

To
To the Chairman of the Scientific Jury,
according to the Order No. RD 09-362 /30.10.2024
of the Director of the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology
of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
for the defense of the dissertation
of Gergana Yonkova for the degree of Doctor of Science

OPINION

by Prof. Dr. Maria Gavrailova Slavova of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"

Re: dissertation for the award of the degree of Doctor of Sociology, in the field of higher education 3. "Social, economic and legal sciences", professional field 3.1. "Sociology, anthropology and cultural sciences", scientific specialty Sociology",

Madam President,

The dissertation on "The Legal Status of the Bulgarian Family: Between Justice and Tradition" is 226 pages long. The thesis is structured in an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, a questionnaire and a bibliography of the literature used, which includes 287 titles. A list of abbreviations and 145 footnotes, charts and diagrams are listed separately. The relevance of the thesis topic is undisputed and is determined by the importance of the exposition and the conclusions reached.

The subject of study in the dissertation are the legal characteristics of the Bulgarian family in the context of tradition and the contemporary understanding of justice. Clearly formulated is the concept of the dissertation to analyze the potential of sociological science for the development of the concept of the social significance of

the Bulgarian family and its perspective. The dissertation contributes to the theoretical conceptualization of the essence of the family and reaches concrete proposals de lege ferenda with legal orientation.

The basis for the successful work of the doctoral candidate is the rich comparative legal knowledge, the disciplined methodology of critical analysis and the logical structure of the dissertation.

In the introduction the aim, objectives, methodology and path of the research are formulated.

Chapter one of the study is devoted to the justice in family relations through the eyes of the ancient thinkers Plato and Aristotle, through the philosophy of Kant, Fichte and Hegel, Auguste Comte, Stuart Mill and Frédéric Le Pleuil, in order to take a contemporary look at the social nature of marriage and family through the prism of the teachings of Durkhem and Cooley and the pretentious judgment of Simone de Beauvoir on modern marriage.

The dissertation traces the evolution that key elements of the institution of the family have undergone in legal and sociological terms, through social roles, gender division of labour, children's surnames, the division of property in divorce and the corresponding social attitudes and their conditioning.

Chapter Two, "The Legal Framework of Family and Marriage in Bulgaria", traces the framework of marriage and family in Bulgaria through the traditional customary and written rules of ecclesiastical and ecclesiastical law. Critical analysis of contemporary Bulgarian marriage and family law, de facto cohabitation and the implications for cross-border families in this country and around the world.

Chapter Three presents the author's empirical sociological research and analyses its results. The method of data collection is a direct group survey and it was chosen in

view of the possibility to have complete anonymity that would predispose to frankness in the answers. The data show that the trade-off model tends to take an increasingly smaller share among prospective families, and what the distribution between egalitarian and separative models will be depends on many factors such as the social policy of the state, including the provision of social services, and the wages of labour. With potentially low levels of wages, it is quite possible that the separative model will prevail.

The analysis of the legal framework of marriage and family, as well as the information gathered in the course of the empirical research, confirm the thesis of the dissertation that most legal norms postulate equality between partners, but in their implementation, traditions and stereotypes about the roles of both sexes have a strong impact. Alongside this, there are norms that, continuing traditions from patriarchal society, give priority to the man.

The institution of marriage today has clearly embraced the formal equality of spouses, overcoming some of the historical legal restrictions on wives, such as with regard to restrictions on their ownership of property and unequal access to divorce. Wives have equal legal status with husbands, but in actual relations formal legal equality has not necessarily led to corresponding de facto equality between spouses.

Bulgarian social policy has an ambiguous impact on family dynamics. Despite measures to support the family, there is no stable trend towards positive decisions related to marriage and childbirth.

The dissertation concludes that Bulgarian society is dominated by a modern form of patriarchy, which combines traditional and modern elements, but in an unreasonable way limits the rights of women who do not accept that they are discriminated against. The neo-patriarchal character of the modern Bulgarian family is explored, as the The

conclusion summarizes the main conclusions of the dissertation and the most important proposals de lege ferenda, which are based on gender equality, which is crucial for family well-being.

The abstract reflects the achievements of the dissertation, including its scientific contributions and its practical significance.

There is a sufficient number of scientific publications, participation in projects and specializations on the topic of the dissertation.

On the basis of the above, I believe that a dissertation with a topical subject that contains scientific contributions in the field of law and sociology has been presented. I give a positive assessment of the dissertation and propose the scientific jury to vote in favour of awarding the degree of Doctor to Gergana Simeonova Yonkova.

24 November 2024

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Prof. Dr. Maria Slavova