

REVIEW

for the dissertation work of Jordan Jordanovich on the topic "ULRICH BECK AND ZYGMUNT BAUMAN ABOUT THE CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS" for the acquisition of the Educational and Scientific Degree "Doctor of Philosophy", professional field 2.3 "Philosophy" with supervisor Professor DSc Maria Dimitrova by Professor Tatiana Batuleva-Kancheva, DSc, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, BAS

1. Evaluation of the qualities of the dissertation text

The dissertation presented by Jordan Jordanovich consists of an introduction, 9 chapters, a conclusion, and a bibliography and is 197 pages long. The dissertation is centered on key works by two leading contemporary authors: Ulrich Beck's *Risk Society - Towards a New Modernity* and Zygmunt Bauman's *Globalization*. This choice is not accidental: their original, often diverging from the general chorus, interpretations are a focus, reflecting the specific problems of contemporary society with its highlights and possible future developments. The topic is extremely relevant: both authors point out initially latent, but now increasingly visible, negative aspects of globalization. Beck and Bauman are not only critical of these changes, which nullify the achievements of the Enlightenment, but also identify their own ways to overcome them.

The first chapter examines globalization as a social phenomenon, a set of processes, and a philosophical discourse. The author compares several different views on globalization (Roland Robertson; Jürgen Habermas; Anthony Giddens, etc.): a well-chosen approach against the background of which Bauman's and Beck's theses are subsequently analyzed. If, for Bauman, postmodernity is a decivilized modernity, an uncontrollable world, and the total dominance of market mechanisms, Beck defines it as late Modernity and a risky society. The paragraph "*Philosophical discourse of postmodernity, late modernity, risk society, and globalization*", in which the definitions of Jameson, Aylesworth, and Derrida found a place, is particularly informative. The fourth and fifth paragraphs provide a precise analysis of the specifics of Bauman's and Beck's views, presented in the main works of the dissertation. Emphasis has been successfully placed, on linking globalization with neoliberal ideology, as the main background of its occurrence. The author refers to David Harvey's definition, according to which neoliberalism values market exchange as "ethics in itself" and supersedes all ethical rules.

Chapter Two, "*Features of Globalization*," offers a comprehensive analysis of Bauman and Beck's understanding of the era's major trends and social changes. Paragraph 2 is dedicated to

Bauman's vision: the philosopher warns of the destruction of the social and the replacement of real communities with virtual ones, emphasizing that the increase in the risks inherent in globalization goes hand in hand with the dilution of responsibility. Beck relates his theory of globalization as a generator of risks and unknown, unforeseen, and sometimes irreversible consequences. The problem of poverty, dominant in modernity, in "late modernity," is transformed into a problem of the distribution of goods. The concept of the three possible scenarios for the future of a "society at risk" exposed to the will of transnational forces, in which the nation-state is deconstructed, and the family in the traditional sense of the word is dead, is specially analyzed.

Chapter Three, *Technology in the Context of Late Modernity, Philosophical Discourse* begins with an analysis of Martin Heidegger's concept of technology. The visions of Beck and Baumann were subsequently deployed. While Beck accepts that science and technology are nevertheless a response to the challenges of this simultaneously globalizing and fragmenting world, Bauman sees them as just another imperfect product created by man. As a follower of Levinas's humanist pathos, he remains skeptical of a world of technology in which anonymous rules, the human element is obliterated, and moral categories are situated in the "Procrustean box" of technocratic language.

The fourth chapter begins with the paragraph "*Time and Space*", in which the views of Bourdieu and Foucault are the starting point to focus on the concepts of Bauman and Beck: about the compression of time as a critical factor; about the dark sides of technological progress; about the global world in which the proclaimed inclusion is actually the real and increasingly irreversible exclusion of vast masses of people; about the total uncertainty.

Chapter 5, devoted to the ethical discourse of "Late Modernity and the Risk Society", deserves special appreciation. Beck connects the ethics of postmodernity with artificial intelligence and the reduction of ethical problems to a set of technological concepts. The unethical is embedded in the risk society because technological products are marketed without considering their effect on society and the natural environment. The way out, according to him, is to create a cosmopolitan society, where the universality of morality is the guarantor of its validity. Bauman sees the pitfalls of a global ethic in a world full of risks. According to Bauman, ethics cannot pass without the audacity to stand against the community, in this case, against the consumer culture that values the Other according to the laws of the market. For Bauman, "being-for-the-other" is a moral imperative that precedes all rational judgment.

Chapter 6, "Freedom and Security", focuses on the different approaches the two authors take. While Bauman focuses his attention on the processes of stratification in late Modernity, for Beck, the trajectory is different: he explicates the risks inherent in digital freedom and the contradictions of globalization. The analysis is also focused on the difficult combination of self-determination and the

desire for reciprocity, the preservation of individuality, and the need for integration into a community.

Chapter 7, *"On the Ideological Nature of Happiness and Postmodernity,"* analyzes the redefinition of the meaning of categories such as life and happiness. For Bauman (7.1.), happiness is replaced by "the happiness of consuming"; it is focused on producing and possessing things. For Beck (7.2), risk produces new inequalities at the international level, which distance millions of destinies from happiness. This brings the positions of the two authors under consideration closer together. But the naïve belief that corporations can be motivated by compassion instead of economic interests (Beck) is not shared by Bauman.

Chapter 8 *"Identity in Postmodernity"* discusses the problem of the identity of the postmodern subject and offers a comparative analysis of the two philosophers' specific readings. Both thinkers accept that postmodernity radically changes individual identity. An essential tendency that characterizes the subject of identity is that of its indeterminacy. Bauman assumes that everyone creates their own identity. He uses the term "DIY identity" for a person who constantly redefines his identity according to the dominant lifestyle and notions of good and evil.

Chapter 9 *"The Final Outcome of Beck and Bauman's Comparative Analyses"* is a summary of the various stages of the comparative analysis between Beck and Bauman. Both the negative effects of globalization and their possible solutions are presented in a synthesized form. Both main authors, U. Beck, and Z. Bauman, point out the difficult-to-control fate of the world in the conditions of globalization. But if, for Beck, a sense of global citizenship and global values provide a basis for global cooperation and democracy, Bauman is a "global humanist" who seeks the human dimensions of globalization.

2. Contributions of the dissertation research

An advantage of the work proposed by Jordan Jordanovich is that the comparative analysis of U. Beck's "Risk Society - Towards a New Modernity" and Z. Bauman's "Globalization" is situated in the context of other parallel or opposing readings. This gives it *multi-layeredness* and scale: it includes political, social, economic, and ethical projections of the theoretical views of the two thinkers.

With erudition and skill, the specificity in the interpretations of Beck and Bauman, their points of contact, and divergences are shown. By juxtaposing two different but creative lenses, the contradictory tendencies inherent in globalization are outlined. Painful and topical problems for society are examined through the visions of two leading contemporary authors and their proposed solutions.

The evolution of concepts essential to Bauman and Beck's interpretation, such as risk, responsibility, freedom and security, morality, time and space, technology, happiness and identity, their different readings, and the relationships between the categories has been successfully analyzed. In this way, the *main research task that the author set himself was fulfilled*.

The comparison shows that for both, the constitution of planetary social security without a radical change of the philosophical paradigm could not be realized. The dissertation attempts to shed light on the redefinition of philosophical categories such as risk, safety and security, freedom, responsibility, time and space, modernity and postmodernity, morality, society, and politics. The conclusion that the approach of both authors signals *the search for a new conceptual system* is substantiated.

The dissertation work is also an attempt to build one's own position based on the texts of the two authors. The reflection offered in the dissertation largely plays the role of a third, independent position. Discreet and unobtrusive but sufficiently clearly stated, it testifies to a *real author's presence*. The pathos of both authors, which the dissertation shares, is in the direction of the moral perspectives of the subject. His survival and development are in the relationship with the "Other", the one whose face activates the moral impulse in the individual and turns him into a moral subject.

The conclusion that *Bauman's humanistic sociology is an "absolute novelty" is justified*: regardless of the fact that the original idea belongs to Levinas, Bauman formulates the thesis that the only possible way out of the harmful effects of globalization should be sought precisely along the lines of a more humane and a fairer society.

3. Notes and recommendations:

As content, the introduction is informative but not structured enough. One could wish for a clearer explanation of the elements necessary for the dissertation genre: purpose, tasks, method; object and subject distinction; working hypotheses. This shortcoming is overcome in the presentation itself, which is characterized by a neat, understandable, and relevant structure and ends with specific conclusions summarizing the main content of the chapter.

There are repetitions of some passages in the auto-reference.

My recommendation is to develop further the role of postmodernity in the formation of

consciousness in future developments by including other authors and approaches (ex. Anne de Fourmantel's ideas about risk, on which the candidate already has a publication); the ways to overcome the risk, developed by the representatives of the ethics of care, etc.); the interculturalism/neoliberal globalization opposition.

4. Conclusion:

In terms of composition and content, the presented work **fully meets the requirements for dissertation work**. Throughout the work, there is a correct reference and full use of the cited rich literature. The publications presented by Jordan Jordanovich are relevant to certain aspects of the developed topic. Contributions are precise and clearly worded. The abstract accurately reflects the content of the dissertation. These facts are convincing proof that the dissertation student fulfills the minimum national requirements for obtaining the **Educational and Scientific Degree "Doctor of Philosophy"**, as well as those laid down in the Regulations for the acquisition of scientific degrees and holding academic positions at SU "St. Kliment Ohridski" and possesses theoretical knowledge, erudition and the ability for independent scientific research in this current, complex, significant and promising issue.

Having in mind the qualities of the work proposed by Jordan Jordanovich on the topic "Ulrich Beck and Zygmunt Bauman about the Contemporary Society. (Comparative Analysis)", its relevance and future prospects, **I will confidently vote for Jordan Yordanovich to be awarded the Educational and Scientific Degree "Doctor of Philosophy" in Professional field 2.3. Philosophy.**

Prof. Tatyana Batuleva, DSc.

24. 04. 2023