



UNIVERSITY OF NATIONAL AND WORLD ECONOMY

REVIEW

From: Prof. dr. Maria Georgieva Stoyanova, University of National and World Economy – Sofia, department „Economic Sociology”, scientific specialty „Sociology”.

About: Competition for academic position “**Associate Professor**” in professional field 3.1. Sociology, anthropology and cultural studies, scientific specialty „Sociology”, for the purposes of the Social Survey Research Center at Institute of Philosophy and Sociology at Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (IPS-BAS).

1. Information about the competition

The competition is announced for the purposes of the Social Survey Research Center at IPS-BAS, according Protocol №13/13.07.2021 of Scientific Council at IPS-BAS. I am member of the Scientific Jury according to Order № RD-09-391/28.09.2021 by the Director of IPS-BAS.

2. Information about the applicant

Only one candidate has submitted documents in this competition – Assistant Professor Dr. Petya Ivanova Ilieva-Trichkova, Social Survey Research Center at IPS-BAS. The applicant is an alumni of the University of National and World Economy. In the period 2002-2008, she has studied specialty „Sociology” and obtained both „bachelor” and „master” degree. I know the candidate in my capacity of her lecturer in the department „Economic Sociology” as well as for her activity as a member of the Sociologist's Club at the University of National and World Economy and the Alumni Club "Sociology, Psychology and Economics at the University of National and World Economy".

Petya Ilieva-Trichkova is enrolled in a doctoral program of self-study at the Adam Mickiewicz University, Faculty of Social Sciences, Poznan, Poland, which ended in 2016 with the defense of a dissertation on “In Search of Social Justice: Current Developments in Higher Education and the Labour Market in Bulgaria”.

After acquiring doctoral degree, the research and practical experience of the candidate is as follows:

- **Assistant Professor** at the Social Survey Research Center at IPS-BAS from 2017 and onwards;
- **Deputy member** of the National Coordination Group for Lifelong Learning, Deputy member since 2015 and currently;
- **participates** in the Editorial Advisory Board of the International Journal of Lifelong Education since 2020 – and at the moment;
- **participation** in 8 international and national projects;
- **presentation** of 34 papers at scientific conferences;
- **elaboration** of 30 publications, part of which are submitted for review in this competition;
- **received a prestigious award in 2019** by the Ministry of Education and Science - for managing the most successful project in Program for supporting young scientists of BAS – 2017;
- **received a prestigious award in 2018** by the Bulgarian Sociological Association - for best publication of young sociologist in the period 2010-2017;
- **received the prestigious award for young scientist “Marin Drinov” in 2017** by the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

The short biographical info reveals that a promising young researcher with impressive CV, serious achievements in research, with high publication activity and with great authority among her colleagues in the sociological community participates in the announced competition for academic position “Associate Professor”.

3. Fulfillment of academic position requirements

I have received for reviewing a full set of documents for participation of Assist. Prof. Dr. Petya Ilieva-Trichkova in the competition for academic position “Associate Professor”. After their evaluation the following **conclusion** can be made:

first, all publications were made after acquiring a PhD degree or if made earlier they are not included either for the acquisition of the PhD degree or in the competition for the position of "Assistant Professor".

second, these publications are in the field of scientific specialty “Sociology”, in the framework of which the competition is announced.

The candidate **has fulfilled the requirements for holding the academic position of "Associate Professor" at the IPS-BAS.**

The reviewer's observation is also confirmed **by the report of the commission** appointed by Order № RD-09-400/04.10.2021 to verify the regularity of the documents, which states that the candidate could be admitted to the competition.

4. Evaluation of teaching activity

Assistant Professor Dr. Petya Ilieva-Trichkova has no teaching experience.

Ilieva-Trichkova is a member of the Human Development and Capability Association, the International Sociological Association, the Marie Curie Alumni Association and the Bulgarian Sociological Association. She enjoys respect among the colleagues from the sociological community, as well as from colleagues from the Alumni Club “Sociology, Psychology and Economics” at UNWE, as a graduate of the Department of “Economic Sociology” at UNWE.

5. Characteristics of the submitted research works/publications for review

In her research activity the candidate has presented publications, projects and research in **5** main areas. The **first** is in the field of **lifelong learning and higher education**. A total of 8 publications written during the period 2016-2021 after the defense of the dissertation are devoted to this issue, namely: 7 chapters or parts of chapters from the monograph (2021), 6 papers (2017-2020), and 1 article (2016). The **second** is in the field of **educational inequalities**, presented through parts of 3 chapters of the monograph (2021), 2 papers (2015 and 2018) and 1 article (2018). The **third** is in the field of research on **gender differences**, in which he participated with 3 papers published in 2015-2020. The **fourth** is related to the study of **giving for education**, presented by 2 articles (2017). The **fifth** is related to the **development of policies in the field of education**. 3 chapters or parts of chapters from the monograph (2021), 2 papers (2017 and 2018) and 1 article (2015) are devoted to this issue.

Decisive is the research topic in the field of **lifelong learning and higher education**.

Dr. Ilieva-Trichkova participates with a total of 17 publications, of which 1 monograph, 11 papers and 5 articles. Most of them (11) are in English. 5 of the publications submitted for the competition are author's, and 12 are in co-authorship. 12 separation protocols are presented. From them it is clear that Dr. Ilieva-Trichkova is an independent author of **4 thematically related chapters with a total volume of over 100 standard pages** (127.92 standard pages) (**3, 4, 5 and Methodological Note**) and of parts of **4 chapters (6, 8, 9 and 10)** of the monograph and that the share of Dr. Ilieva-Trichkova in other articles and papers is equal to that of her co-authors.

The monograph is published in a prestigious international and refereed publishing house. **10 publications have been made, which are indexed in Scopus and / or Web of Sciences (5 of them in Q1 or Q2)**, 5 articles in non-refereed journals with scientific review or published in

edited collective volumes and 1 paper published in a non-refereed journal with scientific review. The provided publications fully cover the normative requirements.

The candidate has included in the competition her participation **in 2 international** (1 funded by the Bulgarian-Swiss Research Program and 1 funded by the Polish National Scientific Center) and 1 **national** project (funded by the National Science Fund, Bulgaria), which cover her research interests. She has participated with **papers in 9 scientific conferences**, of which 6 abroad (per one in Austria, in the Great Britain, in Italy, in Finland, in Portugal and in the United States) and 3 in Bulgaria. Of these papers, 3 are independent and 6 are co-authored.

The scientific publications offered for review are reflected in Bulgarian and foreign literature. In the presented list of the citations it is clear that their number is **29**, of which 18 are in publications in refereed editions with scientific review and 11 are in nonrefereed editions also with scientific peer-review.

The reviewer considers all submitted works and citations as corresponding to the theme of the competition and subject to review.

6. Evaluation of the main scientific and scientifically applied contributions

The main contributions of the candidate are in the above-described research fields. They are comprehensively described in a separate list as a part of the submitted materials.

Overall, these contributions can be summarised into three groups – scientific, methodological and practical/applied. I will highlight some of them.

In the first place are the **scientific contributions** that relate to the enrichment of sociological knowledge, namely:

- the heuristic potential of the capability approach in the research of education (of adults) on the basis of an analytical review of its basic concepts is revealed. This potential is also demonstrated through the *patterns of agency* and the *patterns of (dis)empowerment* through adult education, which are developed on its basis and which are applied in the secondary analysis of interviews from international qualitative research among young people who experienced early job insecurity.

- building upon ideas from the capability approach and the embeddedness approach, *an integrated model of participation in adult education has been constructed*. The model recognises that the capability to participate in adult education and training is influenced both by factors at different levels (micro, meso and macro), as well as by the interactions between factors at different levels. The application of this model, for which data from large-scale comparative international studies have been used, reveals both associations between the factors influencing participation in adult education and interactions between factors at different levels.

- two aspects of the *graduate employability* have been identified. The first is expressed in the knowledge and skills acquired by them, and the second is related to the state of the labor market, which in turn depends on the state of the economy and social policy, as well as that of higher education.

- tangible inequalities have been empirically revealed both in access to higher education and in terms of early job insecurity, which in the first case are caused by the internal differentiation and stratification of higher education systems, and in the second by different characteristics of education system, which are summarised in two main groups: *institutional* (eg. vocational orientation) and *structural* (eg. expenditures for education).

- the analysis of the *relationship between impersonal and institutional trust and higher education and educational inequalities has been enriched*, revealing empirically that the relationship between impersonal and institutional trust and that between trust and educational inequalities differ depending on the level of democracy, which has been reached in a given country.

- gender differences in vocational education in Bulgaria in terms of opportunities and their structuring at the regional level, which are related to the provision of vocational education, were empirically identified. Gender differences in education seem to influence life chances at a later stage, as *differences between young men and women in how education affects work-life balance* have also been identified.

- *a model for conceptualisation of giving for education has been built*. This model is based on the interpretation of the capability approach. Under this model, giving for education is defined as a kind of expression of *other-regarding agency*, which (aims to) help an individual, group of people or an institution in terms of their educational opportunities. The level of this agency in Bulgaria has been empirically explored with data from a nationally representative survey of attitudes towards giving for education.

Secondly, contributions related to the enrichment of the methodology and methodological tools in empirical sociological research, namely:

- *three new methodological instruments have been developed* to measure inequalities in adult education and higher education, both between countries and in dynamics: the index of inclusion in adult education, the index of fairness and the index of adult education as a common good.

- *powerful statistical methods* (regression analysis and multi-level analysis) *are used*, which allow the interpretation of the results that goes beyond a simple description of the observed phenomena, and allows discussing the relationships that exist between the variables, both at individual and at the macro level and, last but not least, the existence of interactions between independent variables at different levels.

- *the analysed quantitative data* from international comparative surveys *considerably enrich the literature of lifelong learning*, which, especially in its part on inequalities, is mainly focused on the use of qualitative methods.

- *the main advantages and problems of international comparative surveys, which are widely used in the field of adult education, are highlighted.* In addition, it is shown how some of the most common problems are addressed in the monograph.

- it is also argued that *a relatively comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the nature and processes of adult education and higher education requires a mixed-methods approach* and a combination of different types of data (eg. longitudinal and cross-national studies).

Thirdly, applied contributions related to management practice aimed at public policies in the field of education, namely:

- *the benefits of using the index of adult education as a common good* for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of national policies in the field of adult education in Europe *are highlighted*, both in terms of the extent to which it is implemented as a common good in a given country and with regard to its four dimensions (access to adult education, availability of sufficient training opportunities, affordability and social commitment).

- *problems in participation in adult education have been empirically identified* and *recommendations* for its promotion among vulnerable groups have been formulated, aimed at increasing justice in access to various forms of adult education.

- *the need to improve cooperation between universities and business in Bulgaria* as a prerequisite for improving the quality of higher education *has been justified*, as well as the ability of universities to effectively deal with contemporary challenges they face.

The reviewer expresses agreement with the candidate's self-assessment of the scientific contributions. The contributions reflect the content of the scientific publications submitted for review and the candidate's research work and achievements.

7. Critical notes and recommendations

Assistant Professor Dr. Petya Ivanova Ilieva-Trichkova has serious research and publishing activities, as well as participation in a sufficient number of research projects. Her main focus is oriented towards the problems of education and lifelong learning in a European comparative perspective and the work with large-scale international research, which is a good basis for future research. The recommendations can be in the strengthening of the pedagogical/teaching activity. Taking the academic position of „Associate Professor“ for the needs of the Social Survey Research Center at IPS-BAS will require in the future more active work with students, PhD students and young researchers, participation in international research projects and events, including scientific guidance of PhD students.

8. Conclusion

The candidate in this competition – Assistant Professor Dr. Petya Ilieva-Trichkova, meets all legal and internal for BAS requirements for holding the academic position of “Associate Professor”. Her works address significant sociological issues and are developed at a high-quality level. Her scientific, methodological and practical contributions deserve high assessment. I know the candidate personally and I have high evaluation about her abilities as researcher and scientist. This allows me to recommend to the members of the scientific jury to vote **positively** of awarding Assistant Professor Dr. Petya Ilieva-Trichkova the academic position of “Associate Professor” in professional field 3.1. Sociology, anthropology and cultural studies, scientific specialty „Sociology”, for the purposes of the Social Survey Research Center at Institute of Philosophy and Sociology at Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (IPS-BAS).

03.12.2021

Sofia

Signature:

(Professor Dr. Maria Stoyanova)