

**SCIENTIFIC PRIORITIES OF THE DEPARTMENT  
"SOCIAL WORK" AT SHUMEN UNIVERSITY  
"KONSTANTIN BISHOP OF PRESLAV"****SONYA ILIEVA**PROFESSOR DSC  
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**ABSTRACT:** THE CURRENT ARTICLE MAKES A REVIEW ON THE SCIENTIFIC PRODUCTION OF THE ACADEMIC STAFF OF THE DEPARTMENT WHICH HAS DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS: SOCIAL SERVICES IN BULGARIA, MIGRATION AND MIGRANTS, LONG-TERM PROGNOSIS IN THE SOCIAL FIELD, CHILD LABOR AND ITS DIMENSIONS, REPUTATION MANAGEMENT, ART THERAPY AND THERAPEUTIC PRACTICES AMONG INSTITUTIONALIZED CHILDREN, PHILOSOPHICAL AND SOCIAL ASPECTS OF SOCIAL WORK, ETC. THE DEPARTMENT WORKS ON ACTUAL SCIENTIFIC PROBLEMS, RELATED TO THE PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF THE SOCIAL ACTIVITIES. THE ACHIEVED RESULTS INFLUENCE DIRECTLY TO THE TEACHING PROCESS AND IMPROVE ITS QUALITY.

**KEY WORDS:** MIGRATION, MIGRANTS, SOCIAL PEDAGOGY, LONG-TERM PLANNING, THE DELPHI METHOD, CHILD LABOR, SOCIALIZATION, EXPLOITATION, REPUTATION, ART THERAPY, PHILOSOPHY, RELIGION, SOCIAL WORK

**THE** development of the professional field Social Work at Shumen University "Konstantin Bishop of Preslav" refers to the educational services in the social sphere, which are aimed at global, national and regional objectives, retaining and developing the traditions of a region with entangled ethnic and religious cultures. This training is carried out with a spirit of tolerance and support for layers and groups with special social needs and interests. It is directed toward social security and protection of citizens in the society. Overall, the educational activity of the department is aimed at maintaining social cohesion in the region and the country through understanding of the social processes during the way of fundamental interdisciplinary training and dissemination of knowledge in the social community. The students' training from specialty Social Activities corresponds to strengthening of the democratic traditions, humanization of the society and the accession to the European Community by adopting the European educational standards in the field of education in social work.

**IN** this context the academic staff's works and state-of-the-art scientific problems relate to the theory and practical improvement of the social activities. The achieved results influence directly the learning process and improve its quality. The main areas in which lecturers of Department "Social Work" Shumen University "Konstantin Bishop of Preslav" refers work are:

**THE** sustainable lead in the scientific harmony of the department is given by the head of the department **PROFESSOR DSC GEORGI KOLEV** – the first Bulgarian habilitated lecturer in Social Pedagogy. He directs his research towards the development of the field in the direction to provision of full social support for the people that need it (child or adult), with a view to improve the social integration of all members of the modern society. According to him it should provide generalized system of knowledge for all types of social work, not only for the social education aimed at a "return" in society of children and young people, strayed from the "right" way of development [33], [34], [35].

**MEANWHILE** G. Kolev develops significant theoretical and methodological issues related to occurring globally migration processes and conceptualizes ways of its regulation [30], based on the regulations in the international plan [31]. In his scientific work the author thoroughly examines the international policy on migration and migrants of the European countries [32].

**NOWADAYS** when in Bulgaria are running powerful migration flows from small towns to big cities and when these processes are amplified within the range of the European Union, the scientific assessments and analyzes [36], [37], [38] of G. Kolev sound extremely accurate and current.

FULL DESCRIPTION OF HIS SCIENTIFIC WORKS IS AVAILABLE [HERE](#)

**THE** research priorities of **PROFESSOR DSC SONYA BORISOVA ILIEVA** are in two scientific fields: The Sociology as a science; Long-term prognosis of the social field.

**DEVELOPING** the general and theoretical aspects of sociology as a science the writer systematizes its genesis in a compendium designed for the taught by her students.[18] Pointed in that direction S. Ilieva arranges the sociology as a fan of paradigms [16], which is her significant and unique contribution to the understanding of sociology as a poly-paradigm science.

**IN** private -sociological aspects are presented the author's studies in the field of modernization of democracy as a merito-democracy[19].

**IN** order to bring together the sociological knowledge to near to the students' understanding concepts, deeply aware of her responsibilities as a teacher, S. Ilieva writes a textbook in which she presents from an etymological and terminological angle the basic concepts related to social and sociological knowledge [17].

**IN** recent years S. Ilieva focused her interest on the potential for long-term forecasting in the social sphere through the Delphi method. Together with a small but ambitious team from the Department of "Social Work", including both teachers and students, for the first time in Bulgaria, she probed in full components the conventional Delphi method to the needs of the social work [11], [12], [13].

**THE** author develops further her ideas in the listed monographs in other publications. [14], [15], [20], [21]

FULL IDEA OF HER SCIENTIFIC WORK MAY BE OBTAINED [HERE](#)

**THE** extremely valuable scientific works of **ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR PHD NIKOLAY NIKOLOV** in the social dimensions of child labor. He studies, explores and analyzes the socio-pedagogical attributes and ethnic aspects on the basis of large-scale socio-pedagogical

empirical research in Shumen region. Socio-pedagogical characteristics of child labor are important for the whole country, ethnic ones are mandatory for areas with mixed population, such as the region of his survey. In this study are reported rapid economic and social transformations in the society in the recent years that changed the majority of people psychologically as well as their values.

A significant part of people proved unprepared for the dynamic course of events, an active search for a way out of crisis situations, removal of exit strategies from them [45, p.6]. In this way the author writes [45, p.9]: *"In practice, it turns out that the problem of working children is not only a problem of the countries, of the so called "Third World", it exists in countries with relatively high levels of economic development and democracy."*

COMPLETING his important theoretical and applied work "Child labor - socialization or exploitation" N. Nikolov summarizes [45 p. 188]: *"The analysis of the results of the study strongly suggests that child labor exists as a problem within the research area. You can make an assumption about the existence of this phenomenon in other regions with multi-ethnic composition, with dimensions similar or close to those parameters ..."*

IN socio-pedagogical aspect the child labor should be seen in its dual character. Such a finding appears based on the specific characteristics in terms of the inability to place a fixed boundary between utility and damage. On one hand it is a factor in education, socialization and integration of children with a view to their full social inclusion and development. On the other hand, when it is inappropriate in nature, duration and intensity, or forced into the worst forms of manifestation, it is a threat to the health, the physical and the mental development of children. Then the child labour has exploiting nature. "

IN more details, the author also mentioned that, as presented in his scientific research to the social perspective of adolescents in terms of the relation "macroeconomics - children" [48], tolerance and public education to resignation of Bulgarian children [49], the impact of unregulated work on the anatomy and physiology of the child [50], the specific educational needs of children of different ethnic groups [51], etc.

AS one of the main teachers of social work N. Nikolov focuses on the system for social support [46]. It identifies the causes and conditions that suggest its emerging. At the same time he interprets the structure, the functions and the parameters of its operation. He makes a description of the performed activities and carries out the analysis of the methodology for their application [46, p.3].

THE author states that [46 p.30]: *"The objectives of social assistance aimed at strengthening and development of social solidarity and the creation of a safety net to alleviate poverty, to meet the needs and satisfaction of the claims of the poorest households. Therefore as an object of assistance should be defined the people which without public intervention can not meet their basic needs. In a more narrower sense, social assistance aims to meet the needs of these groups, that for objective reasons are not able to exercise their right to work such as the elderly, the disabled and the children."*

THE socio-demographic problems with their challenges to public policy are not left out of his focus [47]. He writes [47, p.4]: *"The need for the study and analysis of socio-demographic problems in the country stems from the needs of social policy, whose relevance needs no justification. In terms of transition to a market economy, besides the motivating function, the stabilizing function of social policy comes upfront, which has become an important factor of life satisfaction and social needs of the population on one hand and on the*

*other the control of the social consequences. Therefore scientifically sound social policy provides an opportunity to improve the lifestyle of the people."*

**I**N this context N. Nikolov examines the social-demographic problems related to families, birth rate and fertility, marriage and divorce, healthcare, etc [47, p.6-232].

ALL WORKS RELATED TO THE SCIENTIFIC PRIORITIES OF N. NIKOLOV IS AVAILABLE [HERE](#)

**ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR PHD PAVLINA LAZAROVA** is the only psychologist in the department. She has a special interest in dissociative experiences of the elderly, as a specific part of social work [41]. She makes multiethnic scientific section of these dissociative experiences, taking into account that [41, p.5]: *"Bulgaria is a multiethnic country where for centuries coexist Bulgarians, Turks, Roma, Armenians, Jews and other nationalities. Globalization and the variety of social choices that the Bulgarian society must make in the course of its transformation into a modern European society update the questions about the place of the national identity in the everyday life of the Bulgarians."*

**FURTHER**, the author points to the following interpretation of the problem [41, p.15]: *"One of the main analytical functions of the concept of national character in the person-centered approach is that this concept makes it possible to determine the role of psychological factors in the creation and modification of social patterns. These factors should be identified as dominant behavior, not as its forms. They must have a certain stability and resistance changes. Thus, the definition of national character as a field of research of personality - centered approach is based on the concept of the individual as a relatively stable system of dispositions and ways of functioning."*

**AS** a psychologist P. Lazarova centres her scientific interest on the psychological characteristics of students from the university where she works [41], [42]. Examining their characterological features she concludes [42, p.141]: *"Students are balanced, concealing feelings and emotions, calmly accept criticism and comments, if they are not excessive. They have their own opinion in many issues, and try to resist it. They tend to cooperate and to compromise rather than to rival."*

**FORMALLY** investigating the dynamic properties of the student the author summarizes [43 p.162], *"reported are six differential types of temperament in the psychomotor, intellectual and communicative sphere: choleric, sanguine, mixed low-emotional type, mixed highly emotional type, mixed high active type and unspecified type ... In the studied group of students we observed the nine common types of temperament."*

**AS** a continuation of her work she gives more light in other publications [40].

**P.** Lazarova conducts research related to knowledge and attitudes of students on drug problem [44]. Analyzing the results of her empirical studies she wrote [44, p.5]: *"Drug addiction is not the only disease in the usual meaning, it is not simply a vice inherent in healthy people. Drug addiction is total, affecting all aspects of the inner world, relations with other people and ways of existence / damage of the individual in most cases accompanied by complications of physical health. Man walking on the path of addiction gradually destroys his best moral qualities, becomes not completely normal mentally, loses friends left without work, brings misery to themselves and people around him, slowly destroying his body. "*

A LIST OF HER RESEARCH WORKS IS AVAILABLE [HERE](#)

**ONE** of the major areas of scientific research of **SENIOR ASSISTANT PHD DORA KABAKCHIEVA**, corresponded with her functions as an excellent PR of Shumen University is the Reputational Management [23]. In her dissertation work *Building Institutional Reputation. Problems and Information Effects*, she attempted to fill, at least partially, one so far untapped niche in the study of institutional reputation. The author brings her own definition of that, unexplored in the Bulgarian science construct: *"Reputation is a set of value characteristics perceived by various stakeholders (customers, partners, employees, officers, authorities, media, etc.) under the influence of the received information about various aspects of the business, rationalized in the light of past experience, values, norms and generally accepted moral principles and defining substantially the attitude of these groups and their activities against this institution."* [23, p.10].

**THE** author's thesis states that reputation is the necessary bridge between the organization and its stakeholders. It turns past, present and future actions in understandable and readable information signals, translating them into the language of each group. Her statements on the issues raised D. Kabakchieva further develops in her students' study aids *"Reputation Management"* [24].

**ANOTHER** direction of her scientific works is related to the holidays in the community as a form of social communication [25 p.118]: *„The analysis of the social and communicative essence of the holiday consolidates the leading role of the social communication in turning the event from a sample of the cultural expression in a cultural artefact. Dynamic condition for this conversion is the creative component of the holiday. Set of input values and meanings demonstrated in a creative process and is created by all the festive communication during deployment and immediate socio-cultural dialogue, the result of which is the formation of hyper reality."*

**D.** Kabakchieva interpretes as Event Management [26 p.72] *"specific academic and professional field-based skills and competencies of the various areas of knowledge, focused mainly on the study of the coordination and management of communication flows."*

**THE** research interests of D. Kabakchieva on generational theory are also with a starting point - social communication [27]: *"Using generational theory allows to better understand the values and to build productive relationships between people, to decide disputes easy and conflicts, to develop and use different solutions. There is an obvious need to understand and adapt the theory to new forms of communication and communication in the information network society. There is a load of issues that should be addressed by specific research and analytical efforts."*

**SPECIAL** attention in her research studies D. Kabakchieva gives to the information as a strategic objective and the management of information signals [29]: *"The strategic location in the system of the occurred interconnections and exchange of information are crucial for the progress of the organization and the prestige and good reputation depend primarily on the development and quality of its information links and information activity."* Information according to the author's understanding [29, p.291] *"intangible and most convertible equivalent in building and maintaining the relationships that ensure the existence of any system."*

**THE** author defends her interesting ideas in a publication related to conflicts between generations [28].

ARE AVAILABLE [HERE](#)

**ONE** of the most interesting areas of scientific work of the Department of "Social Work" is a scientific priority of the **SENIOR ASSISTANT PHD ZHIVKO ZHECHEV**. He developed his research towards the usage of art in stimulating social activity of people and particularly children in social institutions, to correct the negative conditions that limit their socialization. According to him, in the presence of these conditions occurs a contradiction between opportunities for the child and the specifics for full inclusion in the society in terms of the following [3, p.3]: *"the needs of modern society and the limited capacity of social institutions to educate and develop the whole figures available in their conditions; availability of practical application of art as a tool for social development of the individual in the early stages of ontogenesis; Art therapy feasibility of self direction in corrections and stimulating social activity of institutionalized children."*

**ZH.** Zhechev presents in his scientific work the main factors shaping the social activity of children placed in institutions that can be identified in the following three interrelated groups [3 p.18-19]:

1. *"Individual personality factors - gender and age characteristics, psychophysical properties of the system needs and value orientation of children, motives, attitudes and interests, educational level."*

2. *Factors of micro-environment - the general, objective social conditions of children belonging to a particular social group, objective accessibility of means of activity, the legislative basis for the various types of activity."*

3. *Factors of macro-environment - common, objective social conditions - historical traditions, socio-cultural characteristics, economic, political and ideological conditions. "*

**THE** author defines the basic problems of socialization mechanisms though some important interpretations [3 p.23]: the problem of integration in social integrity in the functionalist sociological tradition of Durkheim E. and T. Parsons; reflexivity of their image - in social inter actionists' concept of G. H. Mead; subjective point of view as socially constructed and socially constructing - in phenomenological interpretation of P. Berger and T. Luckmann; to explore the symbolic struggles in the field of institutional care for children in the relationship between their practices and representations between objective structures and subjective experience set in strategies for socialization, it introduces the concepts of life chances and social success of P. Bourdieu.

**ZH.** Zhechev displays theses regarding the successful socialization of children residing in institutions, which can be studied in social and life skills that they have acquired as a result of their social activity (understood in the broadest sense) [4 p.53 ] 'ability to care for himself (hygiene and appearance); developing a realistic self-image / self-own-confidence skills; relative autonomy - to make decisions and take responsibility for them; practical knowledge to communicate with others and living spaces of various types; knowledge and respect for social prescriptions (rules and regulations); build a realistic picture of their position (self-sufficient / reliant on authorities), etc.

**IN** his in-depth monograph Zh. Zhechev examines in detail the types of art therapy applied in working with children as institutional and concludes [4 p.140]: *"Art therapy as a type of social activity and socialization mechanism in children is associated with stimulation of the creative impulse that helps them to be aware of these motives, needs, feelings, desires*

*and your self-image. The very impulse to paint, work with text or other activities related to art, provoke social activity of the child, it activates its psychic powers, which supports emotional recovery and inclusion in the surrounding world ..."*

**IN** his research and the rich practical experience of the scientific researcher and a favorite for the students teacher Zh. Zhechev shares his practical experience in multiple publications dedicated to the influence of art therapy on children's socialization and social activity[5], [6], [7], [8], [9], [10].

FULL LIST OF HIS SCIENTIFIC MESSAGES IS AVAILABLE [HERE](#).

**THE** work of the unique specialist of the department **SENIOR ASSISTANT PHD MILOSLAVA YANKOVA**, aims to interpret the socio-philosophical and religious theories in the light of social work. She writes [52, p.4]: *"Modern man needs a wider horizon. Modern lifestyle requires people with rich interests and knowledge. It is necessary for the modern person to have values. The society in which we live requires priority for inclusion in the knowledge and value-released - meaningful component whose main elements are ethical and religious."* Reflecting further the author says [52, p.5]: The ethical and the religious in a large degree reflect the spiritual quest of the man. They are two separate essential forms of its realization as a human being, and the relationship between them and its direction can be the basis of scientific and life position.

**IN** the process of deepening her theoretical searches M. Yankova affects the idea of religious values in the context of modern, unified European society. In this relation she writes: *"Ethic and religious ideas and values have a large load of meaning in contemporary European society. They can serve as a basis on which to form their views for the foundations of the educational and training process, and the manner of their practical realization. So to a certain degree they could neutralize the spiritual, particularly ethical and religious value deficit in the society."*

**PUTTING** the idea of otherness in the aspect of social work the author states [54, p.264]: *"The very pressing problem of otherness and others in various dimensions can find its practical manifestations in the family, education, educational and social institutions through its social and pedagogical aspects."*

**LOOKING** for the lost values M. Yankova postulates that [53, p.258]: There is a need for moral collateral to those values and ideals, without which is impossible to continue the existence of humanity, nature and even the entire planet. Direct expression of this concern the postmodern ethical ideas of responsibility.

**THE** researcher and lecturer M. Yankova makes a series of temporal and semantic bridges between philosophers- classic authors, and their interpretation in modern times, respectively, in the social sphere of the society. For example, referring to Derrida she concluded [54 p.374-375] *"Morality in its pure form stays above all accounts, conscious and unconscious, all purposes, all compensation plans or new appropriation. This sense suggests that we should go beyond the obligations as a debt. Obligation shall not be liable for anything it shall not be bound by anything. Here comes the questioning of the existence of an obligation without a debt. "*

**ANALYZING** M. Heidegger she also as assumes that in addressing the human, in this attempt to prepare people for this reversal lies a concern for the person. *"Where else is directed "the care"- he wrote - except in the direction to return the person to his or her nature?"*

[Heidegger, M. Entities, M., 1993, p.134] For the philosopher that means the man to become human. In this sense, humanity remains the responsibility of thinking for which humanity is striving and caring man to be human. Heidegger agrees that the humanity of a man lies in his nature [55, p.213].

**SIMILAR** bridges to modern times she created through the theories of Fihte [58], Solovyov [56], Berdyaev [57], Hegel [59], etc.

HER WORKS ARE AVAILABLE [HERE](#)

**THE** art spirit of the department is expressed in the readiness of the students from specialty "Social Activities" to work in different scientific areas. Their publications are published in three scientific collections, where they critically state their thoughts related to some aspects of the social reality toward children institutions and de-institutionalization [22]; to the position of the adult people in the society and the opportunities for provision of equal life [1]; to social services – today and in the future [2], etc.

**IN** this third issue of the e-journal "SocioBrains" students are presented through 12 essays, artistically creating the specific social and demographic problems of their birth places and include a futurological element: how they see their future development.

**THE** students' works are accessible in the current issue.

**AS** a conclusion it could be generalized that the scientific work of the academic staff of the Department of "Social work" at Shumen University "Konstantin Bishop of Preslav" develop state-of-the-art research problems related to the practical improvement of the social activities. The achieved scientific results directly influence the learning process and improve its quality. The scientific works manifested in the development of scientific projects, monographs, studies, textbooks, articles and studying aids marks its growth and enlargement of the developed problems.

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