

Certified Translation from the Bulgarian original

PEER REVIEW

By Toni Draganov Traykov, PhD, Associate Professor at Geological and Geographical Faculty of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski University"

(Member of the Scientific Jury, appointed by Order No.ПД 38-120/22.02.2022 of the Rector of the University of Sofia "St. Kliment Ohridski" and a Decision of the Faculty Council of Geological and Geographical Faculty dated February 15th, 2022, Protocol No.2)

Professional field – 4.4 – Earth Sciences (Geography of Population and Settlements)

Scientific department: Department of Socio-Economic Geography at Geological and Geographical Faculty of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski University"

Topic: **"Dynamics and interrelations on the labor market in Bulgaria for the period 1989-2021 - quantitative and qualitative changes."**

Full-time doctoral student: Milen Georgiev Velikov

Scientific adviser: Assoc. Prof. Georgi Kostadinov Burdarov, PhD

1. PARTICULARS OF THE CANDIDATE

The full-time doctoral student Milen Georgiev Velikov was born on August 1, 1982. In 2010 he graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Economics and Labor Organization from the University of National and World Economy. In the period 2010-2011, he completed a Master's Program at the University of National and World Economy, majoring in Human Resources Economics. In 2011-2012, he was in Warsaw (Poland), under the Erasmus Program. Between 2011 and 2012 he graduated with a Master's Degree from Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" in Organizational Behavior and Organization Consulting. In the period 2008-2012, Milen Velikov obtained professional qualification in "Marketing and Business Planning" at the Institute for Postgraduate Qualification of UNWE. In 2012, he graduated from the New Bulgarian University with a degree in Social and Organizational Psychology. From 2015 to 2016 he underwent training and received a Diploma in Human Resource

Management - Chapter institute of Personal Development UK (CIPD). In 2016, he got qualification as a Global Career Development Facilitator (GCDF) – Job Tiger (Center for Credentialing & Education USA). In the period 2018-2019 he completed the course The Art & Science of Coaching (Erickson College International). In 2021 he was enrolled as a doctoral student on a self-study basise at the Geological and Geographical Faculty of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski University", Department of Socio-Economic Geography.

In the period 2012-2016, Milen Velikov worked as a Human Resources Specialist at Actavis, in Sofia. In 2017, he occupied the position of Human Resources Manager at Ecopharm (Sofia). In 2017 and 2018 he worked as an expert in Human Capital and a career consultant for students at Hobelix (Sofia). In 2018, he was appointed Human Resources Director at Telelink Business Services (Sofia). Between 2018 and 2020, Milen Velikov worked as a Project Manager at HR-bg (Sofia). During the same period he also served as Human Resources Manager at Credissimo (Sofia) and Zentiva (Sofia). Since 2020 he has occupied the position of People and Processes Manager at Dentios (Sofia).

The PhD student Milen Velikov has English language competence as follows: B2 listening skills, B2 reading skills, B2 writing skills, B2 speaking skills, B2 participation in conversation. He has various computer skills - SPSS / MS Office / Workday / HerMes 4 and 5 / Small Improvements / Bamboo HR / Jira / Confluence. He has 130 contributions in publications + author's articles with a focus on HR, Career Guidance, Motivation, People Management and more. He has participated in various projects and has obtained various awards for high professional results. He is the holder of a Driving License, B Category. He has participated in organized donation and volunteer campaigns.

2. PARTICULARS OF THE DOCTORAL STUDY

By Order ПД 20-1223/25.06.2021 Milen Georgiev Velikov was enrolled as a doctoral student on a self-study basise in Professional field 4.4. Earth Sciences (Geography of Population and Settlements) at the Department of Socio-Economic Geography of the Geological and Geographical Faculty of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski University". As his scientific advisor appointed was Assoc. Prof. Georgi Kostadinov Burdarov, PhD. At an extended meeting of the Department of Socio-Economic Geography (January 26, 2022), the work was reviewed and the obtained results were discussed. On account of the implementation of the individual curriculum and the achieved positive results, the Department Council of the Department of Socio-Economic Geography proposed to the members of the FS of GGF to dismiss Milen Velikov ahead of schedule, with the right to defend habilitation thesis. At a meeting held on February 15th, 2022 (Minutes No.2) the Faculty Council of the GGF accepted the positive attestation of the doctoral student and dismissed him with the right to defense. With order ПД 20-444 / 17.02.2022 the doctoral student Milen Velikov was dismissed ahead of schedule with the right to defense, as of January 26th, 2022.

By Order ПД 38-120/22.02.2022 appointed was a Scientific Jury consisting of:

1. Prof. Dr. Kliment Minev Naidenov - Sofia University
2. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Toni Draganov Traykov - Sofia University
3. Prof. Dr. Milen Rumenov Penerliev – Shumen University "Episkop K. Preslavski"
4. Prof. Dr. Rumen Hristov Yankov – VTU "St. St. Cyril and Methodius"
5. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nadezhda Borisova Ilieva - NIGGG at BAS

Reserve members:

1. Prof. Dr. Nelly Stefanova Hristova - Sofia University
2. Prof. Dr. Chavdar Milchev Mladenov - NIGGG - BAS

3. PARTICULARS OF THE DISSERTATION AND THE ABSTRACT

The dissertation on the topic "Dynamics and relationships on the labor market in Bulgaria for the period 1989-2021 - quantitative and qualitative changes" presented for discussion comprises 287 pages. Besides the main text, this volume includes lists of figures and tables, lists of abbreviations and the bibliography used. The list of publications used in the habilitation work includes 195 titles arranged in alphabetical order. These are followed by 82 documents and Internet sources. The appendices (tables and diagrams), which are set out separately from the master text of the dissertation, can be considered as a valuable source of information in themselves. To achieve a greater clarity in the list of titles it can be recommended that the NSI editions and the periodicals should be separated from the publications of which the names of the authors are indicated.

The structure of the dissertation includes an introductory part, four chapters and a conclusion. The sequence of the individual chapters corresponds to the main purpose and the tasks set for analysis in the research.

In the introductory part of the dissertation, the author successfully corroborates the importance of the topic, referring to the large-scale changes that occurred in Bulgaria after 1989. The radical transformation in the socio-political conditions in our country began with a change in political governance followed by the replacement of the planned socialist economy and centralized economic governance with a market economy based on free competition and the development of private business. No less significant were the changes in the functioning of the labor market (LM) related to the emerging opportunities for free negotiation of working conditions, wages and all other relations in the demand and supply of labor force. In this regard, the doctoral student's comparative analysis of the differences between the planned and market economy, in terms of employment, its planning, as well as the relationship between the categories of workers and employers, can be considered fully justified.

Of importance for the overall development of the habilitation work are the clear and precise formulations of the object, subject, purpose and tasks of the research. At the same time, it can be noted that, in his desire for greater comprehensiveness in the use of facts from the past, the doctoral student has made detailed descriptions of some political events and personalities related to the country's governance in the recent past. These are not directly pertinent to the purpose of the analysis aimed at clarifying the factors and causes determining LM during the 30-year period under consideration and formulating measures for its optimization in the future. Examples of such details include the description of the long rule of T. Zhivkov and his overthrow, the enumeration of a number of international events, the results of various types of elections held in our country after 1989 etc.

The First Chapter of the dissertation presents the theoretical and methodological foundations of the study in a systematic way. It analyses in a logical sequence the essential characteristics of LM, human capital, the role of motivation for work, various motivational theories, etc. The content of this predominantly theoretical chapter shows a very good knowledge on the part of the doctoral student of the basic concepts and institutions related to LM. The inclusion in it of the

socio-economic and demographic indicators used in the analysis of the changes in LM also contributes to this. From the point of view of the causal relationship, these indicators could be considered immediately after the analysis of the basic concepts and institutions related to the demand and supply of labor force. In addition, these indicators and coefficients are well-known and frequently used and therefore there is no need to be further explained in the text. Apart from the purely theoretical and methodological formulations, the First Chapter also includes an analysis of the main historical periods in the development of Bulgaria prior to 1989 in terms of changes in LM.

The Second Chapter entitled "Main stages in the dynamics and development of LM in Bulgaria for the period 1989-2001" is a logical continuation of the analysis of the changes in LM prior to 1989. As the author's specific approach can be considered his delineating sub-periods determined on the basis of the regular population censuses conducted in our country. The sub-periods determined in this way are differentiated by the 1985, 1992, 2001, 2011 and 2021 censuses.

Based on the changes in the main demographic indicators, namely, employment and unemployment, reported in the 1985, 1992 and 2001 censuses, the doctoral student has formulated the importance of the socio-economic changes in the initial stage of the development of market economy in Bulgaria during the 90s of the last century. The main contribution point in this part of the dissertation can be considered the analyses and conclusions made about the changes during the initial period of transition and the related political and social upheavals and their impact on LM. As the doctoral student rightly points out, these are the result of the political instability during the period which undermined the public confidence in the economic reforms. Another negative factor pointed out by the doctoral student is the lack of continuity in the activities of the different governments. This resulted in a slowdown in the economic restructuring, privatization, insufficient foreign investment and other consequences leading to a decline in the industrial activities, rising unemployment and lower living standards.

The analyses of the changes in the socio-economic development of the country continue in the Third Chapter entitled "Trends in the demographic and economic development of Bulgaria between the 2001-2011 censuses and their impact on the labor market". In the critical and objective spirit characteristic of the doctoral student, an assessment was made of the reforms related to the Bulgaria's preparation for its membership in the EU, as well as of the benefits after Bulgaria joined EU in 2007. Taken into account are the advantages provided by the country's membership in the EU. Among these, figure opportunities for travel, employment and education for Bulgarian citizens in other European EU member states. At the same time, it is stated that the continuing emigration of predominantly young population has led to a loss of reproductive and labor potential, and this, together with the low birth rate, has accelerated the aging process and the resulting negative consequences for LM.

The content of the Fourth Chapter "Dynamics and interrelations on the LM for the period 2011-2021" is of the greatest relevance and practical value. In addition to the detailed analysis of the employment and unemployment situation at national and regional levels, it lays a special focus on the relations between the main participants in LM, i.e. the employees, employers and trade unions. Of greatest contributing value in this largest chapter of the dissertation are the results of the author's research, surveys and studies on the motivation and satisfaction of employees in Bulgaria in the period 2011-2021. The survey conducted for this purpose was developed by the doctoral student and is based on an entirely Bulgarian sample. What is of value in the obtained results, are the conclusions drawn and their wide applicability. Special attention deserves the proposed author's model for hierarchical classification of the factors determining the professional values of the employees, which

is applicable in the management of human resources in both the public and the private sector. In this sense, the work can be useful to both employers, managers and Human Resources experts, and to the employees themselves. The results of the survey can also be applied in the activities of career development centers, various types of schools and institutions related to LM (Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, Employment Agency, trade unions, etc.).

The abstract the size of 59 pages corresponds to the content of the dissertation. It has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for its implementation. According to the requirements, the abstract is accompanied by a reference to the contributions of the dissertation, as well as a list of scientific publications on the subject.

4. SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS

The Reference attached to the Abstract contains 4 self-formulated contributions:

1. Carried out has been a detailed spatial-temporal analysis of LM in Bulgaria for the period between 1989-2021, which takes into account all factors and relationships that mediated the dynamics in it, describing and interpreting the different types of events and processes for the studied period.
2. A comparative approach is applied, which analyzes the state and dynamics of all major actors on the labor market in Bulgaria after 1989, using different types of data from national censuses and current statistics on processes such as changes in natural, mechanical growth, age structure, educational and ethnic structure of the population, employment and unemployment;
3. An author's survey was conducted with over 7400 respondents, and the data were compared by periods and samples. In this dissertation we have analyzed the data from the study with a focus on the professional values of employees in Bulgaria and we have created an author's model that ranks hierarchically the factors that form these values, which can be applied in human resource management in both private and public sectors of the economy.
4. Based on numerous surveys and interviews, we have analyzed the most common motives for work, the factors that would make people feel happier professionally, the main fears in employees, the elements of changing jobs and those of accepting a proposal for a new one. This is a working algorithm that can be applied in various sectors and industries for selection, development, promotion and efficiency of the employees.

The contributions formulated in this way objectively reflect the benefits of the in-depth research. The first two contributions have a predominant theoretical and methodological focuses, and the third and fourth ones have a clear practical and applied significance. The research algorithm proposed by the author can be used in various sectors and industries in the selection and management of personnel. The content of the fourth contribution needs some editing for the sake of clarity.

5. PUBLICATIONS AND PARTICIPATIONS IN SCIENTIFIC FORUMS

Three individual publications have been mentioned in connection with the dissertation:

1. Velikov, M. (2021) Leading motives for the change of workplace, Panorama of Labor, issue 2/2021, "Chance" Publishing House.

2. Velikov, M. (2021) Educational structure of the population in Bulgaria for the period 2001-2011 - General characteristics and regional disproportions, Social and cultural geography, Space-society-culture, Vol. 3.

3. Velikov, M. (2021) Factors for the formation of professional values, Panorama of Labor, issue 3/2021, "Chance" Publishing House

These publications are related to the topic of the dissertation and reflect significant parts of its content.

6. CONCLUSION

The habilitation work submitted for review considers topical and significant issues related to the changes and interrelations of the labor market in Bulgaria in the period 1989-2021. The analysis of the content of the dissertation justifies my opinion that the main goal and the tasks set in the introduction have been fulfilled and this gives the research completeness. The achieved results and the proposals made by the doctoral student can be used for selection and effective management of the staff both in the private and in the state sector of the economy of the country. Based on the overall positive evaluation of the dissertation and the indicated scientific contributions, I propose that the Respected Members of the Scientific Jury should award Milen Georgiev Velikov the educational and scientific degree of "Doctor".

Associate Professor Tony Traykov, PhD

March 31st, 2022

*I, **Vanya Kirilova Nikolova**, certify that the translation from Bulgarian into English of the attached document, Peer Review by Toni Draganov Traykov, PhD, is made by me and is true to the original. The translation consists of 6 pages.*