

# REVIEW

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Prof. Galina Georgieva Kurteva, *Bulgarian Free University,*  
*Professor in speciality "Social management" in professional field*  
*3.7. Administration and management*

Ref.: Dissertation for conferring of educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in professional field 3.7 "Administration and Management" at the Department of "Regional Development" at the Faculty of Geology and Geography of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".

Author of the thesis: **Elena Mitova Kamenova**

Topic of the thesis: **„IMPACT OF THE DEMOGRAPHIC SITUATION IN BULGARIA AFTER 1990 OVER THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE HUMAN CAPITAL AND SILVER ECONOMY“**

PhD Adviser: **prof. Kliment Minev Naydenov**

**Grounds for** presenting the review: member of the scientific jury for the defense of the dissertation according to Order № RD -20-119 / 22.02.22 of the Rector of the Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" and a decision of the first meeting of the scientific jury from 17.03.2022.

The review was prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Law for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its implementation and the Internal Rules for the Development of the Academic Staff in Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".

## **1. Information about the dissertant**

The PhD student Elena Mitova Kamenova received a bachelor's degree in Political Science from Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" in 2004 and obtained a master's degree in International Relations from the same university in 2007. According to Order № RD 20-145 / 18.01.2019. of the Rector of the Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" she is enrolled in the doctoral program "Regional Development" in the professional field 3.7 Administration and Management at the Department of Regional Development of the Faculty of Geology and

Geography at the Sofia University. Prof. Dr. Kliment Naydenov has been appointed scientific supervisor. The training was carried out in regular form during the period 2019-2022. As a PhD student Elena Kamenova has fulfilled all the requirements planned in the study plan. By order № RD 20-450 / 17.02.2022 of the Rector of the Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” due to the expired term, as of 01.02.2022. The doctoral student was written off with the right to defend her dissertation.

Elena Kamenova has extensive administrative experience in the public sector. In the period 2005-2018 she is a state expert in the Communications Directorate of the National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria. She has worked in areas related to the educational policy of the National Assembly and institutional public communication, she was a Correspondent of the National Assembly with the European Center for Parliamentary Research and Documentation.

Elena Kamenova also has many years of teaching experience. Since 2004 she has been a freelance teacher. She teaches English and Bulgarian for foreigners. She is fluent in English, speaks German and Spanish.

## **2. General assessment of the thesis**

### **2.1. Structure and content of the thesis**

The total volume of the dissertation is 376 pages and includes three chapters, introduction, conclusion, bibliography. There are 43 pages of appendices related to the research in the dissertation. The main text is supported by 55 tables and 115 figures. The volume of the thesis is more than satisfactory.

### **2.2 Assessment for: actuality of the topic; the goal; the tasks; object; the subject; the main thesis of the dissertation**

The dissertation is dedicated to a problem of current interest related to the economic development arising from the dominant demographic phenomenon in the 21st century - the population ageing. The author substantiates the actuality of the researched issues in the dissertation with the fact that in modern theories of economic growth human capital is considered as one of the key factors for economic development, creating preconditions for innovation and increasing labor productivity. The development of human capital is a reflection of the demographic processes in individual countries. The main drivers of demographic trends are births, deaths and migrations. In this context, PhD student Elena Kamenova defines the current demographic situation in Bulgaria as a crisis - population decline, change in its structure in favor of the elderly, working age population decline. Under

these conditions, problems arise related to the opportunities for human capital development. In the context of the concept of "silver economy", the author emphasizes on the need for development of a wide range of activities that on the one hand meet the needs of older people as consumers, and on the other hand create a precondition for using their potential. Therefore, taking into account the good practices in different regions and countries of the world which are changing the focus of their policy towards the elderly population, the author emphasizes on the fact that it will be important for Bulgaria to use the potential of older people in the coming years. According to the author, this can be done through lifelong learning and the definition of adequate policies to promote the activity of older people.

*With the conclusions made and the recommended measures for improvement of the potential of human capital, the thesis is essential in solving a real and complex problem arising from the deteriorating demographic situation in Bulgaria over the past 30 years.*

The main thesis of PhD student Elena Kamenova is that the dynamics of the demographic situation in Bulgaria affects the development of human capital and the silver economy and the adoption of specific measures may change certain demographic trends.

PhD student Elena Kamenova defends her thesis by aiming to outline the main parameters of the demographic situation in Bulgaria in the period 1990 - 2019 and to prove the interrelation of the development of human capital and the silver economy.

The study of the potential of human capital in Bulgaria by planning regions through statistical methodology for data analysis provides reliable information about the state of the human capital and its components in the country and by region. A full analysis of each of the twenty-five indicators used is proposed. These are of key importance for determining the educational, health, labor, socio-cultural and intellectual potential as components of human capital. The development of the silver economy has been reviewed and analyzed at the national level and specific recommendations have been outlined for effectively addressing the challenges posed by population ageing.

Elena Kamenova defines the specific research tasks for the realization of the determined research goal as follows:

1. Clarification of the current demographic situation in the Republic of Bulgaria;
2. Study of the demographic development of the country;
3. Analysis of the impact of the demographic processes on the development of human capital and the silver economy in the Republic of Bulgaria; study of the potential of human capital in Bulgaria at regional level; monitoring the dynamics of the factors leading to

demographic ageing of the population in Bulgaria and the demographic indicators related to ageing in the context of the dynamic demographic situation in the European Union;

4. Analysis of the development of the silver economy in Bulgaria and review of measures to promote active life of the elderly; the silver economy as an important European priority - a comparative overview of the development of the silver economy in Germany and Japan;

5. Study of the challenges posed by the ageing population;

6. Outlining specific ideas for overcoming certain demographic problems as well as recommendations for improving the potential of human capital in Bulgaria and for the development of the silver economy in the country.

PhD student Elena Kamenova correctly justifies the limitations in the implementation of her research tasks which are related to the specifics of using indicators to derive trends and patterns in the demographic processes in Bulgaria for a long period of time since 1990 until 2019

According to the formulated tasks, the subject of the dissertation are the demographic processes in Bulgaria between 1990 and 2019, and the object of study is the demographic situation in the country in terms of deteriorating demographics and its impact on human capital development and the silver economy in the country.

### **2.3. Bibliography**

The list of **literature** used by PhD student Elena Kamenova is impressive, consisting of 206 information sources: Bulgarian and foreign language scientific literature, regulations and strategic documents, Internet addresses with specialized information from national and international institutions. The main sources of data used for the empirical analyses are the National Statistical Institute, Eurostat, the World Health Organization, the World Bank and others as well as strategic and regulatory documents. Literary and information sources are appropriately used and correctly cited in the exposition of the dissertation.

**My generalized assessment:** PhD student Elena Kamenova correctly substantiates the actuality of the issues she studies; correctly defines the main thesis and the restrictive conditions for its proof; the subject and the object of the research are clearly outlined and together with the correctly set goals and tasks predetermine the content and structure of the dissertation. In the three substantive chapters, the doctoral student shows a certain ability to clearly distinguish and reason the scientific defense of her views on the development of human capital and the silver economy in Bulgaria, taking into account the trends in the

demographic processes. The used literature is diverse, sufficient and focused on the researched problem.

### **3. Assessment of the results achieved in the dissertation**

The main results of the research are presented in the individual parts of the dissertation:

**The first chapter** has a conceptual character and outlines the theoretical and methodological foundations of human capital, population ageing and silver economy. The retrospective analysis of the development of the concept of human capital systematizes the factors determining the formation of human capital - education, health, migration. Based on the analysis of the role of human capital for economic growth, the benefits of targeted impacts on the factors involved in the process of human capital formation are substantiated. The advantages and disadvantages of different methods for measuring human capital are discussed. The first chapter also covers the theoretical aspects of population ageing and silver economy. A thorough review of the models of the silver economy in Germany and Japan has been made.

**The second chapter** presents the results from the study of the demographic situation in Bulgaria. General demographic trends related to the number and age structure of the population, migration processes, mortality, birth rate are presented. The main problems related to population ageing have been identified.

**The third chapter** contains the results from the research of the potential of human capital in various aspects - educational, health, labor, socio-cultural and intellectual potential. The research was conducted using a statistical method with quantitative and qualitative indicators at national and regional level (by planning regions). Based on the results of the analysis of the influence of the demographic situation on the development of human capital, the doctoral student Elena Kamenova proposes specific measures for the development of the intellectual and innovative potential of human capital. At the same time, she presents her vision of the prospects for the development of the silver economy in Bulgaria in the context of current demographic trends.

The clear and consistent methodology and the use of a variety of **tools** contribute to these results. PhD student Elena Kamenova shows ability to apply the analytical, comparative, deductive and inductive method in relation to the review of the literature in the field. The historical method is skillfully applied when studying the specifics of the main theoretical and methodological directions in the evolution of the concept of human resources. The

methodological framework is based on the spatial approach on two levels - national and regional. In her practical research, PhD student Elena Kamenova successfully applies demographic methods, mathematical-statistical and grapho-analytical methods.

**In conclusion**, the results in the dissertation work fully correspond to the tasks set in the introduction of the dissertation which is a reason to consider the main goal of the thesis successfully implemented.

#### **4. Assessment of the scientific contributions**

The dissertation contains a number of conclusions, ideas and suggestions that can be assessed as contributions of theoretical and practical nature.

The following can be assessed as contributions of a theoretical nature:

- the results from the analysis of the evolution of the concept of human capital, the identification and research of the factors determining its formation and the systematization of the methods for its measurement;
- the scientifically substantiated conclusions from the theoretical review of the main formulations in the concepts of population ageing and the silver economy and from the presentation of different models of the silver economy.

They verify and expand the basic statements about the demographic determinants of the modern theory of economic growth.

The results from the research on the demographic situation and the state of human capital in Bulgaria can find practical applicability in determining the regional policy in human capital management. In the context of the thesis that human capital is influenced by the demographic situation and is key to economic growth, the results can be a guide in developing policies and measures to promote the development of educational, health, labor, socio-cultural and intellectual potential of human capital by regions in the country.

In conclusion, I accept the claims of the doctoral student Elena Kamenova for the contribution moments in her dissertation. In general, their style of description is acceptable. I consider the contributions to be significant both for the practice and for the enrichment of the existing knowledge.

#### **5. Publications related to the thesis**

The list of publications on the topic of the dissertation presented in the abstract contains four reports (three in Bulgarian and one in English). They are sufficient according to the minimum scientometric indicators. They promote the main thesis, the results from the research and the contributions of the dissertation. These publications show the ability of PhD

student Elena Kamenova to adequately inform the public about the ideas she has developed on the issues in the dissertation.

#### **6. Assessment of the dissertation abstract**

The submitted abstract has a volume of 56 pages. The abstract is compiled in accordance with the requirements, reflecting in a synthesized form the content of the dissertation, thesis, object and methodology of the study as well as the final results, a declaration of originality is attached. The abstract also presents a reference to the contributing moments in the conducted research. The report has been compiled correctly and reflects the scientific results achieved by the doctoral student Elena Kamenova.

#### **7. Remarks, recommendations and questions**

I have no critical remarks on the presented ideas and statements in the dissertation. I recommend PhD student Elena Kamenova to determine priorities arising from the relevance of the dissertation, to concentrate and deepen her research and to promote the results of these studies in authoritative international and national publications.

#### **Conclusion**

The dissertation: "Influence of the demographic situation on the development of human capital and silver economy in the Republic of Bulgaria after 1990." meets the established requirements for research, contains its own research on a specific current problem, based on an in-depth study of various information sources and presents a reasoned scientific defense of the results achieved in this study. A number of formulations, ideas and proposals in the dissertation can be evaluated as contributions of theoretical and practical nature which gives me reason to give my positive assessment of the dissertation.

In my opinion, the dissertation also meets the requirements of the Law on Academic Development, the Law on the Development of Academic Affairs and the Internal Rules for the Development of the Academic Staff at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".

Based on all this, I propose to the members of the Scientific Jury to award the scientific and educational degree "DOCTOR" in the professional field 3.7 Administration and management to ELENA MITOVA KAMENOVA.

14.04.2022

Signature:

  
/prof. Galina Kurteva/