

REVIEW

by Assoc. Prof. Dobrin Hristov Kanev, NBU, Political Science (3.3)

on research and teaching activities for participation in a competition for the occupation of the academic position Professor in the professional field 3.3. Political Science (Comparative Political Science), announced by Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski ”in the State Gazette 81/15/10/2019 with the candidate Assoc. Prof. Rumyana Petrova Kolarova, PhD

The only participant in the announced by Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski ” competition for occupation of the academic position Professor in the professional field 3.3. Political Science, who has submitted the necessary documents within the announced deadline, is Associate Professor Rumyana Petrova Kolarova, PhD.

At the outset, I would like to confirm that the candidate meets all the requirements for holding the professorial academic position mentioned in Art. 29 of the Academic Staff Development Act of the Republic of Bulgaria. She acquired her PhD in 1990. She held the academic position of Associate Professor at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” from 2010 until now. She has published monographs and other publications that do not repeat the ones submitted for the doctorate degree and for the academic post of associate professor. Her current research output and teaching achievements meet the minimum national requirements for occupying the academic position of "professor", with significantly higher results in some indicators (eg sections Г, Д, Е). Her publications are original and follow the rules of academic ethics.

The candidate's research output, submitted for participation in the competition and published in the post-habilitation period (after 2010), includes fourteen titles. These include one monograph, a book chapter (co-authored), published in English by one of most respected publishers - Oxford University Press, several large-scale studies and separate works in collective monographs, and a series of analyzes (co-authored) published in English during the period 2010-2018 in the European Journal of Political Research and the European Journal of Political Research Political Data Yearbook, publications of the European Consortium for Political Research.

They all fit into the thematic framework of the competition, focused on comparative political science.

I will draw attention here to the fact that these publications of the author, as well as others outside the competition, have entered the international academic life, have been subject to review, as well as to a large number of citations and references. The attached report shows the presence of Assoc. Prof. Romyana Kolarova on the international research scene. There are 56 citations of her work in Web of Science, of which 5 citations to 3 indexed documents, and to Scopus 69 citations, of which 12 citations to 3 indexed documents. And the author herself has found 148 citations in Harzing's Publish or Perish and 141 citations in Google Scholar, in both cases the high value of 7 h-indexes has been reached. There are citations that have found their place in a number of other databases such as EBSCO, JSTOR, CEEOL, ProQuest Ebook Central and more. Her publications have been featured in numerous library catalogs in the country and abroad.

All this testifies that Romyana Kolarova is among the Bulgarian authors, widely known and cited abroad, which in turn proves the high quality of her scientific research.

This conclusion is also confirmed by the research papers submitted for the competition that are subject of this review. First of all, this applies, of course, to the monograph of Romyana Kolarova, recently published by the St. Kliment Ohridski University Publishing House entitled "Democratic Institutions in Bulgaria. Comparative Analysis (1991-2019)", which examines the practice of structuring and functioning of the main institutions of the Bulgarian democratic political system - party system, government, parliament - and draws conclusions about the nature and the model of Bulgarian democracy.

At the outset, the author outlines the specifics of her research mission - "to map the first twenty-eight years of the functioning of democratic institutions in Bulgaria in such a way as to make possible a comparative analysis between Bulgaria and other European democracies." In other words, her leading research approach is comparative analysis. The reasons for her choice she rightly finds in the statement that "the institutional dynamics in Bulgaria have many similarities and differences as with the institutional dynamics in the relatively young, immature democracies of the "third wave" and the functioning of political institutions in sustainable, consolidated, mid-20th-century Western European democracies. And in this way we can also answer the question about the specific nature of Bulgarian political institutions." (p. 10)

In doing so, comparative analysis is tied to the institutional approach, i.e. at the heart of the study is the analysis of the Bulgarian institutions themselves, but also in the broader context of comparison with Europe's "old" and "new" democracies - an approach that the author rightly took as the most

appropriate for the analysis of the "Bulgarian case". In this spirit, the main thesis / hypothesis of the study is formulated - "despite the circumstances, despite the personal and situational differences, the institutions set models and tendencies" (p. 19).

At the beginning, the starting point for the analysis of the democratic institutions in Bulgaria was fixed and justified, namely the elections of 1991, which distinguishes the author from the choice of other possible starting points, such as the moment of the fall of the "old regime" at the end of 1989.

The beginning of her own institutional analysis is set out in Chapter Two, devoted to the Bulgarian party system and the processes and extent of its institutionalization. In this case, Romyana Kolarova chooses to apply the model of Peter Mair and Casal Bertoa (she is the first to do so for the Bulgarian party system), which allows a reliable study of the dynamics of the party system and the tendencies towards its institutionalization or deinstitutionalization. Here we can also find one of the scientific contributions of the monograph. The author's analysis concentrates on two dimensions of this process - on the one hand, on the nature, condition and change of the cleavages that underlie party divisions, and on the other - on the ability, willingness and reality of party coalition building in Bulgaria.

In the first dimension, Kolarova is seeking answers to the questions she has formulated: Are there structural defining cleavages in Bulgarian society and how strong and resilient are they? Do the trends of potential changes also evolve? (see p. 28). The author's argument, based on a series of arguments and a detailed analysis of the development over the years, sets on the dominance of the classic left-right cleavage in the Bulgarian party system, which, however, has "not only a socio-economic dimension" but is "charged with additional "meanings", but which does not weaken it but, on the contrary, "secondarily strengthens and stabilizes it" (p. 35). This is even true for the considered a "communism - anti-communism" cleavage as flagship at the beginning of the transition. The other cleavage, which has proven to be sustainable in Bulgaria and has also been analyzed by the author, is the "territorial" one, rather the ethnic one, which creates the social basis for the emergence and sustainable presence of the MRF at the political scene.

The second dimension of the institutionalization of the Bulgarian party system, researched by Romyana Kolarova, is related to the formation of party coalitions. In this way, another important aspect of the party system is revealed - the nature of the interaction between political parties. The monograph proposes a periodization of this complex process in which the author outlined several stages, starting with a model of election coalitions and one-party cabinets (1991-1997), going through a model of coalition governments (2001-2009) and a model of minority cabinets (2009-2017) to get to the current

situation of a minimum winning coalition. Behind this diversity of coalition types, the author is discovering a process of transformation of the Bulgarian party system from a two-party system in the beginning to a two-bloc in recent years. This is also a conclusion of the author, that contributed to the study of the Bulgarian political system.

Important from the author's point of view (and contributions) is the third chapter on executive power, which occupies one third of the general text of the monograph. In it, after presenting theoretical approaches to the analysis of executive power that dominate comparative political science, the author chooses her own approach in the face of the Laver and Shepsle method, which pays particular attention to the functioning of cabinet management. From the perspective of their typology, adapted by Müller and Bergman (dominant Prime Minister, government through ministers and governance through coalition compromise), the author analyzes the Bulgarian governments and concludes that "the German model of shared governance is institutionalized in Bulgaria, in which the Prime Minister's dominant role is indisputable", but with the difference that "conflict resolution mechanisms are rather centralized and personalized and coalitions disintegrate because of party interests, not because of disagreement on sectoral policies "(p. 104).

In this chapter we find a detailed and large-scale analytical picture of all parliamentary governments formed during the investigated period (in some cases, the author also includes governments outside of it, such as the governments of Lukanov and Dimitar Popov). The various stages of the government's lifecycle, from the formation of the cabinet to the end of its term, are subjected to in-depth analysis. Within their framework, the negotiations on the establishment of the respective cabinet (including the role of the President in this process) have been thoroughly examined in quantitative and qualitative terms; the peculiarities of the investor vote; the reasons for the termination of the mandates of the Bulgarian cabinets. Unlike other researchers, the author includes in her analysis the election results after the end of the term of the parliamentary elected governments and comes to interesting conclusions about the role of the caretaker cabinets in this respect.

But, as mentioned above, an important focus in Rumyana Kolarova's analysis of the executive is the functioning of the government itself. In this regard, she first makes its classification of the Bulgarian cabinets, using the established typology in comparative studies of five main types of cabinets (one-party cabinet with majority; one-party cabinet with minority; minimum winning coalition; minority coalition; super-majority coalition). Her conclusion is that there are twelve governments in the study

period, which are then subject to detailed study. Their structure and composition, coalition agreements and management programs, votes of confidence and distrust were analyzed in detail.

Towards the end of the chapter, the author proposes her periodization of the process of institutionalization of the Bulgarian parliamentary elected governments. Years and governments that precede the study period are in the preparatory phase. Then there are three stages with dividing lines respectively in 2001 and 2009. After identifying the characteristics of the first period and the factors (exogenous and endogenous) that determine the nature and stability of the executive branch, the author concludes that the first stage, involving the governments of Philip Dimitrov, Berov, Videnov and Kostov, "begins with the institutionalization of partisanship as the principle of parliamentary representation and ends with the institutionalization of multi-partyness as a principle of parliamentary government" (pp. 125-126). The second stage of institutionalization (the governments of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, Stanishev and Borisov) is characterized by "the high governmental stability and efficiency of the parliamentary majorities, which, however, has a very high electoral cost" (p. 126). In the third stage (Borisov's cabinets and the Oresharski government), in which parties triple and deliberately call early parliamentary elections, minority cabinets predominate using the "backing party" strategy, and the relative stability of instability is set by GERB.

If we try to summarize once again the contributing points of the study of the executive in the monograph of Romyana Kolarova, we would pay attention to the proven conclusions about the institutionalization of a parliamentary, not a party model of cabinet governance; the typology of governments, the dominant role of prime minister, the specific role of the caretaker cabinets, which decrease the 'electoral price' for the governing parties at the next parliamentary election. Of particular importance is the analysis and evaluation of coalition agreements in Bulgaria (not to forget that according to the author's calculations, half of the cabinets, which ruled Bulgaria for almost three quarters of the studied period, are coalition ones). Romyana Kolarova not only made significant efforts to search for published and unpublished agreements (also presented as annexes to the monograph), but shows their specificity, namely that they regulate above all the sharing of power between coalition partners, but neglect sectoral policies which renders governments ineffective in implementing reforms (see p. 135).

Contributive features can also be found in the fourth chapter of the monograph which highlights the institutionalization of the Bulgarian Parliament. In this vast section of the study, Romyana Kolarova also seeks to answer the central question, what is the degree of institutionalization of the National

Assembly, and whether it approaches the model of the "speaking parliament-arena" or the model of the "transformative" working Parliament '(see p. 139). In order to find the answer, the author analyzes four dimensions of the parliamentary process, which can provide arguments for the degree of institutionalization of the Bulgarian Parliament. It is about the status and functioning of parliamentary groups, about parliamentary representation, about the role of parliamentary committees and about the effectiveness of the legislative process. For each of these dimensions we find a thorough and detailed analysis.

With respect to the first dimension, the process of stability and instability of parliamentary groups in nine Bulgarian parliamentary assemblies is examined, with the author summarizing in tables the dynamics of parliamentary groups over this long period. It also distinguishes two periods. In the first, longer period (from 1991 to 2009), there are erosion and fragmentation processes of parliamentary groups, which in some legislatures reach extreme values impeding the effective functioning of parliament. The second stage is characterized by a lack of such fragmentation, but it is primarily due to a change in the Rules of Procedure and Organization of the National Assembly. The author analyzes separately the three cases of the highest fragmentation from the first stage in order to outline some important trends in the parliamentary life during these years, and the subsequent look forward at the end of the study period allows her to explain the specifics of the processes in these two stages of the state of parliamentary groups.

The second dimension concerns the parliamentary representation, along with the general characteristics of the composition of the Bulgarian parliaments, first of all, the high level of renewal of the parliamentary deputies (62.5% in the average newly elected members of parliament!) And second, the representation of women in the National Assembly as an indicator of its democratization. In both cases, the author notes the significant role played by the successful new big parties, such as NMSS and GERB.

The third dimension is related to the parliamentary committees in the National Assembly - their role in the legislative process, their composition and their leadership. This is an essential question, because the way it is resolved largely influences the degree of institutionalization of the parliament and, accordingly, its character as a 'speaker' or 'working' parliament. The analysis of the composition and activities of the standing parliamentary committees over the study period of 28 years leads the author to conclude that they are extremely institutionalized. She states, in particular, that "the role of the standing committees in the legislative process and their ability to exercise control over the relevant minister is constantly increasing" and, secondly, that the principle of parallelism between the cabinet structure and committees, and then the

principle of proportional representation of parliamentary groups in committees and in their leadership (see p. 169).

The analysis of the data on the parliamentary committees enables the author to take an important step in answering the question about the essence of the Bulgarian parliament. It is expressed in its index of transformative potential of the Parliament, in which the main variables are, on the one hand, the correspondence between the spheres of the parliamentary committees and the ministry, and on the other, the distribution of the chairmanship of the committees between the governing majority (incl. supporting parties) and the opposition. Applying this index, Kolarova justifies the existence of three distinct stages in the development of the National Assembly towards a "transformative parliament", in particular, according to her conclusions, towards a "highly polarized transformative parliament".

The fourth aspect is related to the legislative process. In addition to analyzing the quantity and quality of the legislative product of the Bulgarian Parliament, particular attention is paid to two aspects that have not been sufficiently explored in this regard - first, the role of the President and his delaying vetoes as a possible stabilizing factor (provided that his veto is respected, and secondly, the role of the Constitutional Court, which is also a stabilizing factor governing relations between the parliamentary majority and the opposition and limiting any majority's arbitrariness. In both cases the author again brought in a large amount of processed information, which as a whole also means her contribution to the Bulgarian political science.

The fifth chapter of Romyana Kolarova's monograph is a kind of summary of the whole study, which sets out her answer to the big question about the model of Bulgarian democracy. First, the author substantiated her initial theoretical positions and her choice of a theoretical approach for the analytical evaluation of Bulgarian democracy in favor of the models of Lijphart and Colomer. She then applied the Lijphart instrumentarium in the face of the ten indicators he proposed and made her conclusions about the model of Bulgarian democracy within his two-dimensional model. The conclusion is: If the majoritarian model of democracy is consolidated in Bulgaria by 2005, then the consensus elements start to strengthen, but we are still in the zone of a "hybrid model", characterized by institutional instability and governance inefficiency. (see p. 215). The subsequent application of the Colomer model with its focus on the veto players also confirms the conclusion that the Bulgarian democracy model is approaching due its large number of veto players the consensus model. An important factor acting in this direction are the effects of Bulgaria's membership in the European Union.

Romyana Kolarova's monograph "Democratic Institutions in Bulgaria. Comparative Analysis (1991-2019)" is a contribution to Bulgarian political science. This is a truly large-scale and comprehensive study of the main political institutions in our country for a long period of time. It gathers, processes and analyzes

a large amount of data for nearly thirty years on the development of Bulgarian parties, parliaments, governments - something that in a number of aspects has been done for the first time. The main Bulgarian institutions have been studied on this solid database of the longest possible series of data. The monograph demonstrates the high professionalism of the author, her excellent knowledge of comparative political science and political thought in general, her rich erudition. Romyana Kolarova's excellent knowledge of the vast amount of theoretical literature allows her to outline analytically and critically all the basic concepts in her field of research. She demonstrated her ability to critically evaluate the tools available in the world of science for her comparative analyzes and to be able to develop and apply specific criteria for the institutionalization of the Bulgarian political institutions studied by her.

Further support for these conclusions can be found in the other publications that the candidate submitted for participation in the competition and which also show the handiwork of a serious and erudite scholar.

In the chapter "Bulgaria: Stable Coalitions of Unstable Parties" (co-authored), part of a collective monograph by an international author team "Coalition Governance in Central Eastern Europe", under the editorship of renowned political scientists, published by Oxford University Press, presented to the world political science community the specifics and life cycle of the Bulgarian coalition cabinets during the period 1991-2014.

In the study "Three Dimensions of Bulgarian Parliamentarism 1991-2018" are published a part of the author's studies on the National Assembly in the three dimensions, which we find in the monograph for a longer period - parliamentary groups, parliamentary representation, legislative process.

In the other part of the submitted papers for the competition (the two publications "Legislative power" and "Executive power" in: Assessment of the National Integrity System in Bulgaria: National Report 2011, as well as the separate chapter "Parliamentary capacity in the implementation of policies combating organized crime and political corruption" in: The Role of the National Assembly in Combating Organized Crime and Corruption 2001-2011) further reveals Romyana Kolarova's ability to combine theoretical and applied research of Bulgarian political life. For example, in the first two publications, the relevant institutions are analyzed in three different dimensions (capacity, management and role) using a set of indicators to reveal their current status, including the weaknesses available and to make recommendations to address the identified problems. The third publication outlines the main institutional deficits of the National Assembly, which are an obstacle to the effective fight against organized crime and corruption in the country.

And the group of eight articles presented for participation in the competition in the European Journal of Political Research Political Data Yearbook is, in addition to its own analytical value, a kind of contribution of Romyana Kolarova (and her co-author) to keep open a window for the international scientific community

towards our country's political processes and for creating an opportunity for Bulgaria to be part of international comparative analyzes and other research projects.

Rumyana Kolarova proves her high scientific capacity with her work (and very often with the management) in numerous research projects. Since her habilitation (2010), she has been involved in ten academic projects. To seven of them, she is a supervisor, which speaks to her ability to form academic teams of teachers around her. These include important topics of such projects as: "Europeanization of the Bulgarian Election Process" (2019), "Political Dimensions of Radicalization in Bulgaria: Contemporary Aspects" (2018), "Election Campaign and Electoral Dynamics for the 2016 Presidential Election" (2016), "The Role of Caretaker Governments in Crisis Management and Electoral Dynamics in Bulgaria 2013-2014" (2015) and others. In other projects she is a member of the team, as is the case with the international projects „Governments in Europe - Bringing in the Baltic and East Central European Democracies (2011-2013)\$ and „Evidence-based Action against Corruption - The European Integrity Systems (2010-2012)".

Turning to the assessment of the **candidate's teaching work**, it is to be stressed that she began her teaching activity in 1986 with the very establishment of the discipline Political Science at Sofia University and to this day she has conducted and leads numerous courses in various disciplines in the field of political science. These include key disciplines such as "Comparative European Governance", "Methods of Comparative Political Analysis", "Democratization and Sustainable Development", "Political Process in the EU", "Introduction to Political Science". Within the Faculty of Philosophy Rumyana Kolarova holds lectures not only in the Department of Political Science, but also in the Departments of European Studies (since 1999) and Public Administration (since 2000). Moreover, she is also the holder of courses in other faculties of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" - at the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication since 2009 and at the Faculty of Classical and New Philologies since 2013, where her lectures are in English. As the official report for the past academic year 2018-2019 shows, her classroom work is really significant - 631 hours total employment, including 451 hours in compulsory subjects.

The picture of Rumyana Kolarova's teaching activity would not be complete if we did not mention that she is a well-known university lecturer not only in Bulgaria but also abroad. She is invited as a guest lecturer at universities in different countries.

Rumyana Kolarova works extremely well with doctoral students and students.

First, she is a responsible, demanding and effective doctoral supervisor, proof of which are six PhD theses defended during the last years under her supervision - four in the doctoral program in Political Science and two in the doctoral program in European Studies.

Successful PhD students include Viktor Mihaylov with the topic "The European Citizens' Initiative and the EU Political Agenda: Assessing Innovation and Efficiency", Ralitsa Simeonova with the topic "Coalition Cabinets and Consolidation of the Parliamentary Regime in Bulgaria (1990-2013)", Goran Shibakovski with the topic "Structuring of the Parliamentary Elite in the Republic of Macedonia (1991 - 2011)", Dafinka Prokopova with the topic "The changing role of the EU Council Presidency and the problem of leadership deficit".

Second, in the aforementioned research projects of which she was the head, Romyana Kolarova regularly attracted PhD students and undergraduates, enabling them to participate in research activities, in various academic forums and debates.

With regard to the candidate's teaching activity, the fact is to emphasize that for six and a half years (from July 2013 to October 2019) she has been the Head of the Political Science Department. This was a fruitful period in the development of the department which was also highly acclaimed in its accreditation, which is due to the qualities and commitment of Romyana Kolarova as its head.

Since 2003 Romyana Kolarova is also the Director of the Master Programs "European Integration" and "European Integration and Diplomacy of the EU" at the Department of European Studies at Sofia University "St. Kl. Ohridski".

The credibility of the candidate among her colleagues from the political science community in Bulgaria is also evidenced by the fact that in 2017 she was elected Chairman of the Bulgarian Political Science Association (formerly a long-time member of the Executive Council) and has been for many years deputy editor-in-chief of the BPSA theoretical journal Political Studies.

Out of university recognition is her position as Chair of the Board of the Center for Women's Research and Policy. And internationally, in the period 2010-2014, Romyana Kolarova is a member of the Council of Media and Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe (MDCEE) - a multidisciplinary research project focusing on the relationship between democracy and the media in Central and Eastern Europe, with leading participation from the University of Oxford and the LSE.

Although not directly related to the competition, Romyana Kolarova's public involvement and political and expert experience as Secretary to the President of the Republic for more than three years and as Minister of Education and Science (August - November 2014) in the caretaker government also contribute to her research and teaching achievements as well as to her authority in Bulgarian society.

On the basis of all mentioned above, I come to the conclusion that the application of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Rumyana Kolarova meets the highest degree of all requirements for the academic position of "Professor". I mean the high quality of her research output; its leading participation in national and international research projects; proven track record in her many years of teaching at St. Kliment Ohridski Sofia University; her successful appearances on the international academic scene; her ability to prepare and give way to young researchers and lecturers; her distinguished organizational skills, her authority among the Bulgarian and international academic community.

This gives me every reason to support with full conviction the candidacy of Assistant Professor Dr. Rumyana Petrova Kolarova as a professor in the professional field 3.3. Political Sciences.

Sofia, 26 February 2020

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