

# REVIEW

of teaching and research activities  
of Assoc. Prof. SVETLOZAR KIRILOV IVANOV, PhD

the only participant in the competition for academic position PROFESSOR in  
the Academic Track 3.5. Social Communication and Information Sciences -  
Multiculturalism and Media at the Faculty of Journalism and Mass  
Communication of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"

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## 1. INFORMATION ABOUT THE COMPETITION

The current competition for the academic position of Professor is in the Academic Area 3. Social, Economic and Juridical Sciences, the Academic Track 3.5. Social Communication and Information Sciences (Multiculturalism and Media). The competition was announced by the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication on the basis of proposition by the Department of History and Theory of Journalism (Protocol 9, May 27, 2022) and was supported by the Academic Council of Sofia University on July, 13, 2022. These decisions are consistent with the Law of the Development of the Academic Staff of the Republic of Bulgaria, art. 29a, and the Regulations for Earning of Academic Degrees and Gaining Academic Positions at Sofia

University, art. 86.2. The competition was announced at the State Gazette, Aug. 2, 2022, No. 61.

Assoc. Prof. Svetlozar Kirilov Ivanov, PhD is the only candidate for the competition. His participation at the competition has been approved by the Commission of selection in consistence with the Regulations for Earning of Academic Degrees and Gaining Academic Positions at Sofia University, art. 119 (2).

The academic jury checked at his meeting on Oct. 13, 2022 whether the publications and activities of the candidate were congruent with minimal national requirements and additional requirements of the Sofia University. The academic jury has decided Svetlozar Kirilov to be allowed to participate in the competition.

## 2. GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF THE CANDIDATE

Mr. Svetlozar Kirilov Ivanov has earned two Master's Degrees: Master's Degree in Sociology from Sofia University and Master's Degree in Political Science from Central European University. Ha has also been awarded Doctoral Degree in Sociology with a dissertation entitled: *The Value Dilemmas in the Bulgarian Political Press: Content Analysis of Duma and Democracy during the Parliamentary Election Campaigns in 1990, 1994, and 1997* (the certificate No. 27565, Oct. 31, 2001, issued by the High Attestation Commission).

Assoc. Prof. Svetlozar Kirilov has 34-year experience in academic research and teaching: firstly as research assistant at Sofia University, than since 1995 as Chief Assistant, and finally as Associate Professor in Journalism since 2007 (certificate No. 24334, June, 18, 2007, issued by the High Attestation Commission).

The colleague has experienced several training and specializations: at the College of Journalism of the University of Maryland, the USA; at the College of Media, Arts and Design of the University of Westminster, London, the United Kingdom; at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Science, Warsaw; at the Central European University, Budapest, Hungary.

Assoc. Prof. Svetlozar Kirilov is a respected scholar in the areas of sociology, media studies, the study of multiculturalism, minorities, and media. He strives to maintain high standards in his teaching and research activities in order to foster the creative development of the students.

### 3. TEACHING ACTIVITIES

The colleague as a part of his professional resume has a long experience of teaching at Sofia University to students at BA, MA, and PhD Programs.

Assoc. Prof. Kirilov have developed ten courses for students who study at BA and MA Programs at the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication and also two courses in English for visiting students from the Erasmus Program. Among these courses are: *Sociology; Post-Socialist Transition and Media; Multiculturalism, Minorities, and Media; Sociology and Media; Migration, Multiculturalism, and Media; Cinema in the Media*. It could be emphasized that the course *Race, Ethnicity, and Religion in Multicultural Society* has been specifically designed for doctoral students at the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication.

Assoc. Prof. Kirilov has applied modern forms of teaching and interactive methods as substantial segment of the educational process of his students.

Assoc. Prof. Kirilov has been academic tutor of 42 students who earned BA or MA degrees from the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication. He has been tutor of one doctoral student who has earned Doctoral degree. Svetlozar Kirilov currently is a tutor of two doctoral students.

Assoc. Prof. Kirilov delivered lectures in English during his visits related to the Erasmus Program at: the University of Wroclaw, Poland; the University of Teramo, Italy; the University of Leeuwarden, the Netherlands; and the University of Bilbao, Spain. He taught lectures in English also at the University of Maryland, the USA; the University of Westminster, the UK; the University of Warsaw, Poland.

#### 4. ACADEMIC WORKS, ACHIEVEMENTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE CANDIDATE

Assoc. Prof. Svetlozar Kirilov has authored two monographs, 36 articles published in academic journals, and 19 articles published in collective volumes. He has participated in six research projects and 16 national and international academic conferences.

The problems analyzed in academic publications of Assoc. Prof. Kirilov are focused on: the intercultural dialog in contemporary societies; the Roma and African Americans and their media coverage; history of cinema; propaganda, disinformation and information war. These publications are cited, which is a proof that they have impact and his research work is valued.

Assoc. Prof. Kirilov has submitted for the current competition: **one monograph; 11 long academic articles (more than 20 pages); 12 academic articles, of which three are in English; six research projects; 12 reports at academic conferences.**

Assoc. Prof. Kirilov clearly discriminates the academic publications that are submitted for the current competition from the whole larger volume of his publications. All academic publications submitted for the current competition are related to the topic of multiculturalism and media, which demonstrates long-term interests of Assoc. Prof. Kirilov to this research field.

The major work, submitted for the current competition, is the monograph **DISCRIMINATED AGAINST OR RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR PLIGHT: ROMA IN BULGARIA AND AFRICAN AMERICANS IN THE UNITED STATES**, 439 pages, published by the Sofia University Press in 2021.

The monograph contains impressively rich systematization and detailed characteristics of the studied communities: the tendency for isolation; early marriages and early births; collectivistic attitudes; short-term time orientation; the lack of adherence to the rules of wider society, etc. The author has viewed these traits not only as a result of ethnic culture but also as a consequence of the culture of poverty. The book has been result not only of desk research but also of extensive field work with numerous interviews and observation of traditions, behavior patterns, and everyday life in Roma neighborhoods.

The comparison between the Roma in Bulgaria and African Americans in the United States can be considered as contribution. The comparison between the two groups is analyzed and supplemented with evidence from

filed work in ghettos in Bulgaria and the United States. The large volume of empirical data from the field work enables the author to utilize the comparative framework, to apply analysis and synthesis and arrive at conclusions. The research was conducted during ten-year period, which allowed the dynamics of processes, events and cultural changes to be studied. The geographical extent of the research is also very broad: the field work in Bulgaria was carried out in more than ten Roma neighborhoods.

The comparison between the Roma and African Americans is carried out for the first time in Bulgaria. However, the comparison is not narrowed to these two communities only. Assoc. Prof. Kirilov significantly broadens the analysis, when he compares the Roma with other minorities in Bulgaria (Turks, Armenians, Jews, etc.) and the African Americans with other minorities in the United States (immigrants from Latin America, Asia, and Africa). This approach enriches the social context for comparison and provides more opportunities conclusions to be drawn.

A significant contribution to the theme of the competition and to the media research is the clear formulation of principles of objective journalism related to the media coverage of minority groups and especially the cases of conflicts. The monograph critically investigates a variety of cases, when there is discrepancy between facts and media portrayal, which breaches the ethical standards of journalism and the rules for objective media coverage of people different in terms of race, ethnicity, and religion. The study of these media cases allows the author to systemize the cardinal principles of ethical media coverage: fact-checking; avoidance of prejudices, hate speech and the trap of self-fulfilling prophecy. Moreover, the author analyzes the reasons for biased media portrayals of conflicts.

The contributions from the habilitation work of Assoc. Prof. Kirilov are related to conclusions and analyses of: the problems of intercultural dialog in multicultural societies; the difficulties for harmonic co-existence of different ethnic, religious, or racial communities; hate speech, prejudices, competition for resources, differences in values, norms, and traditions. Moreover, the monograph is the first complex study of the topic of intercultural communication in Bulgaria and the United States and comparison between them. It also contains the media portrayal of the two groups and the reflections of the author of communication, psychological, and cultural aspects of the topic contribute to several fields of study.

The monograph has been a significant achievement for the author: it is innovative; based on serious study of large volume of academic publications related to the topic; contains multilevel analysis of complex social phenomena and processes.

The achievement of the author in works submitted for the competition is that social conflicts, intercultural communication, and integration are viewed via relations between three groups among the majority and minorities. These three groups are: the tolerant, those “in the middle”, and extremists. The additional notions are the idea of tolerance in concentric circles on the basis of similarity in terms of race, ethnicity, religion, or language as well as renewed interpretations of the concepts “we-groups” and “others-groups.” This approach has turned out to be fruitful since it allows arriving at conclusions about social transformations connected not only to media policies but also to media impact and social governance.

THE ARTICLES of Assoc. Prof. Kirilov published in academic journals and collective volumes are devoted to actual and important problems: the issues of journalism related to intercultural communication; the problems of intercultural dialog in multicultural societies; Roma and African Americans and their media portrayal; history of cinema; propaganda and disinformation, etc.

The articles of Assoc. Prof. Kirilov undoubtedly have contributed to the study of mass communication; they have captured important trends in the media and contained significant observations and volumes of empirical data. His research has provided systematic conclusions about contemporary problems, outlined media deficits, and demonstrated positive and negative traits in the building of the public sphere.

The major habilitation work of Assoc. Prof. Svetlozar Kirilov and his academic articles not only contribute to the media studies but also to the improvement of integration policies toward Roma in Bulgaria.

By and large, the academic publications of Assoc. Prof. Svetlozar Kirilov, especially his habilitation work, are clear indication about:

- High quality research skills, abilities for analysis and interpretations;
- Substantial knowledge about the investigated problems;
- Serious study of significant volume of academic publications related to the analyzed topics;
- Application of qualitative analysis to empirical data.



The monograph and academic articles, submitted for the current competition, have contained contributions and furthered the Bulgarian media studies.

#### 5. ACTIVITIES AS EXPERT AND IN ACADEMIC NETWORKS

Assoc. Prof. Kirilov has been respected and valued as scholar in the area of sociology, mass media and social communication. He has been sought for advice and consultations. Svetlozar Kirilov served as a media expert at the Council of Europe in the period 2005-2008, when he participated in creating of several documents of the Council of Europe in the media field. Assoc. Prof. Kirilov is a member of the Union of Bulgarian Journalists and the Bulgarian Sociological Association.

The participation of Assoc. Prof. Kirilov in national and international academic organizations, commissions, and university bodies has demonstrated his permanent scholarly interests toward the selected academic field as well as his active involvement in research networks and the academic life of the Sofia University, the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication and the Department of the History and Theory of Journalism.

#### 6. CONCLUSION

On the basis of complex analysis of teaching and especially of research activities and contributions of Assoc. Prof. Kirilov, the only participant in the competition for the academic position of Professor of Multiculturalism and Media in the Academic Track 3.5. Social Communication and Information Sciences at the Sofia University, I am completely confident that Assoc. Prof.

SVETLOZAR KIRILOV IVANOV has entirely fulfilled the requirements of the Law of the Development of the Academic Staff of the Republic of Bulgaria.

The colleague has had definite achievements in the study of mass communication, in empirical research and teaching in the area of mass media and journalism. Assoc. Prof. Kirilov has significantly contributed to the quality training of specialists in the field of mass media and communication via his teaching to students at BA, MA, and PhD Programs at Sofia University.

The valuable results from research and teaching activities of Assoc. Prof. Svetlozar Kirilov have been solid ground of my decision to support the candidate and STRONGLY TO RECOMMEND THE RESPECTED ACADEMIC JURY TO AWARD TO HIM THE ACADEMIC POSITION OF PROFESSOR IN THE ACADEMIC TRACK 3.5. SOCIAL COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SCIENCES – MULTICULTURALISM AND MEDIA.

Reviewer:



Prof. Vesselina Valkanova, PhD

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