

OPINION

by Associate Professor, Dr. Anthony Naydenov Galabov, Department of Political Science, New Bulgarian University, specialty 05.11.01 - Sociology (Sociology of Politics and Culture), professional field 3.1. (Sociology, Anthropology and Cultural Sciences)

on scientific papers for participation in a competition for the occupation of the academic position Professor in the professional field 3.3. Political Science (Comparative Political Science) declared in the State Gazette no. 81 of 10/15/2019, with a candidate

Assistant Professor, Dr. Rumyana Petrova Kolarova

1. Assessment of compliance with the minimum national requirements and requirements of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski "

The scientific publications of the candidate, associate professor Kolarova, exceed the minimum national requirements for occupying the academic position of "professor". According to the attached to the documents for this competition, from the Indicator Group B, it has 100 points for published habilitation work - monograph, and from the Indicator Group D - a total of 230.5 points. As regards the citations, Group of Indicators E, the total of 145 points is reflected in the reference. According to the Group of indicators E, concerning the management of successfully defended PhD students, the achieved result is 240 points.

2. Evaluation of the monographic work

The habilitation work - a monograph presented by the applicant, entitled: "Democratic Institutions in Bulgaria: A Comparative Analysis (1991 - 2019)" is a comprehensive, original study of the processes of democratic transformation in Bulgaria since 1991. There are several basic characteristics of this work that determine its quality and contribution. First, it is a clearly presented and well-reasoned approach to determining the starting point of this study. Unlike many other researchers, the candidate identifies as the beginning of the processes of democratic development in Bulgaria the elections to the National Assembly held in 1991.

It is essential to understand that the results of the Round Table and the 1990 elections to the Grand National Assembly are a manifestation of the so-called. "contractual democracy", in the context of a liberalizing totalitarian regime. This thesis allows the author to examine the process of constitution and development of democratic institutions in a specific political context, against a certain level of structuring of the party system.

The second determining element of this assessment is the question of the relevance and manner of application of the comparative analysis. On the one hand, when it comes to monograph research, comparative analysis seems to have limited possibilities. On the other hand, much of the literature produced in recent years shows the limited possibility of applying comparative analysis to the processes of post-totalitarian transformation in the countries of the

former "socialist camp". The solution that the author applies provides a well-reasoned answer to this question.

The comparative analysis shall be deployed at least two levels. The first is the application of research and analysis methods, tested and applied to other groups of countries, in relation to Bulgarian political reality. Thus, at the methodological level, the capabilities of the comparative method are tested. The second level is determined by the direct comparison of certain indicators between "countries in transition". The result of the application of the two approaches is that the application of the comparative analysis is well substantiated and produces concrete results which are part of the contributions of the monographic work.

Of additional importance is the fact that the analysis manages well to control the effects of the seeming "normalization", in which post-totalitarian transformations seem to immediately and naturally go into the development of full-fledged democratic institutions that are perfectly comparable in nature to such institutions, operating under conditions of well-consolidated democratic systems. In the overall development of the analysis, the elements that determine the specifics of the processes in Bulgaria, as well as the limits of possible direct comparison, are clearly and precisely defined.

The monograph includes a series of specific quantitative studies that provide valid answers to specific research questions. The consistent use of quantitative methods and competence in their application, as well as the maturity in interpreting the results, is noteworthy. The very good knowledge of the existing theoretical models and approaches allows the author to structure his research according to relevant theoretical schemes and testing in Bulgarian conditions of internationally recognized indicators.

The author does not try to achieve a clear result at any cost. There is no attempt to assume certain conclusions, most often based on the experience of other countries. For example, the fact that the author has established that over the past thirty years the Bulgarian institutions have gone through all possible models of development has not been used as an element of any type of evolutionary perspective. The author presents the results of his research without attempting to prescribe or "normalize" the results obtained.

The findings of the study show that the overall development of the democratic institutions in Bulgaria is steadily developing towards a consensual type of democratic system with a relatively low degree of polarization. An advantage of interpreting these results is the refusal to claim that these processes have ended with the establishment of a well-consolidated democracy. The study presents sufficiently distinct groups of factors and risks that will continue to influence the consolidation process of democratic institutions in Bulgaria.

3. Evaluation of contributions in other scientific publications

The candidate has submitted 14 scientific publications for participation in the competition, 8 of which are co-authored and represent an annual presentation of data on the development of the democratic process in Bulgaria, in the European Journal of Political Research. Of decisive

importance here is the author's contribution to the construction of databases for international comparative research and integration into research networks.

The other scientific publications of the author, as well as the monographic work, reflect the scientific interests and research experience of the applicant. The consistent study of the process of establishment and development of democratic institutions in Bulgaria is of key importance. It is a sustainable and consistently scientifically protected research interest. The thesis of stable coalitions, which are built despite the weakness of political parties, has a positive character. Even the formulation of this problem is essential in the development of political science research.

4. Citation from other authors

Attached to the documents for participation in the competition, the citation reference allows to make a reasonable conclusion that the applicant's scientific activity is recognizable and contributes to the international comparative political science studies. Applicants' references to comparative political science and European research have become part of the scientific guarantees of any new research demand.

5. Evaluation of the results of participation in research projects

During the last year, the candidate successfully managed the project "Europeanization of the Electoral Process in Bulgaria". Over the years, Assoc. Prof. Kolarova has worked on a number of international and national research projects, within different in nature and design research networks.

6. Academic and teaching activities

The candidate has an intensive and varied teaching practice in the fields of Political Science, European Studies and Public Administration of the Faculty of Philosophy, as well as in the Faculty of Classical and New Philology and the Faculty of Journalism. Lectures in Bulgarian and English in compulsory undergraduate and master's degree programs. Since 2003 he has been managing the Master Program "European Integration and EU Diplomacy".

7. Social activity and personal impressions of the applicant

The candidate for this competition is an authoritative and respected figure in the public and media space. Her practical and research experience, combined with good communication skills, make it possible to present and justify positions that contribute to the quality of the democratic debate in Bulgaria.

As President of the Bulgarian Association for Political Science and Deputy Editor-in-Chief of Political Studies, Assoc. Prof. Kolarova has made a significant contribution to the development of political science in Bulgaria and the consolidation of the scientific community.

In conclusion, I express my positive assessment of the academic activity of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Romyana Petrova Kolarova and propose her admission to the election for the academic position of "Professor" by the Academic Council of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".

Date: 10.03.2020

Signature: 