**POSITION**

Position

on the dissertation work of Mr. Kaloyan Valeriev Angelov

topic: "Ethnopsychological model of coordination-educational policies in Bulgaria (1989-2019)"

for awarding an educational and scientific degree "doctor", professional field 3.1. Sociology, anthropology, cultural sciences.

Dissertation adviser: Prof. Dr. Irina Koleva Koleva. Doctoral program "Ethnology", Faculty of History, Sofia University

Position written by: Ilia Iliev, Associate Professor, Sofia University, Faculty of History, Department of Ethnology

1. General data

Mr. Kaloyan Angelov was enrolled as a full-time doctoral student in the "Ethnology" program on February 1, 2019. He was awarded the right to defense three years later and submitted the text of the dissertation on time. The dissertation passed internal defense at the Department of Ethnology on April 27, 2022. The text also successfully passed the mandatory check for the absence of plagiarism in the StrikePlagiarism system of Sofia University. The similarities noticed by the system are minimal and are only with an earlier publication by Mr. Angelov himself in the electronic edition "Anamnesis".

The doctoral student has also presented 4 publications on the topic of the dissertation in Bulgarian and English. There are also publications that are not presented for the procedure, as they are on other topics. He scored the necessary points on all indicators and the procedure meets all the requirements stipulated in the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the internal Regulations on the terms and conditions for acquiring scientific degrees and occupying academic positions at Sofia University.

2. Data on the doctoral student

Mr. Angelov graduated from the National High School for Ancient Languages ​​and Cultures in 2010, the Bachelor of History program at Sofia University with an additional teaching qualification in 2014, and received a Master's degree in English Philology in 2016, again at SU. He clearly presents a consistent interest in the humanities and social sciences, in different cultures, and in a long-term career in education. Mr. Angelov demonstrated the same consistency after his graduation.

He works as a history and/or English teacher at the junior high and high school levels in various metropolitan schools. He participated in educational projects of "Open Society" and "Center for Inclusive Education"/ Association "ELA", acquired additional certificates for trainings and courses in the field of education.

Mr. Kaloyan Angelov's education and career, as well as his dissertation, show a lasting and deep interest in the theoretical and practical aspects of education.

3. Content and contributions of the dissertation

Essentially, the dissertation contains an introduction, four chapters, conclusions, conclusion, bibliography, appendices and contributions with a total volume of 310 pages, of which 19 pages are appendices. The bibliography includes 106 publications in Bulgarian and foreign languages. The appendices include a blank questionnaire, a blank stakeholder assessment, a list of respondents and four excel tables representing the quantitative results of the survey conducted. The dissertation includes 24 diagrams and tables.

The chosen topic is significant and is related to key program documents such as the National Framework for Education, Training and Learning of the Ministry of Education and Culture.

The introduction contains a general presentation of the dissertation, its goals and objectives, the significance of the topic for Bulgarian society as a whole, as well as its inclusion in the general programs and priorities of Bulgarian education. Credit is given to previous research on the matter. Mr. Kaloyan Angelov shows excellent knowledge of the existing normative documents, demographic data and international commitments undertaken by Bulgaria to outline the general problem of discrimination and education of children from ethnic minorities, as well as the existing approaches to solve it. A working hypothesis is formulated and it is shown how the author intends to test and prove it.

The first chapter, "Models and practices for coordination-educational policies in Bulgaria in the period 1989-2019 (ethno-psychological grounds for educational interaction)", is dedicated to educational policies in Bulgaria for the period 1989-2019 and to the ethno-reflexive approach - a basic theoretical framework of the dissertation. The ethno-psychological foundations of this approach, their connection with the reflexive tradition in the Bulgarian pedagogical school and their application in different models of school education for the studied period are shown.

The concepts used are clearly defined and understandable even for a non-specialist. This chapter also demonstrates the doctoral student's ability to present complex material in a systematized, precise and accessible way and is a kind of testimony to the skills gained in his teaching practice.

The second chapter, "Analysis of coordination-educational policies in Bulgaria in the period 1989-2019 (ethno-psychological grounds for educational interaction with students from the Roma ethnic community)", offers an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of numerous Bulgarian and European program documents related to educational integration of students from the Roma ethnic community in chronological order. The period is divided into two, with the key change being the 2016 Bulgarian Law on School and Preschool Education. Mr. Angelov presents a series of programs, legislative texts, standards and documents, each of which is undeniably valuable, thoughtful and well-intentioned, but is only partially implemented.

A very valuable element of the analysis is Mr. Angelov's ability to assess the applicability of some of the documents as a teacher who is actually engaged in teaching. I hope Mr. Angelov develops some elements of this chapter in a future analysis of why existing programs are not implemented. Without such an analysis, any subsequent program document risks remaining just a good intention.

The third chapter, "Specifics of the Roma ethnic community in Bulgaria (ethnological grounds for educational interaction)", examines a series of ethnological studies dedicated to the Roma in our country, as well as the specifics related to their education. The emphasis here is on the ethnological aspects. Mr. Angelov perfectly knows the best achievements of Bulgarian science in this matter. His approach is well-reasoned and I accept it, but I would still like to remind him that no theoretical or ethnographic study could claim to cover a given social phenomenon in all its depth, let alone a complex community like the Roma.

Specifically for educational purposes, the analysis of the team collected by Ivan Szelenyi ("Poverty in post-communism", Sofia, East-West, 2003) can be useful. The Roma are studied there as a community constructed out of and around poverty rather than based on historical and ethnographic traditions. Such an analysis would allow, for example, to easily discern the educational approaches to more affluent and to more marginalized Roma groups.

Some problems presented in the following fourth chapter and concerning the interaction between Roma groups in Kukorevo could be explained more easily with the toolkit offered by Szelenyi. But it is undoubtedly the author's right to judge which theoretical tool meets his needs best, so I accept Mr. Angelov's choice.

The fourth chapter, "Research module: Ethno-psychological model of coordination-educational policy for educational integration of students from the Roma ethnic community", contains empirical data collected through participatory observation, surveys and interviews. A technique similar to what in French social sciences is called “jeu d'echelle” was used. Mr. Angelov juxtaposes an empirical study of the Roma in one settlement, the more distant view of representatives of various institutions, including the Ministry of Education and Science and non-governmental organizations, against the background of the large-scale program documents detailed in the previous chapters.

Based on the empirical data, the normative documents and the ethno-reflexive theoretical tools used by Mr. Angelov, a model of policies for the educational integration of students of Roma origin in Bulgaria is proposed. Particularly valuable is the author's restrained and realistic assessment of the feasibility of the model in question and the risks involved in its implementation.

The conclusion summarizes the results of the research and convincingly shows that the objectives set in the introduction have been achieved. I accept the theoretical and applied scientific contributions stated in the dissertation and in the abstract. The work represents a rare example of the combination of theoretical and practical tools, the ambition of the researcher and the restraint of practitioner.

4. Recommendations:

Mr. Kaloyan Angelov has extremely valuable practical experience as a teacher, participant in educational projects and researcher, personally collecting empirical data for his work. Going forward, this could allow him not to confine himself within a single model, no matter how undeniably worthy it may be, but to pragmatically choose from among the available theoretical tools the one that best fits the data and the current needs of his future research.

5. Conclusion.

The dissertation meets all requirements and contains indisputable contributions. Mr. Angelov shows that he can collect empirical data in a disciplined way, analyze it, dissect the strengths and weaknesses of program documents and propose new approaches. Fluent and capable of critical reading of available professional literature. The submitted documents - publications, abstract, diplomas and reports - meet all the requirements of the law and the regulations of the SU.

That is why, without hesitation, I recommend that the esteemed scientific jury award Mr. Kaloyan Angelov the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in Ethnology in a professional field: 3.1. Sociology, anthropology and cultural sciences.

Sofia, 18.06.2022 Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ilia Iliev