

SCIENTIFIC OPINION

By Prof. Nikolay Kirilov Mihailov, PhD, SU "St. Kl. Ohridski", FJMC, Department of "Communication, Public Relations and Advertising", member of the scientific jury for the procedure for the applying for the educational and scientific degree "Doctor/PhD" in professional direction

2.3. Philosophy, Ph.D. program Philosophy in English, on dissertation "U. Beck and Z. Bauman on modern society (comparative analysis)" with author **Jordan Jordanovich**, scientific supervisor Prof. Maria Dimitrova

1. General characteristics of the dissertation work. The dissertation work proposed for the applied position is structured in 10 separate parts and a total volume of 197 pages, which contain introduction, content presented in several chapters, a summary of the research result and a conclusion. The PhD candidate referred to an impressive bibliography, numbering over 150 titles from printed and online sources, in English and Bulgarian languages. The sequence of the chapters is connected logically according to the main idea and the theme of the study. The PhD candidate has also attached a certificate of compliance with the minimum national requirements, which clearly shows that he has both the necessary publications and the necessary number of points required for the educational and scientific degree "Doctor/PhD". The subject is developed in detail and with care, with the enough degree of originality of the exposition, and demonstrates a knowledge of the authors on whose ideas it is based, as well as of their problematics. The student shows theoretical ability and an extremely good knowledge of the two main works of Bauman and Beck, which are the main topics of the study, and together with this analysis is expanded with reference to other writings of these and other authors that are relevant to the topic. The abstract is detailed, meets the requirements and faithfully conveys the content of the dissertation.

2. Relevance of the topic and the problem. One of the most compelling academic qualities of Mr. Jordanovich's dissertation lies in the originality of his approach. As PhD candidate writes: "This research is primarily comparative and descriptive, and normative (prescriptive) statements are deliberately avoided" (p. 13). The chosen approach is fully suitable for the goals set for dissertation - to examine the process of globalization through the prism of well-established author paradigms (of Beck and Bauman) and to connect them with additional interpretations, as well as to reach independent conclusions from this comparison about the

significance of the experience of Postmodernity and its role in shaping true human consciousness. The author's attention is directed to categories such as risk, responsibility, freedom and security, morality, time and space, technology, happiness, identity, inequality, wealth and others, which accurately describe the key concepts of any reflection on Postmodernity from philosophical, sociological and social -philosophical point of view. The dissertation also carries a strong ethical charge, developed skilfully and in detail and dealing with the possibility of a way out of the conflict situation of modern society, which is defined as one of extreme individualism. In order to survive, the "I" must find and build a new basis for the relationship with the other. An expression of this desire for survival is uncertainty as the main challenge (according to both authors Beck and Bauman) that man has before him in the age of Postmodernity. These introductory reflections of the author, in my opinion, clearly outline his profile as an independent researcher who understood the tasks of his work and clearly realized their importance. In the dissertation, the PhD candidate makes a detailed and justified comparison between the eras of modernity and that of postmodernity, looking for the connection of the latter with poststructuralism and globalization - a complex scientific task, which, however, is completely solved by Mr. Jordanovich. I attach the quote to show the originality and accuracy of the author's language: "Postmodernists celebrate the activity of masking and cover-up, all the fetishism of locality, place and social grouping while denying that kind of meta-theory which can grasp the political processes that are becoming universal over daily life" (p. 26). The main ideas of Beck, Bauman, Giddens and many others are presented in detail and with understanding, and the analysis distinguishes the different sides of the definitions given by these authors to the key concepts for the dissertation. One of the author's conclusions is that Bauman and Beck see globalization as a process that imposes changes, especially on the ideas of the Enlightenment. They emerged as a critical factor in the decline of nation-states and common social identities. In general, I must note that the choice of two authors such as Beck and Bauman is extremely relevant to the main purpose of the dissertation research devoted to issues such as identity, risk, community, technology, and power, in the current social, cultural and economic conditions. "[Bauman] views technology as a problem of late modernity in the perspective of the point of view and rules that govern people's actions, or to put it another way, from their ethics [or morality - N.M.]" (p. 55). I personally do not know such a comparative and detailed study of the two extremely influential authors, in which a key historical period related to our modern times is analysed with a view to finding solutions to the problems it created, with an extremely skilful use of the methods of political and social philosophy. "Although technology is at the centre of our new world, it must follow but not lead

human society and universal morality" (p. 65). In addition to in-depth interpretations that clearly impress with the author's erudition and academic skills, the dissertation also contains original ideas based on the two authors' (Bauman and Beck) philosophical and social concepts and revealing a remarkable author's (Mr. Jordanovich) philosophical discourse: "There can be no space without time. And therefore there can be no "social space" without "historical space." There can be no space without history' (p. 66).

3. Scientific results and contributions. The position of the dissertation presents an in-depth study of the problems of globalization and contemporary social conditions with their crises and uncertainties. The author finds a place in his exposition for various theses, views, paradigms, mostly of the main authors U. Beck and Z. Bauman, but also of a number of other social scientists who are related to the reasoning of the two thinkers. Mr. Jordanovich skilfully uses the methods of philosophical theoretical analysis, sociological comparison, historical parallels, moral philosophy to defend the conclusions he has reached. Apart from being a social philosopher and sociologist, Z. Bauman is also a well-established ethicist, and this did not escape the PhD Candidate's research eyes. Commenting on the moral philosophy of the British philosopher, the Mr. Jordanovich notes: "His [Bauman's] position is that postmodernity (late modernity) does not represent the end of ethics, but, on the contrary, is an opportunity for ethics" (p. 83). This position of Bauman is indeed specific to him and distinguishes him as a moral philosopher. The PhD candidate has found a place in his work to point out Bauman's relationship with another thinker – E. Levinas – and the shared idea of responsibility towards the other. Unlike Levinas, however, the dissertation argues, Bauman explains evil in terms of moral indifference, a kind of moral "escapism" that he finds possible in contemporary conditions. The reliable conclusion from the analysis of Bauman's moral philosophy is that "it is purely sociological, since this theory is not supported by empirical evidence in the postmodern (late modern) era" (p.86). Bauman sees the future in the new ethics of love and care for the "Other".

Mr. Jordanovich writes that according to U. Beck ethics is connected with the discovery of a specific approach by people to the problems of nature and the environment. If such is not argued and created, it may appear risk and uncertainty for the whole society. Ulrich Beck's thesis is may be known, that the concept of "risk" is based on the fact that we ourselves, the people, produce uncertainty, which, however, we are able to control. This notion and the sense of uncertainty refers to the formulation and emphasis on universal ideas and concepts such as "human rights" according to Beck. Mr. Jordanovich assumes that, according to the German

author, most contemporary risks are reflexive in the sense that they are self-inflicted. One of the dissertation's findings sounds quite relevant: "The problem of ethics in postmodernity Beck connects with AI (artificial intelligence)" (p.100). Another important conclusion of the applicant, based on the analysis of Ulrich Beck's theory, is that the German author discusses a new type of risk that "late modernity" creates, namely the issue of privacy and surveillance of people through digital communication technology and online platforms. Serious erudition and deep knowledge are required to present such analyses as Mr. Jordanovich does with the concept of identity. "Feelings of fear and uncertainty are an integral part of a risky society" (p.131), he writes. This also applies to the uncertainty of such common identities as the national identity. What the two thinkers (Beck and Bauman) have in common, according to the author, is that they see postmodernity as an era that has radically changed the identity of individuals, it has been transformed from a "given" into a "task" and burdening the individual with the responsibility of fulfilling this task.

Overall, I assess that the PhD candidate has made an independent effort and managed correctly to grasp the two thinkers' approaches (in his view, in some ways incommensurable) to the social, moral and political experience of postmodernity, in full and particularly. This enables him to fully and comprehensively perceive the complex texts not only of the main two authors for his study, but also to trace the connections and influences that they build or receive from a whole range of other influential philosophers, sociologists, culturologists, historians, etc. At the centre of the study are the problems of the individual and freedom in a rapidly changing world that brings uncertainty, conflicts, and commercialization and, as it were, a loss of social orientation and sometimes of identity. This process also negatively affects social inequalities related to the distribution of wealth and market dominance, to global uncertainty, which often leads to the production of "organized irresponsibility".

4. Conclusion. The independently developed study of Mr. Jordan Jordanovich is a significant, thorough, and original in design and precisely executed research effort. The research and analysis of two of the most influential authors in the field of social philosophy and sociology – U. Beck and Z. Bauman, the conceiving of important conceptualizations by the dissertation, the excellently designed and conducted comparative research, contribute to the comprehensive implementation of the set research goals of the dissertation. One of the strongest points of this work is the relevance of the main themes, concepts, theoretical sources and the PhD Candidate's own conclusions for the study of the social phenomenon of postmodernism. The search and discovery of trends and emerging phenomena in the very foundations of society - culture, social

groups, organizations, common identities, rationalization, etc., represent not only a reasoned philosophical and even sociological research - in my opinion, with the affirmation of humane ideas, - but also a skilled, competent and independent young researcher. I confirm the presented contributions by the author, especially the conclusion that "the constitution of a planetary social security without a radical change of the philosophical paradigm could not be realized" (p. 187). I believe that they precisely convey the originality and thoroughness of his approach to the chosen scientific problem. In view of the indisputable scientific qualities and contributions of the dissertation work "**U. Beck and Z. Bauman about the contemporary society (comparative analysis)**" and the proven academic and research qualities of its author, **I strongly suggest to the respected Scientific Jury to confer to Mr. Jordan Jordanovich the educational and scientific degree "Doctor/PhD"** in professional direction **2.3. Philosophy**, PhD program Philosophy in English, as I myself will vote for this.

Member of the Scientific Jury:

Prof. Nikolay Mihailov, PhD

25.04. 2022