

REVIEW

Prof. Margarita Nikolova Karamikhova, Department of Modern and Recent History of
Bulgaria, Faculty of History,
University of Veliko Turnovo St. Cyril and St. Methodius
of the materials submitted for the competition to occupy the academic position of
'Professor'
at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski "
field of higher education 3. Social, business and legal sciences
professional field 3.1. Sociology, Anthropology and the Sciences of Culture,
Ethnography - Political Ethnology

In the competition for 'professor' announced in the State Gazette, issue 65 of
16.08.2019. and on the Internet site of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski "for the
needs of the Department of Ethnology at the Faculty of History, took part Assistant
Professor Veselin Ivanov Tepavicharov.

1. General presentation of the received materials

With Order No. RD 38-568 / 01.10. 2019 of the Rector of Sofia University "St.
Kliment Ohridski" (SU) I have been nominated as a member of the scientific jury of
the competition for the occupation of the academic position of "Professor" in Sofia
University, field of Higher Education 3. Social Business and Legal Sciences, Profes-
sional field 3.1. Sociology, Anthropology and the Sciences of Culture, Ethnography -
Political Ethnology, announced for the needs of the Department of Ethnology at the
Faculty of History.

For the participation in the announced competition, only one candidate has
submitted documents: Assoc. Prof. Veselin Ivanov Tepavicharov, Department of
Ethnology, Faculty of History, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".

Veselin Tepavichar's set of electronic and hard copy materials complies with the
Rules for Development of the Academic Staff of Sofia University.

The candidate has applied a total of 19 scientific papers: 1 monograph, 3 articles
and reports published in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in
world-famous scientific information databases, 6 articles and reports published in
non-refereed scientific peer-reviewed journals or published in editorial collections

volumes and 9 studies published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or in peer-reviewed collective volumes. Two of the publications were published in English. The publications are submitted to the scientific jury in paper and electronic versions, according to the list. All publications are related to Veselin Tepavicharov's work as a lecturer at Sofia University.

2. Short biography of the applicant

Veselin Tepavicharov is a classic example of a graduate of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”, who is developing his scientific and professional career at the University. After receiving his basic training as a historian, since 1991 he has profiled himself in the field of Ethnology, applying a skillfully interdisciplinary approach. His active research work has produced excellent results in the field of Political Anthropology. The candidate habitates in 2007 and defends his Doctor Habill. degree in 2017.

From 2007 to 2015 Veselin Tepavicharov successfully leads the Department of Ethnology at Sofia University. He is a member of the International Association of Ethnologists. From 2009 to 2012 he is a member of the Minority Education Commission at the Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Sciences.

3. General characteristics of the applicant's activities

According to the information provided, Veselin Tepavicharov teaches 6 Bachelor's Degree courses and 4 Master's Degree courses at the Faculty of History. It is important to note the conceptual development of the Political Anthropology taught by him in the Master's Degree Program: Ethnopolitical Models in Cultural Anthropology, National Ideologies and National Security in the Balkans, National Security in Socialist Bulgaria, National Mythmaking and State Policy. These lecture courses and the packages of materials to them are unique to Bulgarian higher education and deserve special admirations.

Veselin Tepavicharov participates as a leader or as a member of the team in an impressive number of national scientific projects related to his scientific research and teaching. The number of students, PhD students and young scientists working on projects together with him is impressive. Thus, the scientist trains systematically young ethnologists, which explains the increased interest in Political Anthropology in

recent years. Veselin Tepavicharov is a scientific supervisor of 4 successful PhD students, 3 of whom work in various positions at Sofia University.

4. **Scientific production presented for the competition**

What is remarkable is the fact that Assoc. Prof. Tepavicharov participates in the competition for the position of professor with monograph work - "Nostalgia for Socialism in Bulgaria (Ethnological Research)", and with a group of articles.

The monograph is an entirely original work, a result of many years of collecting empirical ethnological materials and of the constant tracing of national and foreign literature that deals with issues of remembering, memory and forgetting. The author demonstrates a systematic knowledge of the studies of European post-socialist countries. For writing this work, Veselin Tepavicharov fully expands the possibilities of the inter-disciplinary approach, in which the methods of Political Anthropology / Ethnology are leading.

The various chapters of the monograph critically present the achievements of ethnologists, historians, researchers of economics and business history, sociologists. The author maintains an academic distance in commenting on texts, whether he accepts or criticizes certain conclusions and suggestions. I appreciate Veselin Tepavicharov's mastery of keeping distance despite he is an witness, a bearer of the culture and he is experiencing events and processes that ultimately affect him personally as a citizen of the Republic of Bulgaria. As a scientist following the production of Tepavicharov, I believe that he has reached a mastery level of the methodology of Political Anthropology / Ethnology.

The description of the research methodology is constructed according to the highest academic standards. Although the empirical ethnographic materials (interview records) are stored (for now) in the author's personal archive, they carry all the attributes of the correct recording and the necessary metadata. The reader can easily "enter" in the context of the conversation which is quoted. The detailed description of the material collection method earns the author serious credit for the trust, even if readers would not accept all of his conclusions. The structure of text is logical; it is well-structured so as to consistently accumulate knowledge about the object of the study.

The first chapter outlines the theoretical framework of the study. The advantages and / or disadvantages of implementing one or the other approach are clearly demonstrated. Consistently, but without too much details, it is explained why a theory is necessary for this study. I emphasize this fact, because in recent years there have been many works in which the authors present brilliantly the latest theories of notorious Western authors, without being able

to apply this knowledge in their further text. In the following chapters V. Tepavicharov demonstrates his mastery in this - to rely on the presented theories and to evaluate which theoretical model works or not in the particular case.

Chapter two seeks to answer the important question of mythologizing the past. Tepavicharov unfolds the story of the memory of the various generations he works with on the field. As I read the presentation and analysis of the "brigadier generation" I kept returning to my memories of my parents and their friends circle. Without generalizing, which is another important feature of the author he demonstrates the factors that shaped the attitudes and, accordingly, the tendency to mythologize the past by contrasting different segments of personal time spent.

The third chapter is devoted to the so-called "transition". The multidimensional presentation of the last 30 years is important for understanding the attitudes of the past. In this chapter, Tepavicharov focuses on the cultural norms established by longstanding practices that differently shape the personal strategies of those born during socialism. From the willingness or unpreparedness of different cohorts / generations to adapt to changes in business and political life, as well as from working mythological schemes, nostalgic attitudes to the past emerge.

Chapter four provides a typology of nostalgic groups. Tepavicharov's approach in constructing the typology is very productive. The author presents in detail and analyzes the main messages that are constantly broadcast by the interviewees.

Chapter five analyzes the cultural response to changes in its multi-faceted manifestations (personal and group strategies, demographic crisis).

The Conclusion comments on nostalgia for socialism as a group cultural phenomenon and as a product of a lasting national stereotype. The debunking of a series of national myths (like passion for education, etc.) is encouraging. The role of the post-communist oligarchy in the creation and maintenance of social nostalgia through various mechanisms has been explicitly demonstrated.

The studies and articles with which Assoc. Prof. Tepavicharov participates in the competition cover a wide range of topics that are included in the lectures taught by him in the three stages of higher education. They can be broadly grouped as follows: Studies of political subcultural groups; Studies of Transition; Local community surveys; Identity research; Methodological comments.

Particularly noteworthy is the applied part of the projects and their respective publications, implemented by Veselin Tepavicharov. His ethno-pedagogical developments

contain valuable applied potential. Particular attention should be paid to the systematic, reasoned insistence that the science of Ethnology be included in the curricula of secondary education.

From the reports presented, it is clear that Veselin Tepavicharov's works are known and cited positively abroad and in Bulgaria. All respected science portals (Web of Science Clarivate Analytics, Skopus ELSEVIER, CEEOL, etc.) cite citations to his articles. According to data from Harzing's Publish or Perish, his citations form h-index = 2, which is more than enough to gain the position of professor, according to Bulgarian practice.

The information provided shows that Veselin Tepavicharov exceeds the minimum national requirements for occupying the position of professor (having already met the requirements for associate professor and doctor of cultural sciences, entered in the National Register - <https://cris.nacid.bg/public/scientist-search>).

5. Assessment of the applicant's personal contribution

The submissions are purely original, personal input. The applicant has correctly and conscientiously cited the literature and empirical ethnographic materials used. All conclusions are the result of his long time systematic work efforts.

6. Recommendations

I recommend Assoc. Prof. Veselin Tepavicharov to publish a separate monograph on the theory and practice of ethnographic fieldwork in the 21st century. This book will benefit the next generation of faculty and students.

7. Personal impressions

My long-standing observations on the work of Assoc. Prof. Vesselin Tepavicharov say that he is endowed with an increasingly rare quality to attract and work with young people. Moreover, he systematically invests in the further development of students, doctoral students and young scientists. It is undeniable that Assoc. Prof. Tepavicharov has established a school in the field of Political Anthropology / Ethnology.

CONCLUSION

The documents and materials presented by Veselin Ivanov Tepavicharov meet all the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of

Bulgaria, the Regulations for the implementation of the Law and the corresponding Regulations of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”.

The candidate submitted a significant number of scientific papers published after the materials used in the defense of the Doctor Habill. There are original scientific and applied contributions in the works of Tepavicharov, which have received international recognition as a representative part of them have been published in scientific journals. Its theoretical developments have practical applicability, and some of them are directly oriented towards educational work. Veselin Tepavicharov's scientific and teaching qualifications are undoubted. The results achieved by Veselin Ivanov Tepavicharov in the teaching and research activities fully comply with the specific requirements of the Faculty of History of the Faculty of Arts, adopted in connection with the Regulation of the Sofia University for the implementation of the Law.

After getting acquainted with the materials and scientific papers presented in the competition, after completing the analysis of their importance and the scientific and applied contributions contained therein, I find it justifiable to give my positive assessment and to recommend to the Scientific Jury to prepare a report proposal to the Faculty Board of the Faculty of History for the appointment of Veselin Ivanov Tepavicharov to the academic position of 'Professor' at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” by professional field 3.1. Sociology, anthropology and cultural sciences, specialty Ethnography - Political Ethnology.

23.11. 2019

Reviewer: Professor Margarita Karamihova