

## OPINION

for the scientific works and the educational activity of Ch. Assistant Professor Svetlana Doycheva Stamenova, presented for participation in a competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor", specialty "Sociology", professional field 3.1. Sociology, anthropology and cultural sciences, announced in SG no. 67 of 28. 07. 2020 for the needs of the section "Public policies and social changes" at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, BAS

Member of the Scientific Jury: Prof. DSc Tanya Nedelcheva, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

### 1. General description of the submitted materials

Svetlana Doycheva Stamenova participated in the competition for associate professor with publications for the period 1990 - 2020, which are quantitatively: 2 monographs, 7 studies published abroad, 1 chapter of a collective monograph, 12 articles. 11 of them are in English and 11 in Bulgarian. It was found that the content of two of the articles overlapped significantly. In this sense, 21 will be evaluated.

She has participated in 7 international and 12 national conferences, given 8 public lectures at various scientific forums, participated in 5 international and national research projects as a leader or team member.

Svetlana Stamenova is the only candidate in the competition.

### 2. General characteristics of the scientific, scientific-applied and pedagogical activity of the candidate; which of them dominates;

The problem areas are the aspects of political, national, ethnic and political identity, post-communist development and the middle classes, democratic processes and tolerance, political culture.

Educational activity of the candidate: lecture courses at Sofia University "St. Kl. Ohridski", Southwestern University and New Bulgarian University in the period 1999-2001 on "Theories and Concepts of Post-Communist Systemic Change".

### 3. Content analysis of the scientific achievements of the candidate, clear characteristics of the scientific contributions: novelty for science (new theories, hypotheses, methods, etc.); enrichment of existing knowledge; application of scientific achievements in practice and realized economic effect;

Dr. Svetlana Stamenova's work is internally coherent, both synchronously and diachronically, and in an abstract view it can be said that it generally refers to the sociology of ethnic and national identities, political culture, democracy and tolerance. Her work contains certain theoretical centers. The analyzed problems intersect while retaining their relief. Characteristic features of the analysis on the basis of modern theoretical formulations are very convincingly supplemented by statistical data and results of empirical sociological research.

The high professionalism of the author is evident in the interpretation of each of the analyzed problems. The argumentation is at the level of different theoretical positions, combined with empirical results, which is very clearly manifested in the monograph "Political and ethnic influences on the national consciousness of the Bulgarian ethnic majority" (2019), where the above two positions are separated as two semantic parts. The first is the general conceptual framework in which the problems of "Ethnic national identity and the formation of nations", neoliberalism, the crisis of democracy are analyzed. The second part is the results of empirical sociological research. The next characteristic, which is a result of the deep penetration into the developed issues, is the precise systematics and logical argumentation.

Several thematic guidelines can be outlined with relevant contributions.

First. The main center of meaning is the relationship between the political and the ethnic within the national identity. An important conclusion, which refers to the specific difference of the Bulgarian national identity, is that the "civic-political and" ethno-cultural "identities are not antagonistic, but are mixed in the national consciousness. The specifics of the Bulgarian national identity are outlined, in which the strengthening of the ethnic elements does not lead to an increase in the distances between ethnic groups, including immigrants. This is in fact another confirmation that the so-called The "Bulgarian ethnic model" functions and is still a factor in strengthening the social order in Bulgaria. It is for this reason that tolerance of minorities in Bulgaria is a hallmark compared to other Balkan nationalisms.

Second. A number of publications (3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, etc.) make a precise comparative analysis of various aspects of social dynamics in the countries of Central Europe and the Balkan countries. The thesis is argued that the cultural and historical heritage determine the peculiarities of the transition from a totalitarian to a democratic society. It is especially noted that, unlike other Balkan countries, Bulgarian ethnic tolerance is strongly determined by the legacy of the past. The analysis of the state of the middle class in the Central European countries and Bulgaria (Romania) cannot be ignored.

Third. Several of the publications are devoted to problems related to the population in the villages (17, 18, 20, etc.). The emphasis is on the education of the rural population in Bulgaria by making a comparative analysis with this phenomenon in Poland and Romania. The attention is

focused on the factors of satisfaction with the life of the Bulgarian villagers and their change in a ten-year period, as well as on the way of thinking of the inhabitants of the rural areas and those of the cities. The analysis of the models of tolerance towards the ethnic minorities in the Balkans and the specifics of the Bulgarian village leads to the conclusion that the rural residents are more tolerant towards the Bulgarian Muslims and the ethnic minorities than the ones living in the cities.

Fourth. The analyzes based on own sociological research and secondary analysis of results from others allow Dr. Stamenova to reach valuable theoretical conclusions related to the genesis of the nation and the modern nation state, the fate of the nation state in the situation of neoliberalism and globalization, the crisis of democracy, multiculturalism and the modifications of nationalism (1, 7, 15, etc.).

Fifth. In some of the publications there is a strong presence of reflections on specific political situations, events and trends. For example, the monograph "Structural and Axiological Determinants of Political Support (Comparative Analysis of Poland and Bulgaria)" outlines the situation of political support in Bulgaria in the period 1990-2011, changes in the degree of trust in the political elite, frustration with the functioning of specific practices of democratic governance, etc.

Sixth. Empirical sociological research has complied with all academic norms and requirements. The analysis and interpretation of the results are professional.

Seventh. In methodological and conceptual terms, the short notes related to the substantial and relational approach are especially important, because the latter in particular contains exceptional heuristic potential.

#### 4. Critical considerations:

1. I will pay attention to one main thesis that the author defends. Page 22 of "Political and Ethical Influences on the National Consciousness of the Bulgarian Ethnic Majority" states that "it is not culture and ethnicity that are the factors that determine the nation and nationality, but the political project" and as a consequence the thesis that ethnic and cultural nationality is based on politically constructed identities "(p. 16). Such a categorical thesis seems to me to be the result of the strong trust in modern theories and that almost every social action is a transformed form of power attitude. In the formation of the nation, a dominant factor cannot be indicated, because there is a structural and functional interaction of culture, traditions, political projects, etc.

2. The author, after formulating 6 hypotheses, very precisely analyzes the data from the specific sociological research and accordingly finds support or not of the data for the previously assumed assumptions. I will comment on the first hypothesis. It is that there is a tendency to strengthen the civic components in the national identity at the expense of the ethnic ones.

According to the author, in the mass consciousness of the Bulgarian ethnic majority no distinction is made between political and ethnic national identity, the elements of these theoretically opposite identities are mixed in the national consciousness. This, according to the candidate, rejects the first hypothesis as wrong. According to my research, this hypothesis is true. Indeed, there is a tendency to weaken national identity and strengthen civic identity (one could say European). The candidate's statement that the Bulgarian does not distinguish between political and ethnic identities is only seemingly true, because indeed ethnic Bulgarians consider the state as their only, ie. the political and the ethnic are mixed, but this does not mean that no distinction is made between the political, which focuses on state attributes and political functioning, and the ethnic, related to history, family ties, neighborhood, traditions, myths, etc. On pp. 80-81 are given exactly a number of components of national consciousness. Probably some of the misunderstandings come from the use of terms that introduce some ambiguity. For example, there is talk of ethnic and political national identities, but in fact there are both ethnic and political elements in the identification field of national identity. Naturally, there is an ethnic identity and, accordingly, a political identity.

The above critical considerations are in a sense only examples of possible disputed territories, but in general the developments are interesting and in-depth studies of ethnic and national in recent years.

5. In case of collective publications - determination of the candidate's contribution;  
Svetlana Stamenova has no co-authored publications.

6. Reflection of the candidate's scientific publications in our and foreign literature (according to his data). Numerical indicators (number of citations, impact factors). Type of citations (when the latter are not merely mentioned in the bibliography, it is in the candidate's interest to provide a photocopy of the citations in order to assess their nature);

There are 21 citations of the author's publications in English and 1 citation in Russian. 5 of them are articles published in magazines in Skopus.

19 contributing moments are formulated and 1 (№ 7) of them sounds like an activity and not a result.

7. Personal impressions of the candidate and other data not mentioned in the previous points

I know the author as a good professional. But I have one wish: The fact of not mentioning the Bulgarian authors who worked in the same research fields seems to be a demonstration of

scientific arrogance. If you look at the citations in the monograph "Political and ethnic influences on the national consciousness of the Bulgarian ethnic majority" for example, you will see only a few names of Bulgarian authors, and on these issues in recent decades there are many serious theoretical and empirical studies.

**Conclusion:**

Based on the indicated scientific and scientific-applied contributions, teaching and expert activity, I propose to the esteemed members of the Scientific Jury to unanimously recommend to the Scientific Council of IFS the award of the academic position "Associate Professor", specialty Sociology, professional field 3.1. Sociology, anthropology and cultural sciences of the chief assistant, Dr. Svetlana Doycheva Stamenova.

**November 4, 2020**

**Signature:**

**(Prof. DSc T. Nedelcheva)**