

Curriculum Vitae

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Published work online: researchgate.net/profile/Nikola_Venkov
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Research Interests

Theoretical sociology. Post-foundational Discourse Theory (the Essex School of Ernesto Laclau) and the reflexive sociology of Pierre Bourdieu. Fruitfully intersecting the two.

Urban anthropology and urban studies. Urban politics from a postfoundational viewpoint. Conviviality and the politics of living together. Theoretical tools to understand the interplay of power and marginality in the city. Oral and social history of the central marketplace of Sofia, the Women's Market, of the Turkish and Roma neighbourhood Stolipinovo in Plovdiv, and of Plovdiv itself as a 'post-cosmopolitan' city.

Engaged and public anthropology. Experiments in non-classic ways for the production of knowledge, testing the limits of empowering, the creation of social interventions collaboratively with marginalised communities.

New political dynamics of the 21st century from a post-foundationalist perspective. How political discourse and identity get reconstituted in the times of new media, new populism, and new propaganda. Relatedly, developing a theory of conspiracy narratives.

Research Positions

Assistant Professor Since Dec 2021. The Society of Knowledge Division, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology at the Bulgarian Academy of Science (BAS), Sofia. <https://ips-bas.org/>

Scholar (Specialist) July 2020 – Nov 2021. The Society of Knowledge Division, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology at the Bulgarian Academy of Science (BAS), Sofia. <https://ips-bas.org>

Visiting Scholar March – May 2019. Leibniz Institute for Regional Geography (IfL), Leipzig. <http://ifl-leipzig.de>

Fellow March 2017 – Feb 2018. Centre for Advanced Studies (CAS), Sofia. <http://cas.bg>

Young scholar grant for inter-disciplinary urban studies June – Nov 2011. Research Centre for Social Science, Sofia. <http://rcss.eu>

Membership

Member of the European Association of Social Anthropologists / Association Européenne des Anthropologues Sociaux (EASA) – 2024.

Co-founder of Duvar Kolektiv, socially engaged arts group, Plovdiv, <http://duvarkolektiv.art.blog/>

Education

Degrees

PhD in Sociology June 2017. Department of Sociology, Philosophy Faculty, University of Sofia “St. Kliment Ohridski”. Dissertation title: *Gentrification of the Women’s Market: The construction of urban policies and the transformation of local relationships.*

MA in Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology Sept 2012. Department of Ethnology, History Faculty, University of Sofia “St. Kliment Ohridski”. Master thesis on the mobilisation of a neighbourhood NIMBY group and its struggle against the central public marketplace of Sofia.

PhD in Mathematics March 2009, University of Nottingham, School of Mathematical Sciences. Dissertation in Mathematical Neuroscience, on the dynamics of a class of integral neural field equations with space-dependent delays.

BSc in Applied Mathematics July 2004. Faculty of Mathematics and Informatics, University of Sofia “St. Kliment Ohridski”. State exam.

Awards

Second-place award for best published paper by a young scholar, by the Bulgarian Sociological Association. For “Conspiracy narratives at the Women’s Market” in *Seminar_BG*, 2018.

Andrew Henry Scholarship by the University of Nottingham for a doctoral student with exceptional contributions in their PhD research, 2006.

Summer schools in Anthropology at Konitz (2010 and 2012, by the University of Yanina), in Urban Studies organised by the University of Vienna (2014), the Technical University of Vienna (2014) and TRIPAR and the University of Perm (2018). An Erasmus Mundus student with the Centre for Urban Studies of the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy (March – June 2016).

Publications

Book Chapters

- Venkov, Nikola A. 2023. "Marketplace decline heads east: Neoliberal reform, socio-spatial sorting and patterns of decline at Sofia's public markets." In *Marketplaces: movement, representations and practices*, edited by Ceren Sezer and Rianne van Melik, 88-100. London and New York: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003197058-8>
- Venkov, Nikola A. 2021. "Labour and coronavirus: The experience of Stolipinovo." In *Labour from crisis to crisis. Notes from the pandemic*, edited by Jana Tsoneva et al., 66-108. Sofia: KOI. [In Bulgarian.] <https://tiny.one/Venkov2021-trud-St>
- Venkov, Nikola A. 2021. "The “cooperative marketplace” as a point of pride and a challenge for the socialist system." In *Bulgarian Socialism: Ideology, everyday life, memory*, edited by Ana Luleva et al., 39-61. Sofia: Prof. Marin Drinov. [In Bulgarian.] <https://tiny.one/Venkov2021-kooppazar>
- Venkov, Nikola A. 2020. "On the retreat of liberal values and access to discourse: extending post-foundational discourse theory." In *Discursive Approaches to Populism across Disciplines – The Return of Populists and the People*, edited by Michael Kranert, 199-223. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-55038-7_8

In Peer-Reviewed Science Journals

- Venkov, Nikola A. 2023. "Stolipinovo: Trash, Media, Government, Racialisation." *Seminar_BG* 25. [In Bulgarian.] <https://seminar-bg.eu/spisanie-seminar-bg/broy25/842-stolipinovo.html>
- Роуз, Хана, Никола Венков и Янка Симова. 2023. "Duvar Kolektiv: Journeys Towards the Discarded." [In Bulgarian.] *Seminar_BG* 25. <https://seminar-bg.eu/spisanie-seminar-bg/broy25/850-duvarkolektiv-patishta-kam-smetta.html>
- Venkov, Nikola A. 2022. "Studies on everyday multiculturalism in the Western postcolonial city. Social multiculturalism at the Women's Market in Sofia" *Антропология / Anthropology. Journal for Sociocultural Anthropology* 9 (2):79-105. [In Bulgarian.] <https://tinyurl.com/Venkov2022-conviv>
- Venkov, Nikola A. 2018. "Assembling the Post-Socialist Marketplace: Transitions and Regeneration Projects at the Central Pazar of Sofia." *EthnoAnthropoZoom/Етно.АнтропоЗум* 17:229-279. <https://doi.org/10.37620/EAZ181700229v>
Published also in Macedonian translation, <https://doi.org/10.37620/EAZ181700228v>

- Venkov, Nikola A. 2017. "Toward a theory of conspiracy narratives." *Critique & Humanism* 48 (2):83-104. [In Bulgarian.] <https://tiny.one/Venkov2017-consp>
- Venkov, Nikola A. 2016. "Conspiracy Narratives at the Women's Market." *Seminar_BG* (3). <https://seminar-bg.eu/spisanie-seminar-bg/special-issue-3/638-conspiracy-narratives-at-the-womens-market.html>
- Venkov, Nikola A. 2014. "Conspiracies around the Women's Market." *Seminar_BG* 10B. [In Bulgarian.]
- Venkov, Nikola A. 2012. "The citizens and the market. Discourses of an urban conflict." *Critique & Humanism* 39:139-162. [In Bulgarian.] <https://tinyurl.com/Venkov2012-conflict>
- Venkov, Nikola A. 2012. "The traditional Muslim city: Portrait and approaches." *Orientalia* 1-2 (15-16):83-153. [In Bulgarian.] <https://tinyurl.com/Venkov2012-muslimcity>
- Venkov, Nikola A., Stephen Coombes, and Paul C. Matthews. 2007. "Dynamic Instabilities in Scalar Neural Field Equations With Space-Dependent Delays." *Physica D: Nonlinear Phenomena* 232 (1):1-15. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.physd.2007.04.011>
- Coombes, Stephen, Nikola A. Venkov, LieJune Shiau, Ingo Bojak, David TJ Liley, and Carlo R. Laing. 2007. "Modeling Electrocortical Activity through Improved Local Approximations of Integral Neural Field Equations." *Physical Review E* 76 (5):051901. <https://doi.org/10.1103/PhysRevE.76.051901>

Non-Refereed and Conference Proceedings Publications

- Venkov, Nikola A. 2021. "“The Unseen Women's Market” – an anthropology-art initiative and social intervention." In *Etudes in experimental humanities*, edited by Desislav Georgiev and Denitza Nentcheva, 221-52. [In Bulgarian.] Plovdiv: Scribens. <https://tinyurl.com/Venkov2021-nevJP>
- Venkov, Nikola A. 2019. "Urban politics and Post-Foundational Discourse Theory. Political, technocratic and ordinary forms of action." *University of Sofia Yearbook. Philosophy Faculty. Book Sociology*, 108:34-63. [In Bulgarian.] <https://tinyurl.com/Venkov2019-gradski>
- Venkov, Nikola A. 2019. "Conviviality Vs Politics of Coexistence: Going Beyond the Global North." *CAS Sofia Working Paper Series*, 11, 1-42. <https://tinyurl.com/Venkov2019-conviv>
- Venkov, Nikola A. 2019. "Transitions at the Central Marketplace of Sofia: Changing Values and Architectural Plans From the 1980s Until 2013." In *Three decades of Post-Socialist Transition. Conference proceedings*, edited by Nebojša Čamprag and Anshika Suri, 349-55. Darmstadt: tprints. <https://tprints.ulb.tu-darmstadt.de/9222/>
- Venkov, Nikola A. 2018. "On the historicity of urban places (by the example of the marketplace of Sofia)." *Journal of the Institute for Modernity* 23. [In Bulgarian.] <https://tiny.one/Venkov2018-ist>

Research Reports

- Collective. 2023. In the corridors of power. How heads of regional state institutions in Bulgaria get appointed. Sofia: Bulgarian Institute for Legal Initiatives. [In Bulgarian.]
<https://tinyurl.com/Venkov2023-vlast>
- Venkov, Nikola A. 2020. The COVID-19 State of Emergency in the large minority neighbourhoods of Bulgaria. Sofia: Bulgarian Institute for Legal Initiatives. [In Bulgarian.]
<http://dx.doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.14740.73604>
- Venkov, Nikola A. and Genika Baycheva. 2017. Stolipinovo neighbourhood household survey report. Sofia: The Swiss-Bulgarian Cooperation Program – Program for the Promotion of Social Inclusion of Roma and Other Vulnerable Groups. [In Bulgarian.]
<http://dx.doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.29157.50403>
- Venkov, Nikola A., Genika Baycheva, Rositza Kratunkova and Dimitar Panchev. 2016. Results from an ethnographic study of the communities in the neighbourhood of Stolipinovo. Plovdiv: Plovdiv 2019 – European Capital of Culture. [In Bulgarian.]
<http://dx.doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.29169.17768/1>
Translated in English: <http://dx.doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.36299.49446/1>
- Venkov, Nikola A. 2015. “Rimskata Stena” marketplace - a sociological analysis / Policies towards municipal markets. Sofia: Studio Architectonica & Sofia Municipality. [In Bulgarian.]
<http://dx.doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.29727.02728>
- Venkov, Nikola A. 2012. Civil society and the Women’s Market. Sofia: The Research Institute of Social Sciences. [In Bulgarian.] <http://dx.doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.36437.91364>

Professional Experience

Conferences

- Co-organiser with Carola Neugebauer (Aachen University) of Discussion Panel “*Civic activism and changes in the city*” as part of *TRIPAR Conference on Eurasian cities and regions in transformation*, Kyiv, 16-18.XI.2018.
- Invited lecture „**Stolipinovo, Bulgaria: The production of liberal democracy's marginals**“ in the International Spring School *EU enlargement, migration dynamics and local policy responses of cities – Bulgarian and Romanian migration in Europe* at Ruhr University – Bochum, 14 – 18.II.2022.

Dozens of presentations at international conferences.

Selected Projects

Applied research project “Civil monitoring of public appointments”, Bulgarian Institute for Legal Initiatives, Nov 2022 – Sept 2023.

Design, implementation and analysis of in-depth interview study with community representatives in three district capital cities. Authoring a research report.

Interdisciplinary projects bringing together engaged anthropology and socially engaged art: “Share Stolipinovo” (2021), “Duvarmuzei” (2020), “The Beauty We Share” (2019), all funded by the National Cultural Fund, Socially Engaged Arts Programme.

Collaborative work with artist Hannah Rose (UK) and people living the Turkish and Roma neighbourhood of Stolipinovo. Producing exhibitions, a documentary film, and interactive processes and events meeting locals and the public. Further information can be found at duvarkolektiv.art.blog.

Research on housing policies in marginalised areas of North-Western Bulgaria, conducted for the World Bank, August 2020, Open Society Institute – Sofia.

External expert, conducting focus groups and interviews in the cities of Lom and Montana.

Sociological survey of Stolipinovo and Fakulteta minority neighbourhoods during the COVID-19 first lockdown, May 2020, Bulgarian Institute for Legal Initiatives.

Design and coordination of a survey (three interviewers), analysis and research report.

Social project “Mobile School Stolipinovo” for alternative education interventions with children from a marginalised community, March 2018 – Feb 2019. In partnership with ATD Quatre Monde – France and the Children’s Architecture Workshop, funded by Plovdiv 2019 – European Capital of Culture.

Consultancy, mediation with the local community/parents. Took part in project design.

The sociological survey module of a project “All together for a better education and health”, June – Sept 2017 by the Plovdiv Municipality. Funded by the Bulgarian-Swiss Cooperation Program.

Coordinated 8 interviewers surveying 435 households, analysis of quantitative data and research report.

Pre-design survey for the preparation of an architectural competition for the renovation of the “Rimska stena” public market in Sofia, July – Sept 2014, Sofia Municipality.

As expert sociologist designed and implemented in-depth interview survey of stakeholders and socio-economic dependencies. Authored a vision for the management of public markets in by the Municipality of Sofia.

Art-documentation action “The Unseen Women’s Market” of the central public market of Sofia just before most of it was demolished for renovation, April - June 2014. Unfunded.

Concept and coordination, building a team of volunteers and artists. Training in fieldwork methods and ethics of working with vulnerable communities. The final team of 5 produced material and concepts for 8 installations. Didn’t succeed in obtaining funding for implementing the final products and public exhibition. Project website: <http://jenskipazar.eu>

I have worked also with the Ruhr University – Bochum (consultancy and fieldwork), Médecins Sans Frontières (providing training), Collective for Social Interventions (fieldwork, research), Plovdiv 2019 – European Capital of Culture (international training workshop), The Ideas Factory (art-research interventions).

Teaching Experience

Guest lectures and lecture cycles on my research for bachelor and master’s students in Cultural Studies, Anthropology, Sociology, Architecture, Planning from the University of Sofia, the University of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy, New Bulgarian University, and

visiting groups from HafenCity University, University of Thessaly, University of Graz, ETH Zürich, the Centre for Urban Studies in Kyev, Ruhr University in Bochum, the University of Georgia (USA).

Training for 'community mobilisers' at Médecins Sans Frontières in Sliven, Feb - April 2021.

Trainings in fieldwork methods and ethics in anthropology beyond the academia (civil organisations, grassroots groups, artists with interest in socially engaged art) including a co-organiser of a 5-day international workshop *Building up/ with the communities* for the artist partners of Plovdiv 2019, 7-12.IX.2016; design of a 4-day training workshop for study and intervention at the Women's Market (2013); contributions to workshops by The Ideas Factory and others.

Languages

English: Excellent.

Russian and Serbian: Very good practical oral skills.

German and Spanish: Basic practical skills.

Digital Skills

NVivo, MaxQDA, SPSS, Gephi.

Design, image, video, audio editing.

Web design, basic programming, maths programming (MatLab, etc.)