

OPINION

By prof. Tsvetan Parvanov Davidkov, D.Sc.

on the thesis of
Cengizhan Kaptan "Philosophy of Sustainable Finance"
(supervisor: Prof. Dr. Alexander Gungov)

This opinion is prepared on the basis of Order RD-38-413 / 14-07-2023 of the Rector of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" and Decision of the Scientific Jury of 18-07-2023 on the distribution of tasks among the members of the scientific jury.

The presented text is a dissertation for awarding the educational and scientific degree of PhD in PF (professional field) 2.3 Philosophy. Doctoral student Cengizhan Kaptan is a graduate, as follows: of Anatolian University (Bachelor); of Leeds-Beckett and Aston Universities.

As evidenced by his creative autobiography, colleague Kaptan has solid experience in the corporate sector, including in responsible positions. Since 2020, he has been a full-time PhD student at the Faculty of Philosophy at the University.

His training is carried out in the PhD program in PF 2.3 Philosophy, Philosophy with English Language Teaching. Scientific supervisor of the doctoral student is the respected colleague prof. Dr. Alexander Gungov.

The dissertation work is developed in a volume of 170 pages + bibliography (pp. 171-181). It is structured, as follows: introduction; Chapter 1 — Methodology; Chapter 2 – Sustainable finance: definition and historical analysis; Chapter 3 – From finance to sustainable finance; Chapter 4 – Constraints and Imperfections of Capitalism in Terms of Sustainability; Chapter 5 — How to achieve better sustainability — philosophical discourse; Chapter 6 — Concluding remarks and future tasks.

My overall assessment of the dissertation is positive. The arguments for this evaluation are:

- The topic is up-to-date and challenging. The chosen content line for interpreting the topic: *sustainability – finance – capitalism* makes it possible to consider/interpret essential aspects of the research field.
- The structure of the text follows the usual for the genre samples and allows for a full development of the logic of the dissertation. The author's logic (as a narrative) is well outlined.
- I liked the chosen methodology (at the heart of which is declared the dialectical logic of Marx/Hegel) and the critical pathos of the author. I also positively appreciate the fact that

the author does not "stay" with Hegel and Marx – he is interested in social action (including as an opportunity for resistance) and bases his narrative and analysis on developments related to social phenomenology, branches of psychology, interpretations of justice, etc.

- Results are achieved which can be evaluated as an input into the consideration/interpretation of the topic.
- The author has based his work on a rich body of sources.
- The text demonstrates *philosophical dexterity* – let's not forget that the main goal of doctoral studies is to develop skills and competences for independent scientific research in accordance with the good models in this field.

Scientific contributions. The author's claim to scientific contributions may be defended (Abstract, pp. 48 – 49). I deliberately do not open a debate here, as the aim is to evaluate what has been done, not anything possible to be done.

Abstract. I have reason to believe that the abstract (in a volume of 60 printed pages) presents well the overall text in Bulgarian language.

Scientific publications. The presented publications on the dissertation topic present to a wider audience significant results of the scientific research. The texts are published (accepted for printing) in appropriate editions (periodicals). There are reasons to believe that the publication activity of the candidate is sufficient. The texts are at a good level.

Personal impression. I don't know the candidate personally. My impressions are from the dissertation text and the publications related to it.

Discussion. Critical remarks. Recommendations. A question that excites me and – in my opinion – can be discussed in connection with the text presented - is this: to what extent is philosophical knowledge applicable directly to solving private scientific problems of a different nature? This and other texts¹ give me a reason to ask this question. In this question I highlight at least two aspects: in the system of philosophy – if this is accepted – not all knowledge has an utmost degree of commonness – in applied philosophical knowledge there are sought intersections between more general (or extremely general) postulates and research fields of the private sciences (we can denote them as concrete – with different levels of concreteness). The second reason: the "world of being" is an interaction of systems of different complexity. The overall picture is distinguished by both orderliness (within the human ability to grasp and penetrate it) and disorderliness (grounds: plurality – infinity v limitations of our cognition). In the context of what has been said: to what extent are the manifested claims of philosophy as critical knowledge applicable here – now – in a concrete relation – to a particular phenomenon? To what extent it is necessary to further build the real complexity in the direction: (here, but not only) – (now + historical context) – (in a specific connection, but also outside it)? In other words: what are the real trajectories of the ascension of private and concrete to the universal and vice versa?

¹ In this case, I refer to a text by my colleague prof. Dr. Ivan Tsenov.

Colleague Kaptan views sustainable finance exclusively as "a specific part of the financial sphere and ... the funds that financial institutions provide to industrial capitalists to make the transition to zero net carbon emissions economy by 2050." (Abstract, p. 48) In the literature on sustainable entrepreneurship, one can find statements that sustainable finance can aim at efficient solving of certain social problems – in this regard, it can be associated with the concept of corporate social responsibility (in its very broad interpretation).

In the general logic of colleague Kaptan 's presentation, there are appropriate illustrations and answers to the questions raised. And yet...

- A recommendation of a technical nature concerns the presentation of the text in Bulgarian language – there are problems of different nature with the translation into Bulgarian language.
- Usually the professional field (in this case 2.3 Philosophy) is designated in the dissertation and the abstract – such is missing in this case.

Conclusion. In view of the above, I believe that all the requirements related to the procedures for organizing and executing doctoral studies have been met, including a valuable dissertation that fully meets the good standards in the genre. I have reasons and will support the decision of the esteemed scientific jury to award Educational Scientific Degree DOCTOR (PhD) to my colleague Cengizhan Kaptan in PF 2.3 Philosophy.

Sofia, September 26, 2023

Signature: