REVIEW

by Assoc. Prof. Bilyana Nikolaeva Velikova-Tsonkova, PhD

University Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov Burgas

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

in: field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field 3.2. Psychology, Doctoral programme in Social psychology

Author: **Joanna Nikolova Dragneva**

Title: **"Integration and motivation aspects in migration processes depending on the geographical distance of the receiving foreign countries Germany and USA"**

The dissertation submitted for review by Joanna Dragneva is a thorough and well-argued study of a current and significant problem in the field of modern social psychology. In the focus of scientific interest are key psychological determinants influencing the migration process, namely, the integration and motivational aspects for departure and return to the homeland depending on the geographical distance of the host countries Germany and the USA.

In the modern world, migration, caused by inherently complex reasons (economic, social and cultural differences, crises and conflicts, national security, standard of living), is a sustainable and lasting process that marks the dynamics of modern developed societies. In an increasingly globalized world, migration processes form a diversity of different cultural, religious and social traditions within countries.

Bulgaria is a country that has many years of experience with migration, especially in recent years, which also show its more significant growth. The focus on the influence of certain psychological determinants in the choice of departure or return to the homeland of Bulgarian emigrants is an extremely important topic with personal and social significance. In this regard, the dissertation of Joanna Dragneva is highly relevant and significant in scientific and practical terms, primarily in the direction of improving the motivational policies of our country towards the migrants who remain in the host country and those who choose to return to Bulgaria.

General characteristics of the dissertation: volume and structure, literary awareness and theoretical preparation of the candidate

The structure of the dissertation meets the requirements for scientific works, which are scientific research. It consists of 222 pages, which include introduction, three chapters, deductions, conclusion and contributions, bibliography and applied tools of the empirical research. The dissertation is amply illustrated with the help of 107 tables and 22 figures. The literature bibliography is well structured and corresponds to the subject and goals of the dissertation. The large number of literature sources is very impressive at 225, of which 189 are in international languages and 36 in Bulgarian. The cited literature represents both classical authors on the issues it deals with, as well as a multitude of contemporary international and Bulgarian researchers.

The structure of the dissertation is built logically and is entirely dedicated to the overall development of the research issue, and to the successful solution of the tasks at hand and the achievement of the defined goals. The theoretical part is developed systematically and in detail, which shows that the doctorate candidate has good knowledge of the literature and research in this scientific area. The leading classical and contemporary concepts and research, corresponding to the identification, acculturation and motivation subjects in the context of migration process, were competently followed and analysed. The question was asked regarding the identity functioning within modern society and its significance and importance within the migration processes. The social and personal aspects of identity are clearly differentiated in the context of migration. The sense of belonging is rationalised as a significant step towards the restoration and rebuilding of the migrants' identities. In this aspect, the candidate has skilfully presented and analysed the understanding of the significance of the meaning of the matters of cultural diversity, "the other" personalities of the migrants, their rights, belonging, membership, differentiation and self-presentation.

An important accent in the theoretical analysis was put on the acculturational changes in the migrants' culture. The significant researches in this area are presented extensively. The psychological-behavioural cultural change as a result of migration has been looked into, through the connection between how migration and acculturation affect the cultural differences between and within the groups. Using the same in-depth and analytical method, the views of the motivational processes in the context of migration have been followed. The work discusses the connections between migration motivation and identity and acculturation, as important premises

within the adaptation processes. The author has placed an accent on the research in this area and its results, in order to draw the foundations of her research.

The overview of the theoretical approaches and concepts on the subject shows the ability of the doctorate candidate to research, analyse, summarise and make conclusions with terms and concepts, which are key within the issues at hand, as well as to differentiate the specific aspect, which will be researched.

The second chapter presents the methodology, organisation and methods of the research. The goals, tasks and framed hypotheses are clearly and correctly formulated. Generally, the research aims to outline the motivational profiles of emigration and the return to their home country of Bulgarian migrants depending on the geographical remoteness of the receiving country. The research also aims to analyse the reasons for Bulgarian emigration within the various Bulgarian communities in Germany and USA. The main supposition is that the remoteness of the receiving country affects both the emigrant's motives to leave, and their motives to return to their home country. Five specific hypotheses are framed on the relationships between a few variables, which are of interest to the research, namely – the geographical remoteness of the receiving country as a factor of the strength and expression of the identity processes, acculturation, and social integration of the migrants, but there is also hypothesised a key motive to leave and return to the home country.

The setting of the research problem, as well as the formulated research tasks, logically lead to the choice of research approach in the dissertation research – mixed, qualitative-quantitative. A questionnaire was specifically developed for the purposes of the research; it focuses on the basic research constructs: identity, acculturation, motivation to return, future perspectives for the descendants. It was applied to an impressive sample size – 491 people – migrants in Germany and USA. The research also includes narrative biographical interview, which allows for additional interpretations and generalizations to be drawn on the basis of life stories shared by 32 migrants, living in both countries. The limitations of such a study are correctly noted.

High praise must also be given to the in-depth, competent comparative analysis, included in chapter two, of the profiles of both receiving countries in regards to the social-economical, legal-political and cultural integration of migrants in those countries.

Chapter three presents, consistently and logically, and illustrates in detail the results of the research, the data from which are precisely processed and analysed. The drawn conclusions are relevant to the tasks and objectively reflect the research results.

The specific models of adaptation of our compatriots living in Germany and USA are outlined and their motives for possible return to their home country are revealed. Three identity profiles are deducted (high, low and medium); the comparison between them convincingly draws the conclusion that the migrants who have easier access to Bulgaria have weaker to medium identity, while those who live in a more geographically remote country, have a more strongly expressed identity. Three profiles were drawn out regarding acculturation as well; the higher level of processes is found among migrants in USA compared to those in Germany. It proves convincingly that the geographical remoteness of the receiving country is a key factor in the motives of Bulgarian emigrants, both for leaving and for returning, and the future perspectives of the offspring are determined by the country where the migrants live at the moment.

The dissertation finishes with a conclusion, which is well structured and makes a reference to the tasks of the dissertation and the most significant results of the empirical research, which are brought out.

Method approach

The research approach of the dissertation is in conformity with the standards for carrying out modern scientific research and providing reliable results. The method set that was used is comprehensive enough, it allows achieving the goal at hand and realising the research tasks. The research carrying out procedure is described precisely and in detail. The statistical methods, which were applied when processing the data, were suitable for the tasks and goals set to the research, as well as for the nature of the presumed dependencies between the researched constructs.

Significance and persuasiveness of the results. Scientific contributions

The results of the research are presented analytically and in detail and they are correctly interpreted on the grounds of good knowledge of the terminology in the respective scientific area. The conclusions and summaries drawn by the doctorate candidate are well-founded, clearly and correctly formulated and have indisputable contribution value. The presented work is a complete and finished theoretical and empirical research, with unquestionable scientific and scientific-applied contributions. Among them, we should note the structuring and carrying out of the first of

its kind socially-psychological research on the topic of emigration through the focus of the remoteness of the receiving countries. The working toolbox for studying remote emigrants, developed by Joanna Dragneva, is especially significant in practice. Using it as a basis, the profiles of the emigrants in Germany and USA were drawn up, which reflect integrational, acculturational and motivational factors. The model applied to the research and its results can be used as a basis to create policies for Bulgarian emigration communities depending on the remoteness of the receiving countries.

I completely accept the four contribution points in the dissertation work, described by the doctorate candidate, which have research and practical nature.

Personal contribution of the candidate in the research on the dissertation

The presented dissertation work clearly shows the author's approach. The research model reflects the position of the doctorate candidate towards accenting different angles when studying the migration processes with a focus on the psychological determinants. Concluding that the remoteness of the receiving countries as a factor in regards to the motivational and integrational aspects within the migration processes is a significant personal contribution with high value of application.

Quality of scientific works, related to the minimal national requirements for a "doctorate" degree

The presented abstract reflects adequately and correctly the dissertation work, including the contributions and publishing activity of the doctorate candidate. Joanna Dragneva has presented four publications on the same topic as the dissertation work, which meets the minimal requirements for acquiring the scientific and educational degree of "doctor".

Review notes

I have no substantial review notes on the presented materials.

Conclusion

The presented dissertation is a complete research work with significant scientific and applied contributions and meet the requirements of the Law on Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (IRASRB) and the Rules of Application of the IARB. The dissertation

proves the author's abilities to plan, organize and conduct scientific research, the results of which to analyze and interpret in an appropriate way. Everything stated up to this point gives me a reason to suggest to the respected members of the Scientific Jury that they evaluate the scientific work positively and to vote "Yes" for the awarding of the educational and scientific degree "**doctor"** to **Joanna Nikolova Dragneva**.

06.04.2023 **Reviewer:** .....

(Assoc. Prof. Dr. Bilyana Velikova-Tsonkova, PhD)