

STANDPOINT

by Prof. Nako Raynov Stefanov, PhD / code 05.01.13 "Philosophy of Culture, Politics, Law and Economics" /, PhD in History, for a dissertation for the award of educational and scientific degree "Doctor" on the topic "**Opposition between West and modern Russia: the attitudes of modern Bulgarian society (values and ideologies)**" in a professional direction 3.1. Sociology, Anthropology and Cultural Sciences by **Martin Konstantinov Konstantinov** with Supervisor **Prof. Valentina Zlatanova**

The dissertation, the abstract and the attached publications prepared by the doctoral student Martin Konstantinov are dedicated to an important and vital topic, both for Bulgaria and for the world. The confrontation between the West and modern Russia is one of the key conflicts of today's global politics, geopolitics and geo-economics.

For Bulgaria, the division into pro-Western strata and pro-Russian oriented masses has been particularly strong for over a century and a half, even before the Russo-Turkish War of Liberation - 1877-1878. This is what makes such a topic of particular importance for Bulgarian society.

The presented dissertation has a total volume of 242 pages. Consists of:

- ✓ Introduction;
- ✓ Chapter I. Values and ideologies - essence, typology, interrelations;
- ✓ Chapter II. Values and political orientation of Bulgarians in the years of transition - empirical research;
- ✓ Chapter III. Values and ideological and political orientation of members of political parties in Bulgaria - an empirical sociological study;
- ✓ Conclusion;
- ✓ Bibliography;
- ✓ Three applications.

In terms of structure and volume, the dissertation fully meets the requirements for this type of research. In addition to publications on the topic of the dissertation, an Abstract is offered to the materials submitted for review. It has a volume of 56 pages. An interesting point that makes a pleasant impression in the Abstract is the classification of the contributions into three parts - theoretical, methodological and empirical.

The main goal of the work is formulated in the Introduction as "objective determination of the ideological and political orientation of the members of the

party structures and analysis of their dependence on their basic individual values"¹. This objectivity of the work is based on empirical political- sociological research.

As stated, "the study focuses on basic individual values and their degree of impact on political values and ideological and political orientation of politically engaged Bulgarian citizens."² Here, however, it is important to note the warning, based on Hofstede's five-dimensional model of national cultures, used in the paper as one of the methodological matrices that "the above dimensions apply only to states and not to individuals."³ Accordingly, the ideological and political orientation of the individual is determined by "two pairs of bipolar dimensions - "Left-Right" and "Conservatism-Liberalism". The first chapter of the paper presents a broad picture of the theoretical and methodological platform of the research. At the heart of this same platform are Schwartz's theory of the universal content and structure of values, Hofstede's typology of culture, and a number of others. It should be said that the doctoral student has made significant efforts to form the abovementioned platform. In our opinion, he has managed to form a serious theoretical and methodological basis for his research. Such an achievement of the dissertation needs to be highly appreciated.

Further in the dissertation - Chapter 2 - "Values and political orientation of Bulgarians in the years of transition - empirical research", a number of field studies and their results are demonstrated, affecting the complex picture of value perceptions and political orientation of citizens in Bulgaria in the period of the so-called "transitional period".

Respectively, in Chapter 3 - "Values and ideological and political orientation of members of political parties in Bulgaria - an empirical sociological study", similar field studies are conducted, which in this case reflect their value preferences and their relationship with the ideological and political orientation of the supporters of the key political organizations in Bulgaria, but with certain restrictions.

In these two chapters, doctoral student Martin Konstantinov demonstrates a strong research flair. In this respect, the work does offer a significant contribution with the empirical basis, with its analytical part, but also with the summaries and conclusions. Particularly interesting here are the comparisons with some other European countries of the value systems of the parties members with a similar ideological and political color to those of Bulgarian political organizations. An important research finding in this area is that similar ideological and political affiliations reveal significant differences in basic value preferences. In connection with the achievements of the dissertation in the 2-nd and 3-rd chapters of the work

¹ Dissertation, p.10.

² Dissertation p.9, as well as Abstract p.5.

³ Dissertation, p.28.

it can be said that the realized research, analyzes, summaries and conclusions are characterized by completeness, originality and pioneering character. These empirical-sociological researches are an important mechanism for achieving the main goal of the proposed work, as well as to prove the formulated dissertation thesis. Our view is that the huge database collected on the basis of empirical sociological research, demonstrated in 86 tables and figures, is one of the most meaningful contributions in the political-sociological sphere in our country. It should be stressed that the very formulation of the topic of the dissertation and the guidelines of the research, including its theoretical-methodological part, also have their pioneering and contributing character.

As remarks related to the given dissertation, we will emphasize that they are purely technical and rather desirable. For example, in our opinion, the bibliography should be classified on the basis of certain criteria and thus, according to these criteria, be divided and presented into certain groups.

In terms of content, we would refrain from serious remarks, as the work is largely cleared of any significant terminological, logical and other types of omissions, negligence and mistakes. However, we would recommend that when referring to the definition of "the left" as "the social"⁴, to made some corrections - "the left" should be explained "more broadly", namely as "social equality", " social justice "and" social solidarity ". In certain cases, "the right" can also manifest itself as "social", but in no case as the above-mentioned "extended" interpretation of "the social".

In this opinion we would like to ask Martin Konstantinov a question in view of the presented work, namely: The dissertation contains "restrictions" that reflect objective circumstances, such as the non-participation of GERB activists in the field research. In this regard, our question is - to what extent, if expressed in percentages, do these limitations affect the current picture of the reliability of the results obtained?

In conclusion, we will emphasize that taking into account the intelligence of the dissertation, the serious results obtained from empirical sociological research, as well as significant contributions, this work fully meets the requirements for such works. Therefore, I propose to the esteemed jury to award Martin Konstantinov the scientific and educational degree "Doctor" in the professional direction 3.1. Sociology, anthropology and cultural sciences.

September 4, 2020.
City of Sofia

Prepared the Standpoint:
Prof., Dr.Sc.(in Philosophy, Ph.D.(in History)
Nako Stefanov

⁴ See p. 124 of the dissertation - the reference to the study of Rusinova-Hristova (2018).