

OPINION
for dissertation
for obtaining the scientific and educational degree "Doctor"
3.3 Political Science (Political Science – Comparative Political Science)

Author of the dissertation: Anton Valeriev Nachev, PhD student (full-time) at the Political Science Department, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski";

Dissertation: "European Green Parties and Movements as a Factor for the Europeanization and Modernization of the Bulgarian Political Process after 1989";

Author of the review: Prof. Tatyana Tomova, DSc; Department of Public Administration, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".

1. General presentation of the doctoral dissertation.

Anton Nachev's dissertation meets the formal requirements for the development of such a work. It consists of an Introduction, four chapters and a Conclusion. **Chapter One** clarifies the basic concepts that the author uses in the process of proving his doctoral thesis. The main research subject of this chapter – the ideology of the greens, is outlined and explained in relation to the ideas of sustainable development and those of Inglehart's post-material values. The concepts of "modernization" and "Europeanization" are also introduced due to the connection of their contemporary dimensions with green ideology. **The second and third chapters** explore the development of European and Bulgarian green movements. The shift from antisystem (towards capitalism) movements to political parties included in the democratic political process is traced. **Chapter Four** presents the results of a case study in Bulgarian environmental policy related to the implementation of the European Just Transition Mechanism initiative.

The Introduction defines the objectives, tasks and methods of research work. Explicitly the working hypothesis of the doctoral study, according to which "European Green parties and movements are the central factor for the modernization and Europeanization of the Bulgarian political process in the field of environmental policies, but this is achieved not only directly but also through the policies of the European Union" is formulated. In **the Conclusion**, where the main conclusions of the study are formulated, the working hypothesis is confirmed.

The dissertation was developed on the basis of **representative literature** – a sufficient number of bibliographic sources in Bulgarian and English were used, as well as numerous electronic sources. The citation is conscientious and contributes to the achievement of the objectives of the dissertation. A certain weakness of doctoral research is related to the relatively weak reference to literature in Bulgarian in the field of environmental policies. In general, the majority of the literature used is from

the field of conventional political science. I would like to doubt that policies in general, and in particular those in the field of ecology, could be analysed within the basic concepts of democracy. To the extent that environmental policies are rather a marginal part of the research site, this weakness can be explained.

In this regard, and despite my generally positive attitude towards the dissertation submitted for opinion, I will allow myself to disagree with the wording of the objective of the dissertation study (page 8: "The objective of the work is to establish the tools for the implementation of green ideas and policies"). There is practically no correspondence between the objective thus formulated and the doctoral research. The research tasks themselves outline a different research objective, namely "exploring the role of green parties in shaping the agenda in the field of environmental policies". It is this research goal that I consider to have been achieved to a significant extent.

In terms of content, the dissertation follows the scientific logic of transition from the general theoretical to the concrete-practical knowledge: from the study of green ideas, through the study of the political behavior of their main organizational carriers, to the analysis of specific cases of environmental policy, on the basis of which conclusions of theoretical importance are made. Among the theoretical generalizations, the greatest success of the dissertation is related to the conclusion that environmental policies enter the Bulgarian political agenda not through Bulgarian political parties, but through the implementation (I would say through inclusion) in European environmental policies.

The other conclusion of theoretical importance, which is in the author's field of view (at least according to my reading) is related to the thesis that the Bulgarian green parties appear as a result of Europeanization and their behavior is aimed more at participating in the power race than in the creation of an ecological political agenda. Unfortunately, both these are formulated as separate sentences and have not been developed explicitly enough. They are not even among the contributions formulated by the author.

In research terms, the dissertation has several strengths:

1. The genesis and development of green ideas is studied.
2. The deradicalization of green ideas and making them part of the democratic political agenda is studied.
3. A detailed study of the creation and development of green movements and parties in Bulgaria was conducted.
4. In general, the study of environmental policies in Bulgaria, caused by European initiatives, is also of interest.

In general, in terms of content, the dissertation is interesting and useful because of the large volume of systematized information about the processes related to green ideas and policies in Bulgaria.

2. Timeliness of the research problem:

The developed issues are extremely relevant from at least several points of view:

1. Ecological relevance is a horizontal principle of European policies as a whole. That is why and despite the lack of community competence in this area, they are extremely important for the European process. The connection of Europeanisation with the green idea is extremely important for the practices of national public governance in the EU. The current Green Deal only reinforces this importance of green ideas.
2. Support for green ideas among young generations and mobility-related social strata is constantly expanding. This naturally leads to an increase in the weight of the environmental issue in the democratic political debate.
3. Green parties in Bulgaria have not been the subject of independent political research.

3. Knowledge of the problem and of the relevant literature.

Anton Nachev knows the researches in the field of green ideas, as well as those in the field of the behavior of green movements and parties. In his work he demonstrated a good knowledge of political concepts and methods.

The facts on which the contributions were based were collected by appropriate methods and were not manipulated in any way. In addition, they are presented comprehensively in accordance with the theoretical logic adopted by the author.

4. Scientific and applied scientific contributions.

In the autoabstract Anton Nachev has formulated 5 contributions of his dissertation. Of these, I can categorically accept the first two – a comprehensive study of the genesis and development of the Bulgarian green parties and the establishment of the same path of the European and Bulgarian Greens in their transition from movement to party.

The third contribution, at least from my point of view, is vaguely worded.

The fourth and fifth contributions are extremely significant, but they are rather hinted at without being sufficiently elaborated in the dissertation.

At the same time, the dissertation has other contributions that have not found a place in the self-assessment. The most important among them is related to the formation of green policies in Bulgaria not through participation in power or through the pressure of the green parties, but through Europeanization. In fact, the green parties in Bulgaria and the environmental policies have the same genesis, but they have no significant direct connection with each other.

In general, despite some discrepancy between the self-assessment of the contributions and my assessment of them, I consider the contributions of the dissertation research significant and accept them as the main proof of Anton Nachev's research skills.

5. Personal Contribution

The dissertation and its conclusions are a personal contribution of Anton Nachev. I don't know of such a study being published.

6. The dissertation submitted for public defense raises the following question:

Are there non-political organizations that influence Bulgarian environmental policies to a greater extent than green parties? And what is their power resource?

The question is not about information, it is more relevant to research approaches to policies.

Conclusion.

Considering the strengths of dissertation research and the importance of its contributions, I recommend to the members of the Scientific Jury to award Anton Nachev the scientific and educational degree "Doctor" in professional field 3.3 Political Science (Political Science – Comparative Politics).

12. 05. 2024

Prof. Tatyana Tomova, DSc

