

REVIEW

By Prof. Maria STOICHEVA, European Studies Department (Professional field 3.3. Political science/European Studies), Sofia University St Kliment Ohridski

of the research and teaching experience of

Associate Professor Romyana KOLAROVA, Political Science Department, Sofia University St Kliment Ohridski

for participation in the competition for the academic position Professor (Professional field 3.3. Political science/Comparative Political Science), published in State Gazette, issue No 81 from 15.10.2019

Fulfilment of the requirements for the academic position Professor

Romyana Kolarova is the only applicant for the announced position. The submitted documents include the professional cv, a monograph - published book, list of all publications, list of publication to be reviewed as part of the current competition, references for citations, self assessment of meeting of the national minimal requirements for the academic position and all required documents identifying education, academic degrees, teaching experience, etc. They also include a list of papers delivered at conferences, participation in research projects and PhD supervision experience, generated via the Sofia University Authors system as required by the Sofia University additional requirements. The submitted documents and

research results are a sufficient basis for reviewing the application and formulation a comprehensive assessment on all aspects and criteria related to the academic position. My assessment is also based on my personal experience from the work of the candidate as Head of the Political Science Department at the Faculty of Philosophy at Sofia University between 2013 -2019, as Academic Director of one of the Master Programs to the European Studies Department and as colleagues in the Faculty of Philosophy, including the Faculty Council.

After in-depth review of all submitted documents and research I can declare that Rumyana Kolarova meets all requirements for the academic position Professor at Sofia University St Kliment Ohridski. She is PhD in Political science with Decision of the High Attestation Committee from 10.01.1991 and has been associate Professor in the professional field Political Science since 10.02.2010. A monograph in the form of a published book “The Democratic Institutions in Bulgaria. Comparative analysis (1991-2019)” by Sofia University Press St Kliment Ohridski. There are 14 publications submitted for participation in the competition, which are all in the period after being granted the academic position Associate Professor. They include a research paper, several book chapters and expert analyses. There are co-authored publications: chapter of a collection of papers by Oxford University Press and series of research papers after 2010 in European Journal of Political Research. Political Data Yearbook with Maria Spirova. The submitted publications confirm that the minimal requirements are clearly met under indicator 4. The references in the citations documents confirm meeting the requirements under indicator 5.11 and 5.12. This is additionally confirmed by the certified information provided by the department “Library and information services” of the University Library to Sofia University St Kliment Ohridski.

Rumyana Kolarova has considerable teaching experience in the Department of Political Science and the Department of European Studies. She has the necessary academic teaching load at Sofia University. She teaches compulsory courses in the Bachelor and Master Programs on Political Science to the Department of Political Science, the Bachelor Program in European Studies and Public Administration as well as compulsory courses in other Faculties - The Faculty of Classical and Modern Philologies and the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication. Additionally, she has courses taught in English including international and exchange students to the University. Particularly valuable is her experience in working with doctoral students and supervision of PhD students. Most of her doctoral students complete their theses within the dedicated period and demonstrate high quality of their research.

Rumyana Kolarova is established academic and researcher in her area and is recognized and valued by academic at Sofia University, other Bulgarian universities and research institutes and has a clear recognition as a leading Bulgaria political scientist internationally and particularly in the European academic context. She has been the Chair of the Bulgarian Association of Political Science since 2017, and has been Member of the Governing Committee of the Association since 2013. She is the deputy editor-in-chief of the Association journal "Political Research".

Assessment of the monographic research submitted for participation in the competition procedures

The 14 publications with which Associate Professor participates in the appointment procedure clearly demonstrate her main areas of research interests - political science and in particular there is a clear concentration on comparative political science, which

corresponds clearly to the professional field of the announced competition for the Faculty of Philosophy.

My focus in the review is on the monograph “The Democratic institutions in Bulgaria. Comparative analysis (1991 - 2019), which has significant representative value for my assessment on the relevance for granting the applicant of the academic position Professor. The monograph is divided into five chapters, without introduction or conclusion, three appendices and literature references organized separately to the five chapters. The monograph is a profound, empirically based study of the dynamics of the institutionalization of democracy in the Bulgarian context within a clear timeframe and an in-depth contextualization into the political reality of the country. A particular value of the monograph is its consistent comparative perspective of the study of the dynamics realized in the application of clearly identified theories and approaches of the study of political processes and democratic regimes. The application of the historic approach and dimension is well justified and are leading in the analysis of the political processes, thus contributing significantly to the studies of the “transition”. The author clearly justifies the need and her justified choice to apply in her study the institutional approach with a clear arguments concerning its analytical potential in “the Bulgarian case”. The monograph demonstrates in this respect the knowledge of the specificity of the use of other analytical approaches in the study of the transition to democracy and the rich corpus of works and research a result of their application. This introduces another comparative perspective, related to the application and the analytical value of other research approaches and methodologies. This perspective is consistently implemented with careful insights and reference to basic principles and dimensions of other research approaches, with a focus on the sociological analysis of the attitudes and roles and taking to the fore the thesis of political culture. The specificity of the study of the political institutions is clearly differentiated and justified from their analysis by application of other

approaches, bringing to the core the academic interest the uniqueness and the “complex causality” of the Bulgarian case. The Main task of the book, defined as

mapping of the first twenty eight years of functioning of the democratic institutions in Bulgaria in a way that could make possible the comparative analysis between Bulgaria and the other European democracies (p. 10)

is achieved in a logically clear, consistent and highly informative and erudite way. Unimportant asset of the book is the successfully performed research task of correlating the maps of models, classifications and conceptual schemes of the research of the dynamics of the institutionalization of the Bulgarian institutions and those of leading studies of the institutionalization of democratic institutions in European and global context. This task draws upon rich empirical material and ‘long series of data’, involving all institutions with a comprehensive way and in correlation to data concerning democratic institutions in the European context, as well as in correlation to various regional European contexts.

Chapter one of the book presents the framework of the research by defining the starting point and the time frame of the analysis, the choice of theoretical models and determining the Bulgarian case. The main emphasis is on the differentiation between transformation of the authoritarian regime and the starting phase of constituting of democracy and the necessity to clearly define the starting point of the analysis in terms of time, which justifies the application of the research conceptual framework, related to institutionalization of democracy in a relevant context in historical perspective and the justification of the application of the concepts of analysis of democratic institutions. The author draws upon the analytical model of Przeworski and his conceptual map as an analytical tool for outlining the conceptual difference

and organizing the research ideas. The term 'transition' in the Przeworski model has a narrower scope as a process of change, included in the concept of 'negotiation transition'. which clearly refers it to the theories of democracy. The task is the definition of the starting point of the 'institutionalisation of uncertainty' as differentia specific of every democratic political interaction. The choice of theoretical model is guided by questions, key for comparative political science as the models of state governance, the role and meaning of constitutions and in the context the comparison of institutional regulations. The adopted explanatory model is defined clearly as institutional with trading of the evolution of the institutional analysis in response to the question "do institutions matter?" (p. 17) and is supplemented by the application of the model of Lijphart, offering a radical alternative of the theory of the political system of Almond. Chapter one clearly defines the perspective to the Bulgarian case and the difference compared to its inclusion in other comparative studies. The dynamics of the institutions is carried out in a sufficiently long period of time, the ensuring evidence in carefully prepared and well organized data in a series of tables on key indicators and parameters of functioning of institutions and changes in the institutional context, which demonstrates their own logic in the dynamics of events.

Not all institutional changes could be explained with the role of the circumstances and persons in politics and therefore institutional analysis is necessary and the regulations, procedures and the accumulated precedents (practices) have their independent meaning (p. 39).

Chapter two presents the party system in Bulgaria and the models of inter party competition by problematizing the issue of institutionalization of the party system as "a process though which procedures and organizations acquire significance and stability" and the application of Mainwaring's definition and his typology of party systems in new democracies (complemented by aspects of Mair's and Casal-Bertoa's

indicators). The analysis in Chapter two is guided by the quality transformations through which the party system goes through, which “Karasimeonov defines as first, second and third party system”.

Using this periodization and while analyzing these quality changes in the model of interparty competition in Bulgaria, the question can be asked whether there is trend of stabilization in two main dimensions - political opposition and strategic coalition between them (p. 27)

The chapter presents a significant theoretical discussion on the main aspects of defining key concepts and the use of taxonomies and classifications. This is a consistent approach in the current research, which highlights its significant theoretical and terminological contribution, for example in measuring the strategic party opposition process, the types of cleavages and their sustainability. The review of the sustainable cleavages in the Bulgarian party system (left-right, socio-economic, territorial) elaborates an intriguing and theoretically informative analysis of the historical context by nuancing the circumstances and personal qualities with the main focus on the institutions in the explanatory paradigm of the research. The institutionalization of the party system is presented also in the analysis of the coalition strategies, of the models of political representation and four periods of institutionalizing in the Bulgarian party system as testing of successful models of party coalitions. The characteristics of the Bulgarian party system and the processes of institutionalization are consistently assessed by comparing with party systems in other European democracies (p. 59). The conclusions of the analysis of the institutionalization of the party system introduces the mood of representing the features of an incident, through which instead of multiparty system a two-party system is introduced in Bulgaria”, on the one hand, and on the other hand, the key role of the 2001 elections, at which “the anti-cartel party with a particular charismatic

leader succeeded in deinstitutionalizing the incidentally emerged two-party model” (p. 64).

Chapter three focuses on government as a continuation of the main research focus on institutionalization of executive power. The style of the unfolding of the research follows the same logic by clearly justifying and locating the chosen approach and the deduction of the key terminology in constituting its conceptual framework and the choice of variables to be referred to in the institutional analysis of the executive power.

As Blondel argues this list of ‘differences’ between the governments in different countries can be further expanded. Therefore the rule is held that every researcher should make his/ her own choice of variables to analyze executive power; for the time being the attempts for an exhaustive analysis are confusing and ineffective (p. 67).

The theoretical framework of the comparative analysis of governments and the dimensions of Blondel’s functioning governments is supplemented by operationalization of the definitions of the types of coalition policies in Strom and Mueller theory of games and by asking the question to what extent these theoretical models can be applied in the analysis of governments in the European post-communist states. The need to focus on endogenous factors is outlined, in particular those determining the models of government by introducing the concept of “life cycle”, thus deriving the these of the own autonomous dynamics of the governments functioning. ‘without diminishing the influence of parties and the Parliament” (p. 74). Specific attention in the analysis of the life cycle of governments deserves 3.2.1. Negotiations for composition of governments with the presentation of the timeframe for their formation, the relevant subjects participating in the negotiation processes, and the

rounds of negotiations. The analysis in Chapter three draws upon some important differentiations including the exclusion of caretaker governments from the systemic comparative analysis, which play “a specific role in the institutionalized model of parliamentary governing in Bulgaria - they diminish the electoral price, which the previous government pays for early general elections” (p. 135). At the same time a significant emphasis is laid on government programs and coalition agreements as a key component of the life cycle of government. A significant conclusion of this longest chapter of the research is:

Bulgaria and Romania are the only democracies, in which all six type of governments have been formed and have ruled; moreover in Bulgaria, they are represented in relatively equal shares. (p. 129)

Chapter four is dedicated to institutionalize of legislative power, which is related to the creation of stable, predictable and reiterated strategies for achieving the two main functions of the Parliament - representative and legislative, as well as the introduction of procedures to guarantee the effective interaction with the executive power. Similarly to the previous chapters the clarification of the conceptual framework is a necessary introduction in the presentation of the two institutional alternatives of European parliamentarianism - ‘arena’ and transformative legislatures and the criteria for their differentiation. There is reference to theoretical debates traditions (Norton and Olson) and meta-debates on the topic. The Chapter introduces four dimensions of tracing the institutionalization of legislatures -party-ness by analysis of the parliamentary groups, this dynamics and fragmentation in three cases of extreme fragmentation; representativeness where I can point to the data and analysis of women’s representation and the democratization role of the new parties; parliamentary autonomy with the tendency for institutionalization of the permanent committees and the authors propose of an index

which allows for comparison between the nine National Assemblies with a view to possibility of institutionalization as functioning as transformative, working parliaments (p. 173)

and legislative process with a focus on the effectiveness of mutual control and counteraction on the basis of frequency and analysis of the cases of imposing the President's veto. I should specially highlight the analysis of the role of the Constitutional Court without which "the analysis of the institutionalisation of the National Assembly would be incomplete and unjustified" (p. 189). Every aspect of the research is supported by periodization, focused series of data, which do not only inform the applied approach and the conclusions, but also create wide foundation for further research and for visualization of a general view of the processes of institutionalization, allowing for avoidance of exceptional reliance on historical events and over-contextualisation.

Chapter five plays to a certain extent the role of conclusion, as it aims at presenting the main parameters of the Bulgarian model of democracy, which can be derived from the "long lines of data for all institutions" and from the consistent analysis of the institutionalization process of the party system, legislatures and executive power as forming the format of the institutionalization of democracy in the Bulgarian context. The core of this chapter is the evaluation of the extent of institutionalization according to Lijphart's model and Colomer's (Tsebelis's) characteristics. From a comparative perspective as leading in the research, this chapter presents the assessment of the institutionalization model of Bulgarian democracy in the terminology and language of comparative political science research, in which there is focus on historical transition and border conditions, extent of 'hybridisation' of the model, accompanied with institutional instability and government inefficiency. The

chapter finishes with a brief and to a certain extent unexpectedly concise conclusion about the trend of institutional change, its rhythm, and the achievement of potentially stable model of democracy. This constitutes my critical remark to the monograph, which is related to the need of more thorough and justified approach to derive from the conclusions already formulated in the course of the chapters an attempt for construction of the model of institutionalization.

Conclusion

After thorough and in-depth review of the research and publications submitted in the application process for granting the academic position Professor and being very well acquainted with the teaching experience and the academic presence and authority of Associate Professor PhD Rumyana Kolarova, I have no hesitation in expressing my positive conclusion for the applicant's election as Professor in the professional field 3.3. Political Science/ Comparative political science in the Faculty of Philosophy of Sofia University St Kliment Ohridski.

10.03.2020

Reviewer:

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