

REVIEW

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Research specialty: 3.3.Political Science

Subject: dissertation for the award of PhD

Professional field 3.3 Political Science,

Doctoral Programme "Political Science"

Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski",

Faculty of Philosophy, Department of Political Science

Thesis topic:

"Responsibility and Accountability of the Executive in Countering Terrorism in Bulgaria, UK and Germany in the Period 2009-2020"

Author of the thesis: **Bianka Borislavova Bogoevska**

Reason: participation in the scientific jury, appointed by Order № RD 38-111/21.02.2024 - of the Rector of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"

1. PhD, dissertation, abstract and publication data.

From the presentation of the PhD student by the scientific supervisor attached to the documents, it can be seen that Bianka Bogoevska is a regular PhD student in the field of Comparative Political Science at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". She is a PhD student at the University of St. Kliment Ohridski. During a semester of her studies, Bogoevska studied at the University of Warsaw under the Erasmus+ programme. She holds a BA in Political Science from Sofia

University and an MA in International Security Law and Policy from the Free University of Amsterdam. Master's thesis - dedicated to the study of the narratives surrounding the establishment and development of Europol's responsibility and accountability mechanisms. She works as a senior media analyst and is co-founder of Amnesty International Bulgaria.

For the preparation of this review, the dissertation, abstract, publications and documents of the PhD student were submitted for defense, which meet the requirements of the Law on the PhD in Education, the Regulations for its implementation at the University of Sofia and the University academic standards and requirements.

The dissertation was discussed and proposed for public defense by the Department of Political Science at the Faculty of Philosophy of Sofia University, Protocol 7 of 6.02.2024 of the Faculty Council. All this gives me grounds to conclude that the procedural and legal requirements of the public defense procedure so scheduled have been met. The minimum national requirements under Article 2b, paragraphs 2 and 3 of the RAPRB Act and Article 24, paragraph 2 of the Act have been met, respectively. 1 of the Implementing Rules of the RRADD Act. A list of the required publications is provided - 4 in total, 3 in print and 1 in progress, which demonstrate the PhD student's sustained interest in the dissertation topic.

The doctoral candidate has submitted an abstract that contains all the necessary elements and information, adequately reflects the content of the dissertation.

Bianka Bogoevska submits for defense her dissertation "Responsibility and Accountability of the Executive in Countering Terrorism in Bulgaria, Great Britain and Germany in the Period 2009-2020", a topic with exceptional sound and relevance, not only for the studied countries, but also globally. The dynamics of international relations and the radicalization of movements, the increasing

migrant pressure has put the world community in constant danger of terrorist attacks of different nature, which has also evoked the need for the adoption of extended tougher measures in many countries. The philosophy of human rights in the shadow of terrorism has been called into question. The doctoral student set herself the not easy task of not only tracing the legal framework that countries adopt in the face of terrorist threats, but in the context of human and citizen rights, to examine and analyse the responsibility and accountability of the executive power. Bogoevska seeks the balance between rights, protection, responsibility and accountability of those in power, countering and curbing terrorist threats, making her analysis even more challenging. That the PhD student has been so successful in finding it clearly speaks for her excellent legal culture, excellent focus in the set research field, skillful handling of different practices, and clear formulation of criteria for comparison. I believe that we have an excellently chosen and very well formulated research topic, which is multi-layered and rich in the theoretical knowledge demonstrated, as well as the comparative analysis and generalization skills demonstrated.

The presented dissertation has a total length of 220 standard pages, 193 pages of main text, is structured in an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion and is based on over 280 titles of used literature in Bulgarian, German and English (academic texts, electronic, normative, statistical and case law). The proposed text and the extremely rich bibliography testify to a broad professional erudition, analytical and argumentative skills. The PhD student has cited correctly, respecting academic standards.

In the Introduction of the dissertation, Bogoevska argues her research interest, presents her main aim, hypothesis and auxiliary hypotheses, defines the object and subject of her research. The object of the dissertation is "the responsibility (judicial) and accountability (parliamentary) of the executive branch in terms of their measures - powers and actual steps - in their fight against

terrorism", the subject is rightly defined as "the dynamics in the responsibility and accountability of the executive branch under the influence of the increased threat of terrorist attacks". The main objective of the doctoral thesis is to establish the existence of a change in the responsibility and accountability of the executive authorities in the countries studied in the field of counter-terrorism, applying a set of criteria concerning the rule of law (requirement of justification of reasons in administrative acts, limitation of executive discretion and uniform application of laws). Assessment against these standards is the main task of the thesis, in comparative terms, in three European countries. The working definitions of the concepts to be worked with are outlined. The main hypothesis is defended, namely that "no further militarization of democracy has occurred in all three countries since 2015. To some extent, the opposite is even observed: paradoxically, the 2015 crisis appears as an immediate impetus for a more responsible and accountable executive in all three countries compared to the 2009-2014 period". The limitations of the study are presented. The rationale for the choice of the three European countries studied /UK, Bulgaria, Germany/ is provided.

Chapter One presents a detailed review of the literature in the countries of analysis. The study is presented by country, which allows not only to provide an overview but also to trace the different discursive perspectives that have aided the derivation of working definitions. The overview presents the academic debate on the concepts of responsibility and accountability; the derivation of these concepts allows the PhD student to work with precisely formulated and clear concepts from the start of the research, throughout the thesis.

Chapter Two deserves particular attention because it focuses on the methodology of the study. As the PhD student herself points out, "the study uses a mixed comparative analysis of three countries - Bulgaria, the UK and Germany. The work combines a normative analysis of legislative change, a quantitative study of the implementation of anti-terrorism measures, illustration through

selected appeal cases, and a quantitative and to a lesser extent qualitative analysis of the parliamentary questions asked" /page 35/. The choice of countries studied, their specificities and differences are explained in detail. The standards for assessing the rule of law in terrorism are clearly outlined, explained and defended (justification of reasoning in administrative acts , limiting executive discretion and uniform application of laws).

The third chapter is the main one, it is the most useful and interesting - it proposes a comparative analysis of Bulgaria, the UK and Germany, applying the criteria introduced in the methodology. The statutory powers and judicial control, the measures applied, the practical judicial control, an overview of the existing parliamentary oversight in each of the countries studied are presented in development. In depth, each of the reviews concludes with an assessment of the application of the criteria of the rule of law study. In achieving this analysis, the doctoral student developed and analyzed 17 tables and 14 figures. The chapter concludes with a summary of the comparative analysis.

Scientific contributions in the dissertation work

The PhD student has not presented specifically formulated scientific contributions, but I would venture to outline a few that demonstrate the value of the research presented.

The first contribution is theoretical, presented mainly in chapters one and two of the study. A wide range of the author's theses are presented, analysed and summarised, the main working concepts are brought out with a very good ability to formulate problem areas. I believe that the study fills a niche in the specialized literature by its interdisciplinary approach skillfully presenting the complex dynamics and interrelationship between rights and protection of rights (against counter-terrorism attacks), in light of not only the responsibility of the executive

but also its accountability. The PhD places particular emphasis on a particular time period, namely the 2015 crisis and its impact on the role of courts and parliaments in counter-terrorism. In a comparative perspective, the development of the legal framework and judicial control, measures applied, judicial control, parliamentary oversight is examined, which has allowed the PhD student to make an in-depth analysis of the different phases of the protection of rights, refracting the analysis through the application of the rule of law and democratic practice.

A second contribution is the richness of the proposed *comparative study*. Applying a defensible methodology, Bogoevska methodically explores and analyses her chosen criteria, collecting and summarising a vast amount of material presented in tables and figures. I welcome the chosen approach of comparative analysis, which is clear, well argued. In my opinion, it allows for an expansion of the countries studied and I would encourage Bogoevska not to stop her research with this defence. The considerable amount of information and data collected and summarised undoubtedly provides an opportunity for further research by the author.

A third, most significant contribution of the proposed dissertation research is its practical nature. Statutory powers and judicial review, measures, judicial review, parliamentary oversight are clearly, in a sound internal logic, chronologically traced and analysed. The proposed dissertation can be a good resource for any researcher, policy maker or human rights advocate and civil rights activist in analyzing responsibility and accountability in the context of preventing and countering terrorism.

2. Critical comments, recommendations and questions

I have no serious substantive criticisms.

I would like to take the possibility to address a question to the doctoral candidate - counter-terrorism and human rights. A number of international organisations have adopted a series of documents on counter-terrorism in the

context of human rights protection. How do you see the dynamics and balance between human rights and counter-terrorism measures? Are our rights protected from over-measures?

A good extension of the research inquiries would have been how responsibility and accountability is implemented at the level of international organisations.

3. Conclusion

The dissertation work of Bianka Borislavova Bogoevska contains clearly outlined theoretical and practical results. I believe that I can claim that the dissertation satisfies all the requirements of the Law on Research and Development and its implementing regulations. This gives me grounds to propose to the scientific jury to award Bianka Borislavova Bogoevska the PhD degree in the professional field 3.3. Political Sciences.

Assoc. Prof. Teodora Kaleyska

24.05.2024, Sofia