

REVIEW

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Regarding: a competition for the academic position of "professor" in the Professional field 3.1. Sociology, anthropology, and cultural sciences (Sociology – Historical Sociology)

1. Information about the competition.

The competition was announced for the needs of the Department of Sociology at Faculty of Philosophy of Sofia University in **SG No 32/09.04-2024**. I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury by order of the Rector of SU "St. Kl. Ohridski" No. RD 38-302/10.06.2024 based on Art. 4 and Art. 29a of the ZRASRB, Art. 60 et seq. of the Regulations for the Implementation of the ZRASRB, Art. 118, para. (1) and para. (3) by PURPNSZADSU and decision of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Philosophy, protocol No. 11 / 04.06.2024.

2. Brief information about the candidates in the competition.

The only candidate in this competition is Associate Professor DSC Martin Ivanov Ivanov, working in the Department of Sociology at the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of St. Kl. Ohridski. The submitted documents fully meet the requirements for participation in the competition.

Martin Ivanov's biography is remarkable for a person born in 1970, insofar as he combines academic dedication and productivity, and social commitment. He graduated from an English high school; he has two higher educations – in history at SU and law at Southwestern University; a PhD in history since 2000, a doctorate in sociological sciences in 2021. He has several specializations in the United Kingdom - a two-year prestigious scholarship at the Faculty History, Cambridge University; at the University of Edinburgh; as well as at the National University of Ireland. Since 2008, he has been an associate professor at the Institute for Historical Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, and since 2015 - at the Department of Sociology of the "St. Kl. Ohridski", where he still works. His list of publications is more than impressive – nine authored or co-authored monographs, plus two collections of interviews; 12 articles in refereed and indexed journals in world-renowned databases; nearly 100 other scientific articles in journals and collections; over 100 popular science articles. A citation report shows that in Web of Science Clarivate he has a total of 181

citations, h-index 4. The Scopus ELSEVIER database gives a total of 94 citations, and the Citation overview shows an h-index 4. For a social scholar, this is a high citation index. His interdisciplinary orientation, curiosity about the achievements of his colleagues and contagious communicativeness make him a long-time leader, together with Dr. Rumen Avramov, of the Seminar on Economic and Social History, first at the Center for Liberal Strategies and now at the Center for Academic Studies, Sofia. From 2012 to today, he is a member of the editorial board of the "History" journal. He is also a member of authoritative international professional organizations.

In addition to being a respected and proven scientist, Martin Ivanov also has a high public authority. He was appointed the director of SA "Archives" and I witnessed how in two years he made many improvements in its work. He was acting minister of culture; secretary of the President Rosen Plevneliev on matters of education, culture and national identity; an Ambassador of the Republic of Bulgaria in the Republic of Finland and the Republic of Estonia. I mention these commitments of his because they show his desire to improve something in the world in which we live. He is not locked in an academic tower, on the contrary, he actively participates in public affairs, but at the same time, these commitments have in no way affected his academic and publication activities. This combination is a testimony to his tireless diligence and great creative and social energy.

3. Fulfillment of the minimal national requirements for holding the academic position of professor.

Associate Professor DSC Martin Ivanov is registered at NACID, and from the scientometric tables presented by him is seen that the minimum number of points required for the position of professor has not only been met, but also exceeded (he has 820 points). This means that the competition is completely legitimate and complies with the Regulations of the SU on the terms and conditions for holding the academic position of “professor” at the university.

4. Evaluation of teaching and learning activity.

Martin Ivanov has been an associate professor for 16 years, and as such was appointed to the Department of Sociology in 2015 after winning a competition. From 2016 to 2020, he was on long-term unpaid leave due to his appointment as ambassador. As he notes, after the completion of this leave, from the academic year 2021/2022 onwards he has annually realized a full horary with a significant over-load, which reached in 2022/2023 to double the auditorium employment from the minimum requirements /540 hours of classroom employment/. The courses he leads are in the bachelor's programs of the Sociology major: *Modernization processes in the Bulgarian society /mandatory/; Political and economic elites*

of Bulgaria (1878-2000); A village with diminishing functions; Political life of modern Bulgaria; in the Cultural studies department: *A village with diminishing functions*; and in the English and French undergraduate program of the Faculty of Economics of the SU: *Economic Statistics* (in English). All courses are author's and are in the field of the Historical Sociology competition, discussing topics in Economic Sociology, too. I would like to point out that within the courses, Martin Ivanov does not limit himself only to the analysis of theoretical views and the presentation of historical research, but also teaches students various methods - for example, network analysis; and handling different sources – working and analyzing archival sources.

5. General description of the presented materials.

For his participation in the competition, associate professor Ivanov presented 16 publications, of which a habilitation book: Ivanov, M. "*Former people*" of "*Concentration camp*" *Bulgaria*. Sofia: CIELA, 2023, 374 p.; another book, co-authored with Prof. Daniel Vachkov: *Bulgarian External Debt 1944–1989. The bankruptcy of the communist economy*. Sofia: Institute for the History of the Recent Past, 2007, 254 p.; 10 articles in refereed and indexed journals in world-renowned databases, six of which are in English; four articles and reports published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals and in edited collective volumes; and two chapters in collective monographs. There is no plagiarism in his works.

Dr. Ivanov has typologized his publications in five thematic fields: "Elites and urban economy", "External debt", "Modernization and rural economy", "Standard of living" and "Regional and sub-regional dimensions of economic and social processes". Presenting his scientific achievements, I will follow this approach, changing some names of the thematic fields.

Before that, I want to make an important clarification, if by chance the question arises whether Martin Ivanov is not first and foremost a historian and not a sociologist. In the time of interdisciplinarity in which we live, it is good to return to the School of Annals, whose representatives, most emphatically Fernand Braudel, prefer to speak of a social science which, in order to understand any society, including the modern one, must examine it in its systemic connectivity – from its connection with the natural environment; through economic actions; the structuring of social relations– by regulations, in groups; to its collective mentality; as well as in its long-term – *longue duree* – development. Martin Ivanov is a brilliant representative of this school, which is still very relevant today. Serious social science - sociology, including historical sociology - does exactly that - it examines the interconnectedness of different spheres of society in their historical development, this is also

what Martin Ivanov does. In this sense, there is no doubt that he has serious achievements in a series of sociological fields, exploring the specifics of the formation and development of the phenomena and processes that interest him.

6. Analysis of the candidate's scientific achievements.

It is not possible in one review to describe the specific contributions in the 16 publications presented. As I noted, Martin Ivanov typologizes them in five thematic circles, I will follow his approach by formulating them through sociological fields in the general scope of Historical Sociology, because all his research focuses on the long-term development of the phenomena and processes he is interested in.

Achievements in the field of group sociology, specifically in the field of elite theories.

Martin Ivanov carefully traces the long-term historical formation of a certain group in Bulgarian society - the business elite, said in modern terms, which was called differently in different historical periods. Specifically, the formation, growth, contributions, declassification of certain groups of elites, mainly the Bulgarian entrepreneurs since the Bulgarian Revival, starting with the manufacturers of woolen braiding, then the textile entrepreneurs; follows the wider group of the business elite from the beginning of the 20th century until 1944, whose activities are not limited to the sphere of the economy, therefore they have "multiple" biographies, in Ivanov's words, this interconnectedness of their various activities defines them as "network elite"; and reaching the post-socialist business elite. There is no such long-term large-scale study of business elites in Bulgarian social science, it is a very significant scientific contribution. And, as we will see in his habilitation work, the analysis of the declassified elite and the mechanisms of its declassification in communist Bulgaria are also an innovative theoretical challenge to classical stratification and social class theories.

Achievements in the field of Economic Sociology. In it, he again examines long-term processes - the regulation of our external debt from the end of the 19th c. to 1989, mainly through the prism of the relation between national sovereignty and political survival, this is an ambitious and significant undertaking. As a contribution to this field, I consider the articles Martin singled out in "Standard of Living" because of the analysis of the historically variable relationship of consumption, consumer prices, wages, inflation, I do not know of anyone else who examines this relationship in the long run. I especially want to highlight the article by Ivanov, M., R. Simeonova-Ganeva, K. Ganev *Long-Term Consumer Price Dynamics in Bulgaria, 1750-2020*, as it traces, as the title suggests, the long-term development of consumer prices in Bulgaria for a period of 270 years! This is only possible through a huge research work of data collection and that is exactly what Martin Ivanov did - he collected 46

000 prices from the Bulgarian Revival period, after processing over 1000 trade notebooks, and then researched and verified all official publications of prices from our national statistics! As a result, two price indices and an inflation index were constructed. Martin himself acknowledges the contribution of the study, noting "that for the first time in our literature an attempt is made to recover inflation over such a long period, and ... the standard of living through a quantifiable indicator."

In **the study of the modernization processes in the Bulgarian village** Martin Ivanov disputes, based on a serious analysis of sources, the widespread theses of "growth without development" of established authors such as Alexander Gerschenkron and Michael Palairt, and of the backwardness of agrarian Bulgaria, showing the "conception" and development of modernization processes in the Bulgarian village. In this research direction of his, in my opinion, there is a huge potential to elaborate a possible path of alternative modernity, which would be an extraordinary achievement. I look forward to Martin's next book on this subject. Finally, his **studies of the regional and subregional dimensions of economic and social processes are also very interesting**. Here I will note the article co-authored with Stanev, K., K. Marti-Hanenberg, *Regional Transformations of a State under Construction: Bulgaria, 1878-2002*, in which, based on an analysis of census data, the relationship between political events and institutional changes, and socio-economic transformations and spatial inequality fluctuations is shown. Its conclusion is an applied scientific contribution: "Governments can significantly influence long-term regional development through relatively small investments in transport infrastructure."

The concrete achievements in all the listed fields are largely possible thanks to the innovative use of economic statistics and of not very popular methods in our social science, such as network analysis and cliometric methods.

In general, **the contributions of Martin Ivanov in the so called acquisition of new knowledge field are great, since in all his research he has collected a huge and unique empirical material, a prerequisite for further research**. As can be seen, the research fields are analysed in their mutual interconnectivity; the economic view of long-term processes reveals interesting ways of life and structuring of the groups; characteristics of the Bulgarian modernization processes and of the region; etc., which shows the significance of Martin Ivanov's research for historical sociology.

Contributions in the Martin Ivanov's habilitation book "*Former people*" of "*Concentration camp*" Bulgaria. The book has already received its well-deserved

appreciation from the public and through awards. I will not comment on its many merits, but only on its sociological achievements.

In contrast to published diaries, memoirs, memories, telling specific personal stories, the great plus of Martin Ivanov's book is that it gives the opportunity to hear the many voices of different, branded as "former" people. The number of testimonies analyzed by him is impressive, a significant empirical contribution. In 309 interviews and memoirs, 62 ex-post biographical reconstructions broadcasted on the program "Genus" on BNT, a huge collection of official testimonies stored in the archive of the State Security Dossier Commission Martin Ivanov "traces the chain of events of eradication in a social, and to a large extent also in a purely physical sense of the pre-September 9 elites and their subsequent reconversion within the PRB".

The book shows how an artificially constructed group classification category is an influential power mechanism for excluding and subordinating different people, on the one hand, and on the other hand, sets a stratification group characteristic specific to communist countries. **In this sense, the habilitation book has a significant scientific contribution both to the Sociology of Power and to the Sociology of Groups, analyzing an often theoretically underestimated instrument of power - the classification categories, an element of symbolic violence; and an atypical social group.**

"Former people" is a classification category with broad boundaries, purposefully undefined, precisely because it acts as a power tool, showing the character of a totalitarian power - i.e. its arbitrariness, the most essential characteristic of total, absolute power. This category serves arbitrary power because, as Martin shows, it is a convenient "pit" into which to send all the inconvenient opponents of power and people who interfere with the interests of those in power. Therefore, it is maximally fluid, extensible, to include a wide variety of people, to whom, on a random presumption, guilt is attributed, beyond the crimes actually committed, for which there are judicial procedures. And by chance this guilt can be canceled - either by a "good communist", a ransom, a "classmate", a "friend of a friend", i.e. through acquaintance and less often through sympathy. Precisely because of its extensibility, there are different figures on the number of people falling into it, the number is pulsating and difficult to ascertain, commendable is Martin's effort to clarify it, the number is probably higher than the reported figures. Once caught in this stretchable category of "former people", a person can hardly get out, and from then on, he is sucked in by the already classical repressive institutional mechanisms of power, analyzed in the first part of the book, metaphorically named by Martin Ivanov "the three 'circles of hell'". He gives a complete and convincing

typology of the various forms of crushing of the "former people", both along the lines of vertical and horizontal stratification, the description of the process itself through the "three circles of hell" is impressive: (1) of the physical repressions (murders, camps, "People's Court", etc.); (2) of property repression (collectivization, nationalization, emigration, internment, "robbery raids", etc. and (3) of discrimination (through education, work, travel abroad, etc.). In short, **a contribution is the detailed tracing of the power strategies for the destruction of various representatives of three generations of the "bourgeois" world - from the initial ideological classification category to specific practical repressions.**

But the **book also shows how the classification solidifies into a real group, with a radically changed way of life, affecting even the third generation.** This group cannot be explained through established approaches such as class or stratification theories, or through a focus on lifestyle. Martin chooses to use Pierre Bourdieu's theory of types of capital. In "former people" all these approaches are mixed, the process of its consolidation is different. The book shows the power of classificatory categories to define and create a group, combining a variety of groups within itself - usually highly educated, but not all of them, having authority and prestige, but becoming "bourgeois geeks"; urban people, peasants, intelligentsia; left (anarchists, social democrats, left farmers) and right (members of the Democratic and Radical Democratic parties, legionnaires, etc.); bankers, manufacturers, but also petty bourgeois - artisans; ministers and officials, officers and privates, etc.; they are all defined through a nebulous notion of class origin, which, however, includes the above groups whose class status is very different.

How do these people experience themselves, already compressed into this group? How to define this already consolidated group of people who had significant capitals, in Bourdieu's terminology, but these were taken from them and had been sent to the lowest rung of the social ladder. They have preserved - to what extent - their cultural capital, without being able to use it, to some extent their lifestyle, or at least the way of dressing and manners - but only in their home, and their dignity. Outclassed elite? But didn't all of them belong to the elite? They are "former people" - a terrifying-sounding category invented by the communist regime, turned into a group, the analysis of which shows the need to further develop the classical Western theories of groups, and this is an indisputable sociological contribution of Martin Ivanov. In this general group, Martin Ivanov singles out "four main behavioral archetypes" of survival strategies: the "runaways" - abroad or from life; to those who resist - openly and quietly; of the reconciled and humbled; and of the refracted and "repainted." I appreciate this typology as a contribution as well.

I also agree with the theoretical contribution indicated by Martin Ivanov, that the book for the first time in our country raises the question of the risks involved in trusting the documents of the State Security (DS), since the denunciations and reports stored in its archive reproduce the voices of the State Security apparatus.

7. Questions and Recommendations.

I have no important notes or questions. It is very interesting and curious to include data from the study "The City and the Village" from 1986 in the book and the attempt to establish some quantitative parameters of the exclusion of the former people through it. The attempt is laudable, but as Martin himself points out, it is difficult to rely on this data and calculate it correctly due to the small numbers, the vagueness of the categories, etc., so this data is not reliable. I think that overt and covert resistance should be distinguished as strategies, the former being a clearly expressed political act, severely punished, and the latter involving various forms of everyday resistance, often invisible to public authority. One question - is there a connection between survival strategies and vertical stratification?

8. Personal impressions.

I have no conflict of interest with Martin Ivanov, and no joint publications with him. My first impressions of Martin came from his work as a fellow at the Center for Advanced Studies, Sofia, and subsequently as a colleague in the Department of Sociology. I have always been impressed by his diligence, by his inexhaustible curiosity to enter new fields of knowledge and learn new methods, as well as to constantly seek new and different sources of information; from the discovery of unexpected angles to the areas he researched; from his ability to dialogue with his colleagues, but also to defend his own position. These qualities of his, apart from his academic merits and achievements, are very important in working with students.

9. Conclusion

Everything written so far shows my conviction that the scientific achievements of Martin Ivanov's remarkable and original research, his indisputable academic and public authority, make him a fully worthy candidate for a tenured professorship in the Department of Sociology at Sofia University. I fully support and vote positively for holding the academic position "Professor" of associate professor Martin Ivanov Ivanov in the professional field 3.1. Sociology, anthropology and cultural sciences (Sociology - Historical Sociology). I also call on my respected colleagues from the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Philosophy to support such a vote.

20.08.2024

Prof. Petya Kabakchieva

