

REVIEW

by Associate Prof. Dr. Milen Todorov Lyubenov,
SU "St. Kliment Ohridski", Political Science (3.3.)

of the dissertation of Anton Valeriev Nachev on the topic "European green parties
and movements as a factor for the Europeanization and modernization of the
Bulgarian political process"

for the awarding of an educational and scientific degree "doctor" in professional field
3.3. Political Science (Political Science - International Relations)

1. Information about the doctoral candidate

Anton Valeriev Nachev is enrolled in full-time doctoral studies at the "Political Science" department under professional direction 3.3. Political Science (Political Science-International Relations) in 2020. He is a graduate of the department. In 2017, he graduated with a bachelor's degree and in 2019 with a master's degree in the "Political Consulting" program. During the doctoral studies, the doctoral candidate actively participated in the scientific life and work of the department. Proof of this is the participation in a number of international projects, seminars and conferences on the subject of the dissertation.

I know Anton as a dedicated young scientist, highly engaged in the subject he is researching.

2. General characteristics of the dissertation

The dissertation seeks a current and significant topic. Climate changes in the 21st century have not only increased public sensitivity to the problem, but also made the

fight against global warming a leading political priority. The main merit for this goes to the green parties and movements that are establishing themselves among the leading party families in Europe.

The subject of the Europeanization and modernization of the political process in Bulgaria has been widely researched. However, the proposed dissertation presents a different focus. The role of green parties and movements for Europeanization and modernization in the field of environmental policies in Bulgaria is still a poorly researched topic. This gives additional value to the dissertation work presented by Anton Nachev.

The dissertation consists of 170 standard pages. It is divided into four main chapters, an introduction, and a conclusion. The bibliography contains 174 sources, including articles and studies by leading scholars in the field, as well as numerous documents.

3. Structure, content, and results of the dissertation

The research objectives and tasks presented in the introduction are clearly defined. The main research hypothesis seeks to establish a relationship between two qualitative variables - the European green parties and the movement as a factor influencing the modernization and Europeanization of the Bulgarian political process in the field of environmental policies. The dissertation makes a clarification that this is achieved not only directly, but also through the policies of the EU.

The first chapter is devoted to green ideology, which serves as the main conceptual framework of the dissertation.

The first chapter is devoted to green ideology, which serves as the main conceptual framework of the dissertation. In theoretical terms, the dissertation follows Ronald Inglehart's modernization theory, which presents the emergence and development of green parties and movements because of the post-material value change.

The second chapter presents the development of green parties and movements in Europe in a comparative perspective. The doctoral candidate demonstrates in-depth knowledge, which makes it possible to look at the different development trajectories

of the green parties. The fundamental differences between the greens in the established Western democracies and those in the post-communist countries is a valuable analysis that serves as a good transition to the third chapter, dedicated to the green formations in Bulgaria. This chapter is also the longest – 57 pages. A detailed historical review of the development of environmental parties and organizations in the country has been made.

The fourth chapter is dedicated to the implementation of European green policies in Bulgaria, as the dissertation focused mainly on the Just Transition Mechanism and the Recovery and Sustainability Plan.

The results of the research lead to two main conclusions, which are defended with arguments. The first is that the Bulgarian green parties have a rather instrumental role in the debate and the protection of certain policies in the field of ecology. The second conclusion is that the European Union with the legislation it adopts has a direct impact on the Europeanization and modernization of environmental policies in Bulgaria.

4. Evaluation of the scientific contributions of the dissertation

The doctoral candidate has highlighted several scientific contributions of his work. Research on the topic of green parties and movements in Bulgaria is scarce. Therefore, such an experience should be counted as a contribution. The analysis of the transformation process of the Greens - from anti-systemic single-issue formations to centrist-oriented parties, capable of finding partnerships and demonstrating management capacity, can be accepted as a contribution, although with certain reservations regarding the Bulgarian case. This is the place to look for the reasons for the opportunistic behavior of the Bulgarian greens over the years, which are even now strongly divided along the radicalism-pragmatism axis.

The proof of the applicability in Bulgarian conditions of the theory of ecological modernization, in which environmental policies are combined with economic growth, is highlighted as a contribution. No convincing evidence has been shown for the above claim, especially since the green transition is rather in its infancy and the real results

in terms of effects on economic growth and economic development will be seen in years.

5. Evaluation of dissertation publications

Three publications are presented, which formally cover the legal requirements. Two of them are on the topic of the dissertation. The first is published on the ClimaTeKa website and is an overview text on the ideological foundations of environmentalism. The second, entitled "Cities of the future as a bridge between business and effective governance within the framework of the Green Deal and the EU", is part of a doctoral collection to be published. The article "Industrial hemp - against warming and depopulation", published on the website of the newspaper Telegraph, cannot be defined as scientific.

6. Evaluation of the abstract

The abstract is in full compliance with the established normative and scientific requirements, both in terms of content and structure. The individual chapters of the dissertation are fully and correctly presented. The conclusions and scientific contributions of the work are clearly identified and presented in the text.

7. Criticisms, recommendations, and questions

The text is written in good scientific language, despite the parasitic words and expressions used in places.

Some inaccuracies are noted. Some of them stem from previously written passages in the text and were not noticed in the final editing (for example - "the last local elections in 2019" (p. 121), although analysis and data from the local elections in 2023 were then added to the text). The article "Parties on the Edge" was written by Lyubomir Stefanov, not by the name cited in the dissertation (p. 122).

The work would benefit from more data from public opinion surveys regarding citizens' attitudes towards environmental policies in Bulgaria and the EU. The World Values Survey, in which Ronald Inglehart was directly involved, provides good opportunities for analysis. For example, according to the post-materialism index,

Bulgaria ranks last among the EU member states, which deserves comment and analysis. It is interesting how the doctoral candidate would comment on this fact.

Conclusion:

The presented dissertation has fulfilled the set research goals and undoubtedly adds value to a still poorly researched area of Bulgarian political science. Therefore, I will support the awarding of an educational and scientific degree "doctor" in professional field 3.3. Political Science (Political Science - International Relations) by Anton Valeriev Nachev.

09.05.2024

Signature :

Sofia

Associate Professor Milen Lyubenov