

A REVIEW

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Bulgarian Current Research Information System No 33078

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Higher Education Field: 3. Social, Economic and Legal Science;

Research area: 3.7. Administration and Management

Scientific specialization: 05.02.24. “Organization and Management Outside the Sphere of Material Production (Security and Defense)”.

Higher Education Field: 9. Security and Defense;

Research area: 9.1. National Security;

Research area: 9.2. Military Science.

Scientific specializations:

- 05.02.24. “Organization and Management Outside the Sphere of Material Production (Management of Security and Defense)”;
- 05.12.01. “Organisation and Management of Armed Forces”;
- 05.12.02 “Military-Political Problems of Security”;
- 05.12.03 “Military Applied Aspects of Civil Protection”.

on the scientific papers submitted under the competition for the academic position of Associate Professor (published in the State Gazette, No 81/11.10.2022), in the Higher Education Field 9. Security and Defense, Research area 9.1. “National Security (Anti-Money Laundering and Countering Terrorist Financing and Proliferation).

The present review is prepared following Order No 67/18.01.2023 by the Rector of the Higher School of Security and Economics, Plovdiv.

Dr. Gergana Dimitrova Yordanova, Ph.D., is the only candidate within the competition procedure. She has been Part-time Lecturer (October 2020 – February 2021) and Full-time Assistant Professor and Researcher (March 2021 – February 2023) at the New Bulgarian University, Sofia.

Dr. Gergana Yordanova, Ph.D., holds M.Sc. in Public Finance from Dimitar A. Tsenov Academy of Economics, Svishtov (2006 - 2007) and an M.A. in National and International Security from Georgi S. Rakovski National Defense College, Sofia (2009 - 2011), both graduated with *Summa Cum Laude*. She has also defended a vocational Teaching Qualification with a specialty in Economic Pedagogy from Dimitar A. Tsenov Academy of Economics, Svishtov (2003 - 2005).

The candidate in the competition has defended her doctoral dissertation and has obtained the scientific degree of Doctor in Research Area 9.1. “National Security”, with a scientific specialty in Military-Political Problems of Security at Georgi S. Rakovski National Defense College, Sofia (2013 - 2016), Diploma No 74/ 11.01.2016.

Dr. Gergana Yordanova`s research and teaching activity in her capacity as a candidate in the competition is mainly focused on the field of creation and enlargement of scientific knowledge via a theoretical and content analysis of the specific and non-researched problems concerning dynamic security environment as a practically synergetic result of cumulatively acting multiple hybrid threats, both of military and non-military nature. In this context, challenges related to budget deficit financing via sovereign debt financing stand out as highly distinctive ones.

The diversity of deficit financing sources, the strong and weak geo-economic centers worldwide, as well as the military confrontation between them create preconditions and terms for converting debt leverage into an effective maneuver of several geostrategic actions against the financial system stability.

The practical manifestation of deficit financing as a securitized problem is complemented by a broad interdisciplinary relationship with the Islamic Finance Doctrine with informal, non-regulated, non-banking value transfer, payment and settlement systems such as e.g. the Hawala System, particularly.

An emphasis is placed on the manifestation of migrant and refugee flows from the Middle East to Western Europe based on a thorough and correctly performed scientific analysis via the perception of the newly generated risks and threats to the economic and financial security systems of the host countries. The dynamics in the evolving geo-economic integration of Muslim ethnic migrants in Europe is researched in the context of the integration of their traditions and habits in terms of economic, financial and payment operations.

All the above-mentioned factors determine the relevance of the researched scientific problem within the papers submitted for participation in the competition. They are aimed at further developing and upgrading present theoretical and practical-expert developments regarding the Hawala System usage as money laundering and terrorist financing and proliferation typology.

The relevance of the problems developed by Dr. Gergana Yordanova, Ph.D., in the papers delivered for participation in the competition, in a scientific and applied scientific sense, stems from instances to fill out the lack of systematic scientific knowledge about the specifics of essential requirements about the importance of prevention, protection, monitoring (early signals and warnings) and countering of potential money laundering and terrorist financing and proliferation operations via implementation of cash settlement¹ of the Hawala type, in the context of the national security protection policy as well as the integrity, stability and reputation of the financial sector.

Particular attention is paid to the need for practical criminalization of certain acts related to the usage of the Hawala system (operations of the so called “The Black Hawala” type).

The candidate Dr. Gergana Yordanova, Ph.D., through her research and scientific applied activity, expands the scope of the category apparatus the scientific theory operates with from a methodological and research point of view considering the Hawala system discourses² as a problem of financial security, for the very first time in such a conceptual framework.

¹ The final transfer of funds to the payment accounts of the participants in the payment process, via which the limited monetary resource is redistributed and the payment is actually completed between the banks participating in the payment transaction. A thesaurus.

² “Discourse is the way in which language is used socially to disseminate a broad historical meaning” Richard Nordquist. Discourse: Definition and Examples. <https://bg.eferrit.com/%D0%B4%D0%B8%D1%81%D0%BA%D1%83%D1%80%D1%81-%D0%BE%D0%BF%D1%>

1. Summary of materials submitted for scientific review under the competition procedure (monographs, textbooks, certificates and patents, articles and reports).

The participant in the competition, Dr. Gergana Yordanova, Ph.D., is the author of more than 30 scientific and research papers published in several specialized editions. Three of them are related to the educational and scientific degree of Doctor. Thirteen of the scientific and research papers presented in the competition have been proposed for scientific review by the jury.

The list of papers delivered to me for scientific review contains 13 titles all written by the author. The listed titles are distributed as follows:

1.1. Publications from Bulgaria:

- Monographs - 1 item;
- Books published based on a defended dissertation - 1 item;
- Scientific articles - 1 item;
- Scientific reports – 9 items, of which 1 in English;

1.2. Publications abroad – 2 items, both in English;

I do hereby accept for scientific review all the materials presented by the candidate. In my opinion, all are within the subject of the competition and contain contributing points in the scientific field reviewed by me.

Finally, the number of publications is representative and I do estimate it as sufficient for participation in the competition for the academic position of Associate Professor at the Higher School of Security and Economics, Plovdiv. The candidate has adopted the chronological principle of presenting her papers for scientific review. Therefore, that principle is also followed in the present review by myself.

2. General characteristics of the candidate's scientific, applied scientific and pedagogical activities.

First, most of the scientific and research papers written by Dr. Gergana Yordanova, Ph.D., and submitted for scientific review, are in the field and issues of the specialty of the competition for the position of Associate Professor, in Higher Education Field 9. Security and Defense, Research Area 9.1. National

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Security (Anti-Money Laundering and Countering Terrorist Financing and Proliferation).

Second, most of the papers were published in specialized scientific and research editions in Bulgaria by the Higher School of Security and Economics, Plovdiv, Georgi Stoykov Rakovski National Defense College, Sofia, Vasil Levski National Military University, Veliko Tarnovo, Paisii Hilendarski University Publishing House of the University of Plovdiv, the New Bulgarian University, Sofia and the Foundation “Institute for National and International Security”, Sofia.

There are also two papers published abroad in authoritative and respected international scientific journals: one within the internationally refereed and indexed journal in the field of Security and Defense “*Information & Security: An International Journal*” and one deposited at the Scientific Electronic Repository of the Kyiv National Economic University named after Vadym Hetman (the Republic of Ukraine).

Moreover, the candidate's written style is academic, thorough, understandable and accessible with the usage of specific professional terminology as a proven specialist from the field.

The candidate presented her works in a different format, organized into a few main thematic areas:

- Generation of new scientific knowledge and skills for a systematic scope of the issues concerning the etymology, nature and financial and accounting functioning aspects by the ancient Arab informal, non-banking, non-regulated value transfer system with a settlement of the Hawala type;
- Development of a system for studying, analyzing and synthesizing the existing scientific knowledge about the origin of the Hawala System, for its usage as a means of money laundering and terrorist financing and proliferation;
- Extension of the theoretical framework towards the practical dimensions of a new system of scientific and research knowledge as a methodology for risks assessment and management with cash settlement operations of the Hawala type (based on the derived signs and criteria) in the cases where it is used as a typology for money laundering and terrorist financing and proliferation;
- Enrichment of an innovative model for the Bulgarian practice for sovereign debt management by a proposal of critical alternatives for the

current sovereign debt management model rationalization and optimization projecting the dynamic geo-economic security environment challenges within the Third Security Wave conditions at the beginning of 21st century;

- Justification of the need for an interdisciplinary approach to the scientific analysis of sovereign debt management as a securitized problem refracted through the theoretical lens of the dynamic security environment and the various hybrid security threats and risks both of military and non-military nature.

Furthermore, in my opinion, one of the greatest merits of the reviewed scientific papers by the candidate in the competition, Dr. Gergana Yordanova, Ph.D., is the examination of the possibilities for the practical manifestation of migrant and refugee flows from the Middle East to Western Europe through the perception of new risks and threats to the economic and financial security systems of the host countries generated by them. The latter is delivered by Dr. Yordanova via a presentation of up-to-date and modern, directly applicable scientific knowledge, in practice.

3. Fulfillment of the requirements for holding the academic position

The scientific production provided by the candidate in the competition is fully compliant with the requirements of the Indicators Assessment System for Holding the Academic Position of Associate Professor by activities and indicators in Research area 9.1. National Security:

- **Total points Indicator “A” – 50 points;**
- **Total points Indicator “C” – 100 points;**
- **Total points Indicator “G” – 205 points;**
- **Total points Indicator “D” – 105 points;**

The candidate has got 460 points, with a total of 400 points required.

Based on the Original Scientific Contributions Report delivered under Art. 53, para. 1, item 5 of the Regulations of the Implementation of the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act **no plagiarism** has been proven according to local jurisdiction rules within the scientific papers. I do hereby confirm that I am not aware and I have received neither plagiarism check reports evidence nor reports of any misrepresentation of scientific information.

4. Lecture Experience of the Candidate

Dr. Gergana Yordanova, Ph.D., has taught the following developed academic courses at both the Bachelor's and Master's degrees levels at the National and International Security Department at the New Bulgarian University, Sofia: “Notions in Security”, “Levels of Security”; “The Violence (Theory of Legitimate War)”, “Public Service in Secret Services”, “Secret Services Management”, “Economic crimes”, “Penitentiary Pedagogy”, “Pedagogy of Deviations”, “Security Systems Establishment and Management”, “Terrorism and Islamic Fundamentalism”, as well as the following practical courses (projects): “Security as a Political and Legal Category”, “Security Systems Establishment and Management” and “Organization of Anti-terrorist Protection of National Security Strategic Objects”.

Since 2021 Dr. Gergana Yordanova, Ph.D., has been teaching as a Visiting Professor the course “Security Systems Establishment and Management” both at the Bachelor and Master degrees levels of the National Security and Public Order Faculty (Learning Center) of the Higher School of Security and Economics, Plovdiv.

The candidate in the competition, at the time of submission of the documents, is preparing the successful scientific supervision and defense of the Master theses of two female graduates from the Master program in Crime and Terrorism Counteraction at the National and International Security Department of the New Bulgarian University. Sofia.

5. Scientific Contributions Nature and Assessment

The main contributions delivered by the candidate cover scientific, scientifically applied and applied nature. They could be summarized with the scientific results achieved within the publications systematized in the following areas:

- New scientific knowledge and practical skills have been generated in the Security sector via the relatively complete scientific theoretical concept regarding the practical manifestation of migrant and refugee flows from the Middle East to Western Europe through the perception of new risks and threats to the economic and financial security systems of the host countries generated by them – *papers No 1, 2, 5, 10, 11*;
- Enriched theoretical and practical statements regarding the current process of increasing migration flows to Europe which generates new challenges to

the financial security of the host countries - *papers No 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11*;

- Further development of the theory and practice of budget deficit financing, the strong and weak geo-economic centers in the world and the military confrontation between them that creates prerequisites and conditions for converting debt leverage into an effective maneuver of several geostrategic actions against the financial system stability - *papers 1, 2, 4, 6, 10, 11*;
- An extension of the theoretical framework to the practical dimensions of sovereign debt management as a securitized problem is refracted via the theoretical lens of the dynamic security environment and the various hybrid security threats and risks both of a military and non-military nature. The latter could be successfully used for national and international financial security protection – *papers No 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13*;
- A scientifically based analysis of the counteraction of the Hawala Systems cash settlement operations is carried out (following the indicated symptoms and criteria) via a constructed system of criteria and indicators for suspicious transactions, operations and clients when carrying out the Hawala cash settlement in cases where the latter is used as money laundering and terrorist financing and proliferation typology - *papers No 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 10, 11, 12*.

6. Implementation of Scientific Publications

Based on the papers provided to me for a scientific review, the wide broad practical implementation of the results of the scientific research and regulatory activity of the candidate in the competition Dr. Gergana Yordanova, Ph.D., becomes apparent. It is also confirmed by the Citations Report presented. Dr. Gergana Yordanova, Ph.D., is the main, the sole author of all the presented publications. There are no co-authored publications presented in the procedure documents.

7. Critical Notes

A few critical remarks could be delivered to the scientific papers submitted for review:

- The Appendix used in some of the publications is not formatted according to the requirements of the Bibliographic Citation Standard Bulgarian State Standard/ISO 690:2011;

- There are some inaccuracies, repetitions and editorial errors in some of the publications that do not reduce their scientific value but affect readability;
- The main part of the published scientific papers refers to a strictly specific expert and professional audience which restricts the opportunities for active participation in the scientific exchange, presentation, hearing and defense of innovative scientific ideas by the candidate before the academic community in the national security system.

I truly hope and recommend Dr. Gergana Yordanova, Ph.D., to continue her scientific research activity and the practical implementation of the achieved scientific results in her teaching activity because a successful teaching practice is a measure of the credibility of science and the mission of successful science is to translate into real-world impact for society!

I do believe that the papers presented are the candidate's independent work. Based on the achieved results they successfully defend Dr. Yordanova's claims for scientific and scientifically applied contributions.

I do hereby confirm that I have no joint publications with the candidate.

I am indirectly acquainted with the candidate in the competition, Dr. Gergana Yordanova, Ph.D., from the annual Competition for High Scientific Achievements in Defended Doctoral Dissertations organized and conducted by the Union of Scientists in the Republic of Bulgaria. In 2016 I was appointed as a scientific reviewer of the materials presented by Dr. Yordanova for the competition procedure. As a result of it, the candidate's dissertation was awarded the third prize. It should be noted that the latter is not only her personal and professional achievement but also the only one in the competition of the Union of Scientists in Research Area 9.1. National Security from its beginning until nowadays.

8. Conclusion

I do confirm that the documentation and scientific production provided by the candidate in the competition, Dr. Gergana Dimitrova Yordanova, Ph.D., are fully compliant with the requirements of Art. 21, para. 1 and Art. 24 of the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act and Art. 47, para. 2 and Art. 48, para. 3 for compliance with the Minimum National Requirements and with the Requirements under Art. 1a, para. 2 of the Regulations for its application.

My overall assessment of the scientific works by Dr. Gergana Dimitrova Yordanova, Ph.D., the only candidate in the competition for the academic position of Associate Professor (published in the State Gazette, No 81/11.10.2022, in the Higher Education Field 9. Security and Defense, Research Area 9.1. National Security (Anti-Money Laundering and Countering Terrorist Financing and Proliferation) of the Higher School of Security and Economics, Plovdiv is a **“Positive one”**.

I do propose to the respected Members of the Scientific Jury of the competition to rank the candidate, Dr. Gergana Dimitrova Yordanova, Ph.D., and to propose to the Academic Council of the Higher School of Security and Economics, Plovdiv, that she be elected to hold the academic position of Associate Professor in the Higher Education Field 9. Security and Defense, Research Area 9.1. National Security (Anti-Money Laundering and Countering Terrorist Financing and Proliferation) of the Higher School of Security and Economics Plovdiv.

January, 31st 2023

The city of Veliko Tarnovo

Scientific Reviewer:

Col. (ret.), Prof. Dr. Eng. Stoyko Stoykov, Ph.D., DSc.