Opinion
by Prof. Dr. Rumen Ivanov Stamatov –
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on a dissertation for the award of the educational and scientific degree "doctor" in the field of higher education: 3. Social, economic and legal sciences; professional field 3.2. Psychology doctoral program: Social Psychology author: Julian Vassilev Haralampiev topic: "ATTITUDES TOWARDS WAR, SOCIAL-GROUP IDENTITY AND PERSONAL AGGRESSION"

1.General description of the submitted materials

By choice of the scientific jury, I have been appointed as its member in the procedure for the defense of a dissertation on the topic "Socio-psychological and personal factors in various forms of aggression among students" for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "doctor" in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field 3.2. Psychology, doctoral program: Social Psychology. The author of the dissertation is Julian Vassilev Haralampiev - doctoral student at the "Social, Labor and Consulting Psychology" section, Department of Psychology at the Institute for Population and Human Research at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. The set of materials presented by Julian Vassilev Haralampiev is on paper and is in accordance with the requirements of the Act on the Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Regulations for its Implementation and the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. It includes all necessary documents. The doctoral student has also attached the relevant publications.

2. Relevance of the topic and appropriateness of the goals and objectives set.

In an ongoing debate about the limits of globalism and nationalism, the attitude towards war acquires particular significance. It is not difficult to find policies and attitudes that link war and the understanding of war in the context of nationalistic values. In this sense, the proposed study can be considered as a contribution to the understanding of attitudes towards war by outlining the connections with constructs such as nationalism, patriotism, social and group identity and aggressiveness. In this

way, the study outlines a field in which attitudes towards war are understood through identity in its various dimensions, individual characteristics and aggressiveness. The results of the empirical study are placed in the context of already existing research, which opens up opportunities for understanding attitudes in an expanded time context and for identifying sustainable trends in its manifestations, taking into account the influences of various variables.

3. Knowledge of the problem

The doctoral student tries to reasonably achieve the goal of the dissertation research, as well as the pursued tasks with the relevant methods of theoretical and empirical research. The theoretical analysis is aimed at understanding the relationships between the main constructs - attitudes towards war, aggression and identity thematized through various manifestations.

All classical and modern approaches to the conceptualization of aggression are traced and the different dimensions of aggression itself are outlined. The presented model of aggression is built on the distinctions proposed by Y. Zografova and encompasses the behavioral, cognitive and social dimensions of the construct. The detailed consideration of the cognitive presences in the dynamics of aggression, as well as emotions, creates not only depth, but also a framework for the empirical research. The theoretical part also examines the topic of war and attitudes towards war, uniting historical and contemporary approaches in its understanding. The potential relationships between attitudes towards war and identity are presented in depth. The theoretical analysis also presents a comprehensive overview of the influences of numerous variables related to identity – patriotism, nationalism, individualism, collectivism, with their reflections on attitudes towards war, as well as distinctions concerning the peculiarities of social and national identity. The analyses of identity are in the context of the main theories and are correctly interpreted. I would like to note the presence of coherence between the analyses of the individual constructs, which shows not only the depth of knowledge of the different studies and concepts, but also the smoothness of the transition to empirical research, by providing a conceptual framework that sets the tasks, hypotheses and tools of the study.

Following the empirical analyses, I would also like to note the value of many of the findings related to attitudes towards war and the different dimensions of identity.

4. Research Methodology

The methodology reflects the main idea of the study and its conceptual understanding. The study was carried out using:

Roth et al. Questionnaire (Rothi et. al., 2005), which consists of 20 items and is built on a two-factor structure - civic understanding of national identity (civic practices and shared policies) and traditional-cultural understanding of national identity (shared attachment to traditional culture, genetics and heritage).

Questionnaire for assessing the level of anxiety about one's own security (Radoslavova & Velichkov, 2005), from which seven items were used.

Questionnaire for assessing the level of social-group identity, including two scales - level of social-professional identity (membership in a professional or other group)

The brief aggression questionnaire (Webster et.al., 2015), including 12 items, and assessing 4 factors - anger, hostility, physical aggression and verbal aggression.

Questionnaire for studying the horizontal and vertical dimensions of individualism and collectivism: A theoretical and measurement refinement (Singelis et.al., 1995). The four-factor scale covering horizontal individualism, vertical individualism, horizontal collectivism and vertical collectivism, is represented by 12 items - three items for each factor.

Questionnaire for assessing patriotism by Schatz et al. and Staub (Schatz et.al.,1999; Staub, 1997). The questionnaire is made up of two factors – blind and constructive patriotism and consists of 21 items.

Questionnaire for assessing attitudes towards wars by Dupuis and Cohn (A new scale to measure war attitudes) (Dupuis, & Cohn, 2011). The questionnaire is made up of 3 factors – ethics of war (cognitive component), support for war (behavioral component) and affect from war (emotional component). Each factor is assessed by three items.

The questionnaires included in the empirical study have good psychometric characteristics and are adequate for the purpose.

5. Characteristics and evaluation of the dissertation work

The dissertation work has a volume of 175 pages in the main text, which includes 46 tables, 12 figures and 10 appendices. The structure includes an introduction as an introduction to the research topic, three chapters, conclusions and conclusion, used literature and 10 appendices. The bibliography has 298 titles - 17 in Cyrillic, 281 in Latin. The study itself is structured in two parts - theoretical, which presents the main concepts around which the study is built and empirical, which presents the research instruments with a description of the psychometric characteristics of the self-assessment questionnaires and the various analyses, in the context of the formulated hypotheses. Analyses and conclusions are representative of the efforts of the doctoral student and support the verification of the results obtained.

6. Contributions and significance of the work for science and practice

The contributions of Julian Vassilev Haralampiev are meaningfully summarized and correspond to the conducted research. In general, I would like to note the following positive points:

-Profiles of specific social groups are presented, related to specific attitudes, identities and behavioral tendencies related to aggressiveness and attitudes towards wars, which is new for research in this field in Bulgarian conditions.

-Links between national and social-group identity and attitudes towards war and aggression and the experience of anxiety about one's own security are established;

-Adapted versions of questionnaires are presented for assessing attitudes towards war, various manifestations of aggression, and identity in different dimensions.

I would like to note that the conclusions from the research can be used when creating prescriptions in an educational context and, more specifically, when understanding the challenges facing moral identity.

8. Assessment of publications on the dissertation

The submitted publications are 3 and are entirely on the topic of the dissertation.

9. Personal participation of the doctoral student

Julian Vassilev Haralampiev has independently implemented the entire dissertation research. The text, the obtained results and contributions are his personal work.

10. Abstract

The abstract contains the main statements in the dissertation, the results and their analysis. I believe that it is adequate to the dissertation and objectively reflects the theoretical analyses and the main results presented in the content of the study.

11. Personal impressions

I would like to note that Julian Vassilev Haralampiev has in-depth knowledge in the research area, combined with responsibility and an original approach to the empirical examination of the topic, which enriches understandings of attitudes towards war, aggression and identity.

12. Recommendations for future use

I propose that the main text of the dissertation be expanded, emphasizing the relationships between the cognitive and moral aspects of identity.

Conclusion

The dissertation shows that the doctoral student Julian Vassilev Haralampiev possesses in-depth knowledge of the topic of the dissertation. I believe that the candidate meets the conditions and procedure for awarding the educational and scientific degree "doctor" under the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the PPZRAS, the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. After the arguments presented, as well as the overall positive assessment of the dissertation research, I propose that the scientific jury vote positively and award the educational and scientific degree "doctor" to Julian Vassilev Haralampiev, for which I also give my affirmative vote.

06.05. 2026 Prepared the opinion:

/prof. Rumen Stamatov /