

Brief summary of the monograph
"Social and solidarity economy and finance in the Balkans and Europe. Historical development, contemporary ideas, institutions and policies"
by Senior Assist. Prof. Tsvetelina Marinova, PhD

In connection with the competition for the academic position "Associate Professor" in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field, 3.8. Economics, published in State Gazette no. 29 of 12.04.2022, Dr. Tsvetelina Marinova has presented a monograph on the topic: *"Social and solidarity economy and finance in the Balkans and Europe. Historical development, contemporary ideas, institutions and policies"*.

The monograph explores the leading ideas, institutions and public policies in the social and solidarity economy and finance in a historical and long-term perspective in Europe and the Balkans (Bulgaria, Romania and Serbia). Similar to the global economic crisis of 2008, the Covid-19 crisis has proved that state intervention and the market are unable to solve major socio-economic problems. Against this backdrop, since 2008, we have seen a rapid increase in civil society initiatives and organisations in Europe and a growing role for the third sector in the economy. In recent years, the social and solidarity economy (cooperatives, mutuals, associations, foundations and social enterprises) has become the most dynamic sector in the advanced European countries. In the Balkans, despite the long traditions and experience in the cooperative movement and the development of social institutions, the sector is still emerging and fragile. Moreover, comparative and interdisciplinary research on the genesis and evolution of the social and solidarity economy ideas and institutions is missing in the contemporary academic literature.

The first objective of the monograph is to study the ideas of cooperatives and social and solidarity economy and finance in developed European countries in a historical perspective, as well as contemporary concepts, institutions and policies in the European Union.

The second objective of the study is to analyse the birth and evolution of cooperative ideas and cooperative financial institutions (agricultural credit cooperatives and popular banks) in the Balkans from the second half of the 19th century to the present. The transmission of ideas and institutions from Western Europe and Russia is discussed.

The third objective is to explore modern concepts, institutions and policies for social and solidarity economy and finance in the Balkans as well as the transfer of concepts and policies from European countries.

The monograph consists of two parts. The first part traces the emergence and evolution of the cooperative ideas and social and solidarity economy and finance concepts in the leading European countries (England, France, Germany, Italy, Russia) within the framework of the dominant ideologies in Europe during 19th and 20th centuries. The main cooperative schools and their contributions to the development of cooperative thought and cooperative institutions are explored. The study reflects on the ambiguity of contemporary approaches and concepts of social and solidarity economy and analyzes the major features of the sector's organizations. The various

models of social enterprises in Europe are studied. It discusses European Union's policy on the social economy and in particular on social entrepreneurship and funding opportunities for the Member States. Furthermore, the study provides a synthesis of contemporary ideas and forms of alternative money and social and solidarity finance in Europe.

The second part of the monograph is dedicated to the genesis and evolution of cooperative ideas, credit cooperatives and popular banks in Bulgaria, Romania and Serbia from the end of 19th century and during 20th century. It explores the influence of different ideologies and the transfer of ideas and concepts from Western Europe and Russia. The research offers a comparative analysis of the trajectories of cooperative financial institutions in the three Balkan countries, as well as of their role in shaping and modernizing the national economy during different periods of economic development: pre-capitalist (under Ottoman rule), capitalist (1878-1944), socialist (1944-1989) and post-socialist (after 1989). The study evokes the dominant role of the state in the cooperative development during 20th century and especially after the end of World War II, during socialism, when they were fully controlled and subsequently nationalized by the state. The main factors and drivers for the emergence and spread of modern organizations in the region are explored, as well as the reasons for its lagging behind in comparison with developed European countries. Public policies and trends in the three Balkan countries are studied and conclusions and recommendations for its future development are drawn.

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