

## REVIEW

By Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sasha Vladimirova Todorova

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

**Grounds:** I have been appointed to be a member of the Scientific Jury regarding a dissertation defense pursuant to Order No. 3472 of Dec. 12, 2019 by the Rector of Trakia University.

**Dissertation Author:** Dimitar Vasilev Shterev

**Dissertation topic:** Organizational and Functional Models in the Social Security and Social Assistance Systems.

### 1. Dissertation details

The doctoral candidate Dimitar Vasilev Shterev was born on November 10, 1971.

He completed his secondary education at Ivan Vazov High School in Stara Zagora in 1989.

In the period 1995-1997 he was a student at St. Cyril and Methodius University of Veliko Tarnovo. There he gained a Bachelor's degree in Administrative Management and a Master's Degree in Social Activities.

From 2000 to 2004 he was a student at the Dimitar Tsenov Academy of Economics in Svishtov, where he completed a Bachelor's Degree in Business and Financial Control and a Master's Degree in Economics.

Since 2016 he has been a doctoral candidate preparing independently at the Department of Business Activities with the Faculty of Medicine at Trakia

University of Stara Zagora.

He started his professional career as an accountant. Later on continued as a financial auditor and a social worker, and so he eventually went through almost all hierarchical levels in the social security system in Stara Zagora district to reach the position of a director of the National Social Security Institute in Stara Zagora.

The information provided shows that the doctoral candidate has completed his individual plan of study in due course as a candidate on independent form of study.

By virtue of Order No. 3190 of December 19, 2018 by the Rector of Trakia University of Stara Zagora extended the study duration of the candidate by one more year, and by Order No. 3475 of December 16, 2019 the candidate was granted the right of defense.

## **2. General description of the dissertation.**

The topic of the dissertation is closely related to the new realities and the objective necessity created by them to maintain a balance between the economic and social spheres of public life, as well as to maintain the necessary balance between the various structural elements of the social sphere. This imposes the need for in-depth knowledge of the processes and phenomena, the direction and dynamics of their occurrence. Only on such a basis can one find the right and possible way to optimize the mentioned aspects of social life in Bulgaria.

Against this background, the purpose of the dissertation is formulated precisely and clearly. Its tasks stem from the goal itself. The object of the study is expectedly and justifiably the organizational and functional models in the social security and the social assistance systems and the opportunities that they provide for new modeling of these systems in Bulgaria. Subject of the study is

the process of interaction between the social security system and the social assistance system, in which the transfer of rights, responsibilities, control and financial resources between them can take place.

The doctoral candidate defends the thesis of the interconnection between the social security system and the social assistance system in our country, which leads to low efficiency of social protection as a whole, which in turn imposes the need for improvement and introduction of new models in those systems.

The dissertation consists of 189 pages, structured in five chapters, with an introduction, a conclusion, a bibliography and appendices. The bulk of the information is relevantly summarized in tables, charts and diagrams. There are also graphics and maps.

The candidate reveals thoroughly and professionally the nature, peculiarities and development of the social processes in Bulgaria. Based on the main features of a welfare state, he outlines the existing strategies and policies by analyzing their impact on the social strategies and policies in the social sphere. The analysis places particular emphasis on the demographic situation, the emerging trends and the need for a peremptory and rapid change in the policies called the Bulgarian demographic case. The dissertation rightly draws attention to the living standards of the population, based on evidence of its factor impact on the demographic processes. Emphasizing the inertness of these processes, the candidate makes justified proposals for optimizing the social policy, focusing on all its structural elements.

Against this background, the analysis continues with a historical overview and a comparative analysis of the types of social security models, their characteristics, advantages and disadvantages, as well as the effectiveness of their application in different countries. The so presented differentiation contributes to both, enrichment of theory and to modern practice.

What impresses in this part of the analysis is the candidate's ability to combine the historical and the sociological approach, which provides better opportunities for discovering and identifying the factor impact on social processes and phenomena in society. This technique of analysis is also used in chapters Three and Four of the dissertation.

Particular interest presents chapter Three, "The Essence, Principles, Characteristics and Features of Social Security and Social Assistance in Bulgaria". This interest is aroused by the depth and extent of the completed analysis, resulting from the excellent background knowledge of the doctoral candidate and also from his outstanding awareness of the applied procedures, which are very closely related to his professional life, doing different jobs, as I have already noted, at almost all hierarchical levels in the NSSI establishment. Based on this analysis, significant problems and contradictions have been identified in the organization and management of social security and social assistance.

The candidate has also carried out a three-stage author's research. The methods he has used are statistical analysis, monitoring and case studies. The methodology he has adopted fully corresponds to the object and the subject of the research. The combination of historical-comparative and system-structural analysis in determining the manner of functioning of both systems i.e. those for social security and social assistance also deserves a positive mark.

Furthermore, the analysis impresses with the provided evidence of the need for changes in the social security and social assistance system.

A new scientifically grounded and practicable model for organization and functioning of the social security and social assistance has been developed with a logical conclusion of the analysis.

In conclusion, the candidate has revealed his ability to summarize the

results obtained, to identify problems, to seek measures and possible solutions. He undoubtedly proves the obvious need for putting a new practicable model for organization and functioning of the social security and social assistance in place. In my opinion the organizational measures described as needed for implementation of the new model is an achievement enriching the management practice. The advantages of this model should also be highly assessed.

All this gives me a good reason to believe that the stated tasks have been fulfilled and the aim of the dissertation has been achieved.

### **3. Appraisal of the scientific and applied contributions**

I accept the scientific and applied contributions stated by the doctoral candidate. They fully correspond to the content of the analysis. An indicator of their depth and the possibility of generalization and typologization is their presentation in separate groups - theory, management practice and methodological tools.

### **4. Evaluation of the candidate's publications**

The candidate has made all necessary publications on the topic of the dissertation as required under the regulations. In this way, the main results of the analysis in the dissertation are made available to the academic society and the management stakeholders. On the other hand, the published texts serve for verification of the obtained results.

### **5. Evaluation of the abstract**

The abstract of the dissertation has been developed in accordance with the requirements. It fully corresponds to the content of the dissertation and gives an idea of the research and the results obtained.

## **6. Critical notes, recommendations and questions**

In view of the relevance of the topic, I recommend that the candidate continues with his future research in the issues of this dissertation.

The results of the study give me a solid reason to strongly recommend that the dissertation be published subject to some editing and having it more concise as necessary.

*Question:* Are there any shortages related to HR provision for the introduction of the new model for social security and social assistance and, if yes, how can they be overcome?

### **Conclusion**

The dissertation contains contributions that enrich modern science in the field concerned as well as contributions from methodological and practical nature. They are original and meet all the requirements of the Act on Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for its implementation at Trakia University of Stara Zagora.

The results obtained from the dissertation research reveal that the doctoral candidate Dimitar Vasilev Shterev has excellent theoretical background and professional skills in the scientific specialty "Organization and management outside the field of material production", as well as qualities and skills to carry out research independently.

Based on this, I am giving in full confidence my positive mark to the research, presented in the dissertation reviewed above, the abstract, the achieved results and the contributions and I propose to the honorable Scientific Jury to award a doctoral educational and scientific degree to Dimitar Vasilev Shterev in the higher education field 3. Social, Business and Legal Sciences, professional area of Social Activities.

February 17, 2020

Sofia

Reviewed by

Ass. Prof. Dr. Sasha Todorova