**Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"**

**Faculty of History**

**Department of Ethnology**

**REVIEW**

Of dissertation on the topic:

**THE WOMAN FROM THE SMALL BULGARIAN TOWN – mid-20th century to 1989 (social status and roles)**

For the award of educational and scientific degree "Doctor", scientific field 3.1 Sociology, anthropology and cultural sciences

Author of the dissertation: Kristiana Marianova Boyadzhieva

Academic supervisor: Prof. Dr. Mira Markova

Reviewer: Associate Professor Ekaterina Dimitrova Ivanova-Keremidarska, PhD

The review was prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its Application and the Regulations for the Terms and Conditions for Acquiring Scientific Degrees and Holding Academic Positions at Sofia University "St.Kl. Ohridski", last change from 19.10.2016 by decision of the Academic Council. The review of the materials is according to the order of the Rector of the University of Ohrid for the appointment of a scientific jury.

Kristiana Marianova Boyadjieva has submitted all the necessary documents required for the dissertation defense procedure. The PhD student has the required number of publications on the topic of the dissertation, of which four are out of print and one is in print

**General characteristics of the dissertation work**

The dissertation consists of: 218 pages of text, the literature used includes: sources with scientific literature – 57 titles, collections, encyclopedias and periodicals – 17; Virtual sources - 8; Appendix with a list of respondents and brief information about them - 38 people; The text in the dissertation is illustrated with 20 tables.

In the introduction, the structure of the dissertation, the object and subject of the research, and the set goals and objectives are discussed. They are formulated and argued clearly and convincingly. A correlation is established between the set goals and objectives and the text of the scientific research.

In the motivation of the research dissertation, the main priority is the relevance and significance of the research. The parameters of the research program include: The aim of the current dissertation research is the place of women in the small Bulgarian town, with their social status and roles from the middle of the 20th century to 1989, based on the example of the town of Panagyurishte.

The doctoral student sets herself the following research tasks:

– A thorough review of the political situation and the introduced normative and legislative changes after September 9, 1944 and their impact on the social status and roles of women from the small Bulgarian town.

* Analysis of the mechanisms used by women to adapt their daily life to the new requirements of the time – their active inclusion in public life, through their participation in the labor market, while at the same time remaining the care providers to their children and family at home.

– To explore mechanisms for balancing women's commitments inside and outside the home.

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

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

The object of the present research is the city of Panagyurishte, because in the first half of the 20th century the city developed as a center of industry, in which women were mainly involved. The lack of thematic research in this region of Sredna Gora makes the town a suitable representative of most small towns in Bulgaria during the research period.

The subject of the study is the place of women, their social status and roles in the small Bulgarian town during the study period, with the aim of making broader generalizations that go beyond the objective state framework for the general development of small towns during the study period.

**Research approaches**

The methodological basis of the study is based on the classical methods of ethnological research: use of ethnological analysis, interviews, included observation and structural-functional approach.

In the scope of the research, the doctoral student includes semi-structured autobiographical and biographical interviews, in which 38 people born in the period 1935-1976 participate, of which 33 are women and 5 are men. Most of them (26 respondents) were born in the city, 6 respondents settled in Pangyurishte after getting married, and 6 came from nearby villages to the city and commuted regularly, continuing their education and professional career in Panagyurishte.

The PhD student sets the boundaries in the present study. In the first part, it concerns the situation of women from the city of Panagyurishte, pointing out that they were active participants in public life even before the middle of the 20th century. In the second division, she considers the changes in education, work and migration as the main factors that reflect the change in the social status and role of women in the country, and points out the mechanisms for preserving the traditional beliefs and rituals of the society, which have a defining role in everyday life of the woman from Panagyurishte.

In the third part, the four main roles of women are defined: mother, working housewife, worker and women in "male" professions.

**The dissertation consists of an introduction, three chapters and a conclusion, a bibliography and an appendix**.

**First chapter** "Roles and social positions of women from the city of Panagyurishte at the end of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century."

In this chapter, historical, economic, cultural, social and public events are studied, which determine the position of women from the city of Panagyurishte and society in the period from past years to the middle of the 20th century. They are essential in the active inclusion of women from the city in various areas of activity outside the home.

**Women and education**. During this period, there was a large number of women in the teaching profession. It is the result of the continuity in the families and the development of the educational institution in the city, through the old schools preserved after the Liberation, as well as in the new specialized ones that became available. In the family tradition, the teaching profession also has a social significance for the place occupied by women in society.

**Women in culture, art and social activities**. During this period, the women in the city confirmed their place in the public space through their active involvement in the cultural life of the city and their participation in various social activities and organizations, led by the example of women - artists and public figures. The names of Elena, Nikolay and Olga Bradislovova, well-known in world art, Raina Popgeorgieva, teacher, founder of the women's society for active social activity "Nadezhda", who sewed the flag of the participants in the April Uprising, give an example of emulating local women in their social development.

**Women and paid work**. In the developing factory production in the textile industry, women from Panagyurishte have a predominant participation as carpet makers and seamstresses in the towel factory and textile workshop in the city. Until the middle of the 20th century, women in the city had their place in the public sphere - through inclusion in the labor market, participation in social activities and in the cultural space.

**Second chapter** "The influence of the political changes of September 9, 1944 on the status and place of women in the small Bulgarian town"

The new political, social and cultural changes that have taken place have an impact on the life of the entire society in the country, but they have the greatest impact on the lives of women. With the adoption of normative documents and the Constitution of 1947, structural changes were made in society, and state emancipation officially forced women to join the labor market and the public space.

**Education, work and migration, and their influence on the social status of women**

The factors that lead to a change in the social status of women throughout the country are:

- Access to education - compulsory and free for all boys and girls in general schools and with the right to continue their education in higher institutes.

– Compulsory inclusion of paid work outside the home for women, imposed as a gender policy, forced industrialization for the participation of all people of working age in the labor market.

* Introduction of state distribution in order to provide specialists in areas of the country where needed. There is the imposed emancipation for equality between the sexes, but in practice the personnel policy of factories and enterprises is for the existence of stereotypes for female and male activities. These state-regulated women's rights are coupled with requirements for education and work. They make women's participation in the labor market a norm of behavior and give the educated woman a natural path to development and self-improvement.

**The modern woman and the new holiday calendar. Tradition and family**

- State-defined holidays are created in the public space. Through new scenarios, the traditional model for celebrating private family holidays and rituals - baptism, wedding and funeral - has been replaced. The function of the Church in people's lives is taken away and a state position is asserted in the private space. With the introduction of a special holiday "March 8 - Women's Day", a new model of collective celebration is created, ignoring the traditional models of the patriarchal society. And here it is necessary to note that despite the strong control exercised by the state, the woman plays an important role in the preservation of tradition and rituals through their secret performance in the family. In this way, it preserves part of the cultural memory of the traditional holiday calendar and passes it on to the generations after 1989.

**Third chapter** "Defining roles and social positions (social status) of women from the city of Panagyurishte in the period from the middle of the 20th century to 1989."

Women's participation in paid work in the first half of the 20th century made their transition smoother through the political and economic changes that required their mandatory inclusion in the labor market and work with regulated working hours. This leads to new patterns for redistributing everyday practices in working women's everyday lives.

New social roles are created while preserving part of the traditional patriarchal family model. The everyday activity of women forms two areas of action with the corresponding female role in them - a role in the private sphere and a role and social position in the public sphere.

**Roles in the private life**

– **The role of a mother.** Simultaneously with the mandatory participation in the labor market, working women delegate part of their duties to state institutions (kindergartens or crèches) or elderly family members.

* **Working housewife**, a role that women perform in their free time from work. This distribution of time is related to commitments at work and at home. It leads to the creation of new daily practices and the need for empathy from family members - children, husband, elderly parents. This double workload of women inside and outside the home is the reason for the decrease in the birth rate and the establishment of a family organization that includes two parents with one or two children. In larger families with three or more children, the older children are actively involved in raising the younger children and in the household work.

**Roles and social positions in the public sphere**

State emancipation and the mandatory inclusion of women in the labor market lead to the creation of new roles and social positions for them. The textile factory production in Panagyurishte and the women involved in it more easily transition and accept the new status of working woman and mother, since they have inherited traditions from before the research period. For women "carpet" workers, who performed their work duties at home, a big change for them is the workplace, the standardized working hours in two or more shifts. The position of the working class in the hierarchy of the social structure appears, the possibility of financial bonuses when the norm is exceeded. Other social privileges are also created for workers, making this low-skilled labor preferred by young unmarried girls.

The socialist labor reality offers women to occupy in male professions as well. As an example, the thesis mentions metallurgical engineer Tsvetana Boyadzhieva, born in Vidin, raised in Sofia.

The new requirements in the development of the textile industry require a redistribution of time and the creation of new daily practices, but nevertheless remain the preferred form of employment for women in Panagyurishte. The emancipation of women is encouraged by state policy and provides opportunities for their realization by including women in male occupations, which they successfully handle. The realization of women in men's professions still remains a difficult task. It involves many compromises and alternative solutions to overcome the conflict between gender and profession.

With the changed social status of women in the researched period, the full inclusion of Bulgarian women in the workforce was completed only in 1968, but it came at a price related to the declining population growth. Women find it increasingly difficult to combine productive work in the public sphere with reproductive work in the family. For the women who work in the factory and exceed the norm, the education and upbringing of the children is tailored to the shifts of their workplace.

The money they receive for their work in the enterprise supports the family budget, but they receive it when they sacrifice their time for family and home in favor of work. It primarily limits them from contact with children and relatives. In most working families, if possible, parents spread their shifts so that the children are not left alone, which in turn limits the time for communication between the spouses. Following the example of Panagyurishte, the image of the female worker takes shape as a dynamic, constantly acting figure who is a mother, a housewife and a worker.

During the studied period, women's access to all specialties in higher education changed.

Regardless of the personal desires and ideas of women - workers or graduates, their rights and obligations are universal - to work, give birth and raise their children and take care of their home.

**The conclusions of the main chapters of the dissertation generally reflect the main results of the research**

In the studied period from the middle of the 20th century to 1989, the life of the Bulgarian woman changed her social status, roles and place in society. Her inclusion in all spheres of social life leads to changes in daily practices and balancing her duties inside and outside the home. The imposed "equality" is conditional. The responsibilities and duties of the woman in the private sphere are preserved, she remains the organizer and distributor of duties in the home, and the head of the family remains the man.

The role of the woman in the family as mother, educator and housewife is preserved, and at the same time, by law, she is obliged to devote herself to work. The role of both sexes in public life is equalized. Her equal presence on the labor market is limited and the limitations are especially strongly expressed in small settlements, where ideas about women's and men's work are deeply rooted not only in the minds of men, but also of women - the main actors in the new emancipated world.

The local nature of the research provides an opportunity to examine the different roles of women and the processes of their adaptation to the political, economic and social changes that occurred in the middle of the 20th century.

**Main contributions of the dissertation**

The main scientific contribution of the present work is the typology of the role of women based on the analysis made on the example of the city of Panagyurishte.

- New ethnological information has been introduced by researching the region of Sredna Gora in the context of the problem posed by the present work - the woman from the local culture, following the example of the city of Panagyurishte.

- Accessibility and publicity of the rich empirical material in the field, in which the respondents affect aspects of life, both for the period of transition from Kingdom to socialist Bulgaria, and for the period from the middle of the 20th century to 1989.

– On the basis of the field material and the functional analysis, the roles that women exercise during the researched period are typologized.

- An analysis was made of the roles of women in the context of the industrial culture of the city, which was compared with another economic practice based on a woman in a male profession - engineer Tsvetana Boyadzhieva.

* With systematized statistical data, 20 comparable tables have been created, structured according to the topics under consideration.

– Archival materials of the local press are indicated as a source of information during the considered period.

– The doctoral student offers her interpretation of the private and the public, based on established interpretations of the concepts, based on the available field material.

**Evaluation of the publications related to the dissertation work**

There are 5 scientific publications on the topic and they correspond to the subject of the dissertation work. Four of them are published and 1 is in print.

**Correspondence of the abstract with the dissertation**

The structure of the abstract meets the requirements and correctly reflects the results of the dissertation work.

**Opinion on the presence or absence of plagiarism**

I have not found any plagiarism in the work. The sources used are cited in good faith.

**Notes, questions and recommendations**

I recommend the doctoral student to publish her work, including one more chapter in her research - the status of women in the big city as a basis for comparison during the researched period.

**Conclusion**

The dissertation presented by Kristiana Marianova Boyadzhieva is an original scientific study and shows that the goal and set tasks have been achieved. The doctoral student knows the problem of the research in depth. She has the necessary knowledge and skills for independent scientific work, which is why I give my positive assessment of the presented work and propose to the scientific jury to vote on awarding the educational and scientific degree "doctor" in professional and scientific direction 3.1. Sociology, anthropology and cultural sciences.

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Review prepared by associate professor Ekaterina Dimitrova Ivanova0Keremidarska, PhD