

## REVIEW

**From:** Prof D.Sc. Zhelyu Vladimirov, Sofia University *St. Kliment Ohridski*, professional field 3.7 “Administration and management”.

**On:** scientific works of Assoc. Prof PhD Diana Sabotinova Mladenova, submitted for participation in a competition for the occupation of the academic position of "professor" in professional field 3.8. Economics (World Economy, International Economic Relationships, and Behavioural Economics), announced in SG No. 55/15.07.2022

**Reason** for the standpoint: order of the Rector of the Burgas Free University, RD 176 / 07.09.2022.

### 1. Brief presentation of the candidate

Associate Professor Diana Sabotinova Mladenova, PhD is a teacher at the Faculty of Business Studies of Burgas Free University (BFU). She graduated the University of National and World Economy in 1991. Since 1994, she has been part-time, and since 2000, a full-time assistant at BFU. From 2009 to 2012, she was a doctoral student at the Economic Research Institute at the Bulgarian Academy of Science, where she defended her doctoral dissertation on the topic "Macroeconomic Consequences of Population Aging" in the scientific field 05.02.03 National Economy. In 2016, she was elected as an Assoc. Prof in the professional field 3.8 Economics (World Economy, International Economic Relationships, and International Trade Policy) at the Faculty of Business Studies of BFU.

Assoc. Prof. Sabotinova has led seminars in Micro- and Macroeconomics, World Economy, International Economic Relations, International Currency-Financial Relations, as well as lectures in Macroeconomics and Economic Theories. She is currently teaching bachelor students in the disciplines of World Economy, International Economic Relations and Behavioural Economics at the Faculty of Business Studies, and master students in Global Economy, Behavioural Economics in Healthcare and Economics at the Faculty of Computer Science and Engineering and the Faculty of Legal Studies of BFU. She has developed 6 electronic courses on five of the academic disciplines. The educational and teaching loading of Assoc. Prof. Sabotinova for the period 2016-2022 is a total of 2103 hours.

From 2007 to 2022, she participated in the Erasmus and Erasmus+ academic exchange programs, giving lectures at 11 universities (in Germany, Portugal, Turkey, UK, the Netherlands, Hungary, Croatia, and Poland). She has participated in five national, one international and one national project, three of which she was the leader of.

The candidate has a total of 80 publications, while in the competition for "professor" she participates with 35 publications. These works include: one monograph (2022, 200 pages); 5 articles and reports in scientific publications indexed in Web of Science and Scopus; 19 articles and reports published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or edited collective volumes; 8 studies published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or edited collective volumes; as well as two textbooks on Behavioural Economics (2022, 432 pages) and World Economics (2015, 256 pages). For eight of the co-authored articles and reports, separation protocols are provided. The texts submitted for participation in the competition do not repeat previous ones related to the acquisition of the scientific-educational degree "doctor", academic position "chief assistant" and "associate professor". The candidate has a total of 25 citations, although only 17 are listed in the reference provided. Among those listed are one citation in a journal indexed in Web of Science, five in peer-reviewed monographs and collective volumes, nine in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals, and two in other editions.

With the works presented and with her teaching activity, the candidate meets the requirements of the Law for development of the academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, as well as the additional requirements of the Faculty of Business Studies of BFU.

## **2. General characteristics of the candidate's work**

The scientific works of Assoc. Prof. Sabotnova submitted for participation in the competition can be grouped into four areas: *International production; Cultural characteristics of Bulgarian management; Gross National Happiness Index; and Economic impacts of population aging.*

### *2.1. International production (publications Nos. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29)*

This area has the largest number of publications presented, including the monograph "International Production" (2022). These publications systematize theories of international production; the periodization and evolution of its forms; the characteristics of the multinational enterprise are given; as well as the levels of internationalization of the largest multinational enterprises. The expected transformation of international production along the following trajectories is revealed: reshoring, diversification, regionalization, replication. Three trends leading to its transformation are highlighted: technological trends, global trends in management, and sustainable development trends. Specifically, publication No. 9 advocates the idea that transnational cooperation is at the heart of economic growth. It is shown how the strengthening of interregional cooperation in the context of smart specialization increases the competitiveness of economies.

The immediate consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, such as: disruption of global supply chains; the growth of online work, of automation and e-commerce; closing borders and restricting transport; restricting exports of medical supplies and food, etc., are analysed in publication No. 10. It is demonstrated how changes in trade flows lead to differentiation of industries into winners and losers. The main factors influencing the global water market (population growth, aging infrastructure, improving water quality and climate change) are explored in publication No. 13. Publication No. 25 presents the idea of a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership with a focus on the investor-state dispute resolution system. The actions needed to mobilize and channel private investment towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals are explored in publication No. 29.

### *2.2. Cultural characteristics of Bulgarian management (Nos. 2, 4, 5, 6, 21, 22)*

In this area, the cultural characteristics of Bulgarian managers are studied using the GLOBE methodology, and their behavioural profiles are outlined. The measures of cultural distance of Bulgaria compared to 57 countries were analysed, as a result of which two clusters were derived - countries that have cultural proximity to Bulgaria (Eastern European, Latin European and Latin American clusters) and countries with a large cultural distance (German, Asian, Scandinavian and Middle Eastern clusters) (Nos. 6, 22). The results of another empirical study among Bulgarian managers confirm the idea that Bulgaria is an egalitarian society with expectations of minimizing gender roles. Gender equality is indicated as one of the visible differences of Bulgarian business compared to other countries of the European Union (Nos. 4, 5 and 21). Based on a survey of 253 managers, a profile of organizational leadership is created and the hypothesis that cultural characteristics can be used to predict perceived effective leadership in Bulgarian culture is partially confirmed (No. 2).

### *2.3. Gross National Happiness Index (Nos. 30, 32)*

In publication No. 30, Bulgaria's first empirical study of the gross national happiness index was conducted among persons over 18 years from the city of Burgas in 2018-2019, using

an adapted methodology of the Centre for Bhutan Studies (No. 32). The studied index consists of nine areas with a total of 23 indicators. The results obtained show that the level of the Gross National Index is low, which is due to a very high proportion of respondents from this sample who are not happy.

#### *2.4. Economic impacts of population aging (№№18, 33)*

The economic impacts of population aging are explored in publication No. 18. It is found that older women often have lower rates of employment in the labour market. The negative labour demand effect is shown to be strongest among the oldest working women, as there is also the probability of a negative labour supply effect among them. The recommendation is that a special gender equality policy is needed in order to mitigate the consequences of population aging (No. 18). Other effects of population aging relate to changes in intergenerational transfers (No. 33). Measurement, modelling and assessment of the consequences of intergenerational transfers at the micro- and macro-level are also done. The thesis is defended that the patterns of private intergenerational transfers in the family are of great importance for the well-being of individuals and families, but also require an adequate social policy.

### **3. Significance of the contributions for science and practice**

The review of the works presented for the competition by Assoc. Prof. Diana Sabotnova, PhD shows that these are studies that meet high scientific standards. The analysis of the publications reveals that the candidate has contributions in promising areas of international production and international economic relations, the cultural characteristics of Bulgarian management, the index of gross national happiness and the economic consequences of population aging. Specifically, these contributions are the following:

- The theories of international production are systematized; a periodization of the forms of international production was made; the role of multinational enterprises is outlined; the conflicting effects of their activity on the national economies of the investing and receiving countries are shown; the current trends in the development of international production are brought out; the changes such as reshoring, diversification, regionalization and replication and their consequences are analysed.

- In respect to the cultural characteristics of Bulgarian management and organizational leadership, the knowledge about the relationship "culture-leadership" is summarized; the cultural profile of Bulgarian managers is outlined; the GLOBE methodology was tested; the hypothesis that culture can predict a perceived effective leadership is partially confirmed.

- Based on the data on the perception of gender roles in Bulgarian business management, a high equality between them is revealed.

- The methodology of the Gross National Happiness Index was adapted and the first empirical study of this index in Bulgaria was conducted. Areas for future research to improve the methodology for measuring the index are outlined.

- Population aging has been shown to alter intergenerational transfers and lead to discrimination against older women in the labour market. The measures to increase labour supply and overcome age discrimination especially for women are justified.

### **4. Critical notes, recommendations and questions**

I have no specific comments on the content of the works presented, but I have two recommendations. The first one concerns formulated contributions. These contributions can be generally theoretical and practical. This means that they could state briefly and clearly - which of the author's studies have what contribution, and not necessarily every publication has a contribution. Some publications are simply a literature review of given theories (such as the formulation of contribution 7), others confirm results of previous research, etc.

The second recommendation refers to more intensive publication in journals with an impact factor or impact rank for which the candidate has already demonstrated capacity.

## **5. Conclusion**

The submitted by the candidate publications testify to a thorough study of the problems related to the development of international production, the cultural characteristics of business managers and the economic consequences of population aging. A detailed and in-depth review of the current literature is made, with which the author contributes to the transfer of knowledge in these areas. A very good knowledge of theoretical and practical problems and correctness in referring to the used information sources is demonstrated. Large-scale empirical studies have been conducted, which reveal good skills in collecting and processing data, summarizing results and drawing meaningful conclusions. The obtained results contribute significantly to the understanding of the contradictory effects of the activities of multinational enterprises; the cultural profile of Bulgarian managers; the low level of gross national happiness in a large Bulgarian city; as well as the economic effects of population aging. A significant part of the works presented are directly related to the courses taught by the candidate.

All this gives me reason to recommend to the esteemed scientific jury to award Assoc. Prof. Diana Sabotnova Mladenova, PhD the academic position of “professor” in professional field 3.8. Economics (World Economy, International Economic Relationships, and Behavioural Economics).

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Sofia

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