

ABSTRACTS OF PUBLICATIONS

of Assoc. Prof. DSc. Maria Dimitrova Jeliaskova, submitted for participation in a competition for the occupation of the academic position "professor" in professional direction 3.1. Sociology, anthropology and cultural sciences (Public policies against poverty and social exclusion), for the needs of "Public policies and social changes" department of IPS-BAN - Sofia, published in the "State Gazette", issue 58 of 09.07.2024.

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Monograph:

- 1) **Jeliaskova, M. (2024), *The Polarized Bulgarian Society: Persistent Poverty and Toxic Inequalities***, „Polis“ Publishing House, Sofia, ISBN 978-954-796-121-0, (240 pages), *in Bulgarian*

Today, there is a fairly broad consensus on the close links between inequalities, poverty and social exclusion. A number of authors cited in the publication emphasize that in unequal societies levels of social exclusion and poverty tend to be higher. However, when it comes to the social impacts of income inequalities, including their impacts on social exclusion and poverty, controversy often arises.

While, supported by the intense neoliberal political trend, income inequalities have been rapidly increasing since the 1980s, research on them both globally and in the EU has been marginalized for a long period. Nevertheless, numerous negative effects and increasing damage to societies gradually began to change the scientific context. Studies on the generators as well as the wide range of consequences in various fields (well-being, crime, health, social capital, education, political participation, democracy, women's participation in the labor market, and many others) engaged scholars from a variety of social sciences. .

Types of inequalities

Regardless of this cognitive upsurge, however, it seems that the quantitative side (the extent to which income is (un)equally distributed between the 'haves' and the 'have nots') remains predominant and the qualitative side, linked to an old philosophical idea disappears. Probably there is a degree or limit, upon reaching which, the further growth of income inequalities changes their functionality, the role they play in the social construction of societies and their normal functioning.

In the presented monograph, a brief conceptualization of the distinction between two types of inequalities in income, respectively - in wealth, is proposed. One type is designated as inevitable (normal) inequalities. Arguments for identifying this type of inequality are provided by numerous archaeological and historical studies that depict their outstanding persistence - the history of inequalities in income and wealth is almost as old as the history of human communities themselves. The constant presence of inequalities throughout the millennia of human history suggests that for

some reason they were necessary and/or inevitable. The reasons for this inevitability are generally known: inequalities are a component of a complicated complex of interrelated elements which includes inequalities, hierarchies and power, and which forms the 'skeleton' of social structuring; the "skeleton" of the social organization of societies. Without this mechanism, it is likely that human communities would not be able to create large organizational structures, including organizing themselves into state entities. From such a point of view, inevitable inequalities can be seen as a necessary component of that complex social mechanism by which societies have achieved and are achieving progress - military, economic, social. In any case, it is clear that this is precisely the path that social evolution has "chosen". In short, inevitable inequalities have contributed to the achievement of development. Apart from their persistence, a characteristic of inevitable and socially necessary inequalities is their relatively slow growth over the centuries. This is especially clear when comparing the data on the increase in inequalities back in history with its increase in the last few decades of the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Because of the relatively slow growth of inequalities historically, it can be assumed that the inevitable inequalities have risen largely based on the increasing capacity to create goods through technological change or to acquire goods through looting from adversaries through the many wars. Under such a dynamic, the accumulation of wealth by the "haves", i.e. the growth of inequalities was not the main cause of the poverty of the "have-nots". Because the birth of material inequalities was lost back in the millennia and proceeded slowly, for each generation the inequalities seemed truly inevitable – part of some natural/divine order and normal aspect of life. The elaborated explanations for the inequalities' generators have also explicitly contributed to this. Due to their stated features, above all - "perpetuity", slow growth and mode of growth (structure of the sources of wealth), the inevitable, normal type of inequalities were tolerable, and therefore power elites did not maintain them solely by violence.

The most general and important feature of the other type of inequalities is that they negatively affect the development of societies and not only do not contribute, but rather delay economic and social progress. Therefore, they can be defined as "toxic inequalities" to emphasize that they paralyze and poison the overall development of societies. Characteristics of toxic inequalities are their relatively high levels and especially - their rapid growth, specific structure of the sources of growth of the highest incomes - intensive accumulation of income and wealth not due to economic growth (rates of growth of inequalities outpace rates of economic growth) , and at the expense of the incomes of groups at the middle and bottom of the income scale (contrary to the notorious "top-down trickle down" proclaimed by the IMF, toxic inequalities are "bottom-up suctioning "), where poverty and social exclusion acquire sustainability and a huge number of other negative social consequences arise. The redistribution of income acquires a hard-to-see side, which consists in the emergence of a "reverse" flow of income: from groups with lower incomes to groups with the highest incomes, i.e. income and wealth are concentrated. The mechanisms through which concentration is achieved are different: some are embedded in the normative frameworks themselves, others are illegal, such as rent extraction, corruption or violations of the normative framework /inefficient justice/.

In more recent history, the period of welfare states in developed countries after World War II until about 1975 could be used as a benchmark for normal inequalities. But the explosion of inequalities after the 1980s could rather be seen as a tendency to turn normal inequalities into toxic ones. The above-mentioned change in the character (functionality) of inequalities, occurring with certain changes in their levels, is obviously based on the presumption of the presence of some limits in the levels of inequalities. When the real levels of inequalities violate these assumed limits, then

there is a change in the functionality of inequalities - they turn from necessary to toxic. Regarding the limits of income inequalities, it should be noted that they are probably the most unexplored problem in the general problematic of inequalities. But recently, some research has emerged on the "optimal level" of inequalities.

Leading ideas

Several main ideas run throughout the book. The first of them is that in the last few decades the transformation of normal inequalities into toxic ones has affected almost all countries in the world, reaching different phases. The second idea is that in some countries income inequalities have reached too high levels and, accordingly, a high degree of toxicity with all the resulting consequences. The USA and Bulgaria could be cited as examples of a particularly pronounced transformation of inevitable into toxic inequalities.

A graphic from „Our World in Data“ (page 16 of the monograph) depicts that the levels of income inequalities, both before and after taxation, in Bulgaria are very close to those in the US. Both countries are also known to be experiencing serious political conflicts, which is not without interest, although it may just be a coincidence.

The third idea is that of the "Bulgarian exceptionalism". It is expressed in two main aspects. The first is that in Bulgaria toxic inequalities are a much more inadequate, risky state of distribution than in the US. Bulgaria is incomparable to the mighty USA in every respect and bears the burden of toxic inequalities much harder, and their consequences are much more severe than in the USA. Second, with its high levels of income inequalities, Bulgaria stands out sharply from other European countries and EU member states. Bulgarian "exceptionalism" is evidenced by: the mentioned very high inequalities, which are in the orbit of the USA, but outside the European landscape; and the very high levels of poverty – for example, according to official figures (which are probably underestimated) a third (!) of children are at risk of poverty or social exclusion.

The fourth main idea of the book stems from the above - the country needs urgent measures to reconstruct the main mechanisms that generate inequalities. This need is exacerbated by the acute processes of depopulation and a worsened demographic picture with many unfavorable forecasts; abandoned areas and settlements; blocking socio-economic reforms; overall well-being issues; crises in essential systems such as healthcare and education; pressure on basic characteristics of human potential; strong fragmentation and exacerbated conflicts; creaking democratic procedures, etc. All of these are clearly linked to levels of inequalities and poverty and are impossible to address without clear and decisive actions.

However, for this to happen, attention must be focused on the real causes of poverty and social exclusion of individuals, groups and communities. The breadth and sustainability of unfavorable social characteristics in Bulgaria cannot be explained by individual characteristics of people and destinies. There are common problems in social interactions that support this state of affairs - it is important that these problems are identified and addressed. The focus of this book is an attempt to find an answer to the question of what these problems are, how inequalities and poverty are generated, what are the consequences for society.

To this end, in **Chapter 1** I present an overview of growing research on inequalities and poverty, their dynamics, causes that generate them in different countries of the world historically.

Accumulating archaeological research and serious reviews of such research provide opportunities to trace these dynamics. Based on data on dwelling sizes, important markers of health status, burial gifts, and DNA studies to trace inheritance and kinship in social statuses, archaeologists have been able to trace levels of inequalities in deep antiquity. An extensive review presented by Carles Lalueza-Fox (2022a, 2022b) includes the results of a landmark study led by S.

Bowles of the Santa Fe Institute published in 2017. The study, based on a large number of archaeological findings, estimates Gini index in historically known settlements for the period from 9200 BC (Jerf el Ahmar, today's Syria) to 1500 AD (Tenochtitlan, present-day Mexico). Among the Gini index levels presented for 10 paradigmatic cities, the highest is the Gini index in Kahun (present-day Egypt) in 1930 BC. However, even this highest Gini index is 13 percentage points lower than the one presented for comparison for the USA in 2016. (Kohler & Smith, 2018). The brief review of some studies of inequalities in antiquity shows that whatever factors for their emergence the authors point out, the dominant fact remains that the emergence of inequalities and the emergence of elites are the same process. Over millennia, inequalities have changed under the influence of spontaneous social evolution, mainly under the influence of technological innovations. Gradually, however, the importance of spontaneous social evolution has been displaced by purposeful and deliberate human behavior, primarily and especially by elites who strengthen their social positions by concentrating wealth and increasing inequalities.

This is more apparent in studies of inequality in later periods of history. A review by Guido Alfani (2024) of research results on wealth and income inequalities for different countries from 1300 to the present presents important findings: there is a long-term trend towards increasing inequalities. It is pronounced in the West and seems to be interrupted mainly by catastrophic events that have leveling effects - e.g. The Black Death 1347–1352, World Wars I and II. In-depth analyses, however, show that catastrophic events are not the main, but a concomitant factor. Because when centuries later – in the 17th century - the plague returned to Europe and the Mediterranean, no egalitarian effects occurred, not even temporary stops in the trend towards increasing inequality. As for the "leveling" power of devastating wars, Alfani believes that, on closer inspection, the factors that led (from 1914 to 1945 and beyond) to a reduction in income and wealth inequalities were much more complex, context-dependent and primarily related to the introduction of progressive taxation. As Alfani demonstrates, the growth of inequalities is not a natural process, but the result primarily of human choices. At its core, this has to do with different understandings of social justice, and in reality institutions shape trends in inequalities.

The institutional generation of inequalities is at the same time institutional generation of poverty - maintenance, increase or decrease. The inevitability of poverty in non-industrialized countries and societies and the opportunities created to overcome it through industrialization are in principle well known and accepted as a plausible thesis of social evolution. However, historical studies presented in the book cast doubt on this thesis (Sullivan & Hickel, 2023). Comparisons of wage levels against subsistence baskets, human stature and life expectancy for five world regions identify waves of improvements and deteriorations associated with the ways in which power is exercised. Significant improvements in well-being occurred in core regions of North-West Europe only from the 80ies of 19th century and in the periphery and semi-periphery from the middle of the 20th century, as a result of income redistribution and the establishment of public insurance systems.

Another study published in 2024 (Nikolić et al., 2024) discusses the dynamics of inequalities in Eastern Europe before the transitions and presents comparative data for Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia for the period 1910-1980. The research does not support the famous Kuznets model and proves that starting from different levels of inequalities (a much more egalitarian Bulgaria and a much more unequal Czechoslovakia) until the Second World War, then there was an organized process of reducing and equalizing inequalities until about 1980. The authors found a "reversal of fortunes", noting that today Bulgaria has some of the highest levels of inequalities in Europe, while the Czech Republic and Slovakia have some of the lowest ones.

The general conclusion from the presented review of researches on inequalities, and also on poverty, from antiquity to the present day is that the levels of inequalities depend exclusively on the constructed institutions, i.e. on the "rules of the game" in specific societies, usually elitist organized and carrying within themselves different ideas of social and distributive justice.

Chapter 2 discusses inequalities as a social construction. Although people are naturally different in numerous and uncountable traits and characteristics, whether and what natural differences will be translated into social inequalities is a matter of social construction (Spicker, 2014). So what will be the wage differentials, will women be paid less than men, will the returns to education be higher for whites, what talents will be stimulated, will housework be recognized labor, etc. is a matter of social convention. A social construction also is what natural differences are used to legitimize unequal access to "packages of rights" and how unequal that access will be - eye color could also be used as in the case of the Aryan race. Social inequalities outline the way a society is structured, the distances between different groups, the extent to which people live and want to live together.

At the same time, one of the results of the return of interest in income inequalities is that we now have much more and comparable data on inequalities in the world, in the European Union and in Bulgaria than 10 years ago. This data allows clear trends to be drawn, even if there are problems with specific values. The chapter uses official data to outline the main aspects of the exceptional rise of inequalities in Bulgaria comparatively in a double sense - how they change over time and how they relate to other countries - members of the European Union. Thus, it is established that Bulgaria demonstrates very high inequalities by all main measurements: Gini index in the primary distribution, after inclusion of pensions and after social transfers; Income inequalities 80/20; Palm Index; Atkinson index; share of national income of the highest income groups; taking over of income from the middle classes in favor of the rich; highest share of the poor, but also of the rich and emptying the middle; high rate of inequalities' growth; high distance from EU averages. According to comparable databases, in 2021, Bulgaria has a Gini index equal to that of El Salvador, and other countries with similar values are Kenya and the Dominican Republic (with a slightly lower Gini index than ours), and the United States (with a slightly higher). The review of various available databases (Eurostat, WDI, WID, IHDI) on income inequalities in Bulgaria could be summarized as follows: On all indicators, Bulgaria demonstrates very high inequalities and usually takes the most unfavorable first place; High income inequalities are consistently traced and traceable in all their possible aspects; Intensive processes lead the country to a specific structuring, simultaneously reducing the income share of the middle and poor groups; In the terminology of winners and losers, this concentration of 'packages of rights' is only for the wealthiest groups of households, and the polarization is clearly pronounced; The processes that take place in our country over time are clearly different from the processes that take place in other EU member countries; As the most unequal society in the EU, which is already stably established, Bulgaria is moving in a different trajectory and direction from the community to which it declaratively belongs and from the geographical latitudes in which it resides. Comparisons with other countries that belong to different models such as France, Ireland, Czech Republic, Germany, Romania, United Kingdom, etc. demonstrate a distinct deviation in the logic and trajectory of inequalities in Bulgaria.

Therefore, in the following **Chapter 3**, I consider how these inequalities are produced. At the basis of this production are neither personal abilities, nor educational achievements, nor the mythical role of the free market, etc. but the institutions in the sense of D. North (1990), as rules of the game in society, primarily laws and normative order for the production and distribution of

goods, as well as the ideas behind them. Inequalities' prevailing paradigmatic ideas, conceptual schemes, multiple intertwined processes, multiple connections and influences between different spheres, exchanges between internally consistent hierarchies, stratifications and divisions, consistent governing effects determine access, equal or unequal, to "packages of rights".

Since an important part of the focus of this publication is to analyze why Bulgaria turns out to be a deviation from usual practices in the EU, I try to look for main generators of these deviations. What I am interested in is whether deviations in the normative rules in our country could explain the excessively high levels of inequalities. This analysis of developments and normative/regulatory frameworks is of course not exhaustive. Only more distinct deviations from dominant normative/regulatory frameworks in other EU countries are discussed.

The presented analysis is on three levels. The first is the level of ideological constellations, of the general direction of ideas about society, development, economic growth, etc. The long-denied, harmful for societies Washington Consensus, which led to intensive privatizations, individualizations, deregulations, desolidarization, accumulation of private benefits against common interest, seems to continue to dominate in the Bulgarian context. Although these ideas prevailed for a certain period in the world and in the EU, now even their most ardent apologists, although timidly and uncertainly, are at least softening their views, and many EU countries are reviewing and reorienting their policies. At this level, however, Bulgaria remains frozen in the spirit of the 90s of the last century and the beginning of this one. A clear indicator of this is the discrepancy between the Constitution and legal regulations. It could be said that the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria, created in the early 1990s, reflects to some extent the prevailing pro-democratic spirit in society at that time. It is assumed, for example, that the preamble reflects the philosophy, the main guidelines and values that should find a place in the legal frameworks of various spheres and be consistently enforced as clear principles (Vasilev, Mareva, 2019: 83). But, this means a need for a paradigmatic reordering of values related to human dignity, social cohesion, solidarity, social inclusion, social justice, social empowerment, control of inequalities, etc., instead of the existing extreme expansion of the space between moral and legal and the emerging question whether the neoliberal, pro-oligarchic state in our country has not even erased the possibility of a social state, otherwise written in the Constitution. If I use the title of Wilkinson and Pickett (Wilkinson & Pickett 2009), Bulgaria has a clear problem with the spirit level, or with the spirit of the norms, and over time the tension between the Constitution and legislative practices is increasing.

The second level affects basic social security systems – insurance systems, pension system, health care, tax system, etc. How core security systems are regulated is clearly related to the issue of the distribution of "packages of rights". These laws, rules, norms harmonize or deharmonize different interests and organize zero-sum games (one wins - another loses) or cooperative game (everyone wins together). Rule-tuning in zero-sum games speaks of institutional or institutionalized corruption as "...systemic and strategic influence that is legal or even currently ethical..." (Lessig, 2013: 553) - the capture of normative frameworks in the interests of specific distributive injustice. The similar reforms carried out in the mentioned systems in the 1990s in many countries of the world, including in particular in Central and Eastern Europe, already with their adoption in Bulgaria included clearly deformed specifics, and now, when many of the countries - participants and actors in their acceptance and implementation, they began to revise them, in our country they seem frozen. The production of inequalities and poverty in the country is normatively settled through the flat ideas in the tax system, the inadequate social insurance model in health care and the desocialized pension system. The cumulative result of this is a successively

pushed regressiveness of "packages of rights". These "norms", "original" in their anti-social direction, which more and more countries are abandoning, if they ever accepted them at all, inhibit social space and lead to excessive inequalities.

Added to this is a third level: specially created separate elements of rule-making that further reinforce inequalities, providing rents for those interested. Such norms-viruses build upon the already deformed systems outlined above, and further affect "the packages of rights" and distributional processes. The publication discusses four such norms-viruses: dividend tax; cap on health contributions; period of the ceiling of insurance contributions; "performance" bonuses. All of them are in clear deviation from the rules in other EU member states.

The consistent inclusion in laws and normative frameworks of specific rules in various public systems that distribute the packages of rights, as well as the special insertion of additional supporting and reinforcing individual elements of the norms lead to an intensive process of extracting rents from certain positions and statuses and is the basis of the production of toxic inequalities in Bulgaria.

However, the evidence that such processes lead to a lot of damages and are paid for by entire societies is numerous and growing. This is the focus of **Chapter 4**: the damages from toxic inequalities in key areas of societal development: economics, political democracy, social progress, well-being.

First, researches are discussed, according to which high inequalities produce damages in the "holy cow" of neoliberal reforms - economic growth. Federico Cingano, OECD (Cingano, 2014) analyzes the impact of inequality and finds out that, due to increased inequality, Mexico and New Zealand missed 10 percentage points of economic growth, and the growth rate in the United States, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Finland and Norway would have to be over 1/5 more if income disparities were not increased. Francesco Grigoli of the IMF (Grigoli & al., 2016) analyzed the impact of shock changes in income inequalities over a 12-year horizon in Nigeria and Finland and found that Nigeria, due to an increase in the Gini index, i.e. of inequalities experienced an 8 percent drop in GDP per capita growth 3 years after the increase and lasting adverse effects 11 years after that. It is important to note that Bulgaria's Gini index is closer to, but higher than, Nigeria's. Another article (Grigoli & Robles, 2017) examines 77 countries over a 20-year period and finds that if the Gini index after social transfers exceeds 27% (in Bulgaria in 2023 it is 37.2%), as well as if the Gini index in the primary distribution is above 34% (in Bulgaria this Gini index is 52%, and including pensions - 40.6%) this leads to missed economic growth.

A second dimension of the damages produced by toxic levels of inequalities is the erosion of opportunities for democracy. Many different studies presented in the book discuss the relationship of income inequalities to political inequalities, as well as the danger and/or the reality of the transformation of the liberal legal order into a plutocracy. In this regard, the US constitutionalist professor T. Khaitan (2019) argues that within liberal constitutional theory and practice, material inequality should be seen as a constitutional problem to provide political insurance for the participation of now excluded groups.

A third dimension of the damages is the significant drop in the Social Progress Index for 61 countries in the world (among them Bulgaria) registered in 2023, as well as stagnation in another 77; while countries with the highest index are those with lower inequalities (GSPI, 2024).

A fourth dimension of the damages produced by high inequalities is the abundant research and evidence since the 1980s on the impact of levels of inequality on life expectancy and years of life lost, not just for the poor but for entire societies. Research is growing in part because of the established "American health-wealth paradox" with the ongoing decline in life expectancy in the

US (NRCIM, 2013). According to various studies discussed in the book, relative income inequality has independent effects that affect the entire population as it undermines social cohesion.

The last, but not least, dimension of the effects of the inappropriately high inequalities discussed is inequality of opportunity and wasted human and societal potential (CE, 2013). The sorting of people by opportunities, prospects and futures as a result of inequalities is well documented and substantiated in numerous scientific studies, regardless of the preferred rhetoric of any equality.

The integrated damages of high inequalities in all areas of public life are multidimensional and extremely serious. Very high inequalities permeate all spheres of social life, change meanings and significance, poison opportunities to live together, fret the glue that binds people together, and produce known and unknown negative effects. There are enough signals that very high inequalities are toxic.

Poverty and social exclusion, discussed in **Chapter 5**, are one of the inevitable outcomes of the processes discussed. The publication analyzes the breadth, depth and persistence of poverty in Bulgaria, as well as their relationship with institutionally generated bundles of inequalities. Bulgaria continuously occupies the most unfavorable places in the EU, at a great distance from the average values in almost all rankings related to various social indicators. In this regard, it is assumed that the social policy has essential importance within its main functions: a) to support an adequate socio-economic condition and quality of life of different groups of the population; b) to maintain social cohesion, principles of solidarity and control of inequalities. However, social policy is strongly dependent on other public policies (economic, financial, energy, etc.). It must either be able to influence them through demands for social cohesion or it must adapt to them while they are tuned to produce poverty and inequality (in the neoliberal consensus). The general trend produced: a strong reduction of social protection, in particular social assistance and various social security benefits; increasing the disciplining nature of social policy through sanctions and an increasing number of conditions of access, as well as marginalization of the poor; radical undermining of systems of shared public welfare, social security and social solidarity; sorting people into "deserving" and "undeserving". And anti-poverty policies - support of vulnerable groups and poverty alleviation - narrowed their scope and became a peripheral, residual activity outside the center of public policies. There is a process of dropping the fight against poverty from the political agenda.

Thus, Bulgaria is one of the clearest examples of the loss of direction and the erosion of social policy. In the country, it is formed according to the "last resort" model, targeting some of the pockets of poverty, weakly supporting the survival of various vulnerable groups, at the same time putting them in competition with each other. Widespread, deep and persistent poverty in Bulgarian society together with very high inequalities and the socio-economic polarization generated by it is a symptom of non-working policies, lack of responsibility, inadequate decisions regarding the overall functioning of society. Poverty in Bulgaria is anomalous not only because it is "large" (in breadth, depth and persistence), but also and more importantly because it is due to anomalous causes. While Bulgaria is recently declared to be a high-income country (WB), the levels of poverty and social exclusion are typical of low-income countries. A main reason that stands out from the previous analyses is the too high inequalities. And they themselves, as was emphasized, are due to inadequate regulatory frameworks. Inequalities turn out to be toxic both because of their generators and their scale, and poverty is frozen.

In **the conclusion**, it is pointed out that both in seismology and in societies, faults in some places can cause tsunamis in others. High, toxic inequalities are faults in social structuring,

distancing some social groups from others to the point of impossibility and distinct unwillingness to live together. An aspect of the induced tsunami is the structuring of the society as a Tower of Babel with the impossibility of mutual understanding and common interest along with intensive depopulation and induced social, economic, demographic and political paralysis and/or decline.

High levels of inequality are shaped by institutional forces that have the tendency and ability to reformulate the common interest into a highly dominant private and zero- or negative-sum game. It is also important to note that once allowed, these processes tend to be maintained by being amplified. And as A. Deaton points out (Deaton, 2024), supporting the simultaneous growth of inequalities and poverty is 'tantamount to issuing licenses for robbery'. In Bulgaria, the levels of inequality and poverty have reached a critical point with an existing "vicious" relationship between them.

In order to be attractive to live in and have potential for development, society must be structured like a spinning top - with a wide middle, a small top and a small bottom, and a low height. It is high time that the question of the limits of inequalities be placed in the focus of public policies in Bulgaria.

Published monographs that are not presented as main habilitation work

- 2) Borisova-Marinova, K., Atanasova, M., Beleva, I., **Jeliazkova, M.**, Tair, E., Tsekov, N., Hristova, A., Nikolova, S., Banov, H., (2018), Demographic Development, Labour Force and Labour Resources in Bulgaria, IPHS-BAS, Measures to Overcome the Demographic Crisis in the Republic of Bulgaria, Publishing House of BAS "Prof. M. Drinov", Sofia, ISBN 978-954-322-964-2; (total 506 pages, independent monograph of M. Jeliazkova with separate protocol - 109 pages "**Quality of jobs and dynamics of the correspondence between the quality of jobs and the quality of the workforce in the country**"). From the month of May, 2024 the volume has a DOI: <https://zenodo.org/records/11033870>, in *Bulgarian*

The collective volume on the project of IPHS – BAS is divided into several independent problem areas and scientists who analyze them.

Within this framework, my monograph examines the quality of jobs and the dynamics of its correspondence with the quality of the labour force. The focus on compliance (balance) is dictated by the significant influence that the ratio in question has on the demographic behavior and state of affairs of the population.

The purpose of the analysis in the first part is to examine the degree of correspondence between the quality of the labour force and the quality of jobs in Bulgaria and to discuss possible scenarios for changes in this correspondence. On the basis of national and international comparative studies and established indicators for the quality of jobs (OECD) and for the quality of the labour force (CEDEFOP), their state of affairs is discussed. Summarizing data and results from various studies, incl. assessments of the comparative levels (values) of human capital made by authoritative Western researchers, the study finds out a deviation of the quality of the labour force in the country from the average European level. Along with this, however, although with reservations, a very strong discrepancy is established: while the quality of the labor force in Bulgaria is about 30% lower than the EU average quality of labor force, the quality of jobs, in particular the pay is 4 times lower. For all the conventionality of the comparison between relative levels of quality of the realities compared, the magnitude of the differences between them is still so great that it should attract attention and engage efforts.

The analysis also establishes a tendency towards functional correspondence and mutual adaptation of the quality of jobs and the quality of the labour force, in which there is a risk that the lower quality attracts the higher to its level. This is one of the significant risks for the demographic (and not only) future of the country. Therefore, labor market policies, as well as the normative framework (norms, rules, regulations and policies) are analyzed.

The second part aims at proposals for measures to improve the quality of jobs and its compliance with the qualities of the labour force. To this end, the approach includes three types of research: Empirical nationally representative sociological research; Focus groups with young people; Results of conducted in-depth interviews with young people. Research finds out: negative assessments of the quality of jobs – more prevalent in terms of pay, but also in terms of security and working conditions. However, it is important to note that the most unfavorable evaluations are not in terms of pay, but in terms of the employees' ability to influence managerial decisions made in organizations and companies. The analysis also proves the existence of a significant potential

for controlling the emigration flow as a reason for the deterioration of the demographic situation in the country, determined by the possibilities for a significant and rapid increase in the quality of jobs and employment. In this regard, proposals for changes in policies and rules, in particular in labor market policies and income policies are proposed.

- 3) **Jeliaskova, M., (2019), Social Enterprises and their Ecosystems in Europe. Country report Bulgaria**, European Commission. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, ISBN: 978-92-79-97826-5, DOI: 10.2767/786387 (110 pages)

The monograph presents a review, assessment and recommendations in relation to social enterprises in Bulgaria. It was implemented within the framework of an activity related to a contract awarded by the European Commission to the European Research Institute for Cooperative and Social Enterprises (Euricse) and the International Research Network (EMES). A coordination team from Euricse and EMES prepared a conceptual framework, a system for monitoring the quality of national reports and their review and scientific editing. (Borzaga et al, 2020: 155-156)

The monograph examines the state, history and traditions of enterprises with a social purpose in Bulgaria - cooperatives, community centers, enterprises of disabled people and non-profit organizations. The analysis establishes three main driving forces of the development of social enterprises in the modern period: a/ growing needs of vulnerable groups, which stimulate the creation of prototypes of social enterprises; b/ EU integration, also related to overcoming negative attitudes towards cooperatives and community centers; c/ funding sources and various programs. Complex interactions between different driving forces and conflicting interests of various stakeholders led to the adoption (2018) and entry into force (2019) of the first Law on Social and Solidarity Economy Enterprises.

The second chapter assesses the legal evolution and the existing fiscal framework. The evolution of the legal framework of social enterprises in Bulgaria is characterized by conceptual and normative ambiguity. Social enterprises encompass various legal forms indicated. The national concept of social economy (in the development of which the author of the monograph participated), adopted by the Council of Ministers in 2012, presents the conceptual framework for the nature and development of social enterprises in Bulgaria. After a long period, the aforementioned Law was adopted, but it is more of a registration nature and divides social enterprises into class A and class A+. The monograph includes an assessment of the compliance of regulatory frameworks for different organizational forms with the EU's operational definition of social enterprise, as well as an overview of the fiscal framework as a tool to stimulate social enterprises.

The monograph also includes mapping: an attempt to expertly estimate the number of potential social enterprises in the absence of statistical data, as well as their main characteristics. The ecosystem of social enterprises in Bulgaria is also analyzed, which is formed through the interaction of various participants. It is found out that national institutions, local authorities and a small number of non-governmental organizations have the greatest influence on policies and legal frameworks. This also determines the measures to support social enterprises. The last part discusses the opportunities for the future development of social enterprises in the country and makes suggestions for improvements. In addition, a more detailed analysis of four specific cases of social enterprises in the country is presented.

The monograph was accepted as the most significant scientific and applied achievement of the IPS-BAS for 2019.

- 4) **Jeliazkova, M., (2020), Vulnerable Consumers Protection Framework Paper.** © ASSIST project, ISBN: 978-619-188-429-2 (120 pages)

ASSIST (2017-2020) was an EU market and policy driven project aimed at measures to tackle energy poverty and support vulnerable consumers. It involved partners from Italy (lead), Belgium, Finland, Poland, Spain and Great Britain and the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN). One of its main objectives was to prepare proposals to improve policies against energy poverty and vulnerability. EAPN was the partner responsible for this activity and I was involved in developing methodology and comprehensive material (policy paper) in this regard.

The monograph on the protection of vulnerable consumers addresses two main questions: 1/ How to promote an appropriate working mechanism to combat energy poverty and vulnerability at EU and national level?; 2/ How to improve the political decision-making process to generate effective consumer protection measures to address energy poverty and the options to address it?

The publication presents policy pathways to promote the protection of vulnerable consumers in the energy market. It is based on the discussions of three rounds of the created within the framework of the project advisory groups, national and EU consultations with vulnerable consumers and dialogues with market participants, as well as results from the different activities of the project: research, training, networking and action in the field. On this basis, the monograph includes a review, assessments and policy recommendations on energy poverty and vulnerability.

The monograph presents an overview and evaluation of various energy poverty alleviation measures and initiatives available in the project partner countries as well as in other EU countries. Despite progress, the shared view is that these measures are not sufficiently ambitious and/or effective and do not address the root generators of energy poverty. Many initiatives and efforts remain short-lived, unfit for purpose and do not contribute significantly to reducing energy poverty. Most of the interventions are focused on financial support and consumer behavior. This approach has achieved some positive results, but it is unlikely to generate strong long-term social acceptance and public support for the necessary reforms.

Therefore, the monograph substantiates a series of recommendations for improvements at each stage of policy interventions. EU Member States are progressing at very different speeds in the field, but all need concrete steps aimed to varying degrees at significant and decisive changes in the design of social protection for vulnerable consumers to address energy poverty and vulnerability in a structured way. In summary, this means: 1. Increased attention to the way energy markets are structured and operate, price-setting mechanisms, tendencies towards concentration and monopolies; 2. Assessment of the impact on different income groups and careful assessment of the required sequence of policy steps; 3. Improvement of decision-making processes through wider involvement of various stakeholders, incl. vulnerable consumers and social workers; 4. Effective efforts to clearly identify the generators of energy poverty and address them. This is also linked to independent impact assessments to assess distributional effects as well as unintended and undesirable consequences, and also to stimulate evidence-based policy-making; 5/ Better and consistent interaction between the different levels: EU, national and local. Such a new policy mix could benefit from a more developed vision of what might be called energy well-being. This concept includes adequate consumer purchasing power, good quality homes and affordable and clean energy and is based on the right to energy.

Article published in an edited collective volume

- 5) **Jeliaskova, M. (2023), Inequalities and political (in)consistency**, in vol. *Communities and Identities*, Academic Publishing "Prof. Marin Drinov", 2023, ISBN:978-619-245-323-7 (pp. 294-307), *in Bulgarian*

The article discusses the contradiction between officially accepted goals and principles of structuring society and public policies that erode the achievement of these goals and principles. The continuous rise of socio-economic inequalities in Bulgaria with clearly declared goals for their reduction reveals a highly expressed political inconsistency, which needs either corrective mechanisms or the recognition of a hidden agenda stimulated by the policies and, accordingly, a rejection of the declared goals.

Papers published in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information

- 6) Foulds, C., Royston, S., Berker, T., Nakopoulou, E., Bharucha, Z.P, **Jeliaskova, M.**, et al. (2022), **An agenda for future Social Sciences and Humanities research on energy efficiency: 100 priority research questions**. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, Volume 9, Issue 1, Springer Nature, Elsevier, ISSN: 26629992, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-022-01243-z>, SJR (Scopus):0.42, Q 2

The paper draws attention to the strong preponderance of techno-economic aspects in energy policy and the insufficient use and incorporation of social and humanitarian research and results. It pleads for a clearer focus and consultative processes with the needs and achievements of Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) in relation to energy policy.

In this regard, the paper contributes to the development of a social and humanitarian research program related to energy efficiency. The study is based on a scannig that aims to identify 100 priority SSH questions for energy efficiency research. It was part of a Horizon 2030 project run by the University of Cambridge and involved 152 researchers with previous SSH experience in energy efficiency, together spanning 62 SSH (sub)disciplines, 23 countries and across a full range of scientific career stages. The authors of the studies discussed, grouped, prioritized and specified necessary main research directions in seven thematic circles: (1) Citizenship, engagement and knowledge exchange in relation to energy efficiency; (2) Energy efficiency and its relationship to equity, poverty and vulnerability; (3) Energy efficiency in relation to everyday life and energy consumption and production practices; (4) Framing, defining and measuring energy efficiency; (5) Governance, policy and political issues related to energy efficiency; (6) Role of economic systems, supply chains and financial mechanisms to improve energy efficiency; and (7) Interactions, unintended consequences, and adverse effects of energy efficiency interventions.

Given the continued centrality of energy efficiency to policy agendas, the paper highlights the need for well-developed SSH approaches elaborated by the social sciences and humanities to be mobilized to contribute to the design and/or understanding of the implications of measures for energy efficiency and management solutions.

- 7) Bertolini, S., Musumeci, R., Athanassiades, C., Flouli, A., Figgou, L., Deliyanni-Kouimtzi, V., Krasteva, V., **Jeliaskova, M.**, Minev, D. (2021), Chapter 8, **Is housing autonomy still a step towards adulthood in time of job insecurity?**. In: Unt, M., Gebel, M., Bertolini, S., Deliyanni-Kouimtzi, V. & Hofäcker, D. (Eds.). *Social Exclusion of Youth in Europe: The Consequences of Labour Market Insecurity*: Bristol University Press, ISBN: 978-1447358725. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1sr6k9z.14> (p. 192–213).

The chapter discusses how housing autonomy affects the transition to adulthood among young people in Italy, Greece and Bulgaria. Economic problems seriously limit the autonomy of young people, both emotionally/psychologically and financially, especially the autonomy of some groups of young people. In all three countries, young people leave the parental home later, compared to young people from Northern and Central European countries.

The analysis is based on 133 qualitative interviews with young people as part of the EXCEPT project - Bulgaria (43), Greece (40) and Italy (50). The results depict that autonomy is quite high in youth preferences, but parts of it (including home autonomy) are compromised by more important aspects of well-being. This is related to high fragmentation: especially young people in families with low economic status have to deal with many other and more basic needs. The comparison between the three countries depicts: similar problems for young people in the conditions of similar policies: With the existing labor market (low incomes in Bulgaria, long periods of unemployment in Greece, uncertainty in Italy), and in the absence of access to unemployment insurance, long cohabitation with parents becomes a normal step. Autonomy remains possible even when young people continue to live with their parents, but this could create various problems, including in front of the flexible labor market and territorial mobility.

- 8) Ricucci, R., Ghislieri, C., Krasteva, V., **Jeliaskova, M.**, Taru, M. & Rokicka, M. (2021), Chapter 11, **How young people experience and perceive labour market policies in four European countries**. In: Unt, M., Gebel, M., Bertolini, S., Deliyanni-Kouimtzi, V. & Hofäcker, D. (Eds.). *Social Exclusion of Youth in Europe: The Consequences of Labour Market Insecurity*: Bristol University Press, ISBN: 978-1447358725. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1sr6k9z.17> (p. 263–292).

The chapter analyzes how young people in four European countries – Poland, Estonia, Italy and Bulgaria – evaluate labor market policies and measures; what are the factors that encourage and/or discourage the use of employment institutions. The analysis is based on an assessment of the socio-economic context and 186 qualitative interviews conducted by the EXCEPT project in the four countries under consideration: 43 in Bulgaria, 53 in Estonia, 50 in Italy and 40 in Poland.

The results establish similarities in the comparative analysis: fragmentation of target subgroups among unemployed youth; varying effectiveness of measures, especially low in cases where active labor market measures have to reproduce the entire process of institutional socialization that has previously failed for certain groups of young people; lack of a comprehensive political framework to address problems in the education system, labor market, housing and more generally social policy in an integrated manner; signals of underestimation and mistreatment of young people; bureaucratization of services instead of adequate individualized approaches. The chapter pleads for a change in the quality of political measures based on the real needs of young people.

- 9) **Jeliaskova, M.**, Krasteva, V., Minev, D. (2020), Chapter 3, **Inconsistencies in Policy-Making as Drivers of Energy Poverty in Bulgaria**. In: Jigla, G., Sinea, A., Dubois, U. & Biermann, P. (Eds.). *Perspectives on Energy Poverty in Post-Communist Europe*, Routledge, ISBN: 9780367430528 (p. 55-76)

First, the chapter outlines and discusses the main dimensions of energy poverty in Bulgaria: a/ prevalence; b/ depth; c/ health effects; d/ low contractual potential of consumers to influence the factors that lead to energy poverty.

To explain the outlined situation, we analyze the policies in the country related to energy poverty. To this end, we combine two analytical frameworks, the widely known policy cycle and Pal's policy consistency framework. For evaluation, we use the scale proposed by Liu et al. The analysis finds out: a/ Low internal consistency (weak correspondence between identified problems, objectives and policy instruments); b/ Moderate vertical consistency (correspondence between programs and activities). Activities follow the programs, but there are problems regarding borderline cases and the quality of social work. And independent evaluations of the implementation of the programs are underestimated or missing; c/ Very low horizontal consistency (inconsistency between different policy areas). The main problem identified is the strong pressure of energy policy, understood as intensive liberalization and privatization, as well as manipulation and rent extraction by powerful participants in the energy "market". This is at the expense of social policy and generates mutual paralysis between it and environmental policy.

This suggests that the current political approach is not able to effectively contribute to reducing the level of energy poverty in the country. Recommendations for improvements relate to the need to place well-being at the centre of public policies; and the citizens, incl. vulnerable citizens have the opportunity to participate in decision-making, in particular in agenda-setting and policy evaluations.

Papers published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collective volumes

- 10) Minev, D., **Jeliaskova, M. (2022), Making a just green transition: perceptions and risks**, *Postmodernism Problems*, Vol. 12, No. 3,, 2022, ISSN:1314-3700, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.46324/PMP2203289>, (p. 289-318), *in Bulgarian*

The paper discusses opportunities and risks in making just green transitions. Existing notions of justice and results of researches in European and non-European countries are analyzed, where a series of unfavorable processes, such as insufficient support for affected groups, mechanisms for extracting rents and corrupt practices, have been identified. The review outlines serious challenges facing the necessary transitions to low-carbon energy systems. On this basis, the study argues for the need to build public capacity through a preliminary and consistent framework that clearly outlines pro-development notions of justice, meaningful alignment of social and environmental goals, and honest monitoring of potential problems, along with solutions to overcome them.

- 11) **Jeliaskova, M. D. (2021), Poverty in Bulgaria: Dimensions, Policies and Analyses**. *Sociološki pregled / Sociological Review*, vol. LV, 1, Serbian Sociological Association, Belgrade, ISSN: 0085-6320, (p. 130-155).

The article discusses the dimensions of poverty in Bulgaria, the policies undertaken to overcome it, as well as their cognitive basis.

An overview of poverty values in the country is made based on various indicators and using data from Eurostat until 2019. Alarming high values were found and the fact that alarming data is not reflected in the two main pillars of anti-poverty policies: a) active labor market policies that neglect the quality of jobs and the increase of the working poor; and b) social assistance, which provides income support at extremely low levels, incompatible with the income people need to survive and regardless of the accumulating data on the necessary living wage (CITUB, Living Wage Indicator, Numbeo).

The review of policies and analyzes in the transition period depicts that both of these pillars were marginalized for a long time, but with the integration of Bulgaria into the EU, a relative increase in attention is observed. At the same time, despite the fact that, following the general guidelines of the EU, Bulgaria implements some political measures to deal with the problems of poverty, the overall effect remains too insignificant. Similar to political actions, after the period of marginalization during the first 15 years of the transition, national analysis and research related to poverty has grown in number and focus on various vulnerable groups. However, despite the expansion of analyses: the descriptive, fragmentary character remains highly prevalent, as does the emphasis on the accompanying factors of poverty instead of its generators.

The combination of predominantly descriptive analyses, emphasis on accompanying factors, fragmented assessments of different labor market measures and social assistance schemes, limitations of knowledge through financial flows and lack of attention to the main generators of poverty are functionally aligned and mutually supportive. However their importance for poverty reduction remains low. To overcome these problems, a clear coherence between different policies is needed, based on adequate indicators of well-being and a shift from policy-driven knowledge to knowledge-based policies to ensure holistic, integrated and people-centred development with adequate action against poverty.

- 12) **Jeliazkova, M., Minev, D. (2023). Bulgaria: Poverty Watch 2023 – State, Political Measures and Green Transition**, EAPN Poverty Watches, ISBN: 978-954-9534-07-8 (p. 1-31)

The consecutively presented 2 papers - Poverty Watch (Poverty Watch), aim to analyze the overall situation in the country in terms of poverty and social inclusion, discuss public policies and propose recommendations. They are developed every year with a different focus, in accordance with the guidelines of the European Anti-Poverty Network for all EU member states, based on desk research, secondary data analysis and surveys and group discussions with various stakeholders.

The paper "Bulgaria: Poverty Monitoring 2023 - status, policy measures and green transition" is aimed at a review, analysis and recommendations regarding the situation in Bulgaria in 2023. It briefly discusses the existing picture of poverty and inequalities and the fragmented social policy. The paper's focus is on the opportunities for a just green transition. In this regard, various issues have been analyzed – they must be addressed in order to make a successful transition. On the basis of a representative sociological study conducted (within a National Fund for Scientific Research project at the Ministry of Education and Science: KP-06 PN55/13), the attitudes of Bulgarian citizens regarding climate change, environmental pollution, necessary measures and justice expectations are also presented. The existing socio-economic context - very high levels of poverty, extremely high inequalities and the resulting low evaluations and expectations regarding

the possible fairness of social processes, reforms and transitions - severely limits these opportunities. At the same time, the conditions that would contribute to the Bulgarian citizens accepting that the transition is fair are outlined. Stimulating and implementing a truly just green transition poses numerous challenges to national and EU policies. In this regard, some recommendations are made in the last part.

- 13) **Jeliaskova, M., Minev, D. (2022), Bulgaria: Poverty Watch 2021.** EAPN Poverty Watches, 2022, ISBN: 978-954-9534-06-1 (p. 1-26)

The paper "Bulgaria: Poverty Monitoring 2021" presents an analysis of the latest available data on poverty and social exclusion and focuses on the impact of Covid-19 and the measures undertaken. For this purpose, essential characteristics of the health care system and their effects in relation to dealing with the pandemic situation are discussed. The impact of social distancing and homeschooling for various vulnerable groups is also discussed.

The main results of the analysis show that despite increased state aid and efforts, many groups, some of which are invisible through the lens of public policy, remain without adequate and much-needed support. It seems that every disaster – pandemic, natural disaster, crisis – leads to growing inequalities. Thus, in both "good" and "bad" times, the result is the same: further fragmentation of society.

- 14) **Jeliaskova, M. (2021), Quality of Jobs and Employment in Bulgaria.** Nasselenie Review, Volume 39, Number 2, IPHS-BAS, 2021, ISSN: 0205-0617 (p. 241-265)

The paper discusses the quality of jobs and employment in Bulgaria through the lens of labour remuneration, employment polarization and material deprivation among the employed. Results of sociological research and comparative data with other EU member countries are presented. The results outline the very unfavorable situation in Bulgaria as a consequence of applied specific distribution and redistribution policies. For comparison, the design of these policies in Ireland, on the one hand, and in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, on the other, is discussed. The choice of these countries is justified by the fact that by conducting active distribution and redistribution policies, they manage to create a much better socio-economic context. The main reason for the very unfavorable picture in Bulgaria is the low negotiating potential of the employed. The need for a purposeful and massive reconstruction of public policies and regulatory frameworks is argued in order to realize development based on quality employment and aimed at internal cohesion of the extremely disintegrated Bulgarian society. Similar measures are also extremely important for improving the demographic situation in the country.

- 15) **Jeliaskova, M. (2019), Status and Significance of Policy Evaluation Studies,** in: „Science for the Benefit of Society“ collection, Jeliaskova, M., Petrunov, G. (eds.), BAS Publishing House, "Prof. M. Drinov", 2019, ISBN:978-954-322-985-7, (p. 148-164) *in Bulgarian*

The paper discusses evaluation studies of youth employment policies. The analysis, based on desk research and EXCEPT project research, establishes a long period of marginalization of this type of research (in the last decade of the 20th century and the first of the 21st century), despite the

fact that during this period policies were implemented to deal with unemployment in European countries. In the following period, evaluative research intensified, but its main characteristic was an overly narrow focus that stimulated positive evaluative research. A wide range of components leading to a deliberate narrowing of focus and ignoring of essential issues are discussed. As a result, dubious scientific recommendations are constructed, as instead of 'evidence-based policies', 'policy-based evidence' is generated (Boden & Epstein 2006). The paper argues that specialized research is needed on policy evaluations and on the ways of controlling knowledge-creation processes.

- 16) **Jeliaskova, M. (2018), *Elusive Effects of Youth Employment Policies***, in: Collection *Inequalities and Social (Dis)integration. In search of togetherness*, Boyadzhieva, P., Kanushev, M., Ivanov, M. (eds.), Iztok-Zapad, 2018, ISBN:978-619-01-0188-8 (pp. 275-290), *in Bulgarian*

The paper discusses labor market policies implemented in the EU over the last two or three decades, particularly those targeting unemployed young people. The analysis is focused on the effects of subordinating passive (income-providing) policies to the unbalanced "activation" trend and the emphasis on individual deficits and reactive measures instead of structural problems of the economy and preventive measures. The result is the simultaneous stigmatization and sanctioning of the unemployed, the disciplining of the employed, and the creation of a "surplus population." Instead of quality employment, these policies generate high inequalities, precarious employment, the emergence of the working poor and social exclusion. Various international actors such as EC, OECD, ILO, etc. have recently drawn attention to the need to review these policies. The paper argues that to adequately address established trends, in addition to changing rhetoric, institutional reforms are urgently needed. They must restore the balance of the deformed bargaining power of the different groups in the labor market.

- 17) **Jeliaskova, M., Minev, D., Draganov, Dr., Krasteva, V., Stoilov, A. (2018). *Youth employment policies in Bulgaria***. Tallinn: Tallinn University, ISBN 978-9949-29-396-4 (p. 1-88)

The paper first discusses the development of the national labor market, focusing on its key developments since the mid-1990s. Its capacity to absorb labor supply is assessed; trends in the cost of living, in-work poverty and salaries/wages; the level of job security/insecurity and the match between demand and supply of educational levels and skills. An analysis of the main risk groups on the labor market, defined by various participants and the place of young people among them, is proposed. In contrast to policies that narrowly address individual deficits, risks stemming from structural deficits and social segmentation are outlined.

The next few parts analyze the main trends in active and passive labor market policies, focusing on youth employment policies, incl. with a detailed overview of 12 selected interventions. Characteristics of the diffusion processes of EU youth employment initiatives are also discussed. The coherence of youth employment policies with other policies (education policy; social policy, etc.) is also discussed and their effectiveness is assessed. The publication concludes with an assessment of employment policies by young people, based on which recommendations are proposed to improve the situation of young people in Bulgaria.

Published chapter in a collective monograph

- 18) **Jeliaskova, M.** (2023), Chapter 7: **The Policy against Poverty and Social Exclusion in Bulgaria as Part of Social Policy**, in: *Public Policies and Social Changes. The Difficult Road to a Good Society*“, BAS Academic Publishing House "Prof. Marin Drinov", ISBN:978-619-245-277-3, (pp. 262 - 286), *in Bulgarian*

The chapter discusses policies against poverty and social exclusion in Bulgaria, following the general conceptual framework (D. Minev) presented in the first part of the collective monograph.

The analysis of the political cycle of decision-making in relation to measures against poverty and social exclusion proves deficits in its different phases: at the stage of identifying the aims – a refusal to address poverty generators; at the stage of policy formulation - absence of clearly developed concepts of poverty and social exclusion based on living subsistence; in the implementation of the policies - signs of "creaming effects"; and in the phase of the evaluation of the effects, which seems to be the most distorted - absence of independent assessments.

This leads, on the one hand, to white spots in knowledge, cognitive distortions, lack of research into alternative scenarios and rejection of holistic assessments. On the other hand, high levels of poverty and social exclusion are stabilized, and the goals (from the Lisbon strategy, through the Europe 2020 strategy to the new Europe 2030 strategy) while not achieved are gradually being minimized. The overall result is that the policies regarding poverty and social exclusion in Bulgaria do not produce the promised and expected results and they need serious revision.

- 19) Minev, D., **Jeliaskova, M.** (2023), Chapter 4, **Employment Policies after the 1980s**, in: „Public Policies and Social Changes. The Difficult Road to a Good Society“, BAS Academic Publishing House "Prof. Marin Drinov", ISBN:978-619-245-277-3 (pp. 169 - 214), *in Bulgarian*

The chapter analyzes the implemented employment policies - a main pillar of the current social policy. It is based both on a review of researches and conceptual frameworks on employment in general and on the results from the EXCEPT project, which focused on policies against youth unemployment in the EU. The importance of the socio-economic and political context, the correspondence between identified causes of unemployment and measures to stimulate employment, the short-term and long-term effects of the policies undertaken and the political decision-making process are at the centre of the analysis.

The analysis traces the radical changes in employment policies brought about by activation in the context of exclusive economic growth, deindustrialization, deregulation, and the dismantling of "welfare states." On this basis, the emergence of an 'universal model' is identified, alongside the inevitable (sometimes significant) differences between countries. This universal "youth" pattern of employment is expressed in a number of similarities between different countries - jobs are of lower quality (low wages, irregularly paid or not paid at all); they are based on coercion and low social protection; accompanied by an increase in uncertainty and temporary employment, etc. Along with this, the model has long-term impacts on other groups (the employed, the working poor and children), as well as on various fields such as education, child poverty and, above all, on the reconstruction of the income distribution system.

- 20) Krasteva, V., **Jeliazkova, M.**, Draganov, Dr. (2018). **Socio-economic consequences**. In: Young adults in insecure labor market positions in Bulgaria – The results from a qualitative study. Tallinn: Tallinn University, ISBN 978-9949-29-369-8 (p. 82 -101)

The focus of the chapter is on the socio-economic consequences of unemployment and insecure employment from the point of view of young people who find themselves in such a situation in Bulgaria. The analysis outlines main aspects of exclusion from the labor market according to the interviewed youth: material deprivation and poverty, lack of access to quality health services and education, lack of a strategy for the future. These aspects are interconnected and create a vicious circle - low positions in one aspect lead to similar positioning in other aspects. The strategies that young people take to cope with the situation are also discussed.

- 21) Krasteva, V., **Jeliazkova, M.**, Draganov, Dr. (2018). **Social exclusion**. In: Young adults in insecure labor market positions in Bulgaria – The results from a qualitative study. Tallinn: Tallinn University, ISBN 978-9949-29-369-8 (p. 102 – 121)

Based on the understanding of social exclusion as a complex process and following the framework common to the EXCEPT project (Figgou & Unt, 2017), in this chapter we differentiate the interviewed young people into three groups: 1. With a high risk of social exclusion – simultaneous exclusion from the labor market, material deprivation and lack of informal and formal social support; 2. With an increased risk of social exclusion - young people who are excluded from the labor market and at the same time face various difficulties; 3. With a lower risk of social exclusion – young people who have different difficulties in the labor market, but receive different types of support. For each of these groups, we outline the interrelationships between work and educational trajectories, autonomy, well-being, and socioeconomic outcomes. We also offer some recommendations for policies that could improve the economic and social situation of vulnerable young people in Bulgaria.