

OPPONENT'S REVIEW

on the **contest for the academic position of Associate Professor in professional field 3.1. Sociology, anthropology, and sciences of culture (Racialization and ethnicization of inequalities and identities in contemporary societies)**

as announced in the State Gazette, No. 58 as of September 9, 2024, for the needs of the Section of Communities and Identities in the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

Reviewer: Prof. PhD Liliana Deyanova, the St. Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia (until 2021), member of the Scientific Jury

In the announced competition for the position of 'Associate Professor', there is **one candidate** applying within the required deadline: Head Assistant Professor PhD Georgi Kirilov Medarov.

1. Educational and academic status of the applicant

Georgi Kirilov Medarov has obtained his Master's degree in 2008 in the Sussex University, UK, Department of Global Political Economy. In 2012, he was accepted as an ordinary doctoral student in the Chair of Sociology of the St. Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia. In the same University in 2017, he defended his PhD thesis on 'From liberalism to authoritarianism: the Bulgarian case'. In 2014 he was selected (and has been repeatedly selected since) as a honorary assistant professor in the Paissiy Hilendarski University of Plovdiv, and after obtaining his PhD, as a lecturer in the Chair of Sociology and Human Sciences in the same University (his seminars and lecturing courses are in Historical sociology of symbolic forms, Critical theory, Historical sociology of the economy and ecology, Biopolitics and security).

His academic growth since 2019 is related to the place he has occupied in the Section of Communities and Identities in the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, first as Assistant Professor, and later, after a contest, as Head Assistant Professor. He is a member of the Institute for Critical Theories of

Modernity, member of the editorial board of the *Heterodoxia* journal, member of the governing board of the Bulgarian Sociological Association, member of the Collective for Social Intervention and the ecological association For the Earth.

2. Description of submitted materials

For applying to the contest for the position of ‘Associate Professor’, all documents have been submitted as required by the regulations: scientific curriculum vitae of the applicant, author’s contribution moments reference, abstracts of publications presented in the contest, reference on points on minimal requirements for applying for ‘Associate Professor’, reference on participation in international venues, reference on citations. A total of 28 publications have been submitted – here included is his defended doctoral dissertation as well as the three articles required for the PhD degree, as well as the author’s habilitation monograph *Races and classes in classical and nonclassical sociology*, published in 2023 and different from the PhD thesis; two articles in periodicals that are referred and indexed in worldwide databases, one of them in co-authorship; two parts of collective monographs; 19 articles in non-refereed but peer-reviewed journals, some of the highly prestigious such as *Sociological Problems* and *Critique & Humanism* (three of these articles are in co-authorship while three of them are related to the defense of his PhD thesis and therefore I shall not take them into account in assessing the fulfillment of the minimum requirements for occupying the position of Associate Professor – but these requirements remain fulfilled nevertheless with regard to the conditions under Art. 27, para. 1 and 2, including the minimum national requirements under Art. 2 b, para. 2 and 3 of the Development of Academic Staff Act of the Republic of Bulgaria, respectively of the requirements under Art. 2 b, para. 5 of the same Act, as well as the requirements of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology for occupying the academic position of ‘Associate Professor’. G. Medarov has submitted correspondent division protocols for the collective publications where one can clearly determine his participation in writing them. A large part of publications are in English, published both abroad and in Bulgaria.

I would note here also the presented list or participations in projects and especially those that are directly related to the problematic of the habilitation and the

requirements for the position – the individual project *Racialization and the Interplay of Roma Inclusion (Exclusion in Post-Socialist Bulgaria)* (2021-2023) that Medarov has won within a programme of the Centre for Academic Studies (Lost in Transition: Social Sciences, Scenarios of Transformation, and Cognitive Dissonances in East Central Europe after 1989). Indicative in this respect are also his other projects financed by prestigious national and international institutions such as the Ministry of Education and Science, the National Science Fund, the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, the Development of Human Resources Operative Programme co-funded by the European Union.

As for the submitted materials, I would like to note the strange absence of essential publications, like e.g. an important anthology of which Georgi Medarov is the editor and which is still being used in teaching and research, and moreover it is on the problematic of social rights and inequalities, and racialization. That is the collection *Critical Looks on Human Rights* where Medarov is not just the editor but also the co-author of the long analytic preface as well as a scientific translator (indeed, this translation of classical texts is an important part of his academic and civil activity). No less strange, it seems to me, is the frivolous neglect by the applicant of his own articles, projects, quotations that would bring considerably more points to him far beyond those that he has actually submitted since even they satisfy the minimum requirements. (Just an example: his 2020 article *The new corona virus and the modern management of supermodernity* has been quoted not only in *Sociological Problems* but also in *Phainomena. Journal of Phenomenology and Hermeneutics*. 30 /116-117/ which is worldwide known and indexed in Scopus.) Thus although G. Medarov has formed his lists in accordance with the requirements on the different indicators, I cannot leave unnoticed these technical imprecisions as well as other undeserved reductions of contributions in the hastily compiled application documents.

4. Analysis of scientific publications and achievements of the applicant

A large part of the publications and contributive theses of G. Medarov are related to his long exploration of the historical forms of naturalization of inequalities in the modern era, with the effort to make a genuine historical sociology of racialization. And thus, to study the concrete regimes of racialization in Bulgaria, focusing on the Roma

communities and the way they are analysed by the different experts and social scientists. This is a topic in the largest chapter of the monograph *Races and classes in classical and nonclassical sociology* (consisting of 7 original chapters, an introduction, an extended and rich bibliography). A main question and a starting thesis of the book is why and how in the early Modernity, the emergence of class differences begins to displace the racialized rigidified forms of social difference while today it is the opposite, the racialized forms in which the social contradictions appear, become rigidified. In this monograph and in other publications of his, Medarov traces the replacement of ‘racism’ with more acceptable forms of racism in which the place of ‘race’ is taken by ‘culture’, ‘culture wars’, but this he traces the displacement of public debate from the questions of economy and politics to questions of cultural, civilizational, and racial, identities (with the de-historicizing and naturalizing of the difference itself).

The author distinguishes between general and particular regimes of racialization. This allows him to analyze the economic functionality of racialization and modern anti-Semitism as a ‘form of personalization of reified modern rational domination’. And also to distinguish, in interpreting Marx and Hannah Arendt, different forms of legally determined and practical discrimination, to thematize the tension between formal equality and empirical inequality. Some of the most original and discovering parts of the monograph are dedicated to the dialogue between W.E.B. DuBois, one of the classics of the sociologization of the race question, and Max Weber (Chapter Two). Contributive are his critiques of modernization theory, of the decolonial ‘paradigm’, the interpretation and raising of the problem of the so-called intersection approaches, etc....etc. Another group of theoretical-methodological publications are no less interesting, By new readings of classical Marxist theories and of the theory of mediators, G. Medarov develops an original reflexive theory of crisis, explaining the logic of ecologic crises as well as the modern manageability of new insecurities. (SP21)

5. Critical remarks and questions

I would like to raise a question that may come out as a recommendation. In reading the wonderful monograph *Races and classes in classical and nonclassical sociology*, rich of analyses, ideas, hypotheses, empirical cases and arguments, I felt a

kind of shortage at places – I didn't always understand with what notion of 'class' the author of the historical-sociological studies of racialization and 'regimes of racialization' works. Does this notion follow the concept of 'class' of a studied author or is it a concept of G. Medarov himself? And does it too change when e.g. the monograph stages a dialogue between Marx and Weber (such a dialogue, albeit in another key, has been staged by Schumpeter in his 'theory of classes in an *ethnically* homogenous environment' when he explains that 'the capitalist *exploits* not the worker but the entrepreneur...' – italics are mine, L. D.). And regarding that, I wonder with what concept of class G. Medarov analyzes or would analyze the racializing discourses of 'human capital' in the numerous ideological handbooks and prescriptions of 'maximizing the human capital' – of course, the 'quality human capital'. A problem also critically raised by Foucault in *The Birth of Biopolitics* when he discusses 'the theory of human capital' (by the way, he quotes Schumpeter exactly there); when he discusses in his lecture as of March 14, 1979, the 'danger quotient' of the use of the then increasing possibilities of genetics to improve that capital.

6. Personal opinion of the applicant

I know Georgi Medarov since 2008, the time of exciting scientific conferences and seminars in the University of Sofia. Coming from a British university, he preferred to become an ordinary doctoral student in the Chair of Sociology. He was brilliant, admirably erudite, moral, honorable, dialogic in his work on the dissertation, and he still is. He believes that working and thinking together is a primary value, and sociological theory is not merely academic but also a civil activity – 'a tradition of thinking concerned of the present state and the common good' (I quote from memory).

Conclusion

In summary of all that has been stated above, I wish to stress that with the presented scientific work and with his theoretical, concretely researching and teaching activities, the applicant not only satisfies the mandatory conditions of the Development of Academic Staff Act of the Republic of Bulgaria but also demonstrates the doubtless

academic, research and moral qualities necessary to occupy the academic position of Associate Professor in professional field 3.1. Sociology, anthropology, and sciences of culture.

This gives me reason to propose to the Scientific Jury, with full conviction, to take a decision in favour of electing his candidature for the announced position in the Section of Communities and Identities in the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

21.10. 2024, Sofia

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