

## ABSTRACTS

of the publications with which Assist. Prof. **Blagovesta Ilieva Nikolova** participates in the competition for obtaining the academic position of “Associate Professor” for the needs of department “Social theories, strategies and prognoses” at IPS-BAS, announced in the State Gazette, issue 106/15.12.2020

### I. Monograph

*Nikolova, B. 2019. The RRI Challenge: Responsibilization in a State of Tension with Market Regulation. Innovation and Responsibility Set, Volume 3, ISTE & Wiley: London, UK and Hoboken, NJ; ISBN: 978-1-78630-142-0*

*Abstract.* The monograph explores the prospects of innovation governance against the backdrop of growing unease as to the effects, democratic deficits and overall societal adequacy of techno-scientific progress. It focuses on the recently promoted notion of Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI), and attempts to shed some light on the inevitable impediments to its meaningful implementation vis-à-vis the normative structure of contemporary market societies. A particular matter of concern is the normative interlock between science and the market around the notion of neutrality, and the narrowing room for ethics reflexivity.

Chapter one explores the RRI theoretical landscape and its specific social critique stance on the current governance of innovation. The text examines the arguments that feed into the intellectual effort to reconcile innovation with its societal context and emphasizes some particular points of incompatibility between the logic behind them and the normative structure of contemporary market societies, taking cue from the work of Karl Polanyi, Michael Sandel, Frank Cunningham and others.

The second chapter explores the ways in which the manageability of future is being conceptualized and imagined in current RRI accounts. A particular attention is paid on the role of innovation in the production of specific temporal regimes of contemporary market societies and the implications as to the prospects of responsibilization of the knowledge-creation process.

Chapter three focuses on the features of the institutional context in which the notion of RRI emerged. A point of departure is the so-called “governance turn” in EU studies and the impact of the latter on the actual EU policy-making process. The text examines the assumptions behind the notion of governance in view of its specific history; then it explores the “research-market” axis in the evolution of EU governance of RTD and the discursive and policy mechanisms by which industry is legitimized as the interface with society.

The fourth chapter focuses on the way RRI is being institutionally operationalized in terms of EU governance of RTD. It outlines the actual prospects of the RRI “keys” in view of “the market turn in EU governance”. Then, it explores the hypothesis that the usual conceptual coupling of responsabilization and democratization as to the knowledge creation process can have very problematic manifestations in the context of contemporary market societies.

Stepping on the assumption that ethics is more an opportunity for reflexive examining of the clashes between different normative orientations rather than preaching verses on the right ones, Chapter five argues that the status of ethics in European RTD is crucial in any RRI-inspired attempt for responsabilization of the knowledge-creation process today. The text explores the achievements in the progressive codification of research ethics standards, as well as the problems and the challenges as to guaranteeing actual room for ethics reflexivity in the organization of RTD activities in contemporary market societies.

Chapter six delves into some neoclassical assumptions fueling the dynamics and dominating the imagination as to the current political-economic context, and reflects on the detrimental consequences as to the place of ethics and the interpretation of responsibility with regard to the innovation process. The text argues that the meaningful implementation of RRI is inseparable from reconsidering the normative claims of market regulation and contesting the tenets of the New Public Management approach.

In the conclusion “The RRI Challenge” outlines avenues for further conceptualization so that RRI can fulfil its emancipatory potential as social critique. This involves challenging the current politico-economic framework of the knowledge-creation process, as well as reconsidering some problematic moments in the discourse on innovation governance such as: the economic imprint on the notion of governance, the role of soft law instruments, the complex interrelation between

the notions of positive and negative responsibility, and the tension between dialogical and non-dialogical solutions to the problem of normative fragmentation of contemporary pluralistic societies.

## **II. Publications in international journals with Impact factor and/or SJRank**

*Nikolova, B. 2021. The Science Fiction - Futures Studies Dialogue: Some Avenues for Further Exchange. Journal of Futures Studies, Vol.25, No.3, pp. 93–98. ISSN 1027-6084*

*Abstract.* The text aims at contributing to the current debate on the relations between science fiction and futures studies by suggesting two possible directions of renewing the discussion: first, by the means of challenging approaches that treat science fiction merely as an useful adjunct serving the specific goals of futures studies and the innovation process (as a generator of ideas with potential for market realization); and second, by engaging with rigorous conceptual exploration of the notion of plausibility.

*Leese, M., Lidén, K., Nikolova, B. 2019. Putting critique to work: Ethics in EU security research. Security Dialogue, Vol. 50, issue 1, pp. 59-76; ISSN: 0967-0106*

*Abstract.* In this article, we examine the possibility of exercising critique through the mandatory ethical coverage that EU security research projects must be subjected to. Applied ethics, so we argue, speaks to several core issues in the critical security studies agenda, such as turning abstract considerations of critique into forms of tangible cooperation, engaging exoteric communities, and placing normative questions about security within concrete contexts of its imagination and production. Accordingly, it can be seen as a concrete way of putting critique to work. At the same time, however, applied ethics does face considerable challenges that result from its location in the middle of numerous cross-pressures, such as political ambitions, economic interests, technological rationales and the demands of security professionals. These challenges risk turning what was intended to be the critical corrective of applied ethics into a legitimizing function of mere ‘ethics approval’. Drawing on personal experiences as well as

debates on critical security studies and ethics, we discuss some of these challenges and discuss the possibility of and conditions for critique within the arena of EU security research.

***Nikolova, B. 2015. The Wildcard Event – Discursive, Epistemic and Practical Aspects of Uncertainty Being “Tamed”. Time & Society. DOI:10.1177/0961463X15577283, April 2, 2015; ISSN 0961-463X***

***Abstract.*** The text explores the functionality of the notion of a wildcard event as a means to articulate uncertainty and incorporate the latter in the performance of various realms of human activity. It starts by examining some common narrative modalities through which uncertainty is being approached. The second section illustrates how the notion of a wildcard event fits those modalities and how scanning for wildcards serves as an anticipatory strategy to compensate for certain lack of experience, ignorance and insufficient knowledge and as a very specific technique for temporal adjustment. The third section demonstrates its applicability, influential presence and productivity (including profitability) in three realms – futures studies, the market and politics.

***Nikolova, B. 2015. Youth And The Future: Could Normative Foresight Help Their Reunion? Society. Vol. 52, issue 3, pp.246-251; DOI 10.1007/s12115- 015-9895-1; ISSN: 1936-4725***

***Abstract.*** The text aims at exploring the pressing issue of how to approach the problematic relation between youth and the future. It examines two common public discourses on youth; then it lays the question in view of the crisis of contemporary representative democracies. Finally, it makes suggestions for using normative foresight techniques in the effort to address the difficulty of engaging the youth with some long-term societal future.

***Nikolova, B. 2014. The Rise and Promise of Participatory Foresight. European Journal of Futures Research, pp. 15:33, DOI 10.1007/s40309-013-0033-2; ISSN: 2195-2248***

***Abstract.*** Historically, the capability of predicting the future has always been perceived as a matter of certain inequalities, reflecting the initiation in or access to significant knowledge with regard to the future. The prophet, the philosopher, the statesman and the scientist are emblematic figures of such cognitive hierarchies. The text addresses a problem which has not been at the forefront of futures research attention, but nevertheless it reflects some major changes in the

domain of foresight. A great deal of effort has been put in search for adequate ways to handle the complexities of contemporary life as well as to come to terms with the increasing unpredictability of the future. The unstable societal dynamics challenges the traditional notions and practice of foresight. The broader inclusion of diverse participants (experts, citizens, stakeholders or nongovernmental activists) and their perspectives has been seriously considered as a means to expand the visibility of the future and promote firmer engagement with it. The promise of a participatory approach in futures research and its practical manifestations (with sometimes controversial effects) are in the focus of the paper.

### **III. Publications in other refereed and/or indexed journals**

*Nikolova, B. 2014. Trends in Contemporary Economic Forecasting. Dialogue, vol.2, pp.30-46; ISSN 1311-9206 [In Bulgarian: Николова, Б. Тенденции в съвременното икономическо прогнозиране, в: сп. Диалог, 2014, бр.2, с. 30-46].*

*(EBSCO Publishing, CEEOL, RePEc, BASE u Google Scholar)*

**Abstract.** The text makes an attempt to outline some changes in the realm of economic forecasting within the context of a broader process of transformation of foresight in the last few decades. The paper focuses on the following issues: the rise of technological forecasting; the advantages of long-term planning; the emergence of “alternative futures” and global modeling; the normative considerations in economic forecasting; and some specific problems which need to be taken into consideration when making economic forecasts.

*Nikolova, B. 2014. Marketizing Contemporary Forecasting. Economic Thought, no.1, pp. 115-132; ISSN 0013-2993 [in Bulgarian: Николова, Б. Маркетизация на съвременното прогнозиране, в: сп. Икономическа мисъл, 2014, бр.1, с. 115-132]*

*(EconLit, AEA, RePEc, CEEOL, EBSCO, ERIH PLUS)*

**Abstract.** Marketizing contemporary forecasting is part and parcel of the general transformation of the latter. It reflects the very dynamic relation between forecasting and the market mechanism. In the current text it is defined as a peculiar interaction between prognostics and the market logic, in which we witness: 1) the increasing integration of prognostic activities into market

supply thus making prognoses objects of market exchange; 2) changes in the functionality of forecasts in the capital accumulation process within the financial sector.

*Nikolova, B. 2013. On Contemporary Knowledge Societies. Philosophical Alternatives, no.5, pp.66-80; ISSN 0861-7899 [In Bulgarian: Николова, Б. Съвременните общества, основани на знанието, в: сп. Философски алтернативи, 2013, кн.5, с.66-80] (The Philosopher's Index, EBSCOhost, Central and Eastern European On-line Library; Google Scholar)*

*Abstract.* The text represents a reworked excerpt from a dissertation on the transformation of contemporary forecasting. It explores some conceptual and practical problems relevant to the notion of knowledge-based societies, the legitimacy of expertise, and the rise of think tanks. The knowledge production process has been analyzed as one introducing biases and distortion in the adequate understanding of phenomena thus impeding the construction of reliable images of the future.

#### **IV. Publications in non-refereed journals or edited compilations**

*Nikolova, B. 2021. Covid-19 and the Problem of Governance. In: Nesković, S., Todorova, B. (eds.) Philosophy in the time of Pandemic, Centar Za Strateška Istraživanja Nacionalne Bezbednosti-Cesna B, Belgrade, pp.79-86; ISBN 978-86-85985-47-8*

*Abstract.* The paper attempts to briefly outline some of the major problems of the governance model in Western liberal democracies, dramatically exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. It summarizes some of the main narratives around the situation with the new coronavirus as those stories open discursive space to further elaborate on three particular sources of the witnessed governance failure: its narrow normative orientation towards economic expediency; its “reverse” temporal scheme of targeting societal problems; and its strong inclination to resort to an ever-expanding set of “irregular”, “emergent” and “extraordinary” mechanisms to cope with uncertainty.

*Nikolova, B. 2020. Securing Safe Distances: On Some Bordering Practices during a Pandemic. In: Društvo i COVID – 19. Proceedings Međunarodna Naučna Konferencija, Knjiga XXXI, Centar Za Strateška Istraživanja Nacionalne Bezbednosti-Cesna B, Beograd, pp.309-317; ISBN: 978-86-85985-43-0*

*Abstract.* The current paper aims at examining a particularly significant aspect of the current pandemic, namely, the practice of bordering. The text focuses on two manifestations of the latter. First, it explores the process of re-bordering of external borders as part and parcel of the biomedical securitization of societies under the strain of the coronavirus challenge. Second, it examines how the pandemic activated bordering practices within societies themselves. A particular matter of concern is the notion of social distancing, which is at the heart of governance mechanisms reconfiguring the crystal lattice of social interactions thus stretching the social fabric under the auspices of health safety.

*Nikolova, B. Migration Flows and the Smart Borders Package – the new functions of European Border Control. In: Migration Waves: Past, Present and Future, Neofit Riski Unuversity Press: Blagoevgrad, 2017, pp.79-86; ISBN: 9789540001074 [In Bulgarian: Николова, Б., Мигрантски потоци и пакетът „Интелигентни граници“ - новите функции на Европейския граничен контрол, в сб. „Миграционните вълни - минало, настояще и бъдеще“, УИ „Неофит Рилски“, 2017, с. 79-86]*

*Abstract.* The text offers a short critical interpretation on the evolution of the idea for “smart borders” and the ever-expanding use of new biometric technologies for “management” of migrant flows towards the European Union. At the same time it makes an attempt to outline how in the context of an increasingly intensive global movement of people the meaning of notions such as “border” and “border control” is inevitably changing.

*Nikolova, B. The Optimistic Turn of Contemporary Global Foresight and the Migration Problem. In: Gradinarov, B. (ed.) Will the European Union Fall Apart? Faber: Sofia, 2016, pp. 265-277; ISBN 978-619- 00-0504-9 [In Bulgarian: Николова, Б., Оптимистичният*

*уклон на съвременното глобално прогнозиране и въпросът за миграцията, в сб. "Ще се разпадне ли ЕС?", Изд. Фабер, 2016, с.265-277]*

**Abstract.** The text aims at identifying some of the shortcomings of contemporary global foresight which may be traced back to what we could denote as “optimistic drift” in the realm of futures studies. It outlines the prognostic blind spots of such an approach, which leads to the construction of insufficiently adequate and not quite useful projections of the eventual European future and the issue of migration. This in its turn results in institutional unpreparedness and strategic weakness in the face of processes such as the ongoing European migrant crisis.

*Nikolova, B. The Migrant Problem, the Balkans and Bulgaria: Elements of the Prognostic Analysis. In: Gradinarov, B. (ed.) Global Changes and Bulgaria in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, BISFIRM: Sofia, 2016, pp. 229-236; ISBN 978-619-90757-0-8 [In Bulgarian: Николова, Б., Мигрантският въпрос, Балканите и България: елементи на прогностичния анализ, в сб. „Глобалните промени и съдбата на България през 21 век“, изд. BISFRIM, 2016, с.229-236]*

**Abstract.** The paper makes an attempt to outline the elements of an adequate foresight analysis with regard to the processes of global migration and the pressure towards Europe. It first pays attention to the ambivalent interpretations as to the migration question; it then elicits some of the main factors and considerations that need to be taken into account in any attempt to construct prognostic narratives on the future of the migrant flows through the Balkans and Bulgaria.