

OPINION

by Prof. Atanas Georgiev Lyondev, PhD

on a dissertation for obtaining the educational and scientific degree of 'Doctor'
in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional
field 3.7. Administration and management

by Liliya Nedkova Nedeva

on the topic:

**„Management of Social Capital in Municipal Organizations”
(by the example of the Municipality of Plovdiv)**

The preparation of this opinion was commissioned by a decision of the Academic
Council, as determined by Order of the Rector of the Academy of National and
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1. Relevance of the Dissertation Topic

The topic of the dissertation "Management of Social Capital in Municipal Organizations" (using the example of Plovdiv Municipality) is highly relevant and carries significant social importance. In the context of a modern state and the need for effective state and local governance, studying social capital in municipal organizations is crucial. As noted in the work, strong and functioning local self-government reflects the democratic nature of the political system, and social capital is at the core of this process, as it generates social identity and enables individuals to address public issues through established networks, norms, and trust. The focus on the Municipality of Plovdiv and the neighboring municipalities (Maritsa, Rodopi, Asenovgrad) gives the study a strong regional and practical-applied character. Analyzing social capital in this specific context is important for deriving concrete guidelines to improve the efficiency of local administration and to address issues such as low trust in local and national authorities, as found in the empirical part.

2. Compliance of quantitative results with the minimum national requirements for obtaining a PhD

The materials presented in this procedure comply with the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB) and its implementing regulations. To obtain a PhD, the candidate must defend a dissertation under the conditions and in accordance with the procedure of the LDASRB. Only individuals who meet the minimum national requirements under Article 2b, paragraphs 2 and 3 of the LDASRB are eligible to defend a dissertation. The publications under review are evidence of the author's scientific activity in the field of science they have chosen for their academic development. The quantitative evaluation meets and even exceeds the minimum required points across groups of indicators according to the Regulations for the Implementation of the ZRASRB in area 3: Social, Economic, and Legal Sciences, professional field 3.7 Administration and Management. Liliya Nedeva has presented 6 (six) scientific publications on the topic of her dissertation, with a total of 60 points for all publications.

3. Understanding of the State of the Problem

The candidate demonstrates an excellent understanding of the state of the problem, both theoretically and empirically. Regarding the theoretical framework, the main concepts of social capital by well-known authors such as Lida Hanifan, Pierre Bourdieu, James Coleman, Robert Putnam, and Francis Fukuyama are systematically presented and analyzed. The essence, components (bonding and bridging networks), and multidimensionality of social capital (trust, norms, networks, resources) are clearly defined. The research methodology uses an appropriate combination of

quantitative methods (survey, statistical methods such as correlation analysis, IBM SPSS Statistics 25, and others) and qualitative methods (in-depth interviews), which demonstrates a thorough understanding of the research process. The scientific thesis is clearly formulated, and the methods used (analysis and synthesis, induction, deduction, comparative analysis, statistical methods) are suitable for achieving the objective. The empirical analysis is conducted based on the carried-out research, covering four municipalities and analyzing key aspects such as sense of closeness, trust (in colleagues, authorities, ethnic belonging), motivation, conflicts, and job satisfaction, which proves the candidate's ability to apply theoretical knowledge in practice.

4. Overall opinion on the construction of the dissertation

The dissertation is well-structured, logically coherent, and meets the requirements for a scholarly work of this rank. The structure of the work follows the classical format: Introduction, three chapters, conclusions, final summary, scientific contributions, scientific publications, references, and appendices. The length of 183 pages is appropriate for a dissertation. The logical sequence is such that there is a clear connection between the stated aim ("to study the management of social capital in the municipality of Plovdiv and neighboring municipalities in order to derive guidelines for its improvement") and the formulated tasks (theoretical analysis, development of a methodology, analysis of results, and recommendations). The bibliography is extensive (136 sources, 60 of which are in foreign languages), which supports an in-depth theoretical understanding of the problem.

5. Scientific Contributions to the Research

As a result of the theoretical analysis conducted and the research carried out by Liliya Nedeva, scientific and scientific-applied contributions can be identified. The candidate has clearly formulated her scientific-theoretical and scientific-practical contributions, which are significant and original in the context of the researched issues. Particularly valuable is the practical contribution related to the empirical study, which identifies specific problems such as low trust in local authorities, a lack of willingness to provide voluntary help among colleagues, and the influence of differences on conflicts. These findings directly form the basis for the formulation of management recommendations.

6. Evaluation of the abstract

The presented abstract contains the main problems of the dissertation and the methods for solving them. The abstract has been developed in accordance with the requirements and reflects the main points and contributions of the dissertation.

7. Dissertation Recommendations

I recommend Lyliya Nedeva to publish a book based on her dissertation, for the purpose of its promotion.

8. Presence or absence of plagiarism in the dissertation

In accordance with Article 10, Paragraph 2 of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, I do not have information and consider that there is no presence of plagiarism in the dissertation submitted for evaluation.

9. Conclusion

The presented dissertation constitutes a scientific study of an interesting problem from both a theoretical and practical perspective, which has been successfully analyzed and proposals for its improvement have been made. I believe that the results obtained in the dissertation and the publications made on the topic provide sufficient grounds for the successful defense of the dissertation.

The doctoral candidate has achieved the set goal by conducting a comprehensive theoretical analysis and carrying out an original empirical study. The research results are reliable and valid, confirming the initially proposed scientific thesis. The conclusions and recommendations drawn are specific and applicable in the practice of municipal administration, particularly regarding the need for financial decentralization, improving internal organizational trust, and leveraging social capital to achieve socially significant goals.

The above gives me grounds to give my positive opinion on Lyliya Nedeva obtaining a Doctoral Degree in the professional field 3.7 Administration and Management, with the dissertation topic "Management of Social Capital in Municipal Organizations" (using the example of Plovdiv Municipality).

12.01.2026

Plovdiv

Prepared the opinion by:

Prof. Atanas Lyondev, PhD