

## **PhD Dissertation Evaluation Report**

By Prof.Dr. Nikolay Zaprinov Arabadzhiski - member of the scientific jury for the evaluation of the dissertation work of the doctoral student Boris Filipov Hadzhipetkov on the topic: "Deficits and priorities of communication practices in the local self-government system in Republic of Bulgaria" for obtaining education and scientific degree "doctor" in the scientific field "Organization and management of the non-production sphere (public administration) in professional direction "Administration and management"(3.7.).

The dissertation work submitted for evaluation on the topic "Deficits and priorities of communication practices in local self-government in the Republic of Bulgaria" was developed by Boris Filipov Hadzhipetkov - a doctoral student in the Doctoral Program "Organization and Management of the Non-Productive Sphere (Public Administration)" of the NBU accredited by NAOA with academic supervisor Prof. Dr. Ludmil Georgiev.

The PhD dissertation consists of an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, three appendices, references and sources, and has a total volume of 237 standard pages.

In the introduction, the doctoral student provides arguments for the importance and relevance of the research, having brought out the research problem - the hitherto unexplored communication practices in local self-government. The purpose of the research is clearly defined - to determine the deficits and priorities of communication practices in local self-government. Five tasks that will be carried out for its achievement are also specified. As the subject of research, the doctoral student indicates "the communication practices in local self-government in Bulgaria, considered through the prism of the management carried out by the local authorities and their supporting administrations", and as the object "the local authorities and their supporting administrations in the Republic of Bulgaria". The main thesis that the doctoral student puts forward and will try to defend is that "Still, the state of external proactive and Internet-based communication practices carried out by local authorities and their supporting administrations do not contribute enough to the deployment of the complex processes of decentralization." Research methodology and limiting conditions are indicated.

In Chapter one, entitled "Theoretical framework of the study of the deficits and priorities of communication practices in local self-government", the doctoral student takes on the task of "forming the theoretical framework of the study". In this regard, the organization of the system of local self-government and the role of communication interaction in the implementation of its functions are clarified. The four organizational characteristics of local self-governance brought out as a result of the analysis have a contributing aspect - "social

collective", "embedded environment", "social capital of local authorities and their supporting administrations" and "coordination function". Subsequently, the structural properties (hierarchical arrangement, interdependence and permeability of the organizational boundaries) of the local self-government system are examined, logically moving on to the examination of the system processes expressed through those of the exchange and feedback of information. In this chapter, the doctoral student presents the modern aspects of the system of local self-government, making an attempt to define the concepts of "decentralization", "de-concentration", "delegation" and "devolution". The substantiation of the doctoral student's proposals "normative model of the communication practices of local authorities in Bulgaria" including five areas (pp. 65-85) is of a contributing nature.

In the second chapter entitled "Methods of scientific research and operationalization of the theoretical propositions from the first chapter", the doctoral student states his attempt to create a practical mechanism with the help of which the main communication interactions of the local authorities in Bulgaria at the end of the first decade of the 21st century will be studied. Here, the author offers his approach to the study of communication practices in local self-government through the lens of local authorities. On this basis, the structure of the groups including the specific criteria by which the degree of awareness is assessed in terms of information provided through the Internet pages of the municipalities is derived. The doctoral student proposes, on the basis of what he identified as a "normative model of the proactive communication practices of local authorities" including Internet-based communication - "a recommended model of an Internet-based communication platform for all municipalities" (p.89).

In Chapter three entitled "Analysis of the deficits and priorities of communication practices of local authorities in Bulgaria" an analysis of the state of proactive and electronically based communication practices of local authorities and their supporting administrations was carried out. Following the results of the analysis, five conclusions were drawn. To overcome the reported deficits, a "recommended basic model of an e-communication platform" is proposed (p. 184-191).

In the conclusion, the emphasis is placed on the implementation of the five tasks to achieve the goal of the study. Here, the doctoral student also indicates his doubts about proving the thesis of the study. He declares that: "Despite these negative results, we cannot fully conclude that the local authorities and the administrations supporting them do not think about these problems, but it seems that there is a lack of will, adequate planning and persistence for the effective implementation of this type of communication practices." (cit. p.199).

In the literature and sources used, a total of 251 sources are indicated, of which 36 are in Bulgarian, 63 in English and 152 from the Internet. Visualization is done through 4 diagrams, 2 tables and 14 diagrams.

In general, the research fully meets the requirements of a dissertation work. The following notes can be made about its layout:

1. In the introduction, it would be appropriate to indicate more clearly the scope of the research - temporal and territorial, the specific methods that were used, as well as for whom it is intended and who will be able to use it.

2. In Chapter one, it would be more expedient to propose two or more variants of a "normative model of the communication practices of local authorities in Bulgaria", highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of each of them.

3. In Chapter Two, it would be appropriate to highlight the procedure by which the introduction of the "recommended model of an Internet-based communication platform for all municipalities" proposed by the doctoral student would be implemented, highlighting the advantages of such a unified model.

The mentioned notes do not affect the merits of the dissertation work and are of an advisory nature.

The abstract objectively reflects the content of the dissertation and is prepared structurally in accordance with the requirements. The doctoral student has published 2 publications with the results of the dissertation work in refereed scientific publications. The scientific guidance for the development of the dissertation work by Prof. Dr. Ludmil Georgiev was carried out competently and professionally.

Some clarifying questions can also be addressed to the doctoral student:

1. By what criteria can the four "main characteristics of local self-government" specified by the doctoral student in Chapter One be defined as "organizational"?

2. Is it possible that the two models proposed by the doctoral student - "recommended model of an Internet-based communication platform for all municipalities" and "recommended basic model of an e-communication platform" can be combined and considered as one model?

## CONCLUSION

The dissertation "Deficits and Priorities of Communication Practices in Local Self-Government in the Republic of Bulgaria" developed by PhD student Boris Filipov Hadzhipetkov is a complete scientific study that was conducted in accordance with the requirements and I believe that it can be positively evaluated and successfully defended for the awarding of the educational and scientific degree "doctor" in the scientific specialty "Organization and management of the non-production sphere (public administration) in professional direction "Administration and Management" (3.7).

December 30, 2022  
City of Sofia

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