

REVIEW
from
Professor DSc. Borislav Nikolov Gradinarov,
Institute of Philosophy and Sociology - BAS,
on
the dissertation of Martin Konstantinov Konstantinov, a full-time doctoral
student at the section “Social control, deviations and conflicts”, IFS-BAS,
for awarding the educational and scientific degree “doctor” in scientific
specialty 3.1. Sociology, anthropology and cultural sciences

This review was prepared on the basis of the decision of the meeting of the Scientific Jury (approved by Order № RD 09-346 /17.07.2020 of the Director of IFS - BAS), held on July 23, 2020, at which I was appointed reviewer of the dissertation of full-time doctoral student Martin Konstantinov Konstantinov.

1. General description of the dissertation and assessment of the fulfillment of the minimum national requirements.

The dissertation of full-time doctoral student Martin Konstantinov is on "The Opposition between the West and Modern Russia: Attitudes in Contemporary Bulgarian Society (Values and Ideologies)." Its content includes three chapters, an introduction and a conclusion. The total volume of the work, together with the list of used literature (without the title page) is 275 standard typewritten pages, containing 86 figures and 11 graphics. The used literature is in the volume of 284 titles, including the Internet-based sources in Bulgarian and English.

The enclosed abstract summarizes the main points of the dissertation, contains an author's reference for the contributions, as well as information about the results of the research presented at scientific conferences and in scientific journals.

So far, the scientific jury has not received any signals and no indications have been found by its members for unregulated borrowing of texts by other authors.

Four articles published in the specialized scientific literature on the topic of the dissertation are indicated. This fulfills the minimum requirements of BAS for admission to defense (30 points under Section D of the scientometric table). The candidate for the OSD Doctor holds a Master's degree in Politics, Security and Integration from University College London, London, UK, has successfully

passed the doctoral minimum exams and has the required number of credits, according to the Regulations of the Training Center at BAS, which fulfills the mandatory prerequisites for admission to public protection.

The scientific supervisor of the dissertation is Prof. DSc. Valentina Zlatanova from IFS-BAS.

2. Content analysis of the scientific achievements in the dissertation of the candidate.

The first chapter of the dissertation is devoted to the relationship between values and ideologies. It provides a theoretical analysis of basic individual values and the mechanisms or ways in which they affect the ideological and political orientation of politically active citizens. Assessing critically the state of research on the problem, the dissertation argues that the ambiguity in the understanding of values is a consequence of the multidimensionality of the very concept of them. Values cannot be directly observed and explored, and although they are manifested through the actions of subjects, they are not an integral part of them. They are the general framework that determines individual ways of thinking, speaking, acting, judging, deciding, and relating. Their lack of independence determines the difficulties in studying them - they can be studied only indirectly. That is why values are "overgrown" with too many definitions, conventions, and prejudices. Nevertheless, they are an important phenomenon and subject of study in the social sciences (in sociology, in political science, in psychology, etc.), which cannot be ignored.

In the first chapter the dissertation shows his ability to analyze and summarize different authors in their ideological position and style. Here he tries to introduce a certain degree of invariance and mutual determination of the important attitude - values - ideologies while emphasizing the hierarchy of this attitude. While attitudes may be large in number, values are more limited in quantity, while ideologies as the most comprehensive are even fewer. In contrast to attitudes, values and ideologies show a higher degree of stability and resilience over time.

In this part of the dissertation, Martin Konstantinov demonstrates the important quality for any researcher to understand the conceptual system of a wide range of authors, without losing the red thread of his own conceptual attitude. As a result of the comparative analysis of some of the most significant representatives of the sociological approach to values (Rocky, Inglehart, Hofstede, Schwartz, etc.), on the one hand, and the evolution of understandings of ideologies (from de Tracy, Marx and Mannheim to Arend, Brzezinski, and Fukuyama), on the other hand, the dissertation forms its conceptual scheme for combining values and ideologies. It shows the inadequacy of the one-dimensional ideological model "left - right", as well as the rather value-based dichotomy "liberalism - conservatism". His conclusion is that multidimensional

models are needed to take into account in more detail the structure of citizens' political attitudes.

For the purposes of his research, however, the dissertation prefers the two-dimensional explanatory structural scheme: left - right; liberalism - conservatism. But in it the rational choice of a certain position is not leading, as empirical research shows that political orientation is more predetermined by hereditary and psychological characteristics of individuals and to a lesser extent by political socialization or socio-demographic factors (p. 54 of the dissertation). Therefore, logically here the concept reaches the psychological roots of ideological and political self-determination.

One of the important points in the first chapter of the dissertation, in my opinion, is the outline of evolution in the understandings of left and right - they gradually not only exchange some of their basic values but seem to change their places and roles. The left adopts in its arsenal a number of ideas and beliefs that in the past belonged to the right ideological and political attitude and vice versa. In their numerous variations and combinations, the left, the right, the liberal and the conservative generate a colorful mosaic of political and social models. In this sense, we can hardly say with full confidence that the ideology of Russia's current government under Russian President Vladimir Putin is entirely conservative, and that liberalism is the invariant model of Western European political structures. There is a variety of mixed forms that also have deeper roots. In each of them such concepts as order, rule of law, traditionalism, nationalism, and others. They must be applied carefully, as the specific socio-historical conditions have shaped them in their own way.

The first chapter of the dissertation, in my opinion, achieves its goals to outline the complex and rich scientific history of values, ideologies, and political attitudes. It also illustrates the dissertation's ability to navigate the relevant literature.

The second chapter is empirically oriented and is dedicated to the value attitudes of Bulgarians in the years of transition (after 1989). The starting point for the analysis is the thesis that in Bulgaria the values of survival prevail over those of self-expression and the secular rational dominates over the traditional attitude towards authority (according to the classification scheme of Ronald Ingalhart's values). In our country, a priority seems to be given to satisfying the needs of the lowest hierarchical levels of Maslow's pyramid - physiological needs and the need for security (p. 92 of the dissertation).

Based on the summarized data from the used empirical researches in different periods of the so-called transition, interesting conclusions are made, which to a large extent agree with the intuitive expectations. Unlike the citizens of the most developed European countries, who place the traditions and security of one of the lower values, in our country, the tendency to security by maintaining the status quo prevails, although the majority of Bulgarians are more often critical of it. This is one of the explanations for the fact that although

they do not approve of the situation in their country, most Bulgarians stay away from organized protest activities in defense of civil society and democratic values. The conclusions of the dissertation sound interesting, according to him the explanation of this paradox "is in the emphasized lack of tendency of the Bulgarian for direct, group coordinated confrontation with social phenomena disliked by him. The combination of this lack with his desire to adapt and "fit" in the best way for him personally in the given situation leads to the well-known practice of "individual rescue" and neglect of the community at the expense of personal interest "(p. 99). But is this generally known explanation enough? Perhaps the higher value weight of tradition, security, and comfort is due to the specifics of Bulgarian history, leading in many periods to the erosion of national self-confidence and high levels of anxiety and insecurity? Interestingly, regardless of their specifics, the empirical research analyzed by the dissertation on both Schwartz's and Hofstede's methodology presents generally coherent results - they show the tendency of Bulgarians in the years of transition to preferring tradition, security, and conformity to universalism and self-determination.

Modern research on political orientation and political values also outline expected and explicable attitudes of Bulgarians - the unacceptability of social injustice and inequality, distrust of institutions and at the same time high statist attitudes, egalitarianism, but combined with low levels of economic solidarity, low tolerance on religious, ethnic and sexual grounds, a predominantly positive attitude towards Russia, despite the ambiguous attitude towards Russian President Vl. Putin and the official policy of the Kremlin, etc.

Interesting in this chapter is the original study of the attitude towards migrants, carried out by the scientific team of the section headed by Prof. A. Mantarova. But the topic of emigrants here seems to be partially presented, as it has already been commented on in paragraph 1.3 of the first chapter. I think that for the point of view of compositional logic this text from the first chapter should be placed in the appropriate place in the second chapter of the dissertation.

In my opinion, one of the important achievements of Chapter Two is the argument that the term 'European values', which is often used in European political vocabulary, is inhomogeneous and has different meanings in different regions and countries. This partly explains the discrepancy between the understandings of left and right, liberalism and conservatism in Bulgaria and those characteristics of developed Western democracies, which are highlighted as an important focus in the final paragraph of Chapter Two.

The **third chapter** presents the empirical sociological research conducted by the dissertation on the value system of members of Bulgarian political parties. 107 respondents were selected, but as explicitly stated, the survey is not representative and should not be used to formulate definite conclusions. Rather, it is an illustration of the practical applicability of the author's so-called "three-

step model of the ideological orientation of the individual as a function of basic individual values through political values." It is worth noting the conclusions of this empirical study, that especially with the sphere of an economy the right orientation is characteristic first of all for the members of the right parties. All other members of the political forces profess to one degree or another left-wing economic beliefs (p. 152).

The study supports another conclusion, which was formulated in the previous text - that the typical European characteristics, founding the left-right and liberal-conservative dimension, are inverted in our country and although they retain their fundamental differences, do not follow the established in most Western European countries. In a sense, the attitude towards Russia and the official Russian policy is also unique, which is highly polarized and depends to a very high extent on the value and ideological factors. In my opinion, the moment underestimated by the doctoral student is the historical overlaps and traditions in the relations between the two Slavic states, which determine today's, still very emotional (in a positive and negative sense) perception of the Kremlin's behavior.

3. Reflection of the candidate's scientific publications in our and foreign literature (according to his data).

The attached references do not contain citations of the dissertation's publications. I hope that after revision the study of Martin Konstantinov will be published in its entirety. This will be useful for researchers who are interested in the thematic range of the dissertation and will create an opportunity for a wider response to the ideas and arguments presented in the dissertation.

4. Critical remarks of the reviewer on the submitted works, including on the literary awareness of the candidate.

I have no special conceptual disagreements or serious critical remarks on the chosen topic and on the way it is developed. Martin Konstantinov demonstrates ability to work with relevant literature, adequate use of the conceptual apparatus and independent thinking.

In terms of composition, improvements can be made related to balancing the individual chapters. It has already been mentioned above in the review that, in my opinion, paragraph 1.3 of the first chapter can be moved to the second chapter and thus the topic of migrants can be more solid and homogeneous. This will also compensate for the textual imbalance between the three chapters - in the current version, the second chapter is much smaller than the others. Although in the development of a dissertation each author has freedom of choice in terms of structure and style, it seems to me that the text would win if at the end of the chapters were formulated in a concise form the main conclusions and research results in each of them.

Another omission, in my opinion, is the absence at the end of the dissertation of the so-called dissertations of the dissertation, which he mentions in the main text (eg on p. 134).

I think that the dissertation underestimates the historical argumentation in the development of the thesis of the discrepancy between the value and ideological differences on the left-right and liberal-conservative axes between Bulgarian political activists and politically engaged citizens in most Western European countries. Their consideration would enrich the explanatory tools and would give the findings, especially from the empirical sociological research, additional weight and depth.

5. Personal impressions of the reviewer about the candidate and other data not mentioned in the previous points.

I do not know Martin Dimitrov and I have no personal impressions of his work as a full-time doctoral student before the extended seminar for discussion of the dissertation in the section "Social control, deviations and conflicts". During the discussion, he demonstrated a skill for dialogue and a willingness to accept other people's opinions.

6. Reasoned and clearly formulated conclusion.

My conclusion from the above is that the dissertation on "The Opposition between the West and Modern Russia: Attitudes in Contemporary Bulgarian Society (Values and Ideologies)" by full-time doctoral student Martin Konstantinov Konstantinov shows the author's ability to work with sources and good analytical skills. All legal requirements for successful defense are met, which gives me reason to vote "yes" and to recommend to the esteemed scientific jury to award him the educational and scientific degree "Doctor".

September 3, 2020

Signature: