

## EXAMINER'S REPORT

by Associate Professor Meglena Ivanova Zlatkova, PhD, Department of Ethnology, Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv

on the materials submitted for participation in the competition for the academic position of "Professor" of Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv

field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field 3.1. Sociology, Anthropology and Cultural Studies (Cultural Studies - Historical Anthropology of Political Culture)

### 1. **General presentation of the procedure and the applicant**

By order of the Rector of the University Paisii Hilendarski Plovdiv № RD-21-1601 from 31.07.2023 I have been appointed as a member of the Scientific Jury for the announced competition for the academic position of "Professor" in the State Gazette 39/02.05.2023 in: field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field 3.1. Sociology, Anthropology and Cultural Studies (Cultural Sciences - Historical Anthropology of Political Culture) for the needs of the Department of Ethnology.

I have reviewed the submitted documents of the sole candidate, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Dobrinka Dragieva Parusheva, which demonstrate that the candidate's scholarly achievements not only fulfill but also significantly surpass the national minimum requirements outlined in accordance with the Act on UP Rules for the Development of Academic Staff. In the competition, Assoc. Parusheva presented a total of 13 scholarly works, comprising 1 monograph in Bulgarian and 12 studies and articles in both Bulgarian and English.

### 2. **General description of the applicant's activities**

**A) Teaching activities.** Assoc. Prof. Dr. Dobrinka Parusheva is actively involved in teaching in several undergraduate, masters and doctoral programmes offered by the Faculty of Philosophy and History at the Paisii Hilendarski University in Plovdiv. Her academic teaching began in 1997 as a lecturer at the Chernorizets Hrabar Free University of Varna, and then in 2003 at the University of Sofia. Since 2010 she has held the position of Associate Professor in the Department of Ethnology at the Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv. Her contributions extend to the establishment and development of several undergraduate programmes, including "Social Anthropology", "Cultural Tourism", "English Language and Cultural Heritage", "History and Cultural Heritage" and "Cultural and Social Anthropology". She is also one of the founders of Master's programmes such as "Social Mediation and Communication", "Ethnology: Communities, Identities, Culture" and "Ethnology and Cultural Heritage". She is a director of the two MA programs in Ethnology.

"Within these academic programmes, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Parusheva shares her expertise through a variety of compulsory core courses and elective courses for both undergraduate

and postgraduate students. In addition, she contributes to courses within the Faculty's PhD programmes and the PhD University School "Academia Uventutis".

She is teaching three English language courses per year, attracting Erasmus+ students from different faculties. In addition, the candidate has a rich teaching experience in various European universities.

**B) Research activities.** Assoc. Parusheva is the author of more than 60 articles, studies and book chapters published in Bulgarian, English and German. She reviewed numerous books and edited volumes, actively participates in the editing of scientific publications and is a member of the editorial boards of four prestigious academic journals. Her research results have been presented at 13 conferences in Bulgaria and 35 international conferences. She is a distinguished European author with numerous citations in authoritative scientific works, and she actively engages with young scholars, including PhD students and postdoctoral researchers, through collaborative projects, academic networks and advisory roles.

Assoc. Parusheva has led two projects for young scholars, actively participated in several research teams, and played a key role in organising the traditional for the Department of Ethnology academic meetings for undergraduate, postgraduate students and young scholars. She is also involved in the compilation of their proceedings. In summary, Assoc. Parusheva's substantial contributions at the University of Plovdiv and as a researcher at the Institute of Balkan Studies and the Centre for Thracology at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences have not only developed the scientific fields of history and anthropology, but have also worked with and supervised future scholars, promoting interdisciplinary approach at the intersection of historical and anthropological topics and methodologies.

In the procedure for Professor Dobrinka Parusheva participates with her monographic book *“Down with the government! Long live the cartoon!!” Politics, Culture, and Caricature in Early 20th Century Bulgaria* and 12 articles. I would agree with division of the publications into three main areas - political culture, visual dimensions of political culture (caricature and images) and city and urban culture. Her studies are significant and contributing not only to historical knowledge in the Balkan and European context, but also to historical anthropology and cultural studies.

Dobrinka Parusheva's book represents the first interdisciplinary exploration of Bulgarian political culture and its representation through political cartoons in the early twentieth century. This insightful investigation serves as a productive lens for understanding the complex landscape of the political realm. It explores the complex interplay of different narratives responsible for shaping representations of key individuals, pivotal events and stereotypes of 'the other' and otherness through cartoons published in print media.

A distinctive contribution of Assoc. Parusheva's approach can be highlighted in the revelation of the subtle mechanisms through which the 'political imaginary' is formulated and embedded in the everyday lives of individuals. The examination of the

pictorial-affective layer within political cartoons not only delineates the 'reactions' and 'evaluations' of relevant events and processes from the perspective of the cartoonists, but also allows the author to illuminate the broader context in which these images and texts are conceived or reimagined/translated, borrowed.

This nuanced analysis provides valuable insights into the intricate web of interactions between different actors within the political imaginary, set against the backdrop of the wider geopolitical, cultural and social milieu".

From an anthropological perspective, the author skilfully captures the diverse viewpoints of cartoonists, media consumers and political figures, while maintaining the integrity of the 'data information' specific to this unique field. She skilfully places the key players in the realm of the political imaginary within the broader context of geopolitical, cultural and social landscapes.

Moreover, the book makes a significant contribution to visual anthropology, not only by presenting over 90 cartoons as a self-contained body of sequential data and visual narratives, but also by contextualising them through the perspectives of various social actors - from their creators, publishers and publications to various political figures. In this way, 'both politics and politicians can be seen as the visualised eye of the age' (Michael Baxandall).

In conclusion, Assoc. Dobrinka Parusheva's monograph is a solid research of the interplay between political caricature and politics. It is not only a valuable historical study of political processes, but also as a comprehensive anthropological analysis of the triad of politics, culture and caricature. This analysis not only deepens our understanding of Bulgarian society, but also sheds light on the construction of images of identities and otherness.

### **Critical comments and recommendations**

As one of the reviewers for Dr Parusheva's book, I've already had the opportunity to share my comments and notes with her. They have been properly considered in the final version and I have nothing to add. I have not identified any instances of plagiarism and have no conflicts of interest.

The self-evaluation contributions are precisely formulated. The comprehensive body of academic research and teaching activities reflected in the documents, with which I have had the privilege of collegial acquaintance, undeniably demonstrates the qualities of an established scholar. Dr Parusheva has the courage and imagination to explore new

interdisciplinary areas while at the same time maintaining a high standard of academic excellence.

## **CONCLUSION**

After a thorough review of the materials and academic works submitted as part of this procedure, including an assessment of their significance and the academic contributions they contain, I am confident that a positive assessment is justified. I recommend that the Scientific Jury prepare a report and a proposal to be presented to the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Philosophy and History. This proposal should endorse the election of Assoc. Prof. Dobrinka Parusheva, PhD to the academic position of "Professor" at Paisii Hilendarski University in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field 3.1. Sociology, Anthropology and Cultural Studies (Cultural Studies - Historical Anthropology of Political Culture

29. 09. 2023 г.

Opinion: ..... (signature)

Assoc. Prof. Meglena Zlatkova