

OPINION

on the scientific works and contributions of DSc Albena Nakova-Manolova, Associate Professor at the Center for Empirical Social Surveys, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, candidate in the competition for the Professor in Professional Field 3.1. Sociology, Anthropology and Cultural Sciences for the needs of the Center for Empirical Social Surveys

by Professor DSc Tatyana Petrova Batuleva-Kancheva, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

1. Reasons for preparing the review

I participate in the Scientific Jury *in accordance with the Order RD 09-42.1/18.02.2025*, issued by the Director of the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Prof. DSc Emilia Chengelova, and I am the author of this opinion in accordance with the Resolution of the first meeting of the Scientific Jury held on 21.02.2025. The competition was announced in the State Gazette, issue 105, 13.12.2024.

2. General description of the submitted materials

Associate Professor DSc Albena Nakova is the only candidate in the competition for a professor in the Scientific Field 3.1. Sociology, Anthropology and Cultural Sciences (Public Opinion Studies on the Contemporary Identity of Bulgarian Citizens and Refugees) for the needs of the Center for Empirical Social Surveys (CESS). To take part in this competition, Assoc. Prof. DSc. Albena Nakova has attached three tables, respectively for "Doctor", "Associate Professor" and "Doctor of Sciences". The data in them *do not match in any indicator*. She not only meets the national minimum requirements for a professor but *significantly exceeds them*. The total amount of points is **1235**.

3. General characteristics of scientific, applied and other activities of the candidate

Albena Nakova is an Associate Professor at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Doctor of Sociology (2002) and Doctor of Sciences (2024). She actively participates in the administrative management of the Institute as: scientific secretary of the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, BAS (2015-2018); deputy director of the IPS-BAS (2018 to the present). She develops active expert activities at the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Ministry of Education and Science. DSc Albena Nakova is a member of the Union of Scientists in Bulgaria and the Balkan Society for Pedagogy and Education (BASOPED), member of the Scientific Council of the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, participant in several editorial boards of leading scientific journals as: *Scientific Result. Sociology and Management*; *Postmodernism Problems Journal*; *International Science Reviews. Social Sciences Series*. A distinguished scientist, DSc Nakova has been a member of more than 30 scientific juries.

4. Content analysis of the candidate's scientific achievements in the publications with which she applies for the academic position of "professor"

Associate Professor Nakova's scientific interests are mainly in the field of ethnosociology and ethnopsychology (interethnic relations); national, ethnic and European identity; migration processes and refugee policy; human resource management.

The first research lens focuses on refugees, policies, and changing societal attitudes toward them. The monograph *"Public Opinion on Refugees in Bulgaria (2013-2020)"*, published in 2024 by the Academic Publishing House "Prof. Marin Drinov" is a *comprehensive study* that presents the analyses of specific sociological studies, with an emphasis on the small town. The *contradictory attitude* towards refugees, combining elements of sympathy and rejection, is studied. It is argued that the distance is due not so much to the ethnic and the religious differences as to the lack of certain social qualities and the *impossibility of their successful integration* into Bulgarian society. The conclusion is that low tolerance *does not necessarily mean xenophobic attitudes* (7,1).

This research area also includes a number of articles analyzing integration and social attitudes towards *special categories of refugees* (such as women and children) (7.7; 7.9); *challenges to national policies* and social attitudes towards refugees (7.8); visible and invisible *barriers to their integration* (7.10); *types of rejection* and the fears associated with them.

The *second research focus* is on the issue of *national identity*. Here, the monograph entitled "*Hybrid Identities (Contemporary State and Ethnic Models in Bulgaria)*" (2024) is worth mentioning. Among the qualities of this work are the following: migration and identity are thoroughly analyzed in the *context of the thesis of liquefied (or fluid modernity)*; the analysis of national identity is linked to the *contemporary processes of Eurointegration*; the *complex nature of the identity* of contemporary Bulgarian citizens is substantiated; the specific features of the identity of the Bulgarian, Turkish and Roma ethnic groups *in their national, local and ethnic dimensions* are deduced; the specific features of the *model of formation of collective identity* in different age groups are analyzed.

This area of research also includes analyses of the attitudes and *ambivalent* positions toward the Other and the Foreign in contemporary Bulgarian society. A. Nakova substantiates the conclusion about the evolution of national identity and the emergence of new, structurally and functionally different identities. In this direction, several articles are devoted to *ethnic identity* and the historical stereotypes that underlie it, as well as to the interdependence between ethnic memory and solidarity (7.13; 7.16). Depending on the image of the other, Nakova defines *two models of interethnic communication* (closed and open) and two models of solidarity (based on the negation of the "other" and disintegration) and open (producing solidarity). Special attention is given to attitudes toward the ethnic other in the context of *educational status* (7.14). The *relationship between tolerance and ethnic memory* is studied as a kind of *social mediator* between the past and the present (in cognitive, emotional, evaluative and behavioral aspects) (7.17). The relations between the Bulgarian and Turkish ethnic communities in Bulgaria, in both historical and present-day socio-political contexts, are analyzed in a separate article (7.12). The conclusions reached by the researcher in the analyses of the relations between the self and the foreigner and the models of communication she proposes are also *relevant to the analysis of ethnic stereotypes and interethnic solidarity* (7.13). The analyses related to refugees and ethnic identity lead Associate Professor Nakova naturally to *conclusions regarding the evolution of the role of the nation-state* in conditions of supermobility, migration, and increasingly insecure state borders (7.11). This role is also analyzed *in the light of interethnic relations, values, and the need for harmonization of national and European legislation* (7.6).

Associate Professor Nakova formulates the conclusion about identity as a *social construct with a relative, contextual and variable structure, depending on the nature of interaction with "others"*. She justifies its *hybrid nature*: in different ethnic communities, the shares of national, supranational, ethnic, and local identities are *in different proportions* in the overall structure of identity.

The contribution of the results achieved by Albena Nakova *is beyond doubt*. The contributions

are correctly presented in the author's bibliography and testify to *objective self-reflection*. All works of Associate Professor Nakova are based on the results of authoritative and nationally representative sociological studies. They introduce into the scientific circulation *carefully collected and optimally interpreted empirical material*, which represents a significant contribution to the information array of data necessary for the development of Bulgarian sociology in particular and Bulgarian society as a whole. In addition to the *practical results*, Associate Professor Nakova formulates *theoretical conclusions and generalizations* that are significant for society and decision makers.

5. Reflection of the candidate's scientific publications in our and foreign literature

Some of the works of Associate Professor Nakova are published in renowned scientific publications and journals in world-famous databases. To participate in the competition for a professor, she has **200** points of citations in Bulgaria and abroad, which exceeds the required minimum of 120 points. Nakova has an impressive number of participations in international projects - another proof that the results of her scientific research work *receive real recognition both in Bulgaria and abroad*.

6. Critical comments on the submitted work

I have no critical comments on the content of the works submitted by DSc Nakova. Their content and the literature used in them indicate the *high competence and literary awareness* of the candidate in the researched thematic areas. The papers are correctly presented and show *objective self-reflection*. I recommend that she continue her work in the study of the increasingly fluid identity and the relationship between native and foreign in a *comparative perspective, i.e. national, Balkan and European contexts*.

7. Personal impressions

I have known Associate Professor Nakova since 2012. My personal impressions of her are that she is a *highly responsible*, very diligent, responsive and *extremely precise* person when working with documents, who with her scientific and organizational activities has made a *real contribution* to the optimal functioning of the Institute. She has the ability to work in a team: proof of this is her long-term participation in the management of the Institute (as scientific secretary and deputy director), as well as in leading and participating in a number of important national and international projects.

8. Conclusion

Taking into account the works presented by Associate Professor DSc Albena Nakova-Manolova, the contributions contained in them, their high scientific and public significance and relevance, as well as her overall scientific and organizational activity, I will confidently vote for **Albena Nakova to be elected professor** in the Professional Field 3.1. Sociology, Anthropology and Cultural Sciences and I appeal to the members of the esteemed Scientific Jury to support this decision.

6th of March 2025

Professor DSc Tatyana Batuleva-Kancheva