

REVIEW

by D.Sc. Valentina Georgieva Milenkova - professor at SWU “Neophite Rilski”

of a Ph.D. Thesis for awarding the educational and scientific degree "doctor"

in: field of higher education Social, economic and legal sciences.

professional direction 3.1. Sociology, anthropology and cultural sciences.

doctoral program Sociology.

Author: Darena Dimitrova Hristozova.

Topic: Youth life transitions in the conditions of globalization.

Research supervisor: Assoc. Ph.D. Sijka Kostadinova Kovacheva - PU "Paisii Hilendarski"

1. General description of the presented materials

By order No. PD-21-645 of March 23, 2023. of the Rector of Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski" (PU), I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury to ensure a procedure for the defense of a dissertation work on the topic "Youth life transitions in the conditions of globalization" for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "doctor" in field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional direction 3.1. Sociology, anthropology and cultural sciences, doctoral program Sociology. The author of the dissertation work is Darena Dimitrova Hristozova - a full-time PhD student at the Department of “Applied and Institutional Sociology”, with the scientific supervisor Assoc. Dr. Sijka Kostadinova Kovacheva from the “Paisii Hilendarski” Plovdiv University.

The set of paper materials presented by Darena Dimitrova Hristozova is in accordance with Article 36 (1) of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of the PU, includes the following documents:

- a request to the Rector of the PU to disclose the procedure for the defense of a dissertation work;
- curriculum vitae in European format;
- minutes from the department council related to reporting the readiness to open the procedure and preliminary discussion of the dissertation work;
- dissertation work;
- executive summary;
- a list of scientific publications on the subject of the dissertation;
- copies of scientific publications;

- list of noticed citations;
- declaration of originality and authenticity of the attached documents;
- certificate of fulfillment of the minimum national requirements;

The doctoral student has attached 4 articles.

The documents are presented in full compliance with the requirements.

2. Brief biographical data of the PhD student

Darena Hristozova was born on February 28, 1993. She is a full-time doctoral student in the doctoral program "Sociology" at the "Paisii Hilendarski" PU, Faculty of Philosophy and History from 03/1/2019 to 03/01/2022. She obtained the Master's Degree - "Human Resources Manager" at the Faculty of Economic and Business Sciences, PU. She obtained the Bachelor's degree in Sociology at the Faculty of Philosophy and History of the "Paisii Hilendarski" PU. She completed her secondary education at "St. Prince Boris I" Secondary School, Asenovgrad, foreign language profile with intensive study of English.

Her level of English: reading, writing, speaking is very good. She participated in a specialized intensive online seminar on SPSS in 2021. She completed the courses: "English Academic Rhetoric and Academic Writing for Humanities and Social Sciences" in January-February 2020 and "Research Methodology and Empirical Studies" in May 2020. She led exercises on "Empirical Sociological Research", "Sociology of Youth", "Methods and Methodology of Social Research".

She participated in 9 online trainings and seminars.

She participated with presentations in 4 international conferences and seminars. There are 6 published articles - author's and in co-authorship. There are 3 co-authors in the monograph "On the way. Migration in the life experience of Bulgarian emigrants in the EU".

3. Relevance of the topic and appropriateness of the set goals and tasks

The problem investigated in the dissertation: "Youth life transitions in the conditions of globalization", is very relevant, given the dynamics of social role repertoires and the need for young people to assume responsibilities. In the conditions of globalization, various changes are observed in the life transitions of young people: destandardization associated with an extended period of study, economic change, increasing uncertainty in the labor market, flexibilization of labor. Young people's life transitions are defined as non-linear and a transformation of values, investment in education and pursuit of professional growth is observed. It is emphasized that the youth transition from education to employment as part of the life path of young people is one of the most important transitions in the youth period. The problem of youth transitions is topical in a scientific and

scientific-applied sense, as it is related to the unstable political situation in the country and the uncertain place of young people in the labor market. The dissertation is focused on the youth with higher educational achievements (secondary, secondary vocational and higher education), thus giving a more detailed picture of the youth situation. The current social, educational and labor policies are analyzed as a factor for the available opportunities and limitations of the institutional environment of the youth. The variety of factors that can influence youth life trajectories, in which higher education becomes a value for young people and a resource for realization on the labor market, is shown. In the course of the dissertation, specific cases of vital youth transitions are analyzed, which are the basis of the formation of typologies of new models of transition to employment. The dissertation evaluates the education obtained and opportunities for job, work experience and career development, the family environment and its influence on the choices made and life prospects.

4. Knowledge of the problem

The doctoral student knows the state of the problem, she is familiar with the literature and author's analytical traditions in the field, she has presented previous studies in the issue. All this gives me reason to emphasize the high level of erudition shown in the dissertation work, which allows for the construction of an excellently balanced structure of the dissertation research and the making of generalizations and conclusions.

5. Research methodology

The chosen research methodology allows to achieve the set goal and to give an adequate answer to the tasks solved in the PhD thesis. It highlights the interplay between existing structural inequalities and the increasingly individualized lifestyles seen among young people. The subject of research is formulated - it is the youth transition from education to employment in Bulgarian conditions, including institutional opportunities and limitations. The object of the research are young people in the age range of 18-33 years who are making their first relatively independent choices regarding education, work and family. Hypotheses are formulated that reflect the family environment, forms of LLL, flexible forms of work. Empirical methods in the dissertation include a quantitative method implemented through an online survey and a qualitative method implemented through an in-depth interview. The study covers the same young people who are participants in the quantitative survey and then respondents in the in-depth interviews. The online survey (conducted in 2020) was based on the method of "those who responded" was distributed through social networks and covered 121 students; it tracks the attitude towards the education received, the opportunities for job and mobility, the role of the family, shared values. The qualitative research

(implemented in 2021-2022) includes 12 in-depth interviews with young people who are studying at a university or have completed their higher education. The topics represented in the interviews concern the problems of professional realization, the role of the family and the contribution of education, life strategies and expectations. The aim is to cover diverse cases of young people in terms of ethnicity, place of residence, gender, educational qualification, to show the life situations of young people and their transition from education to employment. As a next step in the application of qualitative methods, the life stories of four case youths were explored. The dissertation uses theoretical and empirical analyses, which in depth present a rich and diverse picture of youth transitions from education to employment. The methodology used allows the making of generalizations, through which, in addition to the descriptive side, the analytical side is also added, as well as the making of typologies that show a deeper research conceptualization and approach.

6. Caractéristique and assessment of the PhD thesis

The dissertation consists of three chapters. In the first chapter, an overview of the main theories and concepts developed in the direction is made. A systematization of various youth studies is presented, the theoretical ideas and approaches that are their basis are shown. The connection of various theories with world names in sociology and their importance for youth issues is shown. The doctoral student has managed to present in a synthesized form the contribution of various theoretical traditions to the study of youth transitions and the effect of social changes on youth potential. The tradition of youth research in Bulgaria and its evolution over time is shown. The second chapter presents the methodology of the research, by formulating the objectives, thesis, tasks and research problem. The selected research methods are described in detail, the research strategies are justified. The individual stages of the empirical work are traced and specific moments of the fieldwork are shown. The precise presentation of the methods and the specific work in their application gives a very realistic idea of the overall empirical activity, which reflects on the reliability of the results obtained from the conducted fieldwork. In this sense, I can say that tracking the research stages is an example of a conscientious and committed attitude to the subject of research. The third chapter presents an analysis of the empirical data obtained from quantitative and qualitative research. The obtained results become the basis for the formulation of generalizations, as well as for the definition of new models of transition from education to employment, which are manifested in the modern conditions of the Bulgarian reality.

7. Contributions and significance of the PHD thesis for science and practice

The present dissertation work includes scientific-applied and applied achievements.

I can define scientific-applied contributions as: enrichment of available scientific knowledge. This consists in the systematization of already existing theoretical studies in the field of youth issues. Defining and developing the research field outlines the theoretical consistency of the analysis. Very good erudition and thorough knowledge of theoretical concepts and approaches is shown. In formulating and justifying the scientific problem: youth transitions, specifics relating to the Bulgarian reality are shown.

Scientific and applied achievements are also related to the methodology. Contribution represents:

- the mixed approach used, which combines quantitative and qualitative strategy when conducting empirical research;
- the applied qualitative method "case studies" used to study the life situations, past experiences and perspectives of the researched persons.

Based on the empirical data obtained:

- the possibilities and difficulties in the transition from education to employment are explained analytically, the sources of support and the future life prospects for the two groups of young people interviewed are shown: those graduating from secondary and higher education;
- specific typologies of models of transitions from education to employment that young people follow are derived.

8. Assessment of dissertation publications

The presented publications, which reflect the results of the dissertation, include 4 articles: 2 of the articles are authored and 2 articles are co-authored with the scientific supervisor - Assoc.Prof. Dr. Sijka Kovacheva. Three of the articles are in English. Two of the articles are in: the journal „Sociologija“ and the journal „Societies“, which are indexed in Scopus and Web of Science. The other two journals are: "Sociological Problems", which is indexed in CEEOL and registered in NACID; journal „Population“ is registered in NACID.

The publications are on the topic of the dissertation work, reflecting the results of the PhD thesis and are in accordance with the requirements of the ZRASRB and the Rules for it. I appreciate the highly featured publications.

9. Personal participation of the doctoral student

The dissertation research and the obtained results are the personal merit of the PhD student. They are original and not borrowed from research and publications in which she has no participation. Originality also refers to the formulated contributions of the dissertation.

10. Executive summary

The executive summary fully reflects the dissertation work and shows the main results achieved. It is made according to the requirements and corresponds to the regulatory framework.

11. Critical remarks and recommendations

I have no critical remarks about the thesis. I recommend that the dissertation work be published as a monograph given the interesting results that have been obtained, as well as the conclusions that have been drawn in relation to the life trajectories and transitions of young people.

12. Personal impressions

I do not know Darena Hristozova personally, but based on her dissertation work, I believe that she is a serious researcher and a responsible sociologist.

13. Recommendations for future use of dissertation contributions and results

The study of youth transitions from education to employment, carried out by the doctoral student, allows the application of the methodology used by her in future studies on youth issues.

CONCLUSION

The dissertation contains scientific-applied and applied results, which represent an original contribution to science and meet the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ZRASRB), the Regulations for the Implementation of ZRASRB and the relevant Regulations of PU "Paisii Hilendarski".

The PhD thesis shows that the doctoral student Darena Dimitrova Hristozova possesses in-depth theoretical knowledge and professional skills in the scientific specialty of Sociology, demonstrating qualities and skills for independent conduct of scientific research.

Due to the above, I confidently give my positive assessment of the conducted research, presented by the above-reviewed dissertation work, executive summary, achieved results and contributions, and I propose to the honorable scientific jury to award the educational and scientific degree "doctor" to Darena Dimitrova Hristozova in field of higher education: 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional direction 3.1. Sociology, Anthropology and Cultural Sciences; doctoral program Sociology.

8.05. 2023.

Reviewer:

(signature)

Prof. Dr. Valentina Milenkova