R E V I E W

for the scientific production of Senior Assistant Professor Boris Plamenov Boev, PhD, candidate for the academic position of "associate professor" in the field of higher education 2. Humanities, professional field 2.2. History and Archaeology, scientific specialty Historical Demography – Legislation in the field of migration policy between the two world wars, published in the State Gazette, No. 92 of October 31, 2025, announced for the needs of the "Historical Demography" section of the "Demography" department of the Institute for Population and Human Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

by Prof. Iskra Baeva, PhD, Lecturer in Contemporary History at the Faculty of History, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"

1. Information about the contest

The competition for associate professor, in which Senior Assistant Professor Boris Boev is the only candidate, is for the needs of the Historical Demography Section of the Demography Department at the Institute for Population and Human Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. The decision to announce the competition was made after discussion of the habilitation thesis of Senior Assistant Professor Boris Boev at a meeting of the section. The competition was announced in issue No. 92 of the State Gazette on October 31, 2025.

2. Personal data of the contest participant

Boris Plamenov Boev was born on June 21, 1984, in Sofia. After graduating from IX French Language High School "Alphonse de Lamartine" in 2003, he enrolled in the history program at Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski, graduating in 2007 with a bachelor's degree in history and a teaching certificate. He continued his education in the master's program in New and Contemporary Bulgarian History, graduating in 2012. He continued his education in the master's program in Modern and Contemporary Bulgarian History, which he completed in 2012. He applied for and won a doctoral competition and, since the beginning of 2013, has been enrolled as a regular doctoral student in the Department of Bulgarian History with Assoc. Prof. Tsveta Todorova, PhD, as his academic supervisor. On May 12, 2017, he defended his dissertation on "Student Organizations and Movements in Bulgaria (1931–1939)" in the professional field 2.2.

History and Archaeology (History of Bulgaria – Modern Bulgarian History (1878–1944)), as a result of which he was awarded the academic and educational degree of "Doctor."

As part of a postdoctoral program from June 2028 to June 2019, Boris Boev specialized with an individual scholarship named after Prof. Ivan Duychev at the Center for Slavic-Byzantine Studies "Prof. Ivan Duychev" at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".

Since mid-2019, Boris Boev has been working at the Institute for Population and Human Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, where he was appointed senior assistant and continues to work as such to this day. According to the official certificate from the institute, senior assistant Boris Boev has 6 years and 7 months of work experience.

3. Fulfilling the requirements for the academic position

Boris Boev, PhD, meets the requirements for the academic position of "associate professor" because he holds a doctoral degree in science and education; he has held the academic position of senior assistant for more than 6 years; has submitted a habilitation thesis on "Migration Policy in Bulgarian Legislation between the Two World Wars (1919-1939)", which does not repeat the topic of his dissertation and has been published by the Academic Publishing House "Prof. Marin Drinov"; has submitted a report on the minimum national requirements and the special requirements of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences; has also submitted a document for verification of plagiarism, which has not been found.

5. Characteristics of the presented scientific publications

Senior Assistant Professor Boris Boev is participating in the competition for the position of associate professor with a habilitation thesis, 12 articles, and 4 studies devoted to demographic and other issues in modern Bulgarian history.

The most important factor in assessing the research qualities of Boris Boev is undoubtedly his habilitation thesis "Migration Policy in Bulgarian Legislation between the Two World Wars (1919-1939)" (Published by the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Prof. Marin Drinov, 2025, ISBN 978-619-245-584-2), so I will focus on it in more detail.

As stated in the title, the monograph is devoted to one aspect of legislation in the Kingdom of Bulgaria during the turbulent interwar period, dealing with various aspects not only of migration policy, but also the efforts to settle refugees and migrants, as well as the

construction of housing in large cities. In this way, the main theme of the monograph by Senior Assistant Professor Boris Boev fully corresponds to the specific nature of the Institute for Population and Human Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. A central place in the book is given to the presentation of a particularly painful problem for our country, namely the tens of thousands of Bulgarian refugees from neighboring countries (it is for them that the migration legislation was created), a result of the wars lost by Bulgaria in the second decade of the century.

Senior Assistant Professor Boris Boev has written a monograph comprising 198 printed pages. Given the specific nature of the research, which focuses on legislation, Boris Boev used the State Gazette published over a period of 23 years as the main documentary basis for his book. The second most important documentary source is the transcripts of the sessions of the National Assembly over a period of 10 years, to which he has added two thematic appendices. Since Boris Boev researched not only immigration but also emigration, he also used the memoirs of four Bulgarian emigrants—three from Argentina and one from the United States. As for the scientific literature, it comprises 106 items, but presents both purely historical studies and legislative and demographic ones, which is specific to the book.

The author has structured his habilitation thesis into three chapters, each of which presents the legislation in three different areas of demographic challenges faced by Bulgaria in the interwar period. The first chapter, "Immigration Policy in Bulgarian Legislation – Legal Regulation of the Refugee Issue (1919–1939)," is devoted to the most painful issue of refugees seeking refuge in Bulgaria from the repression they have been subjected to or fear after their homelands have been taken over by other countries. The second chapter, "Emigration Policy in Bulgarian Legislation (1919–1939): Concepts, Measures, and Means for Its Resolution," deals with legislation concerning the reverse process—the emigration of Bulgarians for economic or political reasons to countries near and far. The last, third chapter, "Internal Migration and Urbanization Policy in the Context of Bulgarian Legislation (1919–1939). Concepts, measures, and means for their implementation," is to some extent removed from the external demographic issues related to people entering and leaving the country, as it is devoted to the movement of Bulgarians within the country, but also to the state's efforts to solve their problems, first and foremost among which is the housing issue due to the ever-growing population of larger cities, especially Sofia.

Assoc. Prof. Boris Boev has formulated the aim of his research as follows: "*to clarify the concept of the Bulgarian state's migration policy in the period between the two world wars (1919–1939), based on the legislative measures adopted and the means for their implementation*" (p. 9). It confirms the chosen historical approach to trace the problems that gave rise to the legislation, the motives with which the sponsors proposed the draft laws, and to seek the results of the adopted laws. The author also outlined three tasks for his research, which are in the field of searching for concepts in Bulgarian policy in the three selected areas: refugees, emigration, and internal migration. He also justified the use and significance of concepts such as concept and measures, as well as the methodology he used. Boris Boev has also presented a sufficiently convincing demographic review of the literature on the selected issues on which he bases his research. He has not only given credit to his predecessors, but has also managed to distinguish his place among them.

The main part of the book quite deservedly begins with the attempts of the Bulgarian state to cope with the enormous refugee problem caused by the two national catastrophes experienced by Bulgaria in the second decade of the 20th century. In it, Boris Boev traces the attempts of two governments with very different political orientations (one led by the Bulgarian Agrarian National Union and the other by the Democratic Agreement) to provide thousands of refugees with living conditions and livelihoods in Bulgaria. He carefully traces the parliamentary debates on the fundamental question of whether the refugees should settle permanently in Bulgaria or whether it would be better to seek opportunities for them to return to their homelands, as well as on whether the Bulgarian state has the means to assist them and how this should be done. The author pays special attention to the refugee loan guaranteed by the League of Nations, presenting the various points of view not only on the refugee issue, but also on the activities of this first-of-its-kind global organization. Boris Boev does not act as an impartial narrator and analyst, but also takes a position on the different points of view. One of the main conclusions of the first chapter, though bitter, is accurate: that the Bulgarian state is unable to settle refugees on its own and is forced to do so under foreign control and according to external requirements (p. 80).

The second chapter of the book is devoted to the reverse process: the policy of the Bulgarian state towards those of its citizens who want to leave the country temporarily or permanently, in other words, towards emigration. Unlike the problems of refugees discussed in

the first chapter, in the case of emigrants the choice is personal, even when it is not entirely voluntary but semi-compulsory (in cases of economic and political emigration). In this chapter, the task of Boris Boev is easier, as he has taken the legislation from before the war period as his starting point, and then builds on it with an analysis of the amendments to this legislation during the interwar period. At the same time, this chapter is also the most detailed due to the diversity of the motives and nature of the different groups of emigrants – permanent or seasonal, overseas, European or Balkan, etc. By tracing not only the legislation but also the historical and demographic problems of interwar Bulgaria, the author has come to the general conclusion that the efforts of the Bulgarian state were directed towards preserving the country's demographic potential. His other conclusion is that the state's emigration policy was pragmatic, flexible, and moderate.

Boris Boev PhD examines entirely different demographic issues in the third chapter of his habilitation thesis, namely attempts to regulate internal migration by law and the related urbanization policy of the state. In this part of his study, the author again attempts to present his point of view, at times ecological and social, on state policy regarding the systematic resettlement of the country's population, the preservation of agricultural productivity through sustainable farming, and attempts to solve the housing problems of large cities through mass construction, especially in Sofia, where the number of homeless people is highest. It becomes clear how difficult it is to trace attempts to solve social problems through legislative action. To achieve this, the author traces the ideological positions of representatives of the various parties in the National Assembly when laws are discussed and adopted. In this chapter, as in the entire book, Boris Boev's idea of opposing the left-wing social views of the representatives of the Bulgarian Agrarian National Union (BZNS) to the right-wing proprietary tendencies implemented by the right-wing parties, whether they are from the People's Agreement, the Democratic Agreement, the Nineteenth of Mayists, etc., can be clearly traced. The author's conclusions about Bulgarian politics in this area are similar—that the state has tried to avoid "*radical and hasty decisions, relying instead on moderation, flexibility, and socio-economic measures and incentives*" (p. 174).

My overall assessment of the monograph by Assoc. Prof. Boris Boev is that the choice of topic, the formulation of the main issues reflected in the structure of the book, the analysis of demographic trends and the attempts of various governments to resolve them through legislation

in the two interwar decades have yielded very good results. These are my main reasons for concluding that the book "Migration Policy in Bulgarian Legislation between the Two World Wars (1919-1939)" meets all the requirements for a habilitation thesis.

Of the other publications with which Dr. Boris Boev is participating in the competition, I would place those related to the field in which he is applying for professional development in first place. These are the articles and studies: "Sofia Students' Temperance Society – Establishment and Activity in Relation to the Reduction of Population Mortality in Bulgaria (1922-1939)," published in the journal "Population," 2020, No. 3, pp. 477-487; "Concepts for Resolving the Bulgarian Refugee Issue in the Context of the Creation of the Law on Agricultural Settlement of Refugees in 1926," published in the collection "Migrations, Communities, and Cultural-Historical Heritage," 2021, pp. 287-310; "Measures for resolving the Bulgarian refugee issue and means for their implementation in the context of the Law on the Settlement of Refugees and Securing Their Livelihood (1920–1937)," published in the collection Migration and Social Development, Sofia, 2022, pp. 108–134; "The Law on the Agricultural Settlement of Refugees – Measures for Resolving the Refugee Question and Means for Their Implementation (1926–1937)." Izvestiya of the Historical Museum–Kyustendil, Vol. 23, 2023, pp. 385-400; "The Refugee Loan Act of 1926 and the Concept of Resettlement of Bulgarian Refugees," published in "The Balkans – Language, History, Culture," Vol. 8, 2023, No. 1; "Concepts for Resolving the Bulgarian Refugee Question in the Context of the Creation, Amendments, and Additions to the Law on the Settlement of Refugees and Securing Their Livelihood (1920–1928)," published in 2024 in the journal Epochi, Vol. 32, No. 2, pp. 438–457; "The Emigration Issue in Bulgarian Legislation (1919-1939) – Concepts, Measures, and Means for Its Resolution. Demographic Problems Through the Centuries – Dimensions and Perspectives," published in a collection of reports from the National Scientific Conference with International Participation, Vidin, 2024, pp. 117-152. They show how Boris Boev researched various aspects of demographic policy before compiling, summarizing, and developing them in his habilitation thesis.

Several publications by contest participant Boris Boev, which are not related to the subject matter of his habilitation thesis, are also worthy of attention. First and foremost is the book “Love of Science, Love of the People. Student Organizations and Associations in Bulgaria (1931-1939)”, published in 2018, which is a development of his dissertation. It is impressive that this book has obviously helped Boris Boev focus on the interwar period and social problems.

Other similar publications include: "The Munich Agreement of 1938" in the journal "Ponedelnik," 2018, No. 9-10, pp. 127-137; "There Were Puddles of Blood...": Student Protests Against Alexander Tsankov and Their Reflection in Parliamentary Debates (December 16-18, 1931) in the journal Istorichesko Budezhte (Historical Future), 2018, No. 1-2, pp. 49-64; "Bulgarian 'orchestrated democracy' (1937-1939) in the diary of Vasil Mitakov" in the journal "Ponedelnik," 2019, No. 1-2, pp. 131-135; "Accused of inciting enmity and hatred. Legal persecution of Bulgarian students in the 1930s" in the journal "Historical Review," 2019, No. 1, pp. 85-109; "Good University Conservatism"? The Academic Council and Students in the 1930s" in the journal Minalo, 2020, No. 1, pp. 67-82. All of them are dedicated to important moments in Bulgaria's political development in the 1930s, but also to other important European events from the same period. All of them are devoted to important moments in the political development of Bulgaria in the 1930s, but also to other important European events from the same period.

The publications accompanying the habilitation thesis of Boris Boev demonstrate the development of his scientific interests from the socio-political history of Bulgaria in the interwar period to ethno-demographic issues.

6. Evaluation of the candidate's scientific contributions

The monograph by Boris Boev, PhD, gives readers an opportunity to learn about the multifaceted efforts of Bulgarian governments during the interwar period to solve Bulgaria's demographic problems, which had worsened after the two national catastrophes. He has chosen parliamentary debates and the resulting legislation as the basis for his demographic research, but has also drawn on his basic historical education and his ability to perform historical analysis, placing the laws on refugees, emigration, and internal migration in the context of the historical challenges facing Bulgaria during this period. I confirm the author's outlined contributions to the work. He has made a successful attempt to comprehensively examine migration legislation, formulated the state concept for solving demographic problems, outlined the results in a historical context by tracing the measures and means for implementing the concept, He has also examined some laws that have so far remained outside the scope of scientific interest and has succeeded in revealing the motives and ideological orientation of the politicians who participated in the parliamentary discussions on the adoption of demographic legislation.

Further contributions could be sought, but my overall conclusion is that, on the whole, the scientific output of Boris Boev is of a contributory nature.

7. Critical remarks and recommendations to the candidate in the competition

My positive assessment of the habilitation thesis of Senior Assistant Professor Boris Boev does not mean that it, like any human creation, is free of inaccuracies. In this case, they are insignificant, but they deserve to be mentioned in view of my colleague's future work.

It seems to me that when discussing the rights of Bulgarians who remained in other countries after the Treaty of Neuilly (pp. 35-36), the author could have referred to the Treaty on the Rights of Minorities, signed in Paris on June 28, 1919, or at least explained why it was not respected by our neighbors.

Perhaps, when talking about the danger of the radicalization of refugees, which leads them to communism, the danger of extreme nationalism should also be mentioned (p. 37).

Despite our northern neighbor's desire to belong to another European region, Romania is still in the Balkans, not in Central Europe (p. 100).

I also disagree with the author's thesis, following that of Y. Kallchev from Ruse, that gardening (the seasonal labor migration of vegetable growers from Northern Bulgaria to neighboring or nearby countries) poses a demographic threat to Bulgaria (p. 125). It is true that quite a few gardeners remain in the countries where they put their skills to use in the spring and summer, but this only happened after the borders were closed after World War II, which made their seasonal movement impossible.

As can be seen, my comments and disagreements are quite minor and in no way change my overall high assessment of the monograph by Boris Boev, PhD.

8. Evaluation of the scientific indicators

The scientometric indicators of Boris Boev show that he meets the national requirements for the academic position of "associate professor" in the field of higher education 2. Humanities, professional field 2.2. History and Archaeology, scientific specialty Historical Demography, as defined in the Regulations for the Implementation of the ZRASRB. He has a defended dissertation (group A – 50 points), a habilitation thesis, with which he participates in the competition (Group B – 100 points), publications in refereed and indexed publications, as well as

in non-refereed publications (Group C, indicator 6 – 30 points; indicator 7 – 70 points; indicator 9 – 60 points = total 160 points), as well as citations of his publications (Group D – 70 points). The total number is 380 points.

8. Conclusion

The analysis of the habilitation thesis of Senior Assistant Professor Boris Boev, the review of his other publications, as well as my positive personal scientific contacts with him over the years give me every reason to recommend to the scientific jury that Senior Assistant Professor Boris Boev be awarded the academic position of "associate professor" in the field of higher education 2. Humanities, professional direction 2.2. Boris Boev be awarded the academic position of "associate professor" in the field of higher education 2. Humanities, professional field 2.2. History and Archaeology, scientific specialty Historical Demography – Legislation in the field of migration policy between the two world wars, for the needs of the "Historical Demography" section of the "Demography" department of the Institute for Population and Human Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

I hereby declare that I will vote in favour of awarding the academic position of "associate professor" to Senior Assistant Professor Boris Boev, PhD.

February 2, 2026 Reviewer:

Prof. Iskra Baeva, PhD