OPINION

by Assoc. Prof. Bilyana Velikova-Tsonkova, PhD
Burgas State University "Prof. Dr. Assen Zlatarov"

regarding a dissertation for awarding the educational and scientific degree **"Doctor"**
in the aria of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences,
professional field 3.2 Psychology, doctoral program "Social psychology"

Dissertation title: "Attitudes towards war, social-group identity, and personal aggression"

Author: Yulian Vasilev Haralampiev, PhD student, Department of Psychology, Institute for Population and Human Studies – BAS

Research supervisor: Prof. Antoaneta Hristova, DCs, PhD

Research consultant: Prof. Yolanda Zografova, PhD

General impression of the dissertation

This dissertation examines a socially significant problem of pronounced relevance on both a regional and global scale. Within the framework of the conducted empirical study, the relationships between identity, nationalism, patriotism, and attitudes toward war and aggression are explored. The influence of the cultural dimensions of individualism and collectivism on the aforementioned constructs was also accounted for, as was the subjective level of anxiety regarding personal security within specific social groups. The proposed multi-factor model holds significant scientific value, as it addresses the lack of systematic research on the topic within the Bulgarian context.

The dissertation has been developed in accordance with the regulatory requirements and academic standards for the award of the educational and scientific degree of 'Doctor' (PhD).

The structure of the dissertation is classical and meets the standards for this type of research. The total volume of the work is 196 pages, including appendices with the diagnostic instruments. The substantial number of cited sources, most of which are in the Latin alphabet, makes a strong impression. The theoretical part is developed comprehensively and in detail, which testifies to Yulian Haralampiev's sound knowledge of both classical and contemporary research in

this scientific field. The conceptual foundations and the interconnectedness between the analyzed constructs are discussed comprehensively and precisely, providing a scientifically grounded theoretical framework for the author's research. The goals, tasks, and the formulated main and specific hypotheses are clearly and correctly stated, which proves the doctoral student's excellent research orientation. The selected research toolkit is adequately structured for the operationalization of the constructs embedded in the theoretical model and demonstrates very good psychometric properties. The third chapter of the dissertation presents the results of the conducted study and the analysis of the obtained data. The testing of the raised hypotheses was carried out through a rich set of statistical methods for analysis – factor analysis, analysis of variance (ANOVA), and regression analysis. The obtained results are interpreted precisely in accordance with the theoretical framework and are appropriately presented in tabular and graphical form.

At the end of the work, the conclusions from the conducted research are summarized and formulated correctly, which highlights the author's personal contribution to the study of the subject matter. The correct indication of the methodological limitations of the study also makes a good impression.

Significance and persuasiveness of the results and contributions

The presented work constitutes a comprehensive and thorough theoretical and empirical study, offering significant scientific and practical contributions. For the first time in Bulgaria, the psychological profiles of specific social groups have been derived based on their nationalistic (patriotic) attitudes, which appear to be probable predictors for the realization of the corresponding behavior. The correlations between identity (national and social-group) and attitudes toward war and aggression have been established, as well as between cultural orientation and individualism on one hand, and aggression and personal security anxiety on the other. The results obtained provide a foundation for the development of specific policies and methodological guidelines in the field of civic education.

Of particular practical significance are also the instruments adapted for Bulgarian conditions for researching aggression, attitudes toward war, individualism and collectivism, as well as instruments for studying national and social-group identity.

Quality of the scientific publications

Three independent publications have been presented, which are consistent with the topic of the dissertation research. A list is also attached, certifying six participations with reports at doctoral forums and conferences.

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 awarding **Yulian Vasilev Haralampiev** the educational and scientific degree "**Doctor" (PhD)** in the professional field 3.2. Psychology, doctoral program 'Social Psychology'."**.**

5 May 2026 Prepared the opinion:

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