

## REVIEWS

**From:** **Assoc. Prof. PhD Alexander Ivanov Valkov**  
University of National and World Economy, UNWE  
Scientific field: „Management and organization of the non-material production“  
Full-time lecturer in “Public administration” Department in UNWE - Sofia e-mail: [alexander.valkov@unwe.bg](mailto:alexander.valkov@unwe.bg)  
Member of the scientific jury assigned by the Rector of Sofia University „St. Kliment Ohridski“, Sofia №ПД-38-697/09.12.2019 and by decision of the Faculty council of Philosophy faculty №4/3.12.2019

**Subject:** competition procedure for associate professor in the professional field 3.3. Political Science (Regional Governance and Politics), promulgated in the State Gazette no. 93 of 26.11.2019

---

### 1. Information about the competition

The competition is initiated for the needs of Public Administration Department in the Faculty of Philosophy in Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” Sofia. There is only one participant in the competition. The participant has submitted all necessary documents required by Academic Staff Development Law in Republic Bulgaria and Rules on the Terms and Conditions for Acquiring Degrees and Occupation of Academic Positions of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” (Art. 107).

### 2. Information about the participants

In the competition promulgated in the State Gazette no. 93 of 26.11.2019, there is only one participant - Chief Assist. Prof., PhD of Political Science Elena Angelova Kalfova—Voynova, Lecturer in Public Administration Department, Faculty of Philosophy in Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”.

#### 2.1. Education, specializations and training

Chief Assist. Prof., Elena Angelova Kalfova—Voynova, PhD of Political Science graduated in SU “St. Kliment Ohridski”. In 2000, she successfully passed MA course of training in “Political science”, specialization in “Bulgarian political process”. In July 2000, she takes successfully state exams for MA in Political science (Diploma series A 2000 - CY №151985/25.10.2001 № M151985). In the period 2000 – 2004, she is PhD student in Public administration Department under scientific tutorship of Assist. Professor Milena Stefanova. She successfully defends PhD thesis “Development of regional administrative structures in Bulgaria” She acquires Educational and Scientific Degree classification degree PhD in scientific field 05.11.02 „Political science“(Diploma, №32672/8.12.2008, №10/6.10.2008 г.). In Parallel with PhD studentship she participated in the courses “European Public administration” and “Regional and Local self-governance” (April – June 2002) in Maastricht University, Netherlands.

#### 2.2. Professional development

The professional experience Chief Assist. Elena Angelova Kalfova—Voynova is in Public Administration Department of Sofia University. She became assistant professor in the period 2004 – 2009 and later Chief Assistant Professor. Together with teaching activities, she was scientific coordinator (2005-2016) of the following MA programs: “European public administration” and „Public management and policy“ as a result she become very experienced in the training planning and execution process. Since 2016, she is Manager of the MA program „Policy evaluation and impact assessment“.

According to application document attached (Memo from SU №305) it is evident that as of 3.12.2019 Elena Kalfova-Voynova has 18 years, 2 months and 0 days' work experience. Her work experience is dedicated to the scientific field that is subject of the competition. Fifteen years of her work experience are in Public Administration Department.

**Summary of p.2:** The data presented above allow us to summarize that there is a focused and dynamic academic development and professional qualification needed to hold the announced academic position. This makes application of Chief Assistant Professor Elena Kalfova-Voynova appropriate for the position of “associate professor” in Public Administration Department of Sofia University.

### 3. Fulfillment of the requirements for holding scientific position

The attached documents (incl. Reference for fulfillment of minimal requirements) prove that the applicant satisfies the minimal necessary requirements according to Art.2b of Academic Staff Development Law in Republic Bulgaria for holding degree “associated professor”.

The main parameters of the fulfilled minimal requirements are summarized in the following table:

Group. /№	Indicators	Items X points	Total points	Requirement
A / 1	PhD thesis	1 (50)	50	50
B / 3	Habilitation work	1 (100)	100	100
<b>C</b>	<b>Total in group “C”</b>		<b>205</b>	<b>200</b>
C / 7	Articles published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or in editorial volumes	7 (10)	70	
C / 8	Studies published in scientific journals, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information (Scopus)	1 (45)	45	
C / 9	Studies published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or in peer-reviewed collective volumes	6 (15)	90	
<b>D</b>	<b>Total in group D</b>		<b>55</b>	<b>50</b>
D / 12	Quotations in monographs and collective volumes	4 (10)	40	
D / 13	Quotations in reviews or non-refereed editions	3 (5)	15	
	<b>Total for groups A, B, C and D</b>		<b>410</b>	<b>400</b>

**A/1:** Chief Assist. Elena Angelova Kalfova–Voynova defended a PhD thesis in 2008 on the topic "Development of regional administrative structures in Bulgaria" in scientific field 05.11.02 „Political science“(cit. above);

**B/3:** Apply for associate professor competition with the habilitation work: Kalfova, E, 2019, Regional Governance and Regional Policy - Application and Evaluation, IM St. Kliment Ohridski, ISBN 978-954-07-4863-4, 342 pages;

**C/7:** This group includes seven articles in total, out of them 2 are in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals (1 of which in English) and five in peer-reviewed collective volumes (collections), out of which are in English. The articles are original and published in the period 2014-2018;

**C/8:** One (original/author’s) article, published in referred journal (Heliyon Journal) and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information (Science Direct): Kalfova, E., Factors for adoption of EU funds in Bulgaria, Heliyon, 2019, Volume 5, Issue 1, 31 January 2019;

**C/9:** Total 6 studies in Bulgarian, out of which 1 is published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals and 5 in peer-reviewed collective volumes. Studies are original (author’s) and are published in the period 2017-2019;

**D/12:** Publications are quoted four times in monographs and collective volumes issued in the last two years;

**D/13:** there are three more quotations in reviews or non-refereed editions.

On top of the above numbers as a summary of the publications of the candidate is the following:

- All publications address scientific problems in one specific field – regional governance and policy. They do not repeat topics discussed in the PhD thesis;
- The publications are classified properly including points calculations. The Reference for fulfillment of minimal requirements is properly done and provides detailed and trustworthy information;
- All publications are original work of the author. It has to be noticed that this is a specific approach of the applicant: from all 25 publications there are only four written in co-authorship;
- There is positive dependency between the increasing of the scholarship and teaching experience and number and volume of the publications: in 2018 and 2019, publications grow up (in the mentioned period were published 2/3 of all publications, including the monograph. The publications included in the competition start from 2014 that gives the chance to evaluate the progress and the skills of the applicant more precisely;
- Publications in English grew up that helps to increase their visibility (3 out of 15);
- In the publications presented, there is no scientific reports. On one side, this shows willingness to present scientific output in reliable scientific journals. On the other side such approach imitates scientific discussions with the community regarding relevant topics;
- Studies published are ½ of all publications (excluding habilitation work). In the last two years, they are the focus of the publications efforts. The genre specificity is indicative (indirectly) for searching in-depth and comprehensive solutions in the study area;
- As an indicator of scientific visibility and recognition of the quoted publications by group D, it should be noted that applicant has recognized 27 quotations in total of her publications. Out of them ½ are quotations in the last two years (7 in 2018 and 10 in 2019). The publication indexed in Scopus (2019 r.) is cited in the beginning of 2020 which demonstrates increasing recognition of the author in the field of regional governance.

**Summary of p.3:** There is sufficient scientific output in terms of volume, structure and genre diversity. The attached documents characterize the applicant as a recognized and leading researcher in the national and international academic community. The applicant meets the national requirements for holding the position of associated professor.

#### **4. Evaluation of the training activities**

The applicant's high level of education (educational, scientific and practical) is critical to the rapid accumulation of teaching experience required for habilitation. The data shows:

- Chief Assist. Elena Angelova Kalfova—Voynova is member of the Public Administration Department since 2004 (starting as an assistant professor, in 2009 she became chief assistant). In the last four years (2016 until 2019), she has 2 551 training hours or 637 hours annual auditorium employment which exceeds established normative in Sofia University. This employment is accumulated in three of the departments of the Philosophy faculty: „Public administration“, „European studies“ и „Political science“ including BA and MA programs;
- The applicant has extensive teaching portfolio in Bachelor and Master's degrees. She is a leading lecturer and gives lectures in 10 courses, of which:
  - 2 courses in Public administration BA program (Regional policy; Impact assessment);

- Eight courses in six MA programs (Regional policy, Projects in local administration, Programs and projects for cross-border cooperation and regional development, Impact and regulation assessment, Basics of impact assessment, Multilevel governance). Regional Policy course Public Administration in English;
- Since 2016, he has been leading the Master's Program in Policy Evaluation and Impact Assessment and is the Scientific Leader of the Postgraduate Impact Assessment Program;
- She has completed training and applies forms of e learning in her work. Mentor of 32 successfully defended graduates;
- Member of Bulgarian Association of Political science and Bulgarian European Studies Association. In 2009, she was awarded the FF Dean's Award for Contribution to Research.

**Summary on p.4:** Chief Assistant Professor Elena Kalfova-Voynova leads lectures and exercises in disciplines in the scientific area that is subject of the competition, which has a positive impact on the quality of her training activities. The implementation of the annual general and classroom workload indicates that she has accumulated extensive experience in lecture teaching and points to the need to cover teaching by a habilitated person. Fluency in English allows her to teach in foreign language programs as well. This proves the academic competence of the candidate for the academic position of Associated Professor.

## **5. General characteristics of the submitted scientific papers / publications**

### **5.1. The main areas of research**

The applicant's publication profile includes habilitation work, seven studios and seven articles. The structure of the publications speaks about wide-ranging and in-depth scientific activities in theoretical, methodological and practical-applied plan on current and relevant topics not only for Bulgaria in public administration. Three closely related leading research perspectives on public governance at regional level can be outlined that define the "coordinate system" of the research field: **(1)** regional governance – regional institutions, **(2)** regional development – regional policies and **(3)** evaluation of the regional policy. The most enhanced work in the participant's scientific work is the habilitation work „*Regional governance and regional policy – application and evaluation*“. All works correspond to the scientific direction of the competition. Below we briefly highlight some key ideas in the habilitation work.

### **5.2. Essence and scientific and applied scientific results**

**Habilitation work** is built on the following foundation: nowadays there is a process of changing public governance that is spilling in different directions. A leading perspective in this process is the transformation of regional governance, a change that requires (and is most clearly seen) development of new institutions, new functions, new models of interaction, from which the challenge arises - accordingly, redefining the role and functions of already existing, traditional 'clean' institutions (state, social and economic groups, private and civic sectors, etc.). In a general and objective tendency towards regionalization, which accumulates in a common stream of bottom-up and top-down societal pressures, processes such as decentralization and deconcentration, regional governance (will) take on a different meaning, forms of institutionalization and interaction. The process of reforming and building a new type of regional government, seen as an "intermediate or mid-level organization", cannot be understood (and properly managed) outside the institutions that build it, their connecting processes and their policy orientation. In other words, this process requires "regional governance and regional policy to be seen as interdependent processes". Understanding regional governance (and thus the processes of its transformation, changing the role and functions of the state and the way public authority is exercised) is "impossible without an analysis of the processes of regional policy making and implementation" (p.13). This understanding receives evidence in a doctrinal

and practical way, is a conclusion throughout the study, and structures its logic (see along the three coordinate axes indicated). The research-specific theoretical tool can be defined as an institutional approach.

What are the leading achievements in the three dimensions of study outlined? On the first dimension "regional governance - regional institutions": First, in the context of the development of regional governance and processes of regionalization, the need for a new / relevant institutional organization and / or change of the existing political, administrative and functional characteristics at the regional level of governance has been raised. Secondly, the typology / sides of the process of regionalization are outlined as a process of building a new type of regional governance. Third, groups of factors for the establishment and development of the regional level of government and their respective forms of institutionalization (decentralization and establishment of regional self-governing authorities; de-concentrated structures of the central administration and association of local authorities; multilevel governance and networking) are systematized. Fourth, based on international comparisons and experience, common characteristics of regional institutions are derived. Fifth, reforming the institutional and administrative organization at the regional level is a process stemming from our European affiliation, i.e. the change in the role of regional governance and the forms of institutional organization are in the context of the principle and concepts of multilevel governance under consideration. Those are the scientific dimensions also in the rest of the candidate publications (see List of publications - №№ 5, 11, 15).

The second research line (regional development - regional policy): First, the concept of 'local and regional development' is clarified in relation to the processes and changes resulting from globalization in economic, political and social terms. Second, the role of institutional factors as a reorganizing basis of public governance has been drawn from the systematization of conceptual understandings of regional development. The author shares the opinion that institutional differences can explain the differences in 'quality of public governance' and the results of the regional development. The expression (and reflection) of these factors is administrative capacity. Third, the content of regional policy is clarified (because of the interaction between economic and social processes and the institutional system) and the main features of an 'integrated approach' to regional policy are summarized. Fourth, the need for an integrated approach to regional policy has been demonstrated. The advantages and limitations of regional policy instruments are critically considered and the possibilities for their implementation evaluated. There are other candidate publications in this research area (see Publications list №№ 5, 6, 10, 11, 15).

In the third guiding perspective, the candidate's efforts are focused on developing and arguing a system of regional policy evaluation. First, it has been argued the view of regional policy as an "open process. Second, it has been reconsidered in a general and critical way the theoretical approaches to regional policy assessment. For each case of regional policy assessment, a "specific assessment design" (p.152) should be elaborated. There is no universal methodological recipe; regional policy assessment is based on adapted specific case methods. It can be assumed that the idea of an open process is not only applicable for the participants, but also to the flexibility of assessment procedures and methods. The usage of systematic approach suggests an unambiguous definition of the aims and objectives, the indicators and the criteria for evaluating, verifying and validating the information. Third, and in line with the previous one, a portfolio of specific regional policy assessment methods is outlined. I share the author's views on combining evaluation methods and the engagement and accountability of public institutions in the process. Fourth, it has been argued the advantages of the impact assessment as a method for multi-criteria assessment of social consequences of policy. This assessment approach was developed in a practically applicable algorithm in the last part of the

monographic study. There are other candidate publications in this research area (see List of publications №№ 9, 13, 14).

## **6. Summary of the main theoretical and applied scientific contributions**

The analysis of the habilitation work (as a representation of the creative ideas and scientific solutions of the author) clearly indicates Assistant Prof. PhD. Elena Kalfova-Voynova as an exceptional and knowledgeable researcher in the field of regional governance and policy. On this basis, I also confirm the self-assessment of scientific achievements and their importance. They are indicator for theoretically valid and practically useful scientific output that will also contribute to the improvement of administrative science training. The most important contributions are the following:

### **6.1. Scientific contributions**

- It has been developed original theoretical approach to the study of regional governance and policy, which requires they to be considered as a "single" object of study and as "interconnected processes". Imposing a “holistic view” on the regional level of government implies a redefinition of the role of the state, overcomes the partial perceptions of the trend for administrative and institutional reform of the public administration;
- An "open model" for the development, implementation and evaluation of regional policy is justified, and its main elements are outlined;
- An impact assessment of the Europeanization process and the transfer of management practices on the current models of regional governance and the specific content of regional policies in the CEE countries were evaluated.

### **6.2. Practical contributions**

- The factors for the establishment and development of the regional level of government and their respective forms of institutionalization have been systematized;
- A set of specific methods / tools for regional policy assessment is proposed, and arguments are put forward for the applicability of impact assessment to regional policy assessment;
- The advantages and limitations of regional policy tools are critically considered and the probability for their implementation is evaluated;
- A methodology for multicriteria assessment (multi-factor model) of regional policy evaluation is applied;

## **7. Key critical notes and recommendations**

The research field of regional governance is a topic with traditions in our country. However, the ongoing processes of globalization, regionalization and integration redefine the role of local and regional levels of government and require a change in the overall paradigm of regional policy, and at the same time claim a new understanding of the role of the state, public institutions and other actors in policy networks. The role of research in this area will increase. I recommend the candidate to continue her research and teaching activities in this field. From that perspective, developing educational literature in this direction is a natural step in the path of a habilitated teacher. Broader and more active participation in discussions and the presentation of ideas and results in scientific and practical forums is another direction for future development that will present and validate the candidate for the academic position of Associate Professor in the academic community.

## **8. Conclusion**

Referring to the introduced to the competition materials and based on the scientific production presented (after obtaining the PhD), the scientific and applied results and

contributions from the scientific work of Assist. Prof. Dr. Elena Angelova Kalfova-Voynov, give a "POSITIVE ASSESSMENT" to the applicant and recommend to the scientific jury of this competition to award the academic position "ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR" in the professional field 3.3. Political Science (Regional Governance and Politics).

20.03.2020 г.  
Sofia

Signature:  
Assoc. Prof. PhD Alexander Valkov