

REVIEW

About the scientific research of Ivelina Avramova Eftimova, PhD

Regarding her application for the academic position “Associate Professor”

Field of higher education: 3. Social, economic and legal sciences.

3.1. Sociology, anthropology and cultural sciences (Ethnography – Bulgarian Ethnology), announced by Konstantin Preslavsky University of Shumen, published in State Gazette № 37 on 17.05.2022,

By Prof. Diana Atanasova Radojnova, Dr. Habill., University “Prof. Dr. Assen Zlatarov” – Burgas,

Member of the scientific jury by order № RD-16-133/15.07.2022 of the Rector of Shumen University

I. Procedure details

Ivelina Avramova Eftimova, PhD is the only candidate in the announced procedure. The procedure has been complied and corresponds to the Law on the development of the academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for its application at Shumen University.

The competences, acquired scientific degrees and academic positions of the candidate Ivelina Eftimova, PhD correspond to the requirements in the relevant regulations. The presented scientific production, which she provides for the procedure, conforms to the qualitative and quantitative standards in the regulations.

II. Data about the candidate

The only participant in the procedure Ivelina Eftimova, PhD has a serious scientific biography. Her entire career is connected with the academic structures of Shumen University where she currently works and which has announced the procedure for the academic position. From 2001 to 2006, she was a PhD student at Konstantin Preslavsky University of Shumen, and from then until now – she is teaching there. From 2009 to 2011, she held the position Assistant Professor in the History and Archeology Department, and from 2011 to the present moment, she is a Chief Assistant Professor in the same department.

The candidate has excellent linguistic competence in English, which obviously gives her advantages both when using foreign-language scientific literature and when translating it into Bulgarian, as well as when participating in foreign projects and specializations.

At Shumen University she teaches the following courses: "Ethnology", "Cultural Anthropology", "Prehistory", "Ethnography of Bulgaria", "History of Religions". She also teaches various elective courses: "Ethnological Aspects of Magico-Religious Beliefs", "Migration and Identity" and "Aging in Culture" in the BA programs "History", "Archaeology", "History and Geography", "Bulgarian Language and History", as well as in the MA programs "English for tourism and business", "Local knowledge", "Pedagogy of teaching history and geography".

III. Description of the Ivelina Eftimova's scientific papers

Ivelina Eftimova has revealed her interest in a certain fragment of ethnological knowledge: the family-kin relations and the formation of identity among representatives of different gender and age groups in traditional Bulgarian culture since the beginning of her work on the topic of her dissertation "Gender positions in the Bulgarian traditional family". She successfully defended her dissertation thesis and received "PhD" in the scientific specialty "Ethnography", for which she holds Diploma No. 31299/19.04.2007. The loyalty of the candidate to the research interests chosen at the beginning of her scientific path and the scientific production precisely in this field of Ethnology is impressive.

The scientific texts with which Ivelina Eftimova participates in the procedure for the academic position "Associate Professor" are:

- 1. Habilitation thesis – monograph** "Ethnological aspects of old age and aging in Bulgarian society (from tradition to modernity)", 2022, Shumen: Konstantin Preslavsky Publishing House, ISBN 978-619-201-586-2, scientific editor M. Zlatkova. The monograph is innovative in the field of Bulgarian ethnology, given that there are almost no scientific studies on the cultural concepts of age in general, and even less on old age. According to its methodological characteristics, it represents an empirical-theoretical study of the socio-anthropological reflections of the third age, both on its representatives, and on their perception by other age groups. Moreover, the work is also a longitudinal tracking of the significant changes that took place in public attitudes towards the elderly during one of the most drastic "turns" in Bulgarian society in the last two centuries - the transition from tradition to modernity. This

transition, in addition to leading to a "revolution" in all spheres of social life, also leads to a total inversion in the axiological and moral-ethical attitudes towards old people and their "right" to a full-fledged life.

Ivelina Eftimova has accumulated rich field material, which gives her the opportunity to extract conclusions both about the axiologisation of old age and old people in traditional society, and about their neglect and even discrediting in modern times. Along with this, she looks at the emergence and development of the special forms of association and socio-cultural support of people of the third age in our country, such as pensioner clubs and other organizations consolidating and giving meaning to the existence of the elderly who can no longer be useful to society with a labor contribution, but they should have the opportunity to spend their free time in a dignified and meaningful way, although the state allocates very little budget to them.

Ivelina Eftimova's research is undoubtedly an interesting and, above all, useful reading both for specialists - ethnologists and anthropologists, for university students and doctoral students interested in these aspects of humanitarian studies, and for a much wider range of readers for whom the concepts of age are not tied only to biological changes, but also to the changing social and value aspects of humanity and, in particular, Bulgarian culture.

2. **Articles:** The candidate participates in the procedure with 23 scientific articles. Almost all of them are in that ethnological field where her scientific interests and competences are most clearly stated and developed - gender and age identity, family-kin relations in the traditional patriarchal society, juxtaposed with the same relations but in the modern era in our country. Ivelina Eftimova's scientific texts can be divided into several groups, according to their subject matter:

a/ Articles examining the problems of the third age in our country in time. Some of them are "Aging and modernization in Bulgarian society at the end of the 19th – the first half of the 20th century" (2021); "*We didn't have much, but there was peace.* Aging through socialism in the dynamics of autobiographical-institutional-societal interaction" (2019); "Art Crafts After Retirement - Hobby and/or Business" (2019); "Ethnological aspects of aging in Bulgarian traditional culture" (2018); "Construction of gender positions in the family and family-inheritance legal relations (19th – beginning of 20th century)" (2017); "Theoretical and methodological challenges in the ethnosociological study of aging"; "The influence of games and toys on the

construction of traditional "female" and "male" models of behavior in Bulgarian traditional culture" (2011); "Construction of individual gender differences in girls and boys during their socialization in the family"; "The reflection of the traditional idea of "male" and "female" work on the construction of gender positions in the Bulgarian traditional family" (2007).

They analyze and interpret the formation of gender positions in the family, as well as the social stereotypes about them, aspects of adequate theoretical and methodological possibilities of sociology and ethnology in the study of the phenomenon of *aging* are considered. This group of articles is practically a longitudinal study of the social understanding of aging and old age in two different types of culture: traditional and industrial, of the changes in the status of the elderly at the end of the 19th and the first half of the 20th century in Bulgarian society. In all these articles, a unifying starting option is the presumption that the natural process of aging, inherent in all living organisms, is perceived and interpreted by people according to their cultural stereotypes and attitudes, acquired in the course of socialization and conditioned by the type of society and culture.

b/ Articles exploring social institutions, uniting old people in our country and giving some meaning to their life and existence. Such are the articles: "Retirement clubs: a formal form of informal relations useful for aging" (2020); "Awarding and prizes in pensioner clubs" (2019); "Authentic folklore as a symbol of Bulgarian identity: from the repertoire of the singing groups to the pensioners' clubs (2020); "Bulgarian traditional calendar holidays and customs in the annual schedule of pensioner clubs" (2018). This group of articles traces the creation and historical development of one of the main institutions in our country dedicated to the organization and socialization of people of the third age - the Pensioners' Union and its territorial divisions - the pensioners' clubs. These institutions have been studied as one of the ways to overcome some of the problems (both personal and social) of people after retirement in our country. They are analyzed as a generally accepted and already established form of expression of respect, recognition and assessment of the contribution of the elderly in the general structure of society, and also as useful for them to make sense of their free time through various cultural, touristic and community service activities.

c/ Articles concerning the study of ethnic and other forms of identity in Bulgarian society. Some of them are: "Trends in the development of cultural tourism in the municipality of Varbitsa" (2016); "Migration and changes in socialization and the gender model among Bulgarian Muslims (based on materials from Shumen and Razgrad region) (2015); "Materialization of culture: contemporary state of traditional crafts and domestic activities among the Bulgarian Turks (based on materials from the village of Tushovitsa, Varbitsa region) (2014); "Theoretical aspects in the construction of ethnic identity" (2013); "They called me the "Turkish Bulgarian": construction of ethnic identity (based on materials from the village of Yasenkovo, Shumen region) (2012); "The role of girls' education in the years after Liberation (based on materials from Shumen)" (2008); "Komünistpartisininideolojisiilerealityadında - Razgrad'inyerelbasımı da "öteki" (2019); "Identity, Shifting Borders and Migration: Everyday Experiences among Bulgarian Muslims in the Shumen and Razgrad regions" (2015); "Different neighbors - different borders" (2015); "Construction of identity in living together with "others". Case study in Tushovitsa village" (2010).

These scientific articles interpret peripheral problematics, which, however, are connected with the main dominant in Eftimova's scientific interests: the relations between ethnic identity and politics, ethnic attitudes and the "drawing of boundaries" of differences in everyday life, gender positions in Muslim communities in Bulgaria, ideas about the importance of education for adolescents, formed in different time ranges in Bulgarian society, ideas about free time and entertainment among individual communities in our country, etc.

Dr. Eftimova's scientific articles have been published in peer-reviewed collective monographs, scientific collections and authoritative scientific journals, some of which are published abroad.

IV. Other scientific achievements

- 1. Citations and references.** Dr. Eftimova has indicated 12 citations of her scientific works: 5 are in peer-reviewed monographs, 7 in non-refereed peer-reviewed publications.
- 2. Participation in scientific projects.** The candidate has a total of 12 participations in research projects. She is a participant in one international and three national scientific

projects, as well as in eight intra-university ones. She is a member of several editorial boards.

She presented the University where she works, twice with teaching mobility under the "Erasmus +" program: at the University of Lodz, Poland (October 24-30, 2016) and at the University "Osmangazi" in Eskisehir, Turkey (March 2-6, 2020).

- 3. Scientific mentoring of students.** Until now, Ivelina Eftimova has been the scientific supervisor of six students who successfully defended their diplomas at the university where she works, a scientific reviewer for two and a scientific consultant for five students, who were prepared for student conferences.

V. Conclusions and recommendations.

The examination of the scientific biography, scientific production and other scientific realizations of Ivelina Eftimova, PhD gives grounds for a positive assessment of her scientific efforts. This fact, as well as the confidence in the strict observance of the procedure in accordance with the regulations, give me the reason to express an opinion: Ivelina Eftimova, PhD should be awarded the academic position "Associate Professor" in the field of higher education³. Social, economic and legal sciences, 3.1. Sociology, anthropology and cultural sciences (Ethnography – Bulgarian Ethnology). I strongly recommend to the other colleagues included in the highly respected Scientific Jury of the procedure to give their positive vote for Ivelina Avramova Eftimova, PhD.



Prof. Diana Kadojnova, Dr. Habil.

01/09.2022