

OPINION

by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Valentina Grigorova Grigorova-Gencheva,
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on a dissertation for the award of the scientific degree „Doctor of Sciences”
in Higher Education Area 3. Social, economic and legal sciences
Professional direction 3.8. Economy

Author: Prof. Dr. Yulia Dobрева

Topic: „Global, regional and national dimensions of social inequalities”

1. General description of the presented materials

By order № 698/16.12.2024 of the Rector of the Higher School of Insurance and Finance Prof. D.Sc. Boris Velchev, I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury for providing a procedure for the defense of a dissertation on the topic „Global, regional and national dimensions of social inequalities” for the acquisition of a scientific degree „doctor of sciences” in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, Professional direction 3.8. Economy. The author of the dissertation is Prof. Dr. Yulia Dobрева – candidate to the Department of Finance and Insurance,,

For an opinion, I received a dissertation with a volume of 207 pages, entitled „Global, regional and national dimensions of social inequalities”, and an autoreferat with a volume of 63 pages.

The materials submitted by Prof. Dr. Yulia Dobрева include documents on presented inventory: autobiography, dissertation work and autoreferat in Bulgarian, list and summaries of publications, list of citations, as well as a declaration of the originality of the dissertation

The applicant has attached 1 study, 1 chapter of a collective monograph and 9 articles.

2. Brief biographical data about the candidate

Prof. Dr. Yulia Dobрева is the vice-rector of VUZF and director of the "Economics" Department at VUZF Lab.

She is a doctor of economics, majoring in „Political Economy“. She graduated from SU "St. Kliment Ohridski", where he defended his doctoral dissertation on "Optimization modeling in the study of sustainable development" in October 2011. Since January 2012, he has been a part-time lecturer at the Higher School of Insurance and Finance (VUZF), as well as an honorary lecturer at

the International Faculty of the University of Sheffield, Great Britain. Since February 2014. Yulia Dobрева is the chief assistant at VUZF, in March 2016 she was elected associate professor, and in October 2021 - professor. Leads lectures and exercises in the bachelor's courses in the disciplines „Sustainable Development“, „Operational Management“, „Financial Management“, „Accounting“, „Management Accounting“ and „Financial Institutions and Markets“, as well as in the master's courses in the disciplines „Behavioral Finance“, „Globalistics“, „Consumer Behavior“.

He is the author of two textbooks, three books and a number of articles and scientific publications dedicated to the problems of sustainable development, the global economy, behavioral economics and institutional development. She has participated in a number of international scientific conferences and projects in Italy, England, Denmark, Lithuania, Czech Republic, Poland, Greece, Turkey, Romania, Qatar, etc.

Prof. Dobрева also has many years of management experience in the banking sector.

3. Characterization and evaluation of the dissertation work

The dissertation structure chosen by the author includes the following elements: introduction, first chapter „Nature and main characteristics of inequality“, second chapter „Global and regional aspects of inequality“ and third chapter „National aspects of inequality“. Each of the chapters is divided into six parts and ends with conclusions. Also included in the structure of the development are a list of the literature used and the formulation of conclusions and contributions.

In the first chapter, the ways to measure inequality by measuring poverty are presented, the concepts of „equality“ and „parity“ are introduced and compared, basic human needs and social indicators are analyzed. Prof. Dobрева gives concrete examples of the impact of growth on poverty. This part also examines the more important theories of inequality and poverty (Ricardo, Marx, neoclassical and labor surplus model). The author pays special attention to the effects of creative destruction and innovation on inequality. She sees the five stages in the process of creative destruction as a factor creating jobs and an integral part of the process of economic development and growth.

Chapter two is devoted to the critical analysis of the global and regional aspects of inequality. Prof. Dobрева consistently examines income inequality, the factors that determine it and the prospects for overcoming it in Europe and the USA, in Asia, Africa and South America. The author also focuses on the impact of the Covid-19 epidemic on global inequalities. The main conclusions define Europe as the region with the lowest degree of inequality in the world. In conclusion, the main causes of inequality in Asia, Africa and Latin America are also formulated.

The candidate devotes the third chapter in her research to the main characteristics of inequality in Bulgaria and to the factors that determine it and cause it to increase. The Gini index and

polarization in income are presented as measures of inequality. In the conclusions to this chapter, Prof. Dobрева formulated some specific recommendations for overcoming inequality in Bulgaria, namely: ensuring economic growth, a minimum wage corresponding to the standard of living, introducing progressive taxation and improving education with a focus on the relationship between business and academia.

The dissertation structure selected by Prof. Dr. Yulia Dobрева, presented above, includes the main elements necessary for the analysis of empirical data and problems and allows to fully develop the main topics related to the global, regional and national dimensions of social inequalities. The reliability of the data used is guaranteed by the main sources of information on the subject that the author uses. These are UN reports, Numbeo data (the world's largest cost-of-living database, which includes information on over 12,000 cities), UNDP reports, World Bank data, Eurostat, NSIs of Bulgaria, etc.

4. Contributions and relevance of development to science and practice

The topic of inequality in one country, as well as between different countries and continents, is one of the most relevant topics in the conditions of globalization and striving to achieve social justice and sustainable growth. The author's goal is to make an in-depth study of the contemporary characteristics of global, regional and national socio-economic inequalities. Prof. Dobрева brilliantly achieves this goal by realizing the following contributions of a theoretical and practical-applied nature in the process of work:

1. Conducts a critical and in-depth theoretical review of the main terms and indicators used to measure inequality and their application.

2. Examines the interrelationship between inequality and economic growth by analyzing the example of South Korea, Japan and Taiwan over a 30-year period (1965-1995). The conclusion to which Prof. Dobрева arrives empirically and analytically, is that „at the beginning of a given cycle of the economic upswing there is a certain increase in inequality, followed by a permanent decrease with maintenance of growth to the high values reached“. This conclusion is of fundamental importance for the development and implementation of national and European policies for sustainable growth and reduction of social inequalities.

3. Formulates the thesis and proves that income inequalities in financial and economic crises, as well as in economies in transition, can be overcome through innovation, creative destruction and

highly productive investment. This contribution goes beyond theory and can find application in the field of economics, to predict successful investments and introduce innovations in production.

4. Analyzes the manifestation of inequality in different regions of the world (Asia, Africa, Latin America) by processing a serious database, giving concrete examples of good and bad practices and defining its main characteristics in these regions. Of significant theoretical importance is the author's comment on the problems in the analysis of data on world inequality. They can only be overcome by combining different types of data sources: stand-alone or collective surveys, tax data and national accounts.

5. It marks the specifics of income inequality in Europe, which can only be compared to its counterpart in a leading economy such as that of the USA. A serious theoretical contribution is the analysis of data and the critical review of scientific publications on inequalities in the countries of Eastern Europe after 1980.

6. Performs an in-depth analysis of inequality in Bulgaria in the context of the region, outlining the leading trends for the period 2000-2022 and proposing ways to reduce it in the future. The author's recommendations for overcoming inequalities in Bulgaria represent the most significant scientific and applied contribution of the dissertation: „economic growth, minimum wage corresponding to the standard of living, progressive taxation and improvement of education and especially focusing on the relationship between business and academia.“

Against the background of Prof. Dobрева's conclusions that the quality of institutions and the efficiency of their policies for creating conditions for sustainable development are one of the main factors for overcoming inequalities, her analyses and recommendations could be successfully applied in the creation and implementation of modern government policy in the Republic of Bulgaria in the social and tax spheres, as well as in the field of education.

5. Assessment of publications on the dissertation work

In the candidate's research, there are original scientific and scientific-applied contributions that have received international recognition, some of which have been published in journals and collections of international scientific conferences. Prof. Dr. Yulia Dobрева has 11 (eleven) publications on the topic of the dissertation: chapter of collective monograph-1, scientific study-1, conference reports and articles-9. All publications are her independent researches. Nine of the publications are in English.

6. Assessment of the fulfillment of the minimum national requirements

The documents and materials presented by Yulia Dobрева meet the requirements (s) of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ZRASRB), the Regulations for the Implementation of the ZRASRB and the relevant Regulations of the VUZF for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree „doctor of sciences“ in the professional direction 3.8.

Economy.

7. Autoreferat

The abstract has a volume of 63 pages. It contains a description of the main characteristics of the dissertation work, incl. structure and content, relevance of the chosen topic, summary presentation of the dissertation and publications on the topic of the dissertation. The autoreferat of the dissertation work was prepared in accordance with the requirements adopted for similar scientific developments.

The Autoreferat specifies the research methods, problems and limitations of the dissertation work in the context of theoretical generalizations and solutions to major scientific or scientific applied problems, in accordance with modern achievements in this field. Prof. Dr. Yulia Dobрева precisely formulated the object and purpose, as well as the main hypothesis of her research. The six main research tasks that the author sets for herself are also listed. The main part of the autoreferat includes the most essential elements of the studies in each of the three chapters of the thesis. The conclusion presents the conclusions, recommendations and scientific and practical contributions of the dissertation work.

Also attached is a Declaration by Yulia Dobрева, in which the author states the originality of her dissertation, the absence of copyright infringement of other persons and the complete absence of copied elements from her doctoral dissertation, entitled „Application of optimization tasks in the study of the process of sustainable development“, defended at Sofia University „St. Kliment Ohridski“ in 2011.

8. Critical remarks and recommendations

The dissertation work of Prof. Dr. Yulia Dobрева has a number of merits, which are listed above, I have no specific remarks. I would recommend the author to continue her scientific research in the field of social and income inequality in Bulgaria with a focus on the analysis of the processes after the country's admission to the Eurozone. I would like to formulate two questions for Prof. Dobрева:

1. What are the more important measures to be taken in order to reduce socio-economic inequality in Bulgaria?
2. Is it possible to eliminate definitively the socio-economic inequality between the populations of different continents, or is it a utopia?

CONCLUSION

The dissertation contains scientific, scientific-applied and applied results that represent an original contribution to science and meet all the requirements of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ZRASRB) and the Regulations for the Implementation of ZRASRB. The presented materials and dissertation results fully comply with the specific requirements of the Terms and Conditions for obtaining the scientific degree “Doctor of Science” at the Higher School of Insurance and Finance.

The dissertation shows that the candidate Prof. Dr. Yulia Dobreva has in-depth theoretical knowledge and professional skills in Professional direction 3. 8. Economics by demonstrating qualities and skills for independent research.

Due to the above, I confidently give my positive assessment of the conducted research, presented by the dissertation work reviewed above, self-referral, achieved results and contributions, and I propose to the honorable scientific jury to award a scientific degree „Doctor of Sciences“ to Prof. Dr. Yulia Dobreva in Higher Education Area 3. Social, economic and legal sciences; Professional direction 3. 8. Economy

27.01.2025.

Reviewer:

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Valentina Grigorova-Gencheva