

OPINION

by Prof.Valentina Nikolova – Alexieva, PhD

regarding

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

by Lilia Nedkova Nedeva

on the topic:

"Social Capital Management in Municipal Organizations"

(following the example of the Municipality of Plovdiv)

The preparation of this opinion was assigned by a decision of the Academic Council, determined by Order of the Rector of the Academy of National and Information Security No. 111 /05.01.2025, city of Plovdiv

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1. Relevance of the research problem

The topic of the dissertation is undoubtedly relevant and significant in the context of the contemporary development of public administration and the processes of decentralization in the Republic of Bulgaria. The management of social capital is being established as a key factor for the effectiveness of public institutions, the quality of public services provided and sustainable regional development. In the context of dynamic socio-economic changes, growing public expectations and limited resource capabilities, the role of social networks, trust, norms and values within municipal organizations is gaining particular importance. The choice of Plovdiv Municipality as the main empirical object of study is reasoned and justified, as it is one of the largest and economically significant municipalities in the country, with a complex administrative structure and active participation in regional and national policies. The inclusion of neighboring municipalities (Maritsa, Rodopi and Asenovgrad) contributes to expanding the analytical scope and allows for a more complete study of inter-municipal interactions and the influence of social capital on regional development. The relevance of the topic is also enhanced by the need to improve institutional trust, intra-organizational communication and the engagement of employees in municipal administrations, which have been identified as problem areas in the contemporary practice of public management.

2. Compliance of the quantitative results of the candidate's scientific activity with the minimum national requirements for obtaining the EDS "Doctor"

The scientific publications and results of the candidate's research activity presented in the dissertation meet the minimum national requirements for acquiring the EDS "Doctor". The candidate demonstrates active scientific activity, as the developed issues are consistently reflected in scientific publications related to the topic of the dissertation. The quantitative indicators - the volume of the dissertation (183 pages), the literature used (136 sources), as well as the number of figures, tables and graphs, testify to in-depth research work and a systematic approach. It is evident that the scientific results are presented in a manner that complies with academic standards and requirements for a doctoral dissertation in the field of social and management sciences.

3. Knowing the status of the problem

The author demonstrates a very good knowledge of the theoretical foundations and the current state of the problem of social capital. The first chapter of the dissertation examines the leading scientific concepts and approaches related to social capital, through an analysis of the works of established authors. A correct comparative analysis has been made between the different theoretical interpretations, and the main elements and dimensions of social capital have been deduced - trust,

social networks, norms and values. The author successfully connects the theoretical statements with the practical aspects of management in municipal organizations, which shows the ability for critical thinking and scientific interpretation. The Bulgarian and foreign literature used is relevant and adequate to the researched issues, including both classical and contemporary sources.

4. Structure of the dissertation

The dissertation is logically structured and consistently constructed. It consists of an introduction, three main chapters, conclusions, conclusion, scientific contributions, a list of scientific publications, used literature and applications. The structure is consistent with the goals and objectives of the study and allows for clarity and logical connection between the individual parts. The first chapter has a theoretical and methodological character and creates a solid foundation for the empirical study. The second chapter presents the methodology and tools of the study, clearly defining the methods used, the sample and the procedure for collecting and processing data. The third chapter is dedicated to the analysis of the results and the formulation of opportunities for improving the management of social capital in municipal organizations. The use of figures, tables and graphs contributes to better visualization and understanding of the results.

5. Scientific contributions to the study

The following main scientific and applied scientific contributions can be highlighted in the dissertation:

- Systematization and enrichment of theoretical statements regarding social capital in the context of municipal organizations.
- Development and implementation of a methodology for empirical research of social capital in municipal administrations.
- Identifying key factors influencing trust, engagement, and social networks among employees.
- Providing practical guidelines and recommendations for improving the management of social capital in the municipality of Plovdiv and similar municipal structures.
- Analysis of the relationship between social capital and the effectiveness of public policies, including social policy and public procurement.

6. Evaluation of the abstract

The abstract correctly and adequately reflects the content, structure and main results of the dissertation work. It clearly presents the goal, tasks, scientific thesis, methodology, main results and

scientific contributions. The figures and tables included in the abstract correspond to those in the dissertation, which contributes to its clarity and readability.

7. Dissertation Recommendations

Recommendations to the doctoral student include: clearer differentiation between scientific and practical contributions; expansion of the comparative analysis with other large municipalities in Bulgaria; more detailed consideration of the role of digitalization as a factor for the development of social capital. The above recommendations do not reduce the scientific value of the work, but are in the nature of guidelines for future research.

8. Presence or absence of plagiarism in the dissertation work

There are no signs of plagiarism in the presented dissertation. All sources used are correctly cited and included in the bibliography, while academic ethics and good scientific practices are observed.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be summarized that the dissertation represents an independent, up-to-date and scientifically based study with clear theoretical and applied contributions. The author demonstrates in-depth knowledge, analytical skills and the ability to apply scientific methods. On this basis, **I give a positive opinion** and believe that the dissertation of **Lilia Nedkova Nedeva** meets the requirements for awarding the **ESD "Doctor"** professional field 3.7. Administration and management.

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Plovdiv

Prepared by the opinion:
/ Prof. Valentina Nikolova Alexieva, PhD/