

OPINION

under the procedure for obtaining the scientific degree “Doctor of Sciences”

from

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Martin Ivanov Ivanov,

topic of the dissertation: “Swimming against the tide: Bulgarian textile crafts and their growth in the factory industry, 1800-1912”, in the professional field 3.1 Sociology, Anthropology and Cultural Sciences (Sociology), Department of Sociology, Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”.

The opinion was prepared by: **Prof. Dr. Sc. Pepka Alexandrova Boyadjieva, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, BAS,** in my capacity as a member of the scientific jury, Professional field 3.1 Sociology, Anthropology and Cultural Sciences (Sociology), according to Order № RD 38-147 / 15.03.2021 of the Rector of Sofia University.

General characteristics of the dissertation and the presented materials

The dissertation has a clear structure. The analysis is logically consistent and unfolds into an introduction, three chapters and a conclusion, supplemented by 12 appendices and a list of references. The volume of the main text of the dissertation is 198 pages, and of the appendices together with the literature – 304 pages. The list of literature is impressive and includes 1098 titles in Bulgarian, English, German, French and Russian, including primary sources of information such as statistical yearbooks.

Data and personal impressions of the candidate

Dr. Martin Ivanov has been an Associate Professor at the Department of Sociology at Sofia University “St. Kl. Ohridski” since 2015. He defended his PhD thesis at the Institute of History of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences in 2000, and in 2008 he was elected to the academic position of “Associate Professor” at the same institute, and in 2015 he was elected for Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology at Sofia University. He has specialised in various prestigious international institutes such as Caledonian Research

Foundation/ Royal Society of Edinburgh, based at Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities, Edinburgh University, National University of Ireland, University of Cambridge.

I have known Assoc. Prof. Martin Ivanov for more than 10 years. I follow his scientific development and I am very familiar with most of his scientific publications, as I was on the scientific jury in the competition for the academic position of “Associate Professor” at the Department of Sociology in 2015, which he won. Based on my personal impressions of the work and public appearances of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Martin Ivanov, I am convinced that he has established himself as one of the most authoritative Bulgarian scientists in his field, as a researcher with his own creative style and a clear sense of interesting and heuristic topics.

Content analysis of the scientific and applied achievements of the candidate, contained in the presented dissertation and the publications to it, included in the procedure

The dissertation of Assoc. Prof. Martin Ivanov offers an original view of the Bulgarian Revival, which “abandons” the widely established perspectives of political and cultural development and explores the beginning of Bulgarian modernisation in the history of economic rise and decline through the example of textile crafts and their growth into factory industry. The dissertation clearly demonstrates a research approach that does not follow simplistic explanatory schemes, but seeks to reveal the complexity and contradictions of the ongoing processes, taking into account both their positive and negative sides, while distinguishing short-term from long-term effects. I define the dissertation as realised at the intersection of historical sociology and economic history.

The main theses of the dissertation are clearly formulated and convincingly substantiated. Through an in-depth and precise analysis, Assoc. Prof. Ivanov shows that “the first wave of Bulgarian modernisation is not only longer (it ends somewhere around the First World War, not with the Liberation), but is also contradictory, hiding many “dark sides”, underwater reefs and risks” (p. 6). As directly related to this thesis and at the same time developing it and filling it with more specific content, I will highlight two more theses. First of all, this is the conclusion that “the Bulgarian industrial sector is not going through a one-way, linear decline, but follows a U-shaped trajectory of partial and temporary deindustrialisation, followed by a decade of reindustrialisation (p. 7). This thesis is convincingly defended on the basis of a huge and diverse empirical material and undoubtedly contributes to the literature, because it enters into a dialogue with the widespread theory of deindustrialisation. The substantiation of the hybrid character of the factory modernisation in the Bulgarian lands is another contribution to the literature. It is shown that the factory

modernisation developed not only slowly, but also for a long time halfway, preserving a number of the practices and methods of the old manual home industry.

Assoc. Prof. Ivanov is a scientist with a very deep research sense. He manages to capture and highlight unnoticed or neglected details in historical development and to build a comprehensive theoretically meaningful and empirically based study from and around them. His dissertation also starts from revealing one unnoticed feature in our development in the XIX and early XX century, namely its asynchrony (metaphorically referred to by the author as “swimming against the tide”) – on the one hand, in the Bulgarian lands was achieved remarkable pace of industrial development in a period when almost everywhere handicrafts did not withstand the competition of Western factory production, and, on the other hand – when in the last decades of the XIX century external competition decreased, our industry was gripped by crisis and subsequent deindustrialisation. The dissertation of Assoc. Prof. Ivanov offers not only an ascertainment of this economic asynchrony, but also – which is especially important – seeks and highlights factors and mechanisms for its explanation. This is an attempt to take into account the impact of a variety of factors, including those that do not seem particularly important at first glance. Thus, the constructed explanatory scheme includes not only the world situation, but also the Turkish emigration and the disintegration of the farms, social actors, economic nationalism, as well as local fashions and the extent to which they are known by textile producers.

I consider as an important achievement of the dissertation the thorough analysis of the social actors – textile industrialists, domestic producers, craftsmen, manufacturers, farmers, as well as intellectuals, bureaucrats, politicians and representatives of the liberal professions. Special attention deserves the interaction of these actors with another actor, usually accepted in many studies as a very important factor in the process of Bulgarian modernisation – the state. In this case, however, the precise analyses of Assoc. Prof. Martin Ivanov lead to the conclusion that the measures of the state and its protectionist legislation “have a complementary rather than significant role in the recovery of the domestic textile industry started in the first decade of the twentieth century” (p. 197).

With his dissertation, Assoc. Prof. Ivanov joins the discussion of a very discussed, but still very intriguing topic – the relationship “center-periphery”. The analyses made allow us to see new aspects and manifestations of this relationship, such as the cost of transferring models and practices from the “center” to the “periphery”, hybridization as a mechanism through which the “center” influences on the “periphery”, for the resistance of the “periphery” to the “center”, for the existence of different “peripheries”, etc. Through the description and

argumentation of the successful transition of the wool textile industry from manual to machine production in the Bulgarian lands, Assoc. Prof. Ivanov shows that “periphery” should not be equated with “area incapable of progress and development”.

I consider as important from a sociological point of view the outlining of the role of geography, in particular – the specific geographical location of the Bulgarian lands for our economic development and the opportunities it gives to the representatives of our textile industry to take advantage of the processes in the world economy and to respond to external competition. A number of leading universities offer joint educational programs in sociology and geography or courses in geo-sociology and geographical sociology. I believe that the dissertation of Assoc. Prof. Ivanov provides serious grounds for the possibility and necessity of closer connection of research fields and approaches from sociology and geography.

A very important advantage of the dissertation is the rich empirical material on which the analyses are based. A huge and very diverse body of empirical material has been collected, synthesised and analysed, which includes both quantitative data and extremely interesting biographical portraits of representatives of various social groups. It relates not only to individual statistics, but also to a long series of different data – about population, prices, terms of trade, imports and exports, exchange rates, etc. This is a stand-alone contribution, not only because of the difficulty in creating this corpus, but also because it can be used by other scholars in future research.

Approbation of the results

The reference for the conformity to the minimum national requirements (under art. 2b, para 2 and 3 of ZRASRB) and to the additional requirements of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” for obtaining the scientific degree “Doctor of Sciences” in the professional field of the procedure shows that the publications of Assoc. Prof. Martin Ivanov meet these requirements.

I am convinced that the results presented by Assoc. Prof. Ivanov in the dissertation and publications do not repeat those of previous procedures for acquiring a PhD degree and another academic position.

The dissertation is an original study and there is no evidence of plagiarism.

The dissertation of Assoc. Prof. Ivanov has already gained visibility in the academic community through a publication.

Quality of the abstract

The abstract is prepared accurately, meets the regulatory requirements and correctly presents the results and content of the dissertation.

Critical comments and questions

I will formulate one more general theoretical critical comment and two that are more of a technical nature.

According to me some of the basic concepts in the dissertation need more in-depth theorising. This would also lead to a greater deepening of some of the analyses. For example, the term “hybrid” and “hybridization” respectively. This is a key term insofar as it is related to the main thesis of the dissertation, and at the same time it can be conceptualised on the basis of different disciplinary traditions. The difference between the terms “factor” and “agent”, respectively “factors of reindustrialisation” and “agents of industrialisation”, is not sufficiently explained. I also think that the section devoted to the factors of reindustrialisation is brief and needs to be further developed.

The main sentence in the title of the dissertation “Swimming against the tide” appears as the title of the last section of the first chapter. This creates the impression that it applies only to it, but in reality the idea is that it summarises the main thesis of the entire dissertation.

In the first sentence of both the dissertation and the abstract, it is written “This book is about the long and difficult first meeting of Bulgarians with modernity”. Obviously this sentence refers to the dissertation.

Conclusion

After getting acquainted with the dissertation and the accompanying documents and based on the analysis of their significance and the scientific and applied contributions contained in them, I undoubtedly confirm that the presented dissertation “Swimming against the tide: Bulgarian textile occupations and their growth into a factory industry, 1800-1912”, as well as the quality and originality of the results and achievements presented in it, meet the requirements of ZRASRB, the Regulations for its application and the respective Regulations of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” for acquisition by the candidate of the scientific degree “Doctor of Sciences” in professional field 3.1 Sociology, Anthropology and Cultural Sciences (Sociology). In particular, the candidate satisfies the minimum national requirements

in the professional field and no plagiarism has been revealed in the scientific publications submitted at the competition.

Based on the above, I strongly recommend the scientific jury to award Assoc. Prof. Martin Ivanov the degree of “Doctor of Sciences” in the professional field 3.1 Sociology, Anthropology and Cultural Sciences (Sociology).

27.05.2021

Sofia

Prof. Pepka Boyadjieva