



OPINION

from Prof. **Georgeta Nazarska**, Ph.D., University of Library Studies and IT,
Sofia,

for obtaining the educational and scientific degree “*Doctor*” (Ph.D.) in
professional field 3.5. Social Communications and Information Sciences

with a dissertation on the topic ‘*Media and Communication Paradigm of
Turkish Civilizational Discourse (Leadership Communication Strategies)*’,

presented by **Nihal Fehmieva Yuzergan**, free doctoral student in the
Department of Communication and Audiovisual Production of the Faculty of
Journalism and Mass Communication at Sofia University with supervisor Prof.
Simeon Vassilev, Ph.D.

This opinion was drawn up on the basis of Order No. RD 38-597/02.10.2024 and after my acquaintance, as a member of the scientific jury, with the documents of the procedure for awarding the educational and scientific degree ‘*Doctor*’ (Ph.D.) to Nihal Yuzergan - free doctoral student in the Department of Communication and Audiovisual Production at the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication at Sofia University.

I. Evaluation of the qualities of the text of dissertation

The presented research contents of 274 pages and is structured in an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, a bibliography and 4 appendices.

On the basis of basic primary and secondary sources, it is dealing with an essential issue in the history and development of the 20th-21st century Turkey, i.e. its modernization, motivated by the rulers as a ‘*civilizational choice*’ and positioned between the westernization and liberal visions of Kemalism and the



neo-Ottomanist and conservative ideas of the Justice and Development Party (AKP). The topic is relevant even today in view of the ongoing debates in the country itself and because of its stated ambitions for regional and global leadership.

There are various studies on the issue, but Ms. Yuzergan chooses her original point of view, motivated by her extensive experience as an international journalist and excellent knowledge of contemporary Turkish politics and culture, and precisely formulates her goals and objectives. The discursive analysis of the concept of the '*civilizational choice*' is a prerequisite both for a comparative and historical tracing of the socio-cultural transformations in Modern Turkey, and for a study of how the messages of the political elites are constructed in *longue durée*. A good solution is also to position the research entirely in an interdisciplinary field of political communication and linguistics, of media communication and linguistics with elements of social history, sociology of power and cultural studies.

The dissertation shows the in-depth knowledge of its author about the philosophical, historical, sociological and cultural dimensions of the concepts of culture and civilization in the Ottoman and Turkish context, about their controversial understanding in Western and Eastern philosophy and science, about the place of ideas, incl. imaginary, of the Turkish cultural space understood as Ottoman, Turkic, Seljuk, Islamic and European, and of the Ottoman legacy in statehood, institutions, politics and mentality. She succeeds remarkably in describing the evolution and in characterizing the specifics of the concept of '*Turkish civilizational discourse*'. I would also highlight the doctoral student's skills demonstrated in the text for connecting communication and media research with its socio-cultural and political context, for critical and situational analysis



and for carrying out discursive analysis, content analysis, structural analysis and applying the methods of imagology to diverse sources.

II. Contributions of the dissertation research

I fully accept the scientific, scientific-applied and applied contributions indicated as leading in the dissertation research by Mrs. Yuzergan. I consider her undoubted authorial contribution the identification of the '*civilizational discourse*' for the New Turkey as the main means of political messages of the AKP and its leaders, as a tool for their social transformation and social engineering in the 21st century.

Her conclusions are convincing that the quoted discourse categorically distinguishes the present and future of Turkey from Kemalist ideology and practice, creates imaginary connections and '*invented legacies*' with its pre-modern past, serves domestic and foreign policy tasks and gradually becomes a global doctrine pushed through the routine and cultural diplomacy.

A remarkable contribution of the doctoral student is also the empirical study of the leadership communication strategies of R.T. Erdogan through his speeches, statements and messages. Highlighting his characteristic linguistic and rhetorical skills, she dwells not only on his charismatic qualities, but emphasizes their potential to spread, through sustained phraseology, lexemes and metaphors, the nationalist and religious ideas of the new doctrine.

III. Notes and recommendations

After thoroughly familiarizing myself with the presented dissertation work, I believe that it is authored, developed independently and does not constitute plagiarism. I recommend its monographic publication, which would be of practical benefit to the Bulgarian specialized and wider public.



IV. Publications and participation in scientific forums

On the topic of the dissertation work, 4 publications (3 in peer-reviewed collections and 1 in a peer-reviewed continuing edition) are indicated, which represent essential parts of it. Through them and participation in a number of scientific forums, the doctoral student approved her results and conclusions. The abstract is formatted according to the current standard and accurately and faithfully reflects the content of the work. With this, the requirements of the Application regulations of the Law for the development of the academic staff in Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations on the terms and conditions for acquiring scientific degrees and occupying academic positions in Sofia University have been met. I have no publications in common with Ms. Yuzergan.

Conclusion

Based on the ascertained indisputable contributions of the considered dissertation work, the available publications and the fulfilled minimum national requirements according to the Law for the development of the academic staff in Republic of Bulgaria and the Application regulations of the Law for the development of the academic staff in Republic of Bulgaria, I express my positive opinion to award the educational and scientific degree '*Doctor*' (Ph.D.) in professional field 3.5. Social Communications and Information Sciences (Media and Communications - International Communication) by doctoral student Nihal Fehmieva Yuzergan.

Jury member: Prof. Georgeta Nazarska, Ph.D.

Date: November 20th, 2024