

New Bulgarian University
Department of Cinema, Advertising and Show Business
Doctoral Programme Film Studies, Film Art and Television

REVIEW

by Prof. Teodora Petrova, PhD

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professor in professional field 3.5. Public Communication and Information Sciences on
doctoral dissertation of **Borislava Dimcheva Dimova**

entitled

NBU UNIVERSITY TELEVISION: BETWEEN EXPERIENCE AND INNOVATION

dissertation towards award of educational and scientific degree "Doctor", doctoral program
"Film Studies, Film Art and Television", professional field 8.4. Theatre and film art

Scientific advisor: Prof. Svetla Hristova, PhD

1. Significance of the researched problem from a scientific and applied research perspective

It should be noted from the beginning that the reviewed thesis authored by Borislava Dimova entitled: *NBU University Television: between experience and innovation* clearly announces the subject of the study. The topic is neatly formulated. It covers the idea of the start, development and the prospects in front of NBU University Television. The topic as stated in the title has been argued by the author in the text; the importance of university television for students and society, her interest in the topic, the goals and objectives of the study have all been justified. The work is in essence an author empirical research related to the creation and development of New Bulgarian University Television; the problems identified have been studied, systematized, described and analyzed, many of which addressed for the first time. The piece of work presented for defence bears the qualities of independent research. It is deemed a dissertation work that qualifies for defence.

The thesis is dedicated, in the author's words to "the project of building a new modern base in the RTC, building 3 of NBU, including its own specialized TV studio complex." The proposed "theoretical concepts for the future media, the factors hindering the establishment of a successful local model of student television" have been analyzed as well as the production opportunities available to NBU to discover and determine the tastes of the prospective audience of modern young people in search of a successful model for the real start of the NBUTV project, a name used in the RTC development project). The type of research at hand is topical and typically contributes to the outline of the mission of student television. While there is little research on the role of university television in European countries, in our country it is almost non-existent.

Students are a specific audience that has particular interests, specific as requirements and expectations towards audiovisual content. University televisions around the world, as the author states, were born in the 60s of the last century when there was a rapid development of television as a communication channel. They have their place and own niche audience in the audiovisual market - young people and students, but they have the potential to become one of the channels with a wider audience looking for a particular type of television content. At the same time, they serve as an institutional channel, as "Their mission is to coordinate their activities with the mission of the particular higher education institution in which they emerge, while meeting the mission of higher education in general," says the dissertee. Borislava Dimova develops the latter statement about the mission of this type of channels throughout her work and I do support it. Very often this type of channels are provocative, challenging, creative and strive to provide quality products. Some of them remain at the level of educational television, while others breed future presenters and hosts of national programs. Many a popular presenter, successful director or producer has started their careers in such TVs.

Today, after the digitization of audiovisual content distribution platforms, much of this type of content enters platforms such as Instagram, YouTube and others, but reaches a youth audience, and is seen to be sought after and viewed by this focus group, which in the 70s and 80s would watch it on traditional television channels. This research enriches and expands our knowledge about the development of university television, presents a database, while the

results of these studies could be used by other researchers, communicators, people involved in media business or in development of university channels.

The work aims to "explore the perspectives and tasks of an unfinished project on a university television to NBU (abbreviated NBUTV) in close proximity to its actual start)". Documents related to the start of this television, "innovative approaches in creating a specific practical model for the functioning of NBUTV today" have been analyzed. The similarities between NBUTV and case studies of Student TVs have also been addressed.

"Some of the tasks in the analysis of the empirical data are to determine whether NBUTV clearly has qualities in incomparable advantage over other analogues in Bulgaria," says the author "regarding the ability to receive academic support at a total level of expertise in a wide variety of fields at any time. ". The possibilities "for integration in the program and activity of NBUTV of the huge flow of students studying at NBU in specialties outside the field of mass and telecommunications, cinema and television" have been described and analyzed. The author pays attention to the so-called generation Z, which is the first generation born in a world where every physical object /people and places/ has a digital equivalent.

Therefore, Chapter Four develops new ideas and proposals for a future NBUTV program and the concept of development in the form of two digital channels based on National Geographic Channel and Netflix, which are aimed at this generation exactly. The concept also includes documentaries, popular science and educational films created by professors, students of NBU in the Department of Cinema, Advertising and Show Business, suitable for the program of NBUTV Film, as well as the magazine show programme "NBUTV presents".

The dissertation has formulated goals and objectives, which are as follows: "outlining the perspective of an educational and television project of a new kind, with the expertise of both teachers and students studying in parallel to create it; approving a new vision for NBUTV as a type of social network; studying the conditions for the creation of this new communication model; justification of the need to include innovative approaches in the educational process at NBU; creating audio-visual products for the purposes of the research activity of the present dissertation ”.

The methodology used is a comparative analysis of various theoretical and practical research in the field of media in our digital age, an author research through conducting interviews with students and teachers, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches for theoretical analysis, collection and analysis of materials related to the NBUTV project. The underlying assumption is that "NBUTV could become an alternative to conventional television, a working model of university media and a kind of digital network with its own channel through which the interests of the audience of modern young viewers could be catered for. The expected results are subject to certain preconditions". The work is an independent study and is the first study of its kind on NBUTV. The practices of other university televisions have been studied, with the main sources on the topic being used. They are duly quoted in the text.

The study is structured in an introduction, four chapters, a conclusion, a reference list, contributions and appendices. In the Introduction of the presented work, according to the requirements for such a text, a description of the structure of the text is made; the justification for choosing the topic, relevance and importance of the study is included; the purpose and objectives of the study have also been duly described. Chapter One outlines the place of NBU Television in the context of the time in which it started. The main stages in the birth of television as a mass medium, the different television models and university television as a possible alternative are briefly presented. Chapter Two describes the young generation today, its specific searches in the content and form of the information messages that it consciously needs. Chapter Three describes the capabilities of NBU, RTC and the teams of students and teachers to create television content for the future NBUTV. In Chapter Four, summaries are made and concrete ideas for the development of the future NBUTV are offered with arguments; forms have been suggested for the actual implementation of those ideas. The text states the author's opinion on the described practices as a result of the research.

The author quotes Prof. Ivo Draganov: "Despite the dynamic world in which we are launching the NBUTV initiative, the sequence of processes for creating a TV media and its program has not changed, and the stages are described in detail again by Prof. Draganov in his book *Peculiarities of TV Management* as follows:

- knowledge of the media environment
- knowledge of the competition
- knowledge of the needs of the audience
- idea for creating a unique concept, project, profile, scheme
- calculation of the program in terms of need for equipment and staff
- financial assessment of the program
- financial assessment of the project: studios, staff, equipment, rent, fees, taxes, financial obligations
- preparation of a business plan and search for financial resources for its implementation
- creation and effective application of a marketing and advertising strategy

I am quoting Prof. Draganov because I can say that the peculiarities of television management he lists are leading elements in the analysis of the mission and concept of the University Television of NBU.

It seems to me that this is one of the few studies focused on the role of author student teams in creating such content. The theoretical-scientific contributions as well as the applied research such of the above author's work are listed and researched, and I would agree with the findings. I deem the latter perfectly shaped and relevant to the research and analysis made in the dissertation. Other authors and documents related to the original idea of Prof. Ivo Draganov on the emergence of television have been used and cited. Materials with subsequent stages of development of the university television have also been used. A vision about the development of university television has been developed and presented. The doctoral student's hands-on experience is evident in the professional language used in the text. The abstract has been designed according to the requirements of the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act (DASRBA), and the Regulations for its application at NBU and corresponds to the content of the dissertation.

In conclusion it should be said that the dissertation meets the formal dissertation requirements for the acquisition of educational and scientific degree "Doctor".

Description of contributions:

I agree with the following conclusion of the author: "In reality, today NBUTV is faced with the difficult task of creating a real educational and television project of a novel type, i.e. a hybrid model between the trodden path in television making and the formation of current content, synthesized and proposed by teachers, who are experts in their respective fields at NBU, and the innovation in the discovery of unexplored television territories on the Internet by students of today and tomorrow in those rapidly changing high-tech days. "The text is innovative and the first development that analyzes the idea, achievements, mission and ideas for future development of the University Television of NBU. *NBU University Television between Experience and Innovation* is an author study of the prospects and difficulties in creating a project addressing NBUTV and achieves several significant results: she has explored the possibilities for creating television projects in the university structure of NBU created by teachers and students at the new technical base of the university; she has described the prospects for the development of television in the form of differentiated digital channels, each of which envisaged to serve an underlying educational mission.

Recommendations and remarks:

A text can always be improved and edited including this one. I would recommend that the dissertee should publish the results of this work after editing it. They would definitely be of interest to researchers and practitioners alike.

Conclusion:

The presented text defines and grades the priorities of the work of NBUTV, its history and stages of development summarizing and analyzing the information encompassing the entire subject of research: conception, development of television, functions, programmes, author teams, suggestions and proposals for the development of new ideas and proposals for the future program of NBUTV.

The presented dissertation complies with the requirements of both the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act (DASRBA) and the Internal Regulations of NBU for obtaining the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the Film Studies, Film Arts and Television doctoral program, in form and content alike. Therefore, I propose that the esteemed Scientific Panel to award Borislava Dimova the Doctoral educational and scientific degree in professional field 8.4. *Theatre and film art* for her dissertation *University Television of NBU: between Experience and Innovation*. Myself will vote in favour of the above.

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