

REVIEW

By Prof. Dr. **Emilia Radkova Maslarova**

regarding the dissertation of **Dimitar Vasilev Shterev** on the topic of
"Organizational and Functional Models in Social Security and Social
Assistance Systems"

Subject: Award of a Doctoral degree in the scientific specialty
"Organization and management outside the sphere of material production
(Social activities)", professional area 3.4. Higher education field of Social
activities 3. Social, business and legal sciences.

1. Dissertation details

Dimitar Vasilev Shterev holds a Bachelor's degree from the St. Cyril and Methodius University of Veliko Tarnovo, specialty: Administrative Management, and a Bachelor's degree from the Dimitar Tsenov Academy of Economics in Svishtov (specialty: Economic and Financial Control. He has also gained a Master's Degree in Economics in the latter university.

Since 2016 he has been a doctorate candidate in independent form of study at the Department of Business Activities with the Faculty of Medicine at Trakia University of Stara Zagora. His study has been extended by one more year. He has been granted the right of defense.

The doctoral candidate has long years of professional experience in the social field. He started working as a social worker. Then he has gradually climbed up in the organizational hierarchy of the social system. Based on it he started his research on the topic of his dissertation.

2. General description of the dissertation

The dissertation which Dimitar Vasilev Shterev has presented for a review is extremely up-to-date and it puts an essential emphasis on the social protection and social security of the citizens.

The dissertation contains 189 pages. It is structured in 5 chapters, an introduction, a conclusion, a bibliography and appendices. The results of the author's research and the statistical information he has used are summarized and presented in 6 tables, 4 diagrams, 2 charts, 1 schedules and 3 maps, which together with the mentioned literature are an indication of the high knowledge level of the doctoral candidate. The rich scientific means mentioned in the text reveals the candidate as a researcher, bearer of scientific ethics and a person who cherishes the inherited scientific work.

The purpose, tasks, object and subject of the study are properly formulated, and so is the **doctoral thesis**. The scientific issues raised by the candidate in the process of his research make a good impression.

Based on solid grounds, **chapter One** of the dissertation outlines the general features of the strategies and policies which are used as a background for deriving the characteristics of the social strategies and policies. In line with it, the current state of social policy in Bulgaria filtered through the criteria of social efficiency and effectiveness, is also presented. Special emphasis is placed on the demographic and the standard-of-living policies. What is important in this part of the analysis is the identification of the problems that have arisen and arriving at the links and interactions between them and the achieved level of social protection and social security of the citizens.

Chapter Two applies in a subtle and professional manner the historical approach, combined with a comparative analysis of the social

policy models, their advantages and disadvantages reported in different European countries and elsewhere. The analysis in this part of the dissertation is further extended and made more profound by presenting the current state of the insurance systems in the different countries and identifying the good practices.

Logically, in chapter Three, the candidate analyzes the nature, principles, characteristics and features of social security and social assistance in Bulgaria. Related to this, we should note the importance of this analysis in view of the need to adapt the positive foreign experience. The merit of the dissertation stems also from the successful attempt of the candidate to interpret the problems in the analysis through the organization and management of the National Social Security Institute and the Social Assistance Agency. This is where the exceptional role and importance of the connection between theory and practice is most clearly demonstrated. The role of positive and negative red tape and the social systems is outlined in Weber's spirit. The comparative analysis enables the candidate also to highlight some significant differences in the scope of activity of the two institutions, as well as contradictions related to the basic principles on which the two systems are built.

The structure of the research process features is presented in **chapter Four**. The applied methodology is relevant to the object and subject of the study. The choice of methods for data collection and processing is also appropriate.

The research results reveal the dynamic processes in society, the attitudes and expectations of the interviewees for a particular change in social policy, and more specifically, the social security and social assistance systems in a way that ensures not only fairness but also a return

of confidence in the system.

Based on this, Dimitar Shterev proposes the introduction of a new model for the social security and social assistance systems.

Chapter Five presents the nature and basic principles of model building. Its advantages are outlined with solid reasoning as follows:

- Measures that are economically justified and financially feasible sound measures; -
- Cost reduction;
- Linking the social security payments to social security contributions;
- Releasing State Social Security Fund from all non-specific functions performed by it;
- Increasing the control over the disbursement of this type of funds, etc.

The so proposed model provides for greater dynamics both systems and making specific decisions related to the successful implementation of the regulatory framework.

The conclusion contains summaries and inferences as well as suggestions on improving the procedure.

3. Evaluation of the scientific and applied contribution

I approve and highly appreciate the contributions made by the candidate, especially in that:

- They stem from the research data analysis;
- They are practicable

4. Evaluation of the candidate's publications

There have been publications, thematically related to the dissertation. Through them, the candidate has introduced himself to the academic society, and the published texts serve for verification of the results obtained from his in-depth research efforts.

5. Evaluation of the abstract

The abstract follows the structure of the dissertation and provides an idea of the completed research and the results obtained.

6. Critical notes, recommendations and questions

In certain places the analysis needs some editing. Editing is indispensable should the author decide to publish it, therefore I strongly recommend it.

Question: Does the doctoral candidate believe that the minimum pension for seniority and old age should be increased by legislative means, and not by the principles of the insurance system - contribution, result?

Conclusion

The results obtained from the research conducted on the topic of the dissertation indicate that the doctoral candidate:

- has excellent theoretical background and extensive professional experience;
- has a high level of awareness on the topic of the dissertation;
- has professional skills in the scientific specialty of Social Activities;
- possesses qualities and skills for independent scientific research;

- achieves scientific results that are useful both for further theory development and practice optimization.

Based on the above grounds, I propose in full confidence to the honorable Scientific Jury to award a doctoral educational and scientific degree to Dimitar Vasilev Shterev in the higher education field of Social, Business and Legal Sciences, professional area of Social Activities.

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Sofia

Reviewed by
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