

OPINION

for the competition announced in State Gazette, issue no. 61 of 29.07.2025 to occupy the academic position "Associate Professor" in Professional field 3.1. Sociology, Anthropology and Cultural Sciences (Procedural aspects in the generation and formation of public opinion) for the needs of the Center for Empirical Social Research by Prof. DSc Karamfil Manolov, Member of the Scientific Jury

General description of the applicant and the documents provided

One candidate is participating in the competition - Assist. Prof. Dr. Svetlana Aleksandrova.

Dr. Svetlana Alexandrova participates in the competition for academic position "Associate Professor" with a total of 16 publications, of which: 1 habilitation thesis/collective monograph, in which Dr. Svetlana Alexandrova has independently authored pages, corresponding to the definition of a monograph according to the Regulations for the Application of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the requirements of the National Center for Information and Documentation, for which a separation protocol is attached; and 15 articles that do not repeat those presented for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor". Three of the articles have been published in scientific journals, referenced and indexed in the global databases of scientific information (Web of Science). Two of them are in journals in Q3, one is in a journal in Q4. The other 12 articles have been published in peer-reviewed journals or in edited collective volumes. Two of the publications are in English.

The work experience of the candidate is in the field of the competition, and from the attached reference it is seen that the minimum national requirements to the candidates for the academic position "Associate Professor" in professional field 3.1. Sociology, anthropology and cultural sciences are fully covered.

General characteristics of the applicant's scientific, applied and pedagogical activities

In the center of Assistant Professor Dr. Alexandrova's research interests is the topic of public opinion – its essence, the processes of its formation, the factors that influence its formation, the changes it undergoes in the online communication environment typical of contemporary societies, etc. This central theme of her research has been analyzed in a series of scientific articles and studies, interpreted through the prism of and in connection with other more specific research issues such as public opinion on various spheres of public life, namely science, education, politics,

the gray economy, etc. Her interest in studying the various aspects and manifestations of public opinion remains a constant feature of her research work, finding its most concise and comprehensive expression in her habilitation thesis. The main strength of this work is the use of an interdisciplinary approach to studying the nature of public opinion and the combination of theoretical and empirical analysis in examining the main issues concerning the nature of public opinion and the possibilities for studying it. This allows her to apply the developed theoretical explanatory model of public opinion to the empirical study of the generation and formation of public opinion, using mainly qualitative methods—in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. In this regard, I would say that Dr. Svetlana Alexandrova manages to perform a meta-theoretical analysis, i.e., an analysis of public opinion at the meta level (knowledge about knowledge itself), by analyzing the cognitive processes of public opinion formation, the factors influencing them, and the possibilities for their regulation and control. All this is indicative of the multifaceted nature of the analyses and the complexity of the results obtained, which is a sign of the author's in-depth scientific competence in the issues under study, in which she has succeeded in formulating her own original contributions.

Dr. Svetlana Alexandrova also demonstrates activity as a participant in various scientific forums, where she presents her research results - she has participated in 8 scientific forums, all of them international or with international participation.

In the overall scientific activity of the candidate a balance is maintained between theoretical and scientific-applied activity. Svetlana Alexandrova has participated in six research projects, five of which were externally funded and one internally funded by the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

The educational activity of the candidate

The scientific and scientific-applied activity of the candidate is successfully supplemented by teaching activity. Dr. Svetlana Alexandrova has given a series of lectures and seminars at South-West University "Neofit Rilski" – "Cultural Management," "Public Relations and Promotion in the Arts," "International Organizations in the Cultural Sector," "Entrepreneurship in the Field of Culture," "European Cultural Policies," "Culture and Communication," "Spatial Design of Festivals and Events."

The total lecture and seminar workload for all courses is 457 academic hours.

Assessment of the candidate's publications' contributions

The scientific contributions and achievements in her works are in line with the main research field outlined in Dr. Svetlana Alexandrova's work. In this regard, I would highlight Dr. Alexandrova's well-founded understanding of public opinion as a social phenomenon that cannot be reduced to the sum of individual opinions, but rather reflecting their connection and interaction, as a supra-individual and complex phenomenon reflecting the dominant attitudes in society on a particular issue.

Secondly, I would like to note the exceptional wealth of theoretical concepts of public opinion presented and analyzed in the habilitation thesis, which Dr. Svetlana Alexandrova approaches critically, allowing her to formulate her own view and definition of the essence of public opinion, which builds on existing ones, as well as to develop a comprehensive theoretical explanatory procedural model for the generation and formation of public opinion. On the other hand, this makes the collective monograph the most comprehensive and complex presentation of the essence of public opinion in Bulgarian scientific literature.

I would like to note in particular that the scientific analyses and theoretical conclusions formulated by Dr. Alexandrova have an empirical basis and are based on the results of empirical sociological studies, which is a serious argument in confirmation of the scientific validity of the conclusions made. In this regard, I would like to emphasize the empirically derived cognitive content of social representations and attitudes toward public opinion, which contributes to empirical sociological knowledge in Bulgaria in the field of representations and attitudes.

Important contributions of great practical and methodological significance in Dr. Alexandrova's works include the developed toolkit for studying public opinion using qualitative methods, which can be adapted and applied to the study of public opinion in various specific areas and on specific topics, as well as the identification of opportunities for using the online environment to collect empirical information, which is one of the most topical and at the same time most problematic topics in contemporary sociology. Dr. Alexandrova's contributions in these areas demonstrate the relevance of her scientific work to the topic of this competition and to the specificity of the Section in which she will continue her research work.

Undoubtedly, other original contributions can be identified in the works of Assistant Professor Dr. Svetlana Alexandrova, but even those mentioned above are indisputable evidence that her scientific research is not aimed at itself, but has specific practical applicability and meets

specific contemporary needs. In the reference for the candidate's contributions the scientific contributions made by her are correctly formulated and really reflect the contributions in her works.

Determining the candidate's contribution to collective publications

In the collective monographic work, Dr. Svetlana Alexandrova's texts are distinguished by her own name, and a separation protocol is also attached, which very specifically and accurately identifies her individual contribution.

Impact of the candidate's scientific publications in our and foreign literature

The citation reference for Assistant Professor Dr. Alexandrova is proof of her visibility and representation as a researcher in both the Bulgarian and international scientific community – Dr. Alexandrova's works have been cited 10 times, with 2 of the citations coming from foreign researchers; furthermore, four of the citations are in scientific publications referenced and indexed in global scientific information databases, and six are in monographs, peer reviewed collective volumes, and non-referenced peer reviewed journals.

Personal impressions

I know Svetlana Alexandrova from our joint work at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. I have an excellent impression of her as a serious scientist and researcher and as a fair and responsible person and colleague.

Conclusion

Based on all that has been said so far, I believe that **Dr. Svetlana Alexandrova fully meets the minimum national requirements for the academic position of "Associate Professor", I am convinced that she deserves to be elected to this position and I offer the esteemed Scientific Council of the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology to support her candidacy.**

Prof. DSc Karamfil Manolov