



## OPINION

from Prof. Nikolay Kirilov Mihaylov, FJMC, Sofia University  
(*scientific position, academic degree, name, surname, educational / scientific institution*)

for obtaining the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" (PhD) in professional field 3.5. Social Communications and Information Sciences.

with a dissertation on the topic: "Regional TV stations in Bulgaria - specifics of the media transformation",

presented by Blagovest Ganchev Iliev, full-time PhD student in the Department "Communication, PR and advertising" of the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication

with supervisor: Prof. Teodora Petrova, Dr.

**I. Evaluation of the qualities of the text of dissertation:** The dissertation proposed for opinion is structured in an introduction, an exposition in four chapters and a conclusion. The dissertation also contains a bibliography and a substantial number of appendices. The total volume of the dissertation work is significant and exceeds 200 pages. The bibliography includes 103 sources, printed and online, a significant array of scientific information, testifying to the high bibliographic awareness of the author. The structure of the dissertation creates an impression of a thoughtful approach to the problem and a focus on the main topic of research - the emergence and confirmation of the phenomenon of regional television in the field of television journalism, its imposition in public communication and in the media field on a national level. The entire text contains all the necessary elements of an independent and original research, at the same time formed and arranged in a logical sequence, using appropriate methods for researching the topic, something that makes a strong positive impression on the research erudition of PhD student Iliev. The abstract is detailed, follows the presentation of the dissertation and fully meets the requirements for referencing a scientific work and its content as relevant conveys its main positions, topics and summaries. As the PhD student writes, the topic he chose to study and research is "current and important because of its importance for the socio-cultural orientation of the audience and for the integration of regional communities in the democratic process" (p.5). Indeed, in recent years, in the humanities and social disciplines, there has been a growing understanding of the importance of space (region) and location as factors that determine impact and media content through local, regional, regional interpretations, narratives, stories that carry a specific journalistic relevance. I am not aware that these



problems, especially in the field of television journalism, have been studied in sufficient depth in the field of media knowledge, and this makes the PhD student Iliev's dissertation work on regional televisions relevant, necessary and very significant for the field of media and communications, especially in the process of globalization. The methodological apparatus of the research is quite correctly defined - object, subject, goal, tasks, as it contains both quantitative and qualitative methods of collecting and analyzing empirical information. An academic emphasis of the dissertation work is the attention to the national context of regional television journalism, its history, appearance, development trends, which makes it extremely important and scientific contribution for researchers engaged in research, analysis and teaching of the processes in the Bulgarian media environment. In general, the analysis of the studied cases and examples, made by the PhD student on the basis of his theoretical presentation and through the relevant concepts, is distinguish as I have already noted, the content of the dissertation successfully follows the scientific intention of the PhD student and successfully presents the achieved research results. In the first chapter, the global and regional processes that have an impact on the television industry are presented, the basic theoretical concepts on which the conceptual framework of the study will be built are clarified, for example, the concept of media convergence and its role in the quality of media content. An excellent impression is made by PhD student Iliev's comprehensive mastery of the legal basis for the audiovisual policy of the EU and the attitude towards the legislation of the member states. The second chapter of the work deals in more detail with the regional televisions, the preparation of the regional program, the specifics of the regional television centers, as well as with the genre features of the news broadcasts in the regional televisions. The author also analyzes the coverage of the social presence of the Orthodox Church in regional television programs, a way to share his positive practical experience as a journalist in regional television. The author's practical erudition is also demonstrated in the third chapter of the work in the description of the author's production experiment "(on) meeting". The presentation is not only narrative, but is a basis for the PhD student to draw important and reasoned conclusions about the development of regional TV journalism, about the role of producers in it, about the construction of a specific media product, etc. In the fourth chapter, the author presents his own contributions to the media transformation of regional televisions, their impact on the audience and interest in them. The hypothesis that the dissertation defends is that people are less and less following the regional media and interested in what they are doing. The qualitative research methods - in-depth interviews - used by PhD student Iliev unequivocally prove his skills to independently research, collect and legitimately interpret data regarding the process of public communication and derive meaning from them, and not just describe answers. Thus, the PhD student offers a high degree of analytics of the overall presentation of the work, as well as a suitable solution to the problem circle outlined by its starting concepts and its specific tasks, related to bringing out the main characteristics of regional



televisions and their transformation, analyzing problematic aspects of their development in Bulgaria and more specifically the programs and processes in the media environment by detail, consistency and the pursuit of objectivity.

The presentation style and language of the dissertation are scholarly and informative and reveal the knowledge of the doctoral candidate as well as his ability to discover and draw logical connections between the various elements of his research. A very good impression is also made by the high bibliographic awareness of the author, the reference to Bulgarian scientists and researchers, whose works he obviously knows well, as well as the striving for objectivity in the analysis of empirical data.

**II. Contributions of the dissertation research:** The young researcher has grouped the contributions of his research into two groups - scientific and scientific-applied. The main part of the contributions is defined as mainly scientific. Among them are listed the analytical efforts of the PhD student regarding the role and transformation of regional televisions, which are without a doubt authorial, as well as the empirical studies necessary to gather information on the subject. As the latter is more of a method rather than a contribution, I may point out that the analysis and interpretation of the data are entirely my own and the generalizations and inferences lead to the emergence of patterns, which is undoubtedly a contributing effort. The production experiment bears all the marks of originality and practical significance for the professional activity of television journalists, and marking it as a scientific-practical contribution is completely relevant. The dissertation has and even exceeds the scientific significance and degree of author's contributions necessary for its purposes.

**III. Notes and recommendations:** I have no particular remarks, other than a recommendation that the PhD student continue to work through analyses, publications and new experiments in this interesting and underdeveloped area of communication knowledge and broadcast journalism. With his work, PhD student Iliev convincingly demonstrates that he has a contribution to the study of current and important problems in the field of media and communications in relation to regional journalism and the specificity of the place, of the local in a world of ever-increasing dominance of global distribution of media influence amplified by the power of digital technologies.

**IV. Publications and participation in scientific forums:** The PhD student has proposed five publications on the topic of his research, realized in peer-reviewed academic publications. I also have personal impressions of him as a regular participant in scientific forums, national and international, with always well-prepared reports or messages that he not only presents, but also actively discusses and debates. I can unequivocally conclude that the requirements of the Regulations for the terms and conditions for acquiring scientific degrees and occupying academic positions at SU "St. Kliment



Ohridski" for approving and disclosing the results of the research according to Art. 5, item 5 and the minimum national requirements under Art. 63, para. 1, item 4 and art. 69, par. 3.

**V. Conclusion:** There is no doubt in my mind that the submitted dissertation has all the necessary qualities, convincingly meeting the criteria for the type of research required for the award of the ESD "Doctor/PhD" in the chosen research field and scientific field. I strongly suggest to the respected members of **the Scientific Jury to confer to Blagovest Ganchev Iliev the** educational and scientific degree "Doctor" for his dissertation work "Regional Televisions in Bulgaria - specifics of media transformation", in professional direction 3.5. Public Communications and Information Sciences (Media and Communications - TV Journalism) and I myself will be voting in favor of this as well.

Jury member: prof. Nikolay Mihaylov

Date: 14.08. 2024