

STATEMENT**from**

**Prof. D.Sc. Maya Bedros Keliyan, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology at BAS,
Professional field 3. 1. Sociology, Anthropology, and Cultural Sciences
under the competition for “Associate Professor”, Professional field 3.1. Sociology,
Anthropology and Cultural Sciences (Racialization and Ethnicization of Inequalities and
Identities in Contemporary Societies), for the needs of the Department “Communities and
Identities” of the IPhS – BAS, announced in the State Gazette, No. 58 of 9.07.2024
with a candidate Assist. Prof. Dr. Georgi Kirilov Medarov**

1. General description of the submitted materials

In the competition for “Associate Professor”, professional field 3.1. Sociology, Anthropology and Cultural Sciences (Racialization and Ethnicization of Inequalities and Identities in Contemporary Societies), for the needs of the Department “Communities and Identities” of the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology – BAS participated only one candidate – Assist. Prof. Dr. Georgi Kirilov Medarov. He presents a total of 28 publications, different from those with which he participated in the competition for Chief Assistant Professor and from the defense of the Doctoral Degree in Sociology. Among these publications are included: one monograph; 2 articles, one of which is co-authored, published in scientific journals, which are refereed and indexed in world-famous databases; two chapters of collective monographs and 19 articles (3 of which are co-authored) in non-refereed journals with scientific review or in collective volumes. The candidate has submitted separation protocols for the collective publications, from which his participation in their writing can be clearly assessed.

The publications and citations presented by the candidate for participation in the competition fully comply with the conditions of Art. 27, paragraphs 1 and 2, including the minimum national requirements under Art. 2 b, paragraphs 2 and 3 of The Law, respectively, the requirements under Art. 2 b, paragraph 5 of The Law, as well as with the requirements of BAS and IPhS for occupying the academic position “Associate Professor”.

2. General characteristics of the scientific, scientific-applied and pedagogical activities of the candidate

The candidate is a scholar with a clearly expressed theoretical orientation, who is extremely familiar with sociological theory, both classical and modern, brilliantly interpreting it and making sense of it in the context of contemporary changes. He is an extremely productive scientist, with numerous publications in Bulgarian and foreign journals. Dr. Medarov presents the results of his work at conferences and seminars, has actively participated in international forums in Bulgaria and abroad, and he has indicated the impressive number of 16 such participations. His teaching activity is also impressive: since 2014 he has been a part-time lecturer at the Department of Sociology and Human Sciences, Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski", where he currently conducts lectures and exercises in the disciplines "Historical Sociology of Economics and Ecology" and "Historical Sociology of Symbolic Forms". His project activity is also impressive, and since 2020 he has been involved in 4 projects, financed respectively by the NSF at the Ministry of Education and Science, the Center for Advanced Studies, the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, as well as by the Operational Program "Human Resources Development", co-financed by the European Union through the European Social Fund.

3. Substantial analysis of the candidate's scientific achievements

The author's reference for the contributions made in the publications with which he participates in the competition fully corresponds to the achievements of the candidate. He is an author who not only studies the naturalization of social inequalities, their ethnicization and racialization in late capitalism, but also reaches a deep theoretical understanding and conceptualization of the changes in the social structuring of modern societies in recent decades. Dr. Medarov's research pursuits go beyond the sociological reconstruction of the question of relations between race and class, posing the question of thinking about social inequalities in a different way. He examines the Bulgarian case in the broader historical context of sociological thinking about the relationship between race and class. The main thesis that Dr. Medarov argues and convincingly defends in his monograph "Races and Classes in Classical and Non-Classical Sociology" is, that in early modernity, the emergence of class distinction began to replace the

hardened and racialized forms of social difference. And today, in late modernity, we observe the opposite trend – the return of racialized forms in which social contradictions appear. The proposed approach is in the field of reflective critical sociology. The author comes to the conclusion that after the Cold War in Bulgaria, through the politicization of Roma identity, a process of ethnicization/racialization of social inequalities and contradictions was observed. This trend is realized through the specific introduction of explanatory categories such as “culture of poverty” and “underclass”, which the author studies in a number of his publications. In the texts presented by the candidate, one can trace the evolution in the author’s understanding of the naturalization of social inequalities in Bulgaria after 1989, cultural, geographical, racial, communal and identity differences, that is, differences and contradictions that are thought of as something that is outside of history. These are processes that are also related to the current de-democratization and authoritarian tendencies, visible not only in Bulgaria. The following articles are devoted to them: “Our Transition Is Not a Transition” – Uses of the Concept of Transition in the Stories of Shumen Residents” from 2013; “The Roots of Moralization of Politics in Post-1989 Bulgaria” from 2022; as well as the collective monograph from 2014 “Politics without Politics. We and They in the Protests and the Crisis of Representation.” Another collective monograph in which Dr. Medarov participates – “Entrepreneurial Spirit and Ghost Entrepreneurs: Expert Knowledge, Neoliberal Governance and Social Suffering” from 2015 raises the question of the ways in which the presentation of “cultural incompatibilities” and differences contributes to the legitimization of the marginalization of certain groups of small entrepreneurs in post-socialist Bulgaria. The author problematizes populism in the context of the negative effects of the naturalization of social inequalities and contradictions, such as in the articles “Some Prerequisites for the Contemporary Crisis of Representative Democracy in Bulgaria” from 2013, “When is Populism Acceptable?” from 2016, “Historical Context and Political Stakes of the Discursive Theory of Populism” from 2017, “Civil Society” in the collection “Conflicts over History and Memory” from 2024. The formalization of hardening and naturalizing notions of societal problems are analyzed in the 2015 publication “The Rhetoric of Volen Siderov and the Rise of Ataka”, in the articles “The Occult and the Transition” from 2013 and “The Freemasons are in Parliament! Political Economy of Conspiracies in the Judicial System” from 2017. Dr. Medarov examines the politics of memory in the context of the naturalization of inequalities in the publications “The Interpretive Stakes in Biographical Narratives of the Academic Cultures of Dissent of the 1980s” from 2014,

“Communism is Evil” from 2015, and “The Contradictory Images of Totalitarianism in Contemporary Bulgarian Historiography” from 2020. The author also explores issues raised in the theoretical perspective of general sociology in the articles “Direct and Indirect Discrimination under Marx and Arendt” from 2023, “Propaganda and Public Opinion: Lippmann, Dewey and Benays” from 2023, “Race and Crisis: A Critical History of the Production of Community Difference” from 2023 and “Towards a Reflexive Theory of Crisis” from 2021. The articles “The Crisis in Official and Public Holidays: The Case Studies of Gabrovo, Varshets and Kosti” from 2022 and “The Global Context of Local Culinary Holidays in Bulgaria” from 2023 examine issues of politics, economics and culture in the context of the festivalization of the lifestyle in Bulgaria. Specific empirical cases in the key of the presented more general research paradigm are analyzed in the articles “Which Way Will the Winds Blow? Post-Privatization Water Struggles in Sofia, Bulgaria” from 2019, “The New Coronavirus and the Modern Management of Ultramodernity” from 2020, “The Thorny Crown of Labor” from 2021.

I define Dr. Medarov’s scientific contributions as “enrichment of existing knowledge”.

4. Reflection of the candidate’s scientific publications in the literature

The candidate’s publications are well known among the members of the academic community in Bulgaria and abroad: in scientific journals, refereed and indexed in world-famous databases with scientific information or in monographs and collective volumes, his texts are cited in 4 publications.

5. Reviewer’s Critical Remarks on the Submitted Papers

I have no critical remarks and questions to Dr. Medarov, but instead I have a suggestion as a guideline for his future work. It is related to the balance between theoretical analysis and empirical information, and it would be good for its future texts to contain more convincing empirical data on classes, social strata, inequalities, including from the numerous international comparative empirical sociological surveys, such as ISSP, ESS, GSS and others. The arrays of empirical information would help to clarify whether in late capitalism we are talking about the

“disappearance” of the social class or about a change in the socio-group positions and characteristics of individual social strata and groups.

6. The reviewer’s personal impressions of the candidate

I have known Dr. Georgi Medarov since 2019, when he was appointed as an Assistant Professor in the “Communities and Identities” Department of the IPhS – BAS. I am impressed by his academic groundwork, research experience, hard work, as well as by the responsiveness and readiness with which he is involved in the work of the Department and the Institute. For him, they are not just a place of work, but a cause for which he works and to which he devotes his creative energy.

7. Conclusion

All that has been said so far leads me with conviction to the conclusion about the high academic qualities and achievements of the candidate, about his contributions, about his research and pedagogical experience. On the basis of the provided documentation, I fully state that Assist. Prof. Dr. Georgi Kirilov Medarov is fully built and recognizable as a scientist, researcher and lecturer working in the field of Sociology of Communities and Identities (Racialization and Ethnicization of Inequalities and Identities in Contemporary Societies). He has accumulated sufficient research experience and fully meets the requirements for holding the academic position of “Associate Professor”, formulated in the Law, in the Regulations for its Implementation and in the Regulations on the Terms and Conditions for Acquiring Scientific Degrees and Occupying Academic Positions at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology – BAS. Therefore, I will vote positively for the awarding of the academic position “Associate Professor” in professional field 3.1. Sociology, Anthropology and Cultural Sciences (Racialization and Ethnicization of Inequalities and Identities in Contemporary Societies), for the needs of the “Communities and Identities” Department of the IPhS – BAS of Assist. Prof. Dr. Georgi Kirilov Medarov, recommending that the members of the respected Scientific Jury also to make such a decision.

As a member of the Scientific Jury in this competition, I recommend to the esteemed

members of the Scientific Council of the IPhS – BAS to elect Assist. Prof. Dr. Georgi Kirilov Medarov as “Associate Professor” in the professional field 3.1. Sociology, Anthropology and Cultural Sciences (Racialization and Ethnicization of Inequalities and Identities in Contemporary Societies), for the needs of the “Communities and Identities” Department of the IPhS – BAS.

Sofia

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