

R E V I E W

of dissertation for awarding the educational and scientific degree "Doctor"

In the field of higher education: 1. Pedagogical sciences

Professional field: 1.2 Pedagogy (Comparative education)

Author: Svetozar Vihrenov Petrov

Topic: "Comparative study of history textbooks for the first three high school classes in Bulgaria, Northern Macedonia and Serbia"

Scientific adviser: Prof. DSc. Nikolay Popov

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1. General presentation of the procedure and the doctoral student

Svetozar Petrov was born in 1988. He graduated in history with pedagogical qualifications (bachelor's degree) and old and medieval history (master's degree) at the University of Veliko Tarnovo "St. St. Cyril and Methodius". He has worked as a history teacher, reporter, database organizer, teacher and trainer at the "Together in Class" Foundation. For the period 15.02. 2019 - 15.02. 2022 is a full-time doctoral student at the Department of Social Pedagogy and Social Work at Sofia University. There are no violations of the procedure and all the necessary documents have been submitted.

2. Relevance of the topic

The topic of the dissertation is relevant not only as a problem, but also as a development, as a research in which systematic, consistent and responsible. The specific significance of the research is the critical didactic (comparative) analysis of history textbooks. This is a *real contribution*, as this type of analysis is rare in research that focuses more on content analysis. Svetozar

Petrov's dissertation presents and evaluates the methodological and pedagogical value of history textbooks as a projection of the educational systems of the states. This determines the specifics of its relevance.

3. Knowledge of the problem

Despite the difficult problems to study, the doctoral student was able to draw a clear line of research, formed around "own methodology", which is constructed on the basis of analysis and adaptation of leading theoretical pedagogical concepts and a specific operational tool - Anderson's taxonomy and Crawthol, which is applied in the comparison of nine history curricula and nine textbooks. Three criteria have been formulated, according to which the textbooks have been compared - by countries and by classes. All this is *a real contribution* in the field of comparative education and pedagogy. The approach (the second hypothesis) to compare and analyze the didactic justification, the "didacticization" and the different learning activities, and not the factual content, is also correct. This avoids "pitfalls" of a pseudo-historical and political nature. Very good impression is made by the fact that the analysis is critical and with the relevant conclusions and summaries after the main arrays of the text - paragraphs, chapters. It follows a general deductive logic - from macro to micro, and the text consistently follows the research logic and presupposes the next analysis. This allows a clearer orientation in the variety of facts, data and conclusions. The whole text is illustrated with precise tables, which can also be cited as *a contribution* to summarizing the facts.

4. Research methodology

The overall research concept is consistently outlined, structured and justified. The purpose and tasks are well formulated and accurate. The methods used correspond to the research concept and cover the main research fields. The

comparative method is mostly used, which consistently compares structural models, curricula and textbooks and allows for a unified analysis of the various elements of the educational system. The other methods are: content analysis, didactic analysis, quantitative data analysis, the taxonomy of Anderson and Krathwohl, which is particularly suitable for the specific study. The theoretical analysis that is inevitably present in any (comparative) dissertation research can also be added.

5. Structure and characteristics of the dissertation

Structurally, the dissertation consists of an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, scientific contributions, publications on the topic of the dissertation, references - a total of 263 pages. The first chapter presents the structural models of school education, programs and goals of education in the three studied Balkan countries. The similarities and differences are shown. Based on a comparative analysis of the regulatory framework, conclusions are summarized that justify the following analysis. This is *a real contribution* that outlines the educational framework and learning profiles of education in the three countries. The second chapter is dedicated to the textbook, in particular to the history textbook and the ways / criteria for analysis. A detailed theoretical review of the topic was made, the approaches for analysis were outlined and three criteria for analysis were formulated. This is *a real contribution*, which enriches the arsenal of methods and tools for analysis of textbooks in general and history textbooks in particular. The third chapter is the focus of the study because it is devoted to the analysis of history textbooks. Here the possibilities of the comparative method are "played out" and shown - nine textbooks are analyzed, according to the three criteria, for each criterion the textbooks by countries are presented first, and then a comparative presentation by classes is made. This is *a real contribution*, which enriches the comparative scientific knowledge with the specific

didactic profile of the Balkan textbooks, which is important for pedagogy. The final conclusions are significant and stem from the analysis and research data. They also open up future research perspectives.

6. Assessment of the contributions and authorship of the doctoral student

The dissertation is a personal work of the doctoral student, and the text correctly presents authors, results, references. The contributions made are correct, although they could be supplemented by what specifically enriches comparative pedagogical theory and practice. The paper discovers new and unexplored focuses in a research field, albeit studied from different points of view, which enriches the conceptual, substantive and conceptual understanding of comparative pedagogical analysis and its application in comparing history textbooks. Of particular value is the fact that the educational systems and textbooks of three Balkan countries are studied, because, as the doctoral student points out, "Balkan countries traditionally link past and present."

7. Abstract and publications

The abstract reflects the main achievements of the work and is sufficiently representative. There are 5 independent publications from different scientific genres, which are also sufficiently representative.

8. Notes and recommendations for future use of dissertation contributions and results

The doctoral student showed responsibility and scientific reflection and in practice has complied with almost all recommendations and comments from

the previous stages of discussion. My recommendation is related to the even wider presentation of the results and the development of a practical manual for comparative analysis of textbooks (history) according to the methodology used.

Question: Explain in particular the idea of future "better development" of Bulgarian textbooks? - pp. 251.

Summary: The dissertation presents a topical and significant problem for pedagogical theory and practice. The results and conclusions have a specific scientific and practical significance for the realization of the main idea, as well as an opportunity for new future research.

CONCLUSION: The dissertation has a number of indisputable qualities and complies with the Law on the Development of Academic Staff and the Regulations for its implementation. It contains scientific and scientific-applied results, which give grounds to give a **positive assessment** for awarding the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" of Svetozar Vihrenov Petrov in the field of higher education 1. Pedagogical sciences, professional field: 1. 2. Pedagogy (Comparative education).

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Prof. DSc. Klavdia Sapundjieva