relevance of the Topic and Justification of the Objectives and Tasks

The topic of **power in international relations** holds an extremely important place in modern **political science and political practice**. It is intrinsically embedded in the **foreign policy concepts** of contemporary states, which, as evidenced, are not exempt from severe international conflicts affecting global security. Against this backdrop, the **balance between soft and hard power** has always been a focus for both theorists and practitioners.

The doctoral candidate sets the primary research goal: to examine **how the concepts of power are reflected in international relations after the end of the Cold War**. The dissertation focuses on key aspects such as:

- **Analysis of international relations** and the **role and place of foreign policy** within them;
- **Outlining the political system** after the Cold War;
- **Presenting theories and ideas on soft and hard power**, emphasizing their application in international relations;
- **Examining the context of inter-state relations** based on a review of major strategic documents as a foundation for future foreign policy;
- **Investigating the activities of international institutions and military alliances**, providing a forecast of their role in regional security;
- **Analyzing patterns in modern global relations** and attempting to identify the **most relevant theories for practical political applications**.

4. Understanding of the Problem

The dissertation demonstrates that the doctoral candidate has a **deep understanding of the problem**, utilizing a **wide range of sources** to support her arguments. She presents **her own viewpoint** and remains **consistent in evaluating the application of power in international relations**. The detailed and ambitious delineation of key focuses in the dissertation reflects a **broad theoretical perspective**, achievable only through **in-depth knowledge of the subject**.

5. Research Methods

The doctoral candidate aims to identify both the **positive and negative aspects** of the studied processes throughout the research. Various methods are applied in the study, including:

- **Theory of classical and neoclassical realism;**
- **Theoretical synthesis method;**
- **Legal-historical analysis;**
- **Dialectical-logical synthesis** of objective realities, trends, and processes;
- **Historical approach;**
- **Comparative sociological analysis;**
- **Comparative approach;**
- **Interpretative method**, utilizing **desk research** based on the study of specific documents and academic sources.

The applied methods ensure the **achievement of the set research objectives and tasks.**

6. Characteristics and Evaluation of the Dissertation

The topic is **suitable for dissertation research** and addresses a **scientific issue that has not been sufficiently explored in Bulgarian political science.**

The dissertation comprises **217 pages** and includes:

- **Introduction**
- **Five chapters**
- **Conclusion**
- **Bibliography**

A total of **249 literary sources** were used, **169 in Cyrillic and 80 in Latin script.** The dissertation is supported by **three scientific publications** on the topic, all in Bulgarian. The selected sources **demonstrate the doctoral candidate's strong academic awareness** of the research topic.

The study conducts a **political science analysis**, summarizing **facts and events related to the application of power in its different forms: soft, hard, and smart power.**

The **subject of the research** is the **dynamics of power in the post-Cold War period.**

The **main research hypothesis, research methods, and structure of the dissertation** are well-founded and appropriate for this type of academic work. The **technical formatting** of the text complies with **academic standards.**

The **main thesis** of the research is that **despite initial hopes for lasting peace after 1989, the world quickly returned to the use of hard power** shortly after the end of the Cold War.

The author proposes **five working hypotheses:**

1. **NATO will continue to play a key role in European security**, given that the European Union is still unable to form a fully integrated military force.

2. **Hard power will remain a persistent factor in foreign policy, leading to increased rivalry among great powers.**
 3. **There is no fixed hierarchical progression** between the use of **hard, soft, and smart power**, nor is there a clear evolutionary trajectory in how states apply these concepts.
 4. **International institutions and organizations, which are meant to guarantee peace and cooperation through soft power, fail to operate effectively**, struggling to prevent or manage international conflicts.
5. Due to the fact that post-Cold War international relations are in a state of chaos and unpredictability, diplomacy does not play a leading role in shaping them.

Structurally, the dissertation consists of an **Introduction, five chapters, a Conclusion, and a list of references**. The requirements outlined in the Regulations for the Conditions and Procedures for Acquiring Academic Degrees and Holding Academic Positions at PU "Paisii Hilendarski" are met.

The **Introduction** introduces the research field, justifies the relevance of the topic, defines the research problem, objectives, and tasks, and formulates the author's thesis and working hypotheses. The scope of the study, its overall structure, and other introductory aspects are also outlined.

The **first chapter** lays the **theoretical foundations** of the research. It introduces key theoretical concepts such as **power, policies, and the relationship between theory and practice**. It examines the **systematic nature of international relations** and analyzes the global **political system in the 21st century**, focusing on the **transformation from a unipolar to a multipolar world**.

The **second chapter** presents the **main theoretical interpretations of the concept of power**, tracing its development from **ancient political thought to the modern era and the 20th century**. It compares different theories and their key perspectives on power.

The **third chapter** examines **types of power, their characteristics, their impact, and how states as subjects of international relations apply power**. A **comparative theoretical analysis of power** is conducted, summarizing the effectiveness of different approaches based on foreign policy principles.

The **fourth chapter** explores **soft power and public diplomacy**, analyzing its role in **economics, culture, education, science, digitalization, social media, and the goals they serve**.

The **fifth chapter** presents the **structure of international relations before and after the Cold War**, comparing the **bipolar model, the unipolar model, and the strategic pause period**. The role of **international organizations as guarantors of global peace** is discussed. A critical question is raised about whether states can function as a unified community in addressing global issues, or whether the geopolitical environment forces them to **defend their national interests through power rather than relying on international institutions**. The conclusion drawn is that **power remains an unavoidable factor in shaping foreign policy and protecting national interests**.

The **Conclusion** summarizes the findings of the study on **power in international politics**, outlines the contributions of the dissertation, and partially synthesizes its key achievements. It reflects on the **modern world**, where states are under **constant threats to their security and development**. Due to regional challenges, states are forced to **mobilize resources, implement strict economic measures and regulations, and adhere to fiscal discipline**. The study highlights how **Western**

societies must navigate numerous difficulties in an unstable international environment. It also emphasizes that the **Western liberal civilization now faces a new strong competitor in Russia and China, with their fundamentally different cultures.**

The new **international realities** push states to invest more in **military power rather than soft power instruments.** The author argues that this contradicts the **optimistic expectations at the end of the 20th century,** which assumed that the era of **global military conflicts was permanently over.**

7. Contributions and Significance of the Research for Science and Practice

The doctoral candidate presents the following contributions:

1. The dissertation examines the phenomenon of power, the evolution of the understanding of power after the Cold War, and the evolution of power theory during this period. The development of the object of power and the evolution of power theory are traced, considering that theory follows the object and that, at times, the object and subject may coincide. Such a research object is relatively new to Bulgarian political science in the form of a dissertation study.
2. The text explores the application of soft power in the field of public diplomacy. For the first time from a political science perspective in Bulgaria, power and its dynamics after the end of the Cold War are studied.
3. A comparative analysis is conducted between studies by other authors on the leading role of hard power after the Cold War. This systematization represents a unique contribution to Bulgarian political science and serves as a foundation for further analyses on the topic.
4. The text is distinguished by summarizing the perception of power in antiquity and the Middle Ages as authority, while in modern times, power is interpreted in a broader sense. The understanding of power in these three periods is compared.

8. Assessment of Publications Related to the Dissertation

The doctoral candidate presents three publications in Bulgarian, which are included in referenced NACID editions. These publications are related to the topic and precede the presented dissertation. They have not been used in any other procedure and are not co-authored. I have no information on whether they have been cited in the works of other scholars or have received awards.

9. Personal Contribution of the Doctoral Candidate

The analysis of the text leads me to the conclusion that the doctoral candidate makes original contributions and, both independently and with the methodological assistance of her academic supervisor, arrives at the derived results. At the end of each chapter, she provides brief conclusions, which help highlight the key points of the researched issues.

10. Abstract The abstract consists of 32 pages of active text and presents a synthesized version of the most important directions, conclusions, and contributions achieved in the dissertation. It complies with the internal regulatory framework of PU "Paisii Hilendarski," the "Law on the Development of the Academic Staff," and the "Regulations on the Conditions and Procedures for Acquiring Scientific Degrees and Holding Academic Positions."

11. Critical Remarks and Recommendations

- In all chapters, there is noticeable fragmentation of paragraphs. While this helps highlight key points, it also leads to excessive detailing of issues that could be addressed more concisely.
- The conclusion, alongside the contributions, also explains the structure of the dissertation. I believe that such explanations belong in the introduction. Conclusions should summarize the research and highlight its contributions.
- The doctoral candidate correctly cites the sources used. However, in some places, it is unclear where her opinion ends and where she simply accepts the theses of other authors. This diminishes the distinctiveness of her contributions.
- The candidate asserts that hard power dominates international relations. It would be interesting to see her clearer forecast on how long this will continue. A prolonged dominance of hard power could bring the world to the brink of a global conflict. Can this be avoided? What are the possible pathways for a shift towards the dominance of soft power? I believe such reflections and predictions would enrich the dissertation.
- The dissertation does not explicitly address the potential establishment of European Armed Forces. In the context of the research topic, it would be interesting to see how such a force would fit within the concepts of hard and soft power, particularly considering the initial steps taken in international politics during Donald Trump's second term.
- I believe the main contribution of the doctoral candidate is the systematization of extensive empirical material. However, I cannot agree with statements such as: "for the first time in Bulgarian academic literature." It is difficult to claim a topic is being studied "for the first time," as international relations are widely researched in various scientific communities globally. There are already defended dissertations, monographs, and articles that explore aspects of the studied problem. The numerous citations within the text clearly indicate that other authors have worked on similar issues. It is difficult to claim that the issue of "power" is being researched for the first time in a single dissertation.
- I recommend that, following some refinements and additions, the dissertation be published. From the perspective of a future monograph, I would like to emphasize that the current text possesses readability and coherence.

12. Personal Impressions I have no personal impressions. I do not know the doctoral candidate personally.

13. Recommendations for the Future Use of the Dissertation Contributions and Results I believe that this work and its contributions can be used in the education of students in political science and modern history. Certain lessons and insights can also be drawn by active political elites. Systematized knowledge always contributes to making more informed political decisions.

CONCLUSION The dissertation contains scientific, applied-scientific, and practical results that represent an original contribution to science and meet all the requirements of the "Law on the Development of the Academic Staff" in the Republic of Bulgaria (ZRASRB), the "Regulations for the Implementation of ZRASRB," and the relevant "Regulations of PU Paisii Hilendarski."

The dissertation demonstrates that the doctoral candidate, **Nataliya Krasimirova Tsvetanova-Chilingirova**, possesses profound theoretical knowledge and professional skills in the scientific field of **Political Science**, showing the ability and competence to conduct independent scientific research.

Based on the above, I **confidently give my positive assessment** of the conducted research, presented in the reviewed dissertation, abstract, achieved results, and contributions. I recommend that the esteemed academic jury award the educational and scientific degree **Doctor** to **Nataliya Krasimirova Tsvetanova-Chilingirova** in the field of higher education: **3. Social, Economic, and Legal Sciences, Professional Direction 3.3. Political Sciences, Doctoral Program “Political Sciences.”**

Date: 10.02.2025

Reviewer:

(Signature)

Prof. Dr. Sc. Todor Galunov

(Academic Title, Scientific Degree, Name, Surname)