



OPINION ¹

by Prof. Dr. Sc. Milko Dimitrov Petrov, FJMC, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" for obtaining the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the professional field 3.5. Public Communications and Information Sciences with a dissertation on "*Dynamics and Problems of Sectoral PR in the Unconventional Energy Sector*", presented by Maria Teodorova Krasteva, a full-time PhD student at the Department of History and Theory of Journalism at the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication of Sofia University with scientific supervisor: prof. Dr.Sc. Lubomir Stoykov

1. Presentation of PhD student based on the submitted documentation.

Maria Teodorova Krasteva is a full-time PhD student at FJMC, according to Order № RD 20-16/07.01.2019.

2. Evaluation of the qualities of the dissertation text.

The dissertation contains an introduction, four chapters, a conclusion, a summary of the main scientific and applied contributions, a bibliography of **298 titles**, of which **59** in Bulgarian and **239** in foreign languages, a list of scientific publications related to the main topic of the dissertation and 9 annexes. The total volume is **351 pages**. The submitted documentation fully complies with the legal requirements.

The dissertation is one of the first serious scientific studies on the achievements and problems in the communication policy of the RES sector in Bulgaria. It has a serious volume and scientific quality, a clear and well argued structure - each individual chapter ends with scientific conclusions. The scientific analysis uses the evidential value of the results obtained from several sociological studies-analysis of cases from practice using the case study method, conducting in-depth semi-standardized interviews with experts, quantitative research to establish the level of use of PR activities by RES organizations in the country.

The PhD student Maria Krasteva also examines the role of social media in the communication policy of foreign companies, which is indeed a very valuable practical experience. Based on the empirical data used, she proposes her own original practical models for overcoming the existing deficits in the sectoral PR of the renewable energy industry in Bulgaria. This greatly enhances the practical value and usefulness of this dissertation not only in theoretical but also in practical-applied terms.

3. Relevance and significance of the problem developed in the dissertation.

Thoroughness and comprehensiveness of the study of theoretical sources.

¹ Note: The italicized text offers reference points for evaluating research findings. Recommended length of the review - about 6-7 standard pages



*The PhD student Maria Krasteva very thoroughly and in detail examines and analyzes a respectable volume of theoretical sources, which she uses in her scientific presentation - she presents **298 titles**, of which **239** are in foreign languages. The founders of modern PR-James Gruening, Alan Senter, Glenn Broome, Todd Hunt-are discussed. The Bulgarian scientific school is also presented, visions for the future of this profession are offered.*

Proving by new means essential aspects of already existing theories, hypotheses, etc.

The chosen topic of this dissertation is very topical, considering the overall EU strategy and policy for the so-called "green transition" of using electricity from renewable energy sources. The great relevance of this dissertation is also due to the large scale in the development of the renewable energy sector, and its key importance in achieving global goals of decarbonisation and climate change prevention. The PhD student chooses an original scientific approach - she analyses the unconventional energy sector in the context of *public relations*, the public conversation about its development and future in Bulgaria. Maria Krasteva shows a serious and in-depth knowledge in this field, introducing a deductive approach to the scientific analysis of this very complex problem, fraught with many challenges and social contradictions. The dissertation proposes the main theoretical concepts and models in the field of PR, its leading figures, traditional channels and main problems, key audiences and communication crises.

The first chapter analyses in detail the specifics and features of sector PR, and more specifically - its role and significance in the renewable energy industry. It examines the advantages and disadvantages of sector PR in the green energy sector in its two models - with own resources, and with the help of an external agency.

The second chapter deals with some communication specifics of non-conventional energy - their technological development and policy to promote the development of RES, the institutions that are related to RES, some barriers existing to their development, public attitudes in Bulgarian society towards the RES sector.

Proposing new interpretations, definitions, etc. of an actual and already analyzed object of scientific research.

The third chapter presents "Techniques and practices for effective sector PR" in great detail. It essentially proposes a new concept for the development of sector PR in the renewable energy industry in the context of communication activity on social networks such as Facebook, Instagram and Tic-Tok, in digitally based tools (podcasts, newsletters, mobile apps, augmented reality), creating attractive and truthful content through storytelling, introducing creativity and improvisation, special activities aimed at children's audiences, developing special events, citizen movements and astroturfing, crisis communications and relations with local communities.

This chapter is an original scholarly interpretation of a particularly complex practical problem with the modern tools of digital PR, which creates new communication professions every day in order to communicate effectively with current digital audiences who have their own environmental culture, movements and public positions. The PhD student Maria Krasteva proves her theses through numerous graphs, sociological studies, *examples of best practices*.

The fourth chapter presents in detail some empirical research conducted by the PhD student - case studies using the case study method, in-depth semi-structured interviews with experts, quantitative research to establish the level of use of PR activities by RES organizations in Bulgaria. Based on the empirical research, the PhD student proposes original practical schemes for



overcoming communication deficits, a classifier of the main PR narratives, a model for effective relations with local communities, etc.

Operationality of the selected research methods

PhD student Maria Krasteva introduces an integral methodology, she uses methods and indicators taken from different sciences - climate research, types of energy, classical and modern theories of PR, resource management, quantitative and qualitative sociological methods to study this problem. The presented in-depth interviews and some cases from practice show a high awareness of the PhD student in the field of modern empirical sociology.

Correctness in the collection, processing and analysis of empirical data

The PhD student Maria Krasteva precisely and accurately uses quantitative and qualitative sociological methods of analysis. Her sociological research strictly adheres to established sociological methods and best practices, which is a rare advantage in dissertations for the degree Ph.

Credibility of the material on which the are built

The scientific contributions of the PhD student Maria Krasteva are based on reliable data drawn from theoretical and empirical sociological research. I would say something more - she offers a comprehensive model of a qualitatively new digital approach to sector PR in the new conditions of social networks, podcasts and the possibilities of the digital transition. The PhD student conceptually articulates her research and scholarly contributions.

Bibliographical awareness

The PhD student Maria Krasteva shows a respectable bibliographic awareness, which fully meets all scientific requirements. *The bibliography of the dissertation contains 298 titles, of which 59 titles in Bulgarian and 239 titles in foreign languages.*

Compliance with the compositional requirements for the dissertation text

The text of the dissertation meets the established compositional requirements-it has a very clear structure of exposition, each separate chapter ends with well-formulated conclusions, a series of studies based on quantitative and qualitative methods have been conducted according to the author's original methodology, which are duly and professionally presented in accordance with the best practices in empirical sociology. The dissertation is further illustrated with numerous graphs that illustrate very well the main scientific theses presented in the dissertation.

Evaluation of the linguistic and stylistic qualities of the presentation and the degree of deviation from the literary norms of grammar, spelling and punctuation.

The dissertation is written in excellent Bulgarian language, which is consistent with the literary, grammatical, spelling and punctuation patterns of the literary Bulgarian language. In many cases, the PhD student uses polemical style and language to better prove her scientific thesis.

Evaluation of the correspondence of the text of the abstract with the text of the dissertation



The abstract fully meets the scientific requirements, it presents the text of the dissertation comprehensively and conceptually. It contains all necessary and obligatory requisites - object and subject of the scientific research, scientific aims and objectives, limitations of the research, chosen methodology, conducted sociological research, clear structure of individual chapters and scientific conclusions, degree of originality of the main scientific theses, etc.

4. Contributions of the dissertation research.

Nature of contributions: novelty for science (new theories, hypotheses, methods, etc.); enrichment and critical analysis of existing knowledge; application of scientific achievements in practice, realized effect.

-The presented scientific dissertation is groundbreaking, for the first time in Bulgarian media research so clearly and accurately summarizes and systematizes the main problems in the unconventional energy sector, diagnosing the key communication problems in this sector to develop effective PR strategies for its successful development.

-Doctoral student Maria Krasteva proposes an effective model for communication relations with local communities through some strategic communication initiatives to create more effective relations with local residents and to form positive attitudes towards the role of the renewable energy sector in Bulgaria.

-The dissertation research offers an up-to-date toolkit for the practical application of a modern communication approach to the unconventional energy sector in Bulgaria. This, without a doubt, allows new players in this sector to optimize their professional communication with the numerous audiences and their specificities.

-The dissertation offers numerous good examples for optimizing communication strategies in this sector, which are well illustrated by numerous graphs and substantiated by several sociological studies.

-The dissertation presents numerous facts from the world practice in this sector, which confirm already known theories in the communication field.



5. Notes and recommendations

The dissertation presented is a complete and professionally very well argued scientific study. It is entirely original and the first of its kind in our country. The dissertation has a distinctly contributory character and deserves to be published, after some editing. It will be of interest and will be particularly useful to experts and PR specialists who work in the field of unconventional energy, journalists who cover the development and problems of the renewable energy sector, media experts who analyze new digital practices and communication professions, curious and enlightened readers.

6. Publications and participation in scientific forums

- The PhD student Maria Krasteva has submitted **4 scientific publications** in reputable scientific journals, which fully meet the legal requirements. This fulfils the requirements of the Regulations on the Conditions and Procedure for Acquisition of Scientific Degrees and Occupation of Academic Positions at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" for the approbation and disclosure of the results of the studies according to Article 5, item 5 and whether the minimum national requirements under Article 63, par. 1(4) and Art. 69, par. 3.

7. Conclusion

Taking into account the scientific theoretical and practical value of this dissertation, which is the first of its kind in Bulgaria, the modern research approach of the PhD student Maria Tedorova Krasteva, the use of multiple theoretical and sociological methods to analyze this very important problem, I recommend **with full conviction** to the esteemed members of the scientific jury to award the degree of Doctor of Education and Science to Maria Theodorova Krasteva, a full-time PhD student at the Department of History and Theory of Journalism at the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication of Sofia University. "*Dynamics and Problems of Sector PR in the Unconventional Energy Sector*", professional field 3.5. Public Communications and Information Sciences.

Date: 05 February 2025

Reviewer:
Prof. Dr.Sc. Milko Petrov