



## OPINION

from **Prof. Lulivera Krusteva, PhD, Sofia University „St. Kliment Ohridski “**  
( *scientific position, scientific degree, name, surname, educational / scientific institution* )

for obtaining the educational and scientific degree "Doctor of Science" in scientific field 3.5. Social Communications and Information Sciences.

with a dissertation on the topic: **AUDIENCE AND JOURNALISM. SOCIAL AND COMMUNICATION CHANGES IN THE BEHAVIOUR OF THE AUDIENCE AND THE TYPES OF JOURNALISM**  
.....",

presented by **Assoc. Prof. Maria Popova, PhD**  
.....of the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication

### **I. Evaluation of the qualities of the dissertation text**

Social and communicative changes in the behavior of the audience and the types of journalism are a topical theoretical and practical problem, scientifically attractive for a dissertation research. As such this problem has been in the author's research interest for years. The relevance and significance of the chosen topic of the dissertation is indisputable. It is also indisputable that this topicality is constantly growing due to the deepening changes in the behavior of the active audience, the users of media content, the prosumators. Processes that undoubtedly lead to changes in the types of journalism. All this, in turn, outlines the content, scope, depth of the dissertation research.

The dissertation has set itself the difficult task of analyzing an extremely complex, multifaceted social communication problem and stating a specific research focus - what social and communication changes have occurred in the behavior of the audience and the types of journalism. Maria Popova explores the beginning of a new communication model, new roles of traditional and online media in it and the specifics in this process of transformation.

The dissertation of Maria Popova presented for public defense meets the requirements for such research in terms of structure and volume of the text. The dissertation is 465 pages, with 4 tables, 47 figures and 19 images. It includes three studies, two conducted using the content analysis method and one with the Perceptica media analysis agency. The content is structured in an introduction, five chapters, a conclusion, a bibliography and an appendix - an interview with three journalists who worked at bTV. The bibliography lists 363 sources, of which 116 are in Cyrillic and 154 in Latin and 93 are media publications.

The aim and the resulting tasks of the research are clearly and precisely formulated. The same applies to the subject and object of the study. The object of the dissertation is the modern recipient, who goes beyond the traditional notion of the passive consumer, relying solely on the professionalism of journalists and business decisions of media owners about the nature and features of media information provided to him. In terms of composition, the research is arranged logically, and in terms of content it offers not only a thorough review of



the definitions and interpretations existing in the literature, but also its own scientific view of them.

The chosen methodology includes four research methods - deductive, analytical, content analysis, in-depth interviews. Each approach provides an opportunity to build on arguments in testing and proving the author's hypotheses. The three hypotheses formulated by the author are refracted through the prism of the new conditions in the media environment and journalism in general, caused by the perception of the audience as a participant in media production - from collecting and processing information, through its verification, positioning to dissemination and evaluation. Emphasis is placed on its transformation into new role variants - user, procurator, authorized audience, active audience, citizen-journalist. As a result of the new active position of the recipient, the familiar division and content segmentation of journalism is expanding, new variants of it appear, such as participatory journalism, citizen journalism, multimedia journalism, network journalism, decision journalism, etc.

**The abstract** fully reflects the volume and essence of the dissertation, both in terms of content and in terms of contributions. The requirements specific to this genre are met.

## **II. Contributions of the dissertation research**

In the Bulgarian scientific literature these aspects in their interrelation have not been dealt with in depth. They have not been the subject of separate sociological or scientific-applied research. I believe that Maria Popova has coped well with this scientific challenge and thanks to the precisely defined goals she brings additional knowledge and interpretation in communication and media research. The content of the dissertation and the performed analysis have two research fields: a) changes in the behavior of the audience and b) in the types of journalism.

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The theoretical analysis is aimed at identifying problems related to changes in the behavior of the audience, users, prosumators, etc., their role and the importance of knowledge about them, as well as, the negative effects of neglecting this knowledge. The theoretical analysis in the dissertation goes in the direction of connections and interdependence between these changes and the development of journalism with the emergence of new types in it. This parallelism, commitment to analysis is definitely a significant contribution of labor.

The scientific and scientific-applied contributions in the dissertation can be briefly systematized as follows: for the first time in the Bulgarian scientific literature such a wide theoretical observation, analysis and presentation of different topics and the scope of concepts related to new processes within the Internet communication and changes in the behavior of the audience as an accomplice in the information production, in the segmentation of the audience by different criteria. Important characteristics, specifics of a new communication model of media consumption and creation of information content are highlighted - changes not so much technological but social, such as forms of expression, semantic constructs,



language. For the first time the segmentation of the audience according to different forms of social context, the use of certain media formats, specific market mechanisms, typology according to socio-demographic indicators all as manifestations of consumer activity: consumer, prosumator, authorized user. The dissertation has an indisputable contribution character, it touches on problems that are yet to have ambiguous development. It is significant and of interest to a wide audience of experts.

### **III. Notes and recommendations**

Any such large-scale research stimulates more questions for discussion in relation to specific interpretations or claims for more detail on a problem, in this sense I recommend the dissertation to continue her research work in the field of social and communication changes in the behavior of the audience, consumers, etc. and the development of modern types of journalism, as well as to publish the text. I would like to ask the following question: in a possible future large-scale study of the structural changes of Bulgarian journalism and its audiences, what would you suggest?

### **IV. Publications and participation in scientific forums**

The author has three books, two articles and one study on the topic in Bulgarian and two articles in English, published in the last three years, thus covering the minimum national requirements for obtaining a scientific degree. In the studio "Network journalism - civic content in social media" (Yearbook of SU "St.Kl. Ohridski", FJMC, vol. 27, 2020) some of the results of one of our own empirical studies, included in the dissertation, are presented.

### **V. Conclusion**

The dissertation fills an important scientific field - through the study of new processes in media communication it shows the causal links between transformations in the activity of the audience and the emergence of new forms of journalism.

The research qualities of the dissertation and contributions give me reason to confidently vote positively for the award of Assoc. Prof. Maria Popova the scientific degree of Doctor of Sciences in professional field 3.5 Public Communications and Information Sciences.

Jury member: Prof. Lulivera Krusteva, PhD

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