

REVIEW

from Prof. Anna Mantarova (IPS at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences)
of a competition for the academic position of "docent"
in the specialty "Sociology", professional field 3.1.,
announced for the needs of the section "Public policies and social changes"
in the IPS at BAS,
promulgated in the State Gazette No. 67 / 28.07.2020

The competition was announced in accordance with the Law for the Development of the Academic Staff and the Regulations for its implementation.

In the announced competition for docent at the section "Public Policies and Social Changes" of the IPS at BAS participates only one candidate - Ch. Assistant Dr. Svetlana Doycheva Stamenova. The documents submitted by her comply with the requirements of the Law on the Application of Scientific Degrees and the Regulations for the Acquisition of Scientific Degrees and for Occupying Academic Positions at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, the Rules of the Scientific Committee of the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology.

General description of the presented materials

The presented materials show that Svetlana Stamenova not only covers, but also exceeds the Minimum requirements of ZRASRB and BAS to the scientific and teaching activities of the candidates for the academic position "Docent" area 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, defined according to the Classifier of the fields of higher education and professional fields, approved by Decree № 125 of the Council of Ministers of 2002 (SG, issue 64 of 2002). October 22, 2018). With a required 430 points, the candidate has 785, and there is no duplication with the publications submitted for a doctoral degree.

The publications with which Dr. Svetlana Stamenova participates in the announced competition are: 2 monographs, 1 chapter of a collective monograph (published abroad), 7 studies (2 of them, published abroad) and 12 articles. One of the articles is in a referenced edition.

General characteristics of the scientific, scientifically applied and pedagogical activity of the candidate

Svetlana Stamenova graduated in Sociology at Sofia University in 1987. She developed her educational training at the university several times. In 1994 she obtained a Master's Degree in political science from the Central European University (CEU), Budapest, Hungary, the Department of Political Science, and the Program in Politics and Political Economy of the Post-Communist Transition.

In 1999 she defended her PhD degree at the Institute for Political Studies at the Polish Academy of Sciences with a dissertation on "Structural and axiological determinants of political support. Comparative analysis of Poland and Bulgaria."

In the following years she had several specializations - in Great Britain, Germany, USA and Romania. This training provides a rich base of theoretical knowledge and practical skills to be objectified in a successful and fruitful research work.

Since 1988 Stamenova is a research associate (chief assistant) at the Institute of Sociology (later the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology), first in the section "Social control, deviations and conflicts", and from 2018 - in the section "Public policies and social change".

As can be seen from the attached materials, Svetlana Stamenova has an active research and publishing activity. She has participated in five projects, in one of which, funded by the Ministry of Education and Science, as a head researcher. She is the co-author of two empirical nationally representative empirical sociological studies on important issues, one of which is internationally comparative. She has presented papers at 7 international conferences and 11 national scientific forums organized by authoritative institutions and organizations.

In addition to the research activity St. Stamenova also has several years of teaching practice at Sofia University "Kliment Ohridski", SWU "Neofit Rilski" in Blagoevgrad and the New Bulgarian University, and has led courses on current and important topics for our society. Expert and consulting activities are also present.

It can be summarized that the candidate's work is definitely dominated by scientific research (which is quite natural for a person working in a scientific institute), but both teaching and expert activities are also presented. Her activity is also manifested in the scientific-promotional field with the presentation of public lectures.

Thematically, Svetlana Stamenova's research is mainly in several interrelated areas - ethnic relations, civic and national identity, globalization, phenomena and problems of the transition to a market economy and multi-party system, value systems.

The analysis of specific problems in their socio-cultural context naturally makes a transition and enters other thematic areas, thus showing high competence in a wide field of research. Impressive is the presence of many comparative studies - both with countries in the Balkans and in a wider area - the Central Europe. This allows the author to compare the situation and processes in Bulgaria with those taking place in other countries and to identify similarities and differences, to derive their determinants in the present and in the specific historical path taken by the different societies.

Substantive analysis of the scientific achievements of the candidate

I would like to start with the fact that the long-term research of St. Stamenova is focused mainly on the problem area, which stands out as especially important in the conditions of neoliberalism and globalization. It is in the field of these issues (but not only on them) that her main contributions to the expansion and deepening of scientific knowledge can be highlighted. Most of them are contained in the proposed habilitation work, which is largely a development of her previous research. I would like to emphasize the following contributions of the candidate:

Based on a **comparative analysis of ethnicity and nationalism and the construction of ethnic and national identity** in the Balkan region and in Western Europe, **she draws significant conclusions about their specificity and its impact on societies afterwards**. She presents and justifies the claim that ethnic culturally-based nations are in fact not so much defined by culture as they are based on politically constructed identities. However, the politically produced ethnic identities do not change the “ethnic” character of the Balkan nations - they become “ethnic” and function as ethnic in the long run. For a group of Balkan countries (Bulgaria, Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia) the correlations of tolerance with the acquisition of 'modern' (non-traditional) social locations, identities and political ideologies are analyzed in detail, as well as the existing traditional practices with a positive impact on tolerance and the shortening of interethnic distances.

The differences in the determination models in the countries of the former Yugoslavia, on the one hand, and in Bulgaria, on the other, have been stated and explained. For the countries of the former Yugoslavia, a common model has been outlined, which generally follows the modernization model, but at the same time shows the presence of certain modifications related to the specific type and form of interethnic conflicts there. Individualized self-identification increases tolerance for ethnic

minorities in Serbia and Macedonia. In the Bulgarian case, however, it is not so much democratization and the modernization trend that can provide a possible explanation for tolerance towards ethnic minorities, but traditional forms of interethnic peaceful existence, which is a legacy of the past. In Bulgaria, what the author points out as mostly determining the tolerance for ethnic minorities are the factors based on tradition and not on modernization, together with the support of the 'civic' model of ethnic political representation, where the emphasis is placed on individual rights, regardless of belonging to an ethnic group.

Based on information from empirical research St. Stamenova **proves that ethnic and political national identities are complementary rather than mutually exclusive** conceptual constructs in the Bulgarian national consciousness and that the dichotomous nature of the two theoretically constructed types of identity - 'civic-political' and 'ethno-cultural', is not valid for the Bulgarian case.

The author **ascertains and justifies her statement that the Bulgarian case is in direct contradiction with the modernization theory of interethnic relations**, according to which the strong attachment to the ethnic group by the dominant ethnic community leads to a decrease in tolerance to ethnic minorities and an increase in social distance to them, which is confirmed in a 2019 study of attitudes towards immigrants. The analysis of the collected during the research of St. Stamenova's information shows that in our country the stronger the attachment to the Bulgarian ethnic group, the more prone their representatives are to social tolerance towards the ethnic minorities in the country and vice versa, the weak attachment to the ethnic group increases the social distances of Bulgarians to ethnic minorities and does not reduce them. It turns out that the ethnic identity of Bulgarians not only does not reduce their social tolerance towards ethnic minorities in our country, but on the contrary - reduces social distances to them - a fact that calls into question the "destructive force" of ethnic attachment to interethnic relationships.

St. Stamenova **identifies and analyzes the political and ethnic influences on the national consciousness** of the Bulgarian ethnic majority **in the context of the fundamental social changes** taking place in the world and changing the role, functions and strength of nation states and national identities. The line of change in the nation-state has been developed into an independent in-depth analysis.

A detailed critical analysis of the theories of the crisis of democracy has been made, and with the use of information from empirical research on political

support in the world today, **conclusions are drawn for their confirmation and / or refutation.**

The **monitoring of the political support in Bulgaria for two decades and its analysis in a socio-cultural context**, based on representative empirical research, has a significant scientific value.

The scientific knowledge is expanded by **differentiated analyzes focused on certain social groups** - I mean in the first place **the study of the subjective social-class identification of the population** of Central and Eastern Europe from 1990 to 2009. The study **shows the absence of a single common model, despite practically the same starting positions, and this variability is explained by the different success of the reforms.** At the very beginning of the post-communist systemic transformation, subjective identification with the middle class in almost all the countries studied was more numerous than self-identification with the working class and the lower class taken together. The mid-1990s were characterized by a shrinking of the subjective self-identification with the middle class, while by the end of the first decade of the 21st century we were already seeing an increase in middle-class identification in Central Europe as a result of the complete restructuring of the economic and political environment and the entry into the European Union. Unlike these countries, Bulgaria shows an invariant of subjective social-class identification - twenty years after the beginning of the systemic change, the country is dominated by a pyramidal type of social structure, built on the base of subjective social-class identification of respondents. The explanation of this perception of the subjective social status of the Bulgarians over the years is connected with the huge de-industrialization of the transition period.

Scientifically applied contributions:

The author **provides a set of indicators** developed in the operationalization of ethnic and political national identity, which can be used in future research to track the dynamics of processes.

The established direction of development of the national identity of the Bulgarian ethnic majority, as well as its identified interrelations and dependencies can serve as a useful **basis for making management decisions about the interethnic relations**, and now, in a period of intensive migration processes, **to stimulate the formation and manifestation of a positive attitude and tolerance towards immigrants.**

Reflection of the candidate's scientific publications in our and foreign literature

The research activity and the publications of St. Stamenova are on issues that are very relevant in our time and whose significance far exceeds the borders of our country and the author is visible in the international research space. The candidate's works have been cited in 21 scientific publications (indicated by her), 5 of which are in publications included in SCOPUS. Given the fact that the citations found are exclusively in foreign publications, I am sure that there are quite a few citations, but they have not been found.

Critical remarks of the reviewer on the submitted works, including the literary awareness of the candidate

Against the background of the very rich bibliography mentioned in the habilitation work, it is noticeable that the Bulgarian authors are almost not presented - only two books in Bulgarian and one of the Bulgarian authors in English are mentioned. My opinion is that it would be good to use more works by Bulgarian authors - advocates of different positions. This would give a more detailed and multifaceted picture of the social environment in which the studied processes take place that would contribute to trace the determination dependencies.

Looking at the future work of Svetlana Stamenova, I would recommend her to focus on research that reflects the changed situation in the country as a result of the wave of immigrants in the period 2013-2017. It would be interesting to see if and how the arrival and presence of immigrants affects interethnic relations in Bulgarian society, and whether and how it affects the attitudes of the Bulgarian ethnic majority towards other ethnic groups in Bulgaria. The attitudes of the population towards immigrants have been studied, the dynamics, conditionality, etc. have been studied, but the impact of the immigration wave on the interethnic relations of the local population is not known to me to have been the subject of a targeted study.

Personal impressions

I know Ch. Assistant Professor Dr. Svetlana Stamenova since the 80s, when we were both young scientists at the Institute of Sociology of BAS. My impressions are that she is an erudite and competent scientist, active in scientific life, with a position - scientific and civic, with ambitions and potential for development. The knowledge of Polish gives her access to more primary sources and opportunities for comparative analysis.

I have no common publications with the candidate.

Conclusion

Based on my impressions of the overall work of Dr. Stamenova - from the publications, information about her teaching and expert work, as well as my excellent impressions of her as a scientist during our many years of work in one section, I can confidently say that she has all the necessary qualities to hold the academic position of "docent". I recommend to the members of the scientific jury to vote "yes", as well as the distinguished Scientific Committee to elect Dr. Svetlana Stamenova as docent.

Prof. Anna Mantarova