

SOFIA UNIVERSITY "ST. KLEMENT OHRIDSKI"

FACULTY OF HISTORY

DEPARTMENT OF ETHNOLOGY



THE WOMAN FROM THE SMALL BULGARIAN TOWN –

mid-twentieth century to 1989 (social status and roles)

ABSTRACT

for the award of the degree of Doctor of Education and Science

Scientific field 3.1 "Sociology, anthropology and science of culture"

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The dissertation proposal was discussed and submitted for defence by the Department of Ethnology at the Faculty of History of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", at meeting held at

The dissertation proposal consists of: introduction, three chapters, conclusion and bibliography with a total of ... pages. An integral part of it is the Appendix 1 - a list of the people interviewed and a brief information about them.

The defence will take place at open session, on 2024, at pm.

The papers are available at the Department of Ethnology, Faculty of Arts, Sofia University "St. Kl. Ohridski".

1. Relevance of the topic

The topic of women's emancipation is not interesting only to science, but is also an important part of explorations in the field of Arts, and a topic of formal and informal public debate. The interest in women's inclusion in the public sphere and their equality is a process that excites both sexes and occupies an important place in our lives today.

In the period from the middle of the twentieth century until 1989 a number of changes took place in Bulgaria, which established the rights and duties of women as equal participants in the social processes in the country. However, lives of women remained different from those of men. In their daily lives, in addition to the economic employment, they are also responsible for the household duties. In spite of constitutional equality, women's domestic commitments are far greater than those of men, and patriarchal family patterns continue to dominate in everyday private life. Still, it cannot be denied that it was the constitutionally proclaimed equality of the rights of two sexes, in a result of the political events in 1944, that is of particular significance for the position of the modern Bulgarian woman. The political, economic, social, cultural and society processes that took place between 1944 and 1989 were important not only for the change in the legal status of women, but also for the change in the social status and roles to which women adapted their lives and daily routines during this period, and which were fundamental to their place in our contemporary society.

The present study focuses on this important period from the mid-twentieth century until 1989, when the social status and roles of women in both *public* and *private* spheres had changed as a result of the major changes at all levels in the country after the change of the political model in 1944. These changes aimed to establish a new model of the society relations, which to replace the patriarchal way of thinking with a modern one, along with focusing on the place of women in the

society and possibilities for women's development both in the family and outside it. It was in this period that the "legal status of woman" was presented as "a combination of the two most important social roles - the role of the artist and worker, and the role of the mother; the professional and the biological status" (Mikhailova 1975: 30). Within each of these two main roles there are series of sub-roles that women play depending on the specifics of a given situation: the work she has to do in her home, the attention she has to give to each member of the household, depending on the needs and the hierarchy established, when several families live in one household. Subsequently, more roles have been established by the kinship of the household members, etc. A person carries all these different roles all the time, but they are activated in a specific situation. Thus, we are actually a set of multiple roles, some of them permanent and others temporary (for a short period of time and for the needs of a particular activity or life event). A role is a social skill that is cultivated from early childhood and helps in exchange and communication with other members of the group and society. The social environment, in the form of the family, has the most significant influence on roles' definition and adoption of different behaviour patterns, depending on the different social and cultural environment. When we are born, we have no information about what we are, but receive it in the form of approval or disapproval from the adults when we perform specific actions. It is the influence of others that builds in adolescents some concrete ideas, it even forms stereotypes. Among the most widespread are those that divide labour into female and male (Arenson 2009: 24-28). Thus, at a conscious age, the human being already burdened by the stereotypical attitudes built up over time, accepts them as an undeniable fact, applies them to his or her own life, and teaches them to his or her children. In this way, the "patriarchal order", in which the *public* sphere (reserved

for the man) and the *private* sphere (reserved for the woman) are strongly expressed, has managed to be preserved over the centuries and deeply rooted in the human mind¹.

2. Objectives and tasks

In 1944, significant political, economic, and social changes occurred in Bulgaria, which reformed women's rights, duties, and responsibilities, both personally and socially, throughout the country. New rights and duties for women were defined by legal documents and the adoption of the (Dimitrov) Constitution in 1947, which led to changes in the daily rhythm of life and a transformation of the roles they had played up to then. This new social status enabled women to participate actively in the economic development of the country through their presence in the labour market and with the right to exercise their desired profession, after obtaining the necessary qualifications, on an equal basis with men. This equalization of the "roles" of the sexes in public life did not abrogate their duties in the family, where women remained the main performers of family responsibilities related to raising children and housework. Placed under constant control and surveillance by the state and society, women constructed a series of new roles and adapted old ones according to the demands of socialist society.

The main objective of the present dissertation is to explore the place of women in small Bulgarian towns, their social status and roles from the mid-twentieth century to 1989, using the example of Panagyurishte.

¹ Within this study, I divide women's possible realizations according to whether they are related to home, as activities in the *private* sphere, and those that take place outside home - the *public* sphere. In the *private* sphere I put all activities and roles, which have been women's priority even before the explored here time period. In the *public* sphere I put those, which are related to outside of home activities and roles, and which had been only men's priority before the explored time period.

The achievement of the main objective of the dissertation research is related to the implementation of the following tasks:

1. A review of the political situation and the normative and legislative changes introduced after 9 September 1944 and their impact on the social status and roles of women in small Bulgarian towns.

2. An analysis of the mechanisms that women apply to adapt their daily lives to the new demands of the time - their active inclusion in public life, through their participation in the labour market, while at the same time remaining the main performers of the duties to their children and family at home.

3. Exploring mechanisms for balancing women's obligations in and outside home. Including the help and support they receive from their relatives at home, as well as the impact of state-provided utilities and the extent to which they are relevant to the everyday life of the socialist family.

4. To trace the mechanisms for inclusion in the labour market and the success of women to prove themselves in the established social model, in which they must assert themselves as good specialists and professionals in order to be an example of emancipation and equality, even in spheres of activity and professions strictly reserved for men.

5. To find out how women managed to preserve and pass on the Christian traditions and Bulgarian folklore rituals, despite the conditions of "socialist way of life".

An important factor in the choice of Panagyurishte as the location for the present ethnographic field research is the fact that in the first half of the twentieth century the town got developed as a centre of industry, in which mostly women were involved. This provides an opportunity for an in-

depth study of the processes of adaptation and transformation of women's roles and social positions that took place after the political changes that occurred in the mid-20th century in Bulgaria. The lack of thematic studies in the region of Sredna Gora provoked my interest and desire to explore the problem of women's place, their social status and roles in the town of Panagyurishte. Last but not least, the study aims to make broader overview of the general development of small towns during the explored period by getting over the objective state framework.

3. Research methodology

The present study has as its basis the following methods: classical ethnological research methods of ethnological analysis, the interview, the included observation, and the structural functional approach. The information was verified and cross-checked by working in the State Archive - Pazardzhik, and the documents have been the necessary historical basis on which the research is built to establish objectivity in the construction and development of social processes. My goal was to search and analyse the documentation of the enterprises, factories, administrations, schools and other institutions functioning in the explored period in order to establish the percentage of women's participation in the labour processes and the positions they held. This information served as a starting point in my research and organization of field interviews, but I have used only a small part of it in my work due to insufficient consistency in the archives examined.

For the actual changes that took place in the everyday life of the women of the small Bulgarian town I draw information from the personal stories of the inhabitants of Panagyurishte, who were born and/or worked in the town, referring to individual memory to reconstruct the public and social relations in the period from the mid-20th century to 1989. The semi-structured interviews,

conducted in 2021 and 2022², contained several key guiding questions, the aim of which was to keep the focus on the topic of the study, while leaving the informants free to recall and tell as much as possible about themselves and their own experiences in the explored period. How they define their roles in the family and society. People's narratives of their participation in different social groups enable a connection to be made between individual (characteristic for the person) and collective (characteristic for the group) memory, as "individual memory is socially conditioned because the social, political, cultural and religious conditions make individual memory possible" (Petrova 2013: 90). Although been subjective, the narratives of the women and men who lived and worked in this period enable "a broader conception of the recent past and its sociocultural transformation into history, thereby influencing the understanding of history itself" (Koleva 2002 :86). Through the personal narrative, it is possible to create a clear picture of the everyday domestic practices of the working woman, her duties, responsibilities and coping mechanisms for the imposed dual commitment in the new times. On the one hand, their compulsory participation in the labour market, on the other, the unchanging obligations in the family. The importance of personal history (biographical approach) is also proved by its application as an important element of museum exhibitions presentation to ample the historical narrative (Luleva 2014: 101-110).

Individual memory is one of the sources that provides information about small-town living conditions and the extent to which women's new regulated rights and obligations changed their social status in the context of the Industrial Revolution. The ways in which the added value of the new social position, such as privileges and opportunities, affected the daily rhythms of everyday life. Moreover, the institutions, standards and formal requirements of the time have a great impact

² During the COVID-19 pandemic, 2021 and 2022, the direct contact with women was quite difficult mainly because respondents fell into the highest risk group. Nevertheless, individual and group meetings took place and I was able to make an audio recording of most of the narratives.

on the personal destiny and are the path through which the individual passes. "Liberated individuals are dependent on the labour market, and therefore on education, consumption, social and legal arrangements and provision; they are dependent on the organisation of movement, on the supply of consumer goods, on the possibilities of medical care, on trends in dietetics and fashion" (Koleva 2002: 39).

Life narratives provide information about the mechanisms of change in lifestyle, everyday life, urban environment and other phenomena through personal experience and are an opportunity to understand the motivations of "social actors" and their decisions about education, profession, work or place of residence. The information that life narratives carry is a prerequisite "for access to culture understood in the everyday sense of mentality, of patterns of thinking and acting, of valuing and goal setting" (Koleva 2002 :115).

The choice of respondents included in the empirical material of the study is directly linked to their personal lived experience during this period, as well as memories of their relatives- mothers and/or grandmothers. Their narratives make it possible to trace the impact of legislative changes on women's education, work engagement and adaptation of everyday practices. The informants' personal experiences provide insight into "common stereotypes and shared patterns" (Koleva 2002 :175) and help define the roles women occupy in the *public* and *private* spheres.

Another important source of information about the mechanisms that led to the change in the status of women in the explored period is the local press, as a reflection of party policy to construct the desired image of the working woman. In the context of the attitudes to elevate the worker into a cult, the Panagyurishte newspaper "*Oborishte*" commented on all events and activities concerning mainly the working class. A newspaper with this title first appeared in 1903, just before the scheduled elections for the XIII Ordinary People's Assembly. It was owned by the "anti Stambolov

Panagyurishe opposition". After some period of interruption, in 1924 a newspaper with the same title appeared and it again was collaborative to the "political situation". On 11 February 1939, as a continuation of the weekly *Panagyurishte Voice*, which had been interrupted for several years, a newspaper called *Oborishte* appeared, "known as '**Oborishte - 'Panagyurski glas**'" (Gemidzhiev 2009: 469-474). The editions of the newspaper "*Oborishte*" kept in the Municipal Library "*Stoyan Drinov*", Panagyurishte, for the period 1944 - 1948 and 1963 - 1989 made it possible to trace the changes that had occurred over time in the attitude towards women in both the *public* and *private* spheres.

For the structuring of the information on the percentage change of women's participation in education, labour market and vocational training in the period from the mid-twentieth century to 1989, I have used the information from the *Statistical Yearbooks of the People's Republic of Bulgaria*, issued in the period from 1944 to 1989 and the *Statistical Yearbooks of the Kingdom of Bulgaria* in the period from 1910 to 1944. For the sake of clarity and possibility of analysis I have systematized available information in the form of tables. I have used comparative analysis of scientific, literature and web sources; content analysis of normative documents.

In the study of the small Bulgarian town, the "case study" approach was used, which allows for an in-depth study of local traditional cultures and is important for the "self-knowledge of a people" (Markova 2022: 32). As an object of ethno-cultural research, the city represents "a complex and diverse cultural and historical complex, including socio-economic, ethnic, religious-normative, traditional and everyday elements and relations" in a given society for a certain historical period (Markova 2011:7/8). The dynamics of the city as a reflection of the community and the individual makes it possible to reconstruct mental stereotypes, standards of life and behaviour in a given period of time (Markova 2011: 10). Small Bulgarian towns occupy a special place in the general

picture of the country's urban development. Their appearance is the result of the specific urbanization processes taking place in Bulgaria, where until the mid-twentieth century the population mainly inhabited villages and made a living from agriculture and cattle breeding. The symbiosis between rural and urban lifestyles that is typical for the small town makes it possible to trace the links between the 'patriarchal' and 'modern' urban culture of industrial society (Markova 2011: 15). Representing it as a transitional link between rural and urban levels of culture, 'it is the small town that has carried the codes of Bulgarian cultural memory through the centuries' (Markova 2011: 97). We can find a difference in the processes that led to a change in the social status of women in the degree of community consciousness, which is strongly expressed in smaller towns and interpersonal relations are similar to those in the countryside. In these settlements, people, in addition to working in the new industrial plants and factories, devote significant time to agricultural labour, most often within their garden and/or some terrain on the outskirts of the town. "In the scientific literature, one of the most common grounds for defining a small town as such is the size of the population. (...) However, from the point of view of the town as a cultural reality, much more important than the size of the population are the specificities of the urban spirit and the segments of the urban structure that characterize some settlements" (Markova 2011: 97/98). "In the village and small town the diachronic principle of cultural and everyday information transmission is more easily realized due to the spatial proximity and frequent contacts of different generations of relatives" (Roideva 2004: 172). The influence of personal acquaintance between people in small towns does not allow for drastic changes either in the economy or on the social and cultural level, and together with the "lack of a market for goods and a market for labour" public opinion has the function of a limiting factor (Gavrilova 2016: 111). It is public opinion that has the most important corrective role in breaking the rules of the patriarchal model (Hadzhiyski 2010: 349), which continued to dominate after the Liberation and to function *de facto* in small towns in the post-1944

period. As a local culture, the small town retains its "regionalism" to a greater extent because of its "stability, repetitiveness and conservatism" (Markova 2022: 19), which is a prerequisite for preserved over time cultural traditions.

The Law on Spatial Planning, approved by the Council of Ministers on 26 March 2009, confirms the categorisation of cities in Bulgaria as follows: 'very large cities' - with a population of over 400 thousand inhabitants; 'large cities' - with a population of 100 thousand to 400 thousand inhabitants; 'medium cities' - with a population of 30 thousand to 100 thousand inhabitants; 'small cities' - with a population of 10 thousand to 30 thousand inhabitants; 'very small cities' - with a population of less than 10 thousand inhabitants. According to this criterion for a small town (with a population between 10,000 and 30,000 inhabitants) in the period 1946-1985, Velingrad, Gotse Delchev, Karnobat, Knezha, Nova Zagora, Panagyurishte, Petrich, Samokov and Chirpan remained without a change of status. The town of Panagyurishte is one of the nine towns in Bulgaria whose status (small Bulgarian town) remained unchanged for the whole explored period, and present study is based on its example. The historical and economic preconditions of the past are important for the place of women in the public space of the town.

The economic activities of the local women are described by many authors who have studied the development of the town (Karapetrov 2013: 32/34/89), and the strong patriotism is still impressive today. With a strongly expressed ancestral memory, Panagyurishte residents have a pronounced self-confidence and a clear awareness of belonging to a town of historical significance. Because of the factory production from the beginning of the 19th century, which provided livelihood for the local population and gave work to many of the women in the town, Panagyurishte is rather an exception to the general picture of the Bulgarian town and the place of women in it.

The active social and cultural life contributed to a large extent to the progress of women from the *private* sphere and their inclusion in the *public* sphere even before the mid-20th century.

4. Scope of the study

38 people born between 1935 and 1976 (33 women and 5 men) took part in the semi-structured autobiographical and biographical interviews. The majority of respondents (29 people) were originally from the town, six settled in Panagyurishte after marriage and six travelled regularly (many people from nearby settlements continued their secondary education and subsequently their professional career in the town).

The women interviewed had different levels of education and occupation. The largest number of women were workers (10 autobiographical accounts and 3 biographical accounts of mothers and grandmothers - workers). Six women were employees (one telephonist, two women working in commerce, one in the city library, one civil servant and one working in a canteen), five were medical workers and 1 woman chemical engineer. There were eight interviewees worked in the field of education and culture, three of them in managerial positions (2 school principals and 1 head librarian of the city library - we are talking about Tinka Yurukova, about whom we get information from the biographical accounts of her granddaughter and her daughter-in-law), four teachers and one woman - poster artist. Two of the women interviewed were involved in local party structures (1 Komsomol secretary and 1 female employee who was also a Komsomol secretary in an enterprise where she worked). These personal life stories on one hand "reveal the levels in the modernization of everyday life, and on the other - in the modernization of the structures of the surrounding space" (Markova 2011).

Of the five men interviewed, three told of women close to them (wives, mothers), but they also gave interesting information about the place women occupied in the work hierarchy where they worked. Another respondent's recollection of his early childhood (he was raised by his grandmother), is a source of information about the nature of women's labour in the carpet factory.

As an example of a woman in a typically male profession, I leave the example of the city of Panagyurishte and present the personality of engineer Tsvetana Boyadjieva, the first metallurgist in Bulgaria and the first woman metallurgist in Europe. The remoteness in time of the active period of her professional realization excludes the use of living narrative as a means of ethnological research, which is here replaced by biographical materials and memoir literature.

5. Parameters of the study

Due to the large scope of the topic, I consider it appropriate to specify in advance the parameters I have defined in this study. In the first part, I address the situation of women in Panagyurishte, as it is important to keep in mind that they were active participants in public life before the mid-20th century when defining their roles and social status in the period from the mid-twentieth century to 1989. I divide the second part into two main sub-parts, in the first I consider the changes that occurred in education, work and migration as the main factors with the strongest impact on the change of the social status and roles of women in the country, and in the second - the mechanisms of preservation of traditional social beliefs and rituals as a role of great importance in the everyday life of women from Panagyurishte. In the third and last part I define four main roles - mother, working-housewife, worker and woman in "male" professions. The information from the empirical material makes it possible to define a number of other roles that the women of the town performed,

but I have focused on those mentioned above for the following reasons: mother – this is undoubtedly the most typical role of a woman and as such it is of interest to trace the changes that occurred in its performance according to the political, economic, cultural and social transformations of the explored period; working housewife - a role that women over a long period of time retained as theirs, to some extent because of the inherited and deeply seeded patriarchal model, and a role by which women identified themselves; worker – the participation of the women from Panagyurishte in the textile industry until the mid-20th century is another reason to continue the tradition, and in the same time the social position of the working class leads to alteration of the status of this role; and the woman in "male" profession – I have chosen to present this role in the *public* sphere because of the opportunity to remind of the women who pioneered in such professions at the time border of two completely different state governing models.

Each of the themes raised in this study is a prerequisite for future in-depth work.

6. Contents of the dissertation

This work consists of an introduction, three chapters and a conclusion, a bibliography and an appendix with a list of people been interviewed and brief information about them.

The main task of the **Introduction** is to set the directions of the present study by presenting the aims and objectives, the methodology used, and the boundaries within which it lies.

Chapter One "Roles and Social Positions of the Women of Panagyurishte at the End of the 19th century and the First Half of the 20th century".

Determining the place of the woman from the small Bulgarian town in the period from the mid-20th century to 1989 requires a study of the historical, economic, cultural, public and social

situations concerning the position of women from Panagyurishte in society in the period up to the mid-20th century. The active involvement of the women of the town in various spheres of activity outside the home is important. These include:

1. Women and education

The presence of women in the teaching profession is a prerequisite for creating a tradition that for many young girls in Panagyurishte is a natural path of development. This is a result not only of the continuity in families, but also the necessary educational institution in the town (the Secular School), which enables the inclusion of women in this profession to become usual. Both old schools preserved after the Liberation and the new ones contribute to this. In their narratives, respondents shared both the importance of the teaching profession as a family tradition, but also the social significance of the place occupied by women teachers in society.

2. Women in culture, arts and social activities

Their active involvement in the cultural life of the town, as well as their participation in various social activities and organizations, was important for the establishment of the place of 16 women in the *public* sphere in Panagyurishte until the mid-20th century. The names of Elena Nikolai and Olga Bradystilova, established in the world of art, on the one hand is a prerequisite for pride and self-confidence of Panagyursians, on the other hand is an important step in the acceptance of women as artists and public figures. Last but not least, Raina Popgeorgieva - an active participant in the April Uprising, a teacher and founder of the women's society "Nadezhda", which developed active social activities - played an important role in the acceptance of women in activities outside the home.

3. Women and paid work

An important factor for the participation of Panagyurishte women in public life is their active involvement in the labour market. This is due to the development of factory production, particularly in the textile industry, where women have a high percentage of participation as carpet makers, as well as seamstresses in the towel factory and the intendant's workshop. This was also the main prerequisite for the creation of new patterns of daily life in most families, which also implies continuity after the political changes of 1944. In their recollections, the respondents spoke about their grandmothers and mothers, who were textile workers, and the practices they applied in carrying out their duties inside and outside home.

In **conclusion** of the first chapter, it can be said that by the middle of the twentieth century the women of Panagyurishte had an established place in the *public* sphere. Through their active involvement in the labour market, their participation in social activities and their presence in the cultural space (not only within the city, but also on a global level), as well as the prestige of the teaching profession, a traditional choice for many of them, was a determinant of their social status and their acceptance as full participants in the public life of the city.

Chapter Two "The Impact of the Political Changes on 9 September 1944 on the Status and Place of Women in the Small Bulgarian Town"

The political changes that took place after 9 September 1944 brought with them a number of changes at the economic, social, cultural and public levels. This had a serious impact on living of all the people in the country, but was of particular importance for women. A number of legal documents and the Constitution adopted in 1947 led to vital changes in society, and state emancipation forced the formal inclusion of women in the labour market and in the *public* sphere.

1. Education, work and migration and their impact on women's social status

Among the most important factors that led to a change in the social status of women throughout the country were: **access to education** - compulsory and free education for all in public schools with the right and opportunity to continue in higher education institutes for both girls and boys; compulsory inclusion into the **paid work outside the home** for women - imposed on one hand as a policy of gender equality in the new socialist state and on the other, forced industrialization required the participation of all people of working age in the labour market; **the migration processes** also impact the lives of women – the need of labour force in factories and plants requires relocation of human resources, and accordingly the rural population was forced to relocate from villages to towns and cities; another factor is the compulsory **distribution** of specialists, which aims to allocate specialists where they are needed. In spite of the legally imposed emancipation, women's **equality** remains controversial according to the recollections of respondents from the town of Panagyurishte, who confirm that stereotypes of female and male activities were important in the HR policies of factories and enterprises.

In **conclusion**, it can be said that the state-regulated rights of women, equal to those of men, and the requirements imposed for education and work turn women's participation in the labour market into a standard, and the educated woman into a natural progression.

2.2 The modern woman and the new holiday calendar. Traditions and family

The socialist state imposes a social order associated with a number of changes encompassing both *public* and *private* space. Significant changes occurred in the holiday calendar. **State-designated holidays** were created **in the public space**, some of them new and others transformed old holidays. The traditional pattern of celebrating **private holidays** such as the rituals of the cycle of life - baptism, wedding and funeral - has been replaced through purposefully scripted celebrations. In this way, the state attempted to assert its position in the *private* sphere and seized

the function of the church in people's lives. A special holiday - March 8 "Women's Day" - has been introduced into the official holiday calendar. Through the creation of the new model of celebration (exclusively tied to the labour collective), the traditional patterns of patriarchal society were broken. However, the important role that women played in preserving traditions and rituals as part of cultural memory was preserved through the secret performance of **(Christian) festivals and traditions within the family.**

As a result, the following **conclusion can be drawn**: despite the strong control and interference of the state in the *private* space, these were women who had managed to preserve the traditional holiday calendar and pass it on to the generations so that it remained part of the way of life after 1989.

The third chapter "Defining the roles and social positions (social status) of the Panagyurishte woman in the period of the mid-20th century until 1989"

The participation of women from Panagyurishte in paid work since the first half of the twentieth century has prepared many of them for the moment when the political and economic changes made their inclusion in the labour market compulsory. Despite their established work habits and the allocation of home time in accordance with their work commitments, the new form of attendance work with regulated working hours necessitated a redistribution of daily practices, and the creation of new patterns. The legal requirement to include women in work processes outside home is also a prerequisite for the creation of new social roles, while at the same time preserving the traditional ones that are part of the patriarchal family model. Thus, two alternatives of action for women with their corresponding roles took shape. On one hand were the familiar and traditional roles handed down through generations in **the private sphere**, on the other are those **roles and social positions in the public sphere** that the new times imposed.

1. Roles in the private sphere

The most important role for women in Panagyurishte in the *private* sphere remained that of **mothers**, which in conditions of compulsory participation in the labour market they fulfilled by delegating some of their duties to state institutions (kindergartens and nurseries) or adult family members. For most of the informants, these were the compromises they had to make in raising their children which were also responsible for their dissatisfaction as parents.

The other unavoidable role is that of '**working housewife**', which women performed in their spare time. The division of time between commitments at work and at home necessitated the creation of new daily routines and the need for help from family members - children, husband, elderly parents.

In conclusion, it can be said that it was this dual workload of women - in and out of the home - that was responsible for the decline in fertility and the establishment of the family unit comprising two parents and one or two children. In families where the number of children reached three or more, the older ones were actively involved in raising the younger ones as well as in housework.

2. Roles and social positions in the public sphere

State emancipation and the mandatory inclusion of women in the labour market led to the creation of new roles and social positions for them. To a large extent, it was the textile factory production in Panagyurishte and the women involved in it, that was the reason why for the women's new status of working outside home was actually a continuation of an old practice. However, the new duties also had an impact on the everyday life of Panagyurishe women working towards the middle of the twentieth century. For **women workers**, as most women in the city were, but with the opportunity to carry out their work duties at home (carpet-makers), the workplace was a major

change, as were the standardised working hours in two or more shifts. The position of the working class in the hierarchy of the social structure has also been changed, as well the opportunity for financial bonuses if the daily/weekly/monthly norm was overreached. Other social privileges had been created for the workers, contributing to otherwise low-skilled labour to be preferred by many young girls.

An important place in the socialist labour reality was occupied by **women in male professions**. The state purposely encouraged women's participation in professions and occupations exclusively reserved for men. Such was the case of the metallurgical engineer Tsvetana Boyadjieva, who, although born in the town of Vidin and had grown up in the capital, is an example of a life path and the real opportunities for women who had chosen (personally or their families) a "male" profession.

In **conclusion** - the traditional participation of women from Panagyurishte in the textile industry continued to be a mass practice after the political changes of the mid-20th century. The new demands necessitated a reallocation of time and the creation of new daily practices, yet for women from the town working in textile enterprises remained the preferred form of employment. The state's policy of women's emancipation provided many opportunities for women's realisation, and it was their inclusion in occupations performed mainly by men that was one way of presenting it as successful. However, the realisation of women in these male-dominated 21 professions remained a difficult and arduous task involving many compromises and finding alternative solutions to overcome the conflict between gender and profession.

CONCLUSION

In the period from the mid-20th century to 1989, the life of the Bulgarian woman changed. Her social status, roles and place in society changed. The political, legislative, economic and social transformations that took place after 1944 led to significant changes in women's rights, duties and responsibilities, both in *the private* and *public* spheres, thus leading to a double burden in their daily lives. A number of legal acts, as well as the Constitution adopted in 1947, enabled them to participate actively in the economic development of the country, obliging them to be part of the labour market with the right to exercise their desired professions on an equal basis with men after obtaining the necessary qualifications. The compulsory nature of this 'state' emancipation deprived women of their right to choose. Their inclusion in all spheres of social life in socialist Bulgaria led to changes in daily practices and a balancing of duties inside and outside home. This made the "equality" imposed by the government conditional. On one hand, women's responsibilities and duties in the *private* sphere were preserved; they remained the main organizer and distributor of duties at home. Still, the head of the family remained the man. The woman's role in the family as mother, nurturer and housewife was maintained, activities that she was obliged to fit into her 'free time'. The main time (by law) the woman was obliged to devote to work and society. The "roles" of both sexes in public life were "equalized".

On the other hand, the stereotype of where a woman's place was in the hierarchy of the work process did not change despite the regulation. Her equal presence in the labour market was limited to what was acceptable by the status quo and long-standing notions of what was women's work and what was men's work. This division was particularly pronounced in small towns, where these notions were deeply rooted not only in the minds of men, but also of women, the main actors in the new emancipated world. It was the way in which women themselves perceived their new place in

society that proved that legislative changes did not have the power to overturn old attitudes and stereotypes, that state law couldn't replace the patriarchal model in society.

The local nature of the research allows for the examination of different roles of women and the processes of their adaptation to the political, economic and social changes that occurred in the mid-20th century. The main scientific contribution of the present study is the typology of women's roles based on the analysis made on the example of the town of Panagyurishte. Another contribution is the rich empirical material in which the respondents addressed aspects of life during the period of transition from Tsar to socialist Bulgaria. To the benefit of the study, statistical data have been systematized and tables have been created for comparison, structured according to the topics under consideration.

From the adoption of the "Dimitrov" Constitution" in 1947 until the end of the explored period, the presence of women in the public sphere became habitual. This was due to state propaganda for the creation of a new socialist society, which continued "with varying intensity throughout the period of socialism." The creation and dissemination of the new values was the responsibility of a whole network of institutions. This included "educational and propaganda events, textbooks, newspapers and magazines, radio and television broadcasts, films and cinema screenings reloaded people's knowledge of the morality and behaviour of the socialist citizen - in society, at work, in their home and family" (Pachamanova 2015 :94). As a result, society began to accept the presence of women in positions of responsibility and leadership, which was a prerequisite for overcoming notions of *masculine/feminine* in the public, social and cultural space. These transformations in the perception of gender roles took place more rapidly in the big city, largely because of the anonymity it offered. In the small town, which preserved traditional beliefs and cultures, these processes took place slowly and delayed in time. In this context, the processes which took place in the small

Bulgarian town, a transitional link between the village and the larger urban space, were extremely important in the overall picture of a lasting change in the social role of women in the country.

Using the example of the town of Panagyurishte in this study, I should note the fact that even before 1944 Panagyurishte had its place in the *public* sphere. Been developed as a modern European city since the late 19th and early 20th centuries, life in Panagyurishte was filled not only with work, but also with cultural and social events. This was fundamental not only for the self-esteem of its inhabitants, but also for the acceptance and achievement of a high social position of women as participants in activities both in the family and in society. On one hand, this was due to the education available to girls at the business school, which prepared future housewives and mothers, but also workers for the local textile industry or the high school, which enabled them to continue their education at a higher level or to pursue a career as a teacher, a profession for women with a tradition in the town. The active participation of women in public, cultural and charitable activities, the names of local women in world art, in leadership positions, and the role of Raina Popgeorgieva Futekova and her participation in the April Uprising were important for the social status of Panagyurishte women. Last but not least is the large number of women, factory workers, who contributed to the economic growth of Panagyurishte. The active involvement of the town's women in work processes and the labour market required the establishment of daily practices to balance the performance of their work duties with those of the home and children, which contributed to the process of adaptation to the state-imposed emancipation.

In the conditions of the socialist reality one of the important roles of women in Bulgaria was to preserve and pass on the traditions and cultural memory. Within the family, it was the women who preserved the religious holiday calendar and passed on to the generations a number of traditions that were an important part of the daily life of the patriarchal family, despite the Party's efforts to

displace the church from people's lives. Despite women's double workload, which required them to participate in the labour market and at the same time be responsible mothers, wives, and housewives, they managed to make time to prepare, according to the requirements of tradition, the performance of religious holidays. Older family members also contributed to the preservation of religious beliefs and rituals. The stories of Panagyurishte residents eloquently identify the elderly women in the family as the bearers of tradition - women who, despite the political conjuncture, remain faithful to the cultural heritage bequeathed to them. This was also the reason why the Party's policy of replacing traditional and religious ritual systems had largely failed at its core.

A contributing factor to the transformation of the holiday calendar into a socialist one was the change in the age composition of the population (Pesheva 1976: 109) and the separation of the young family into a separate household, which was the result of internal migration processes brought about by industrialization and the newly built educational institutions in the large urban centres. It was in families that lived independently and where the presence of adult family members was sporadic or entirely absent that political propaganda had a major impact.

Another important role of women in the *private* sphere, for which the state had made great efforts to present a new model in the explored period, was that of a mother. The presented ideal image of the working mother and housewife imposed certain expectations on women - to give birth to children, to care for them, to maintain the household and to work. A number of newly established institutions and services designed to support women and relieve them of their daily domestic responsibilities had not achieved the necessary popularity and real help working women received primarily from family members - elderly parents, older children and husbands. The involvement of men in domestic duties was a result of the physical impossibility for women only to perform all the tasks of daily life within home. "It is difficult for women to combine productive work in the public

sphere with reproductive work in the home (Godsey 2020: 94). Despite state-provided services and family support for most of them, the dual workload, at work and at home, was a factor that led to a decline in fertility.

Efforts by the state to proclaim equality in both *the public* and *private* spheres had not led to lasting changes in the family patriarchal order, and housework remained an important part of women's identity and culture that was preserved and passed down through generations.

In the *public* sphere, the new image of the working woman had emerged. In the early years after 1944, women engaged in the labour market worked primarily in manufacturing. State-imposed forced industrialization is a closed circle in which people were both means and goals, and labour was the only way. The need to augment the working class "in the society been the subject of power, the support and alibi of the regime" was both goal and cause in the emerging socialist society (Znepolsky 2008: 198). The prioritisation of work and identification with the labour collective was a prerequisite for building the material foundations of a socialist culture in which labour is the most important thing (Brunbauer 2010: 69). The state provided privileges for workers, but despite the changed social status of the working class and its stable position between 1944 and 1989, as the most inclusive among the population, the work performed by both men and women was extremely hard, and the shift system in factories was a heavy burden for women who combined work and domestic duties. The bonuses that female workers received for going above and beyond the daily/weekly/monthly norm supported the family budget, but they were the result of a compromise for the family and home time that limited women's contact with their children and beloved ones. In many working-class families, it was the practice of parents to swap their shifts so that children were not left alone. This, in turn, limited the communication between spouses. However, in the

period from the mid-20th century to 1989, young families in Panagyurishte managed to build their houses and devote sufficient time to maintain the household.

Another area of professional development that the state had made efforts to present as desirable for women was the areas of employment reserved for men. In the early years of the BSP-C government, women professionals in these fields were few, and they were for the most part representatives of the "bourgeois" class against which the socialist idea fought. For the representatives of the working class, who were the priority of the ruling party, paid specialized education at home or abroad was inaccessible during the time of the Tsarist Party. For women educated by 1944, the practice of the profession was difficult precisely because of their background, and they had to do what the authorities allowed them to do, while those tolerated by the authorities had no education. This was the reason why the names of many women pioneers, specialists in "male" professions, remained unknown, as in the case of engineer Tsvetana Boyadjieva. Over the time, the access to higher education for women had also changed, as had their presence in 'male' professions.

The press and mass media occupied an extremely important place in presenting the image of the working woman desired by the government. To a large extent, it was the newspapers that determined the choice of profession and career, especially for young girls. In its articles, the Panagyurishte newspaper *Oborishte* systematically devoted columns to the achievements of women in factories. It commented on women's activities and holidays. As part of the state monopoly, the press directed, deprecated, defined standards for what was right or wrong. Its function as a censor empowered its right to sanction and repudiate publicly.

Regardless of the personal desires and perceptions of women, whether they were workers or graduates, their rights and obligations were universalized into equal rights and obligations. To

work, to give birth and raise their children and to take care of their home. Although it proved difficult to reconcile their work and home commitments in the early years after 1944, women learned to balance, creating new daily practices that in time became standards. New dependencies on institutions and agencies, such as new forms of control and standardisation, 'created problems, difficulties and risks that the individual was powerless to cope with. Thus, instead of family determined and traditionally formed life trajectories, new ones emerge, delineated by institutions: from entering and leaving the education system, entering and leaving working age; from alternating certain roles in certain spheres - family and work, leisure and politics" (Koleva 2002: 39). Over time, these new patterns became entrenched and for subsequent generations they were now part of normality - familiar and legible. This was the reason why we take for granted the presence of women in all spheres of public life today. Without commenting on the negatives left by the socialist rule in Bulgaria in the period from 1944 to 1989, and despite the difficulties that women had to deal with in this period, I believe that it is precisely the "state" emancipation that made current Bulgarian society to a largely equally accessible to both men and women.

7. Contributions of the study

One of the main contributions of the present work is the introduction of new ethnological information through the study of the region of Srednogorje in the context of the problem posed by the present work - the woman of the local culture on the example of the town of Panagyurishte. Another important contribution is the accessibility and publicity of the collected empirical material, in which the respondents address aspects of life both for the period of transition from Tsarist to socialist Bulgaria and the period from the mid-twentieth century to 1989. Based on the field material, the roles that women exercised in the period from the mid-twentieth century to 1989 are

typologized on the basis of a functional analysis, again on the example of the town of Panagyurishte. An analysis is made of women's roles in the context of the industrial culture of the town, as well as a comparison with another economic practice based on the example of a woman in a male occupation - engineer. Tsvetana Boyadjieva.

Statistical data have been systematized for the benefit of the study and tables have been created with the possibility of comparison, structured according to the topics considered. Archival materials of the local press (Oborishte newspaper) are used as a source of information for the explored period. In the present study I offer my interpretation of the private and the public, building on established interpretations of the concepts, supporting them with available field material.

8. Publications on implemented creative achievement related to the dissertation:

1. *Boyadzheva, K.* Жената в мъжките професии преди и след 9 септември 1944 г. (243-261). В: *Mobilitas: Движение на хора, идеи, стоки, пари, изкуство в средновековния свят*. 2021. София. [Zhenata v mazhkite profesii predi i sled 9 septemvri 1944 g. (243-261). V: *Mobilitas: Dvizhenie na hora, idei, stoki, pari, izkustvo v srednovekovnia svyat*. 2021. Sofia]. Text available only in Bulgarian.
2. *Boyadzheva, K.* Влияние на политическите промени от 9 септември 1944 г. върху статута и мястото на жената в българския град. (16 страници). Списание за история, етнология и антропология „Терени“, брой 5. Семинар за докторанти и млади учени „Академични траектории“ 2021. [Vliyanie na politicheskite promeni ot 9 septemvri 1944 g. varhu statuta i myastoto na zhenata v balgarskia grad. (16 stranitsi). Spisanie za istoria,

- etnologia i antropologia „Terени“, broj 5. Seminar za doktoranti i mladi ucheni „Akademichni traektorii“ 2021]. Text available only in Bulgarian.
3. *Boyadzhieva, K.* Жената работничка от малкия български град. (22 страници). В: Списание за история, етнология и антропология „Терени“, брой 6. Семинар за докторанти и млади учени „Академични траектории“ 2022. [Zhenata rabotnichka ot malkia balgarski grad. (22 stranitsi). V: Spisanie za istoria, etnologia i antropologia „Terени“, broj 6. Seminar za doktoranti i mladi ucheni „Akademichni traektorii“ 2022]. Text available only in Bulgarian.
 4. *Boyadzhieva, K.* The Socialist Holiday Calendar and Traditional Festivity. Clash of Models Based on the Example of the City of Panagyurishte. (166-180). In: Diplomacy, Ideologies, Societies: Contemporary Projections and Policies. 2023. Sofia.
 5. *Boyadzhieva, K.* Влияние на политическите промени от 9 септември 1944 г. върху жените от малкия български град в тяхната роля на майки и възпитателки в периода от средата на ХХ в. до 1989 г. (по примера на град Панагюрище). В: Списание за история, етнология и антропология „Терени“, брой 8. Семинар за докторанти и млади учени „Академични траектории“ 2023. (предстои) [Vliyanie na politicheskite promeni ot 9 septemvri 1944 g. varhu zhenite ot malkia balgarski grad v tyahnata rolya na mayki i vazpitateлки v perioda ot sredata na ХХ в. do 1989 g. (po primera na grad Panagyurishte). V: Spisanie za istoria, etnologia i antropologia „Terени“, broj 8. Seminar za doktoranti i mladi ucheni „Akademichni traektorii“ 2023]. Text available only in Bulgarian.