

## STATEMENT

by Prof. DSc. Anna Mantarova,

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regarding a competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor "

professional field 3.1. Sociology, Anthropology, and Cultural Sciences,

05.11.01. Sociology

for the needs of the Communities and Identities Department,

Institute of Philosophy and Sociology,

Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

The competition was announced in the "State Gazette", 58 issue dated July 9 for the needs of the Communities and Identities Department. I was appointed as a member of the scientific jury by order ПД 09-262/11.09.2024 of the Director of the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology at Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

Documents for participation in the competition were submitted by only one candidate - Dr. Georgi Medarov, chief assistant professor in the Communities and Identities Department at the IFS at the BAS.

According to the report presented by the candidate, regarding the fulfilment of the minimal national requirements under Art. 2B of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, he meets them, including considering the corrections due to co-authorship of two of the monographs.

### **General description of the presented materials**

For his participation in the competition, the candidate Georgi Medarov submitted 28 publications. Twenty of them were issued in Bulgaria and eight - abroad. Five of the publications are co-authored and dividing protocols are presented. Twelve of the publications are from the period up to 2017, when Medarov defended his doctoral thesis.

Among the publications presented are three monographs. Medarov is the sole author of one of them - "Race and Class in Classical and Non-Classical Sociology", and the other two are collective ones,

with one and two co-authors, respectively. The candidate has submitted dividing protocols for the co-authored publications. In the collective monograph from co-authored with M. Nikolova and M. Tsoneva "Politics without politics. "Us" and "Them" in the protests and the crisis of representation" (2014), his share is one third. In the second one co-authored with Tsoneva, Hristov and Kasabov and entitled "Entrepreneurship and ghost entrepreneurs: expert knowledge, neoliberal governance and social suffering" (2015), his participation was 25%.

According to the dividing protocols, his participation in the co-authored articles and studies is 50%. The list of publications include two book reviews and one review for an International Symposium. Among the materials presented are two reviews of the candidate's works (co-authored).

The candidate also presents a list of participations in 16 international scientific forums since 2019. A total of 32 reports are listed in his biography.

### **General characteristics of the candidate's scientific, scientific-applied and pedagogical activities**

The scientific activity of G. Medarov is quite diverse - both research and teaching. Research definitely dominates. At the same time, he is a part-time teacher in the Department of Sociology and Human Sciences of the Plovdiv University Paisii Hilendarski, where he leads several disciplines.

Georgi Medarov is also active in various NGOs. He is a member of the "Institute for Critical Theories of Ultramodernity", the association "Collective for Public Interventions" (COI) and the ecological association "For the Earth", a researcher in the ecological association "For the Earth", He is a member of the board of the Bulgarian Sociological Association.

The scientific work of G. Medarov is focused not only on theoretical topics, but also on specific problems of social practice. Projects of a markedly applied nature, on which he has worked, are "Support for increasing the adaptability of employed persons and enterprises to changing economic conditions" and "The European textile strategy: challenges and opportunities for Bulgaria". The areas and aspects to which these projects relate are various - civil society, judicial system, discrimination, infrastructure financing, subcontractors, land relations, Roma integration, local holidays, entrepreneurship. In all of them, he projects the main themes that are at the center of his interests.

Historical sociology, general sociology, political economy, industrial sociology, critical theory, social and ethnic inequalities, populism can be outlined as the main areas of his work.

### **Teaching activity**

Georgi Medarov has a teaching activity at the Plovdiv University, where he gives lectures on: Biopolitics and Security, Historical Sociology of Economy and Ecology, Historical Sociology of Symbolic Forms.

### **Analysis of scientific achievements and contributions**

An essential contribution of a purely theoretical nature is the development of the concept of "racialization". G. Medarov interprets it as "representing and showing social inequalities/contradictions as originating from ethnic, cultural or civilizational differences". His latest monograph, "Race and Class in Classical and Nonclassical Sociology", is a kind of culmination in this respect. There he outlines and develops the analytical and heuristic potential of the concept and examines it in various socio-political contexts

This concept (thesis?) of his reaches is most developed and complete in his last monograph „Race and Class in Classical and Nonclassical Sociology“.

The studies of racialization both - in general in modern and late modern society and in different regimes, respectively in socialist and post-socialist Bulgaria, develop over time in a series of studies, focused on the naturalization of social inequalities. It is the theoretical understanding of the problem of the naturalization of social inequalities after the Cold War that is another contribution to sociological knowledge. In his analyses, the author traces how naturalization grows into racialization and ethnicization of inequalities and identities in modern societies. This contribution of his gradually took shape and developed in a series of publications, including those seemingly limited to very specific problems.

Following his lasting line of linking theory to social context, the author identifies and analyzes the social conditions that make the processes of naturalization and racialization possible - for example, the social conditions making it possible for everyday public narratives of the transition to liberal democracy to reinforce processes of naturalization of social inequalities. This issue is treated in a series of publications over a long period of time - "Our transition is not a transition" - uses of the concept of transition in the narratives of Shumen residents" (2013), "The Roots of Moralization of

Politics in Post-1989 Bulgaria" (2022), as well as the collective monograph "Politics without politics. Us and Them in Protest and the Crisis of Representation" (2014).

A certain aspect of this line is tracing and justifying how talking about cultural incompatibilities and differences contributes to the legitimization of the exclusion of certain groups of small entrepreneurs in post-socialist Bulgaria (the collective monograph "Entrepreneurship and Ghost Entrepreneurs: Expert Knowledge, Neoliberal Management and Social Suffering")

The connection of the general theory with specific processes and phenomena finds expression in the application of the proposed paradigm in the analysis of very specific problems - "Which Way Will the Winds Blow? Post-Privatization Water Struggles in Sofia, Bulgaria", "The new coronavirus and the modern management of ultra-modernity", "Thorny crown of labour".

A great number of publications analyzing interrelationships and interactions at the intersection between politics, economy and culture ("The crisis in public and public holidays: about the cases from Gabrovo, Varshets and Kosti" and "The global context of the local culinary holidays in Bulgaria") apply and develop his theoretical theses.

The author's interpretation of modern "culture wars" and "identity politics" is definitely a contributing point, in which, according to him, there is a shift in the public debate "from economic or political questions to questions of civilizational, cultural, geographical, racial, community and identity differences, i.e. differences and contradictions that are thought of as something that is outside of history."

In this connection, there is another contribution - a problematization of the issue of populism ("Some prerequisites for the contemporary crisis of representative democracy in Bulgaria", "When is Populism Acceptable?", "Historical context and political stakes of the discursive theory of populism"), which he sees as a negative effect of the naturalization of social inequalities and contradictions. In his publications (2013's "The Occult and the Transition" and "The Freemasons are in Parliament! A Political Economy of Conspiracies in the Judiciary"), he develops his thesis that everyday narratives of the "failed Transition" permeate official political discourse and formalize into naturalizing representations of the social problems that fuel the rhetoric of the extreme right ("The Rhetoric of Volen Siderov and the Rise of Ataka").

### **Reflection of the candidate's scientific publications in Bulgarian and foreign literature**

The candidate has indicated 4 citations of his publications abroad - in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases with scientific information or in monographs and collective volumes

### **Critical notes**

Alongside the numerous positive assessments, the publications proposed for review naturally provoke some questions and remarks. I would recommend the candidate in his future research to concentrate on fewer areas of social life and in his analyzes to look for a wider range of objective and subjective factors generating and reproducing social inequalities.

### **Personal impressions**

I have not personally worked with the candidate and have no personal impressions. My opinion is formed exclusively by his publications. But in the collegium he uses the name of a hard-working and competent researcher.

### **Conclusion**

Taking into account the research and teaching activities of the candidate, his achievements and contributions of a theoretical and applied nature, I consider that they fully meet all the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, therefore, I will definitely vote for Dr. Medarov to take the academic position of "Associate Professor" in a professional direction 3.1. Sociology, anthropology and cultural sciences in the Communities and Identities Department at the IPS of BAS.

October 19, 2024.

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