

OPINION

By Assoc. Prof. Dr. Maria Jeliaskova

Concerning the materials submitted for participation in the competition for the occupation of the academic position of Associate Professor in Sociology, code 3.1. at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology for the needs of the department "Public Policies and Social Change".

The competition has been announced in accordance with the regulatory requirements in State Gazette No.89 / 12.11.2019. The only applicant is Chief Assistant, Dr. Veneta Krasteva.

1. General description of the materials presented

Dr. Veneta Krasteva participates in the competition with 35 publications. The publications have been submitted in accordance with the requirements of the Rules of the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology and include: habilitation work (a monograph "Youth Employment and Labour Insecurity in Bulgaria", published in 2019), another published book based on her PhD thesis, 5 papers, 15 articles and 13 chapters in collective monographs, most of which are published in English.

The publications presented provide a quantitative assessment of the applicant's achievements that is significantly higher than the minimum requirements for the post of associate professor. This also applies to the individual indicators that are included in the total number of points forming the minimum requirements.

The publications submitted are also distinguished from the publications used to meet the minimum requirements for the PhD thesis and the position "chief assistant".

2. General characteristics of the applicant's scientific, applied and pedagogical activity and which one is dominating

The academic work of Dr. Krasteva covers both research and teaching. The research work is clearly dominating in the structure of the academic activity.

The publications presented depict that the aforementioned quantitative indicators were achieved through research work of considerable scale, intensity and depth of research. Much of the published research was conducted over a three-year period between 2017 and 2019.

The studies of the applicant include two quite clearly outlined focuses.

The first of them encompasses young people as a special group with specific problems. The peculiarities of the social inclusion and in particular the inclusion in the labor

market of young people are highlighted. Unemployment, job insecurity, poverty, including working poor among young people, as they occupy low quality jobs, are being explored in this area. Dr. Krasteva is also interested in the implemented policies, the institutional framework and the impact they have on the employment and living conditions of young people.

The second subject of research interest of the applicant is the Orthodox Christianity, religious institutions and values, the functionality of faith.

I would like to emphasize that youth issues occupy a much more significant place in Dr. Krasteva's studies and significantly prevail in the overall structure of her research and publications.

3. Teaching experience of the applicant since the beginning of her career

In the period 2010-2016, Veneta Krasteva delivered a lecture course and held classes in economic sociology at the "P. Hilendarski" University. In addition, she participated in the provision of internship training for students of sociology at Sofia University and the University of National and World Economy. I personally have witnessed the commitment and efforts that Dr. Krasteva has made in relation to the program for the inclusion of students as trainees at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, and in particular in the department "Public Policies and Social Change".

4. Analysis of the applicant's scientific achievements, with a clear description of the scientific contributions

The scientific contribution report presented by Dr. Veneta Krusteva (12 theoretical and applied scientific contributions) contains interesting and significant theoretical and applied contributions, which reflect the main part of the research carried out and the content of the publications presented.

For the most part, these contributions relate to research on youth issues and are contained almost entirely in the habilitation work presented. As long time ago I started my research work in youth research, and after 1989 there was a serious decline in these studies and in general interest in the field, I attach great importance to the achievements of Dr. Krasteva. The members of the scientific jury are well aware of the contributions submitted, so I will highlight only some of them:

I would like to emphasize, for example, the analytical review of basic concepts and paradigms in the field of youth research, on the basis of which a sociological understanding of the emergence of the concept of youth as a specific period in human life is presented, as well as young people are analysed as a group with a certain socio-demographic and especially - behavioural specificity.

Another contribution relates to the focus on the impact of the socio-economic context, including policies, (which in some cases have negative impact), as well as the systematization of characteristics of the group and the surrounding social milieu that make young people particularly vulnerable in the labour market and contribute for increasing fragmentation of the youth group due to different access to resources and different opportunities to integrate and operate successfully in the labour market.

In my opinion, the successful combination of quantitative and qualitative data has also contributed significantly to the in-depth exploration and identification of such segments of realities that might otherwise easily go unnoticed.

I consider important also to note the focus on religion, and especially the functionality of religious values. The importance of this topic stems from the weaknesses of the family and especially of the education system to develop adequately the emotional and social intelligence of children and young people. V. Krusteva paid attention mainly to the insufficient capacity of the education system to develop these aspects of intelligence and thus a logical connection with Christian religious values emerges as a possible compensatory mechanism.

5. Contribution of the applicant to collective publications

A considerable part of the presented publications are collective, which is due to the intensive participation of Dr. Krasteva in major international and national projects. As no separation protocols have been provided, collective publications may make it difficult to distinguish the applicant's own texts strictly from those of other participants. In this regard I would like to underline:

1. Since I am a co-author in some of the collective publications - I do not review these publications. But from them I know for sure that the co-authors could clearly distinguish Dr. Krasteva's parts and her own contribution in the respective collective publications.

2. The main part of the applicant's own texts and more importantly, her main contributions are included in the presented habilitation monograph which is her own achievement.

6. Reflection of the scientific publications of the applicant in the academic literature

Dr. Veneta Krasteva submitted 22 quotations in Bulgarian and international refereed publications. At the same time and in connection with her participation in major international projects and networks noted in the competition documents, I also have witnessed the fact that Dr. Krasteva has been sought as a researcher and expert by other projects and research networks.

7. Critical notes of the reviewer on submitted papers

Dr. Krasteva has demonstrated remarkable literary awareness - almost 260 literary sources have been used in her habilitation work, most of them foreign. This is related to an important feature of the applicant's research - the interest in universal, pan-European aspects of the problems studied, for example the so-called activation policies and austerity measures or the restriction of the welfare states, the de-industrialization, economic recession, etc. that could be found in all EU member states. This outlines V. Krasteva as a researcher who goes beyond national borders and the domestic specificity of the problems studied and has a clear presence in the European Research Area.

I have no critical remarks, but I do have a recommendation: Dr. Krasteva examines processes in different thematic areas - labour market, youth employment, religious values, energy poverty, etc. She probably already has ideas to focus on specific topics in her further research work. It seems to me important, whatever the choice of subject, in addition to a thorough analysis of the current state of affairs: a/ to strengthen the identification of long-term (historical) trends in the dynamics of the relevant phenomenon; and b/ to continue to seek the interplay of public policies in various fields, incl. and especially to those who at first glance seem unrelated to the topic being researched. I consider that both analytical perspectives enrich the knowledge and contribute to the further dissipation of the fog of ideologies and ideologemes, which sufficiently stifles social analysis.

8. The reviewer's personal impressions of the applicant and other themes not mentioned in the preceding paragraphs

My continued joint work with Dr. Krasteva in Public Policy and Social Change Department has created the impression that the applicant is an intelligent, conscientious, hard-working and thorough researcher who has enough erudition, desire and ambition to do serious research work.

9. Reasoned and clearly formulated conclusion.

Considering the volume and quality of the research work of Veneta Krasteva, her contributions, as well as my personal impressions of her, I strongly suggest that the distinguished members of the Scientific Jury for the competition recommend to the Scientific Council of the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology at the BAS Chief Assistant Professor, Veneta Krasteva, PhD, to be appointed to the scientific position of Associate Professor.

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Sofia

Signature:

/Maria Jeliaskova/