

OPINION

by Assoc. Prof. Elena Kalfova, PhD

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**member of the Scientific Jury for the competition for the academic position of
"ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR"**

**by professional direction 3.7. Administration and Governance (Public Management)
announced in SG No. 61 of 02.08.2022 for the scientific and teaching activity of the
candidate**

Ch. Assist. Prof. Simeon Atanasov Petrov, PhD.

1. Scientific and teaching profile of the candidate

Ch. Assist. Prof. Simeon Petrov, PhD graduated the Bachelor's degree program in Public Administration in 2007 and Bachelor's program in Political Science in 2009, both at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". In 2009 Simeon Petrov acquired a Master's degree in Public Management and Policies, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" and in 2015 successfully defended his PhD in Political Science (Public Administration). Simeon Petrov has been an Assistant Professor since 2011 until 2015, and from 2015 until now he is Ch. Assistant Professor at the Department of Public Administration, Faculty of Philosophy, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".

The applicant has over 10 years of academic research and teaching experience in the Faculty of Philosophy of Sofia University (Department of Public Administration). Simeon Petrov have a teaching activity in 3 specialties – Public Administration, European Studies, and Political Science – where it is directly related to the thematic scope of the competition. Just as an example some of the courses of which he is teaching or leads seminars are: "Public Policy Design and Implementation", "Public Policy Analysis", "Public Policies", "Social Policy", "Public Policy Transfer Assessment", "Methods and Techniques for Public Policy Analysis", etc. in bachelor's and master's degrees. Simeon Petrov is a lecturer who has always received high praise for his work from both students and colleagues.

The candidate participates in the competition with 1 monograph, 1 book chapter, 12 studies and 2 articles. All publications are directly related to the topic of the competition and have not been used in previous procedures for acquiring academic degrees and occupying academic positions.

Participation in the competition of Ch. Assistant Professor PhD Simeon Petrov is permissible: he holds scientific degree PhD; has worked for more than two years as a lecturer at a higher education institution; for participation in the competition has submitted a published monographic work; from the information provided for the fulfilment of the minimum national requirements for occupying the academic position, it is clear that he has fulfilled the requirements for occupying the academic position "Associate Professor" in professional field 3.7. "Administration and Management". There is no plagiarism.

2. Research and scientific activity of the candidate.

2.1. Main achievements in the research activities.

The publications submitted for participation in the competition are at an extremely high professional level. Each of them demonstrates a thorough and broad knowledge, understanding and adequate implementation of existing theoretical concepts. At the same time, the candidate shows proven skills for the ability to structure and generate scientific knowledge.

Simeon Petrov focus his research on the analysis of the civil sector – the change of its importance in the public governance system, its own organizational development and the related processes with the change of the role of public administration and the role of NGOs in seeking both legitimacy and effectiveness in achieving public goals. Three leading research perspectives can be outlined for the analysis of non-profit organizations applied by Simeon Petrov. First of all, non-profit organizations are considered in the framework of interaction "civil sector - public authorities" and "civil sector - market". Non-profit organizations are defined as a tool to correct both market failures and the shortcomings of representative democracy. Secondly, the own organizational development of non-profit organizations is put in focus. Thirdly, non-profit organizations are analysed through the prism of an integrated "universal" theoretical approach that is based on the understanding that the development of the civil sector is a result of different values and interests (even sometimes contradictory) that coexist in a given society. In the same context, some of the presented publications also analyse practices of non-profit organizations in specific sectors EU level (publications 5, 11, 12).

2.2. Main scientific and applied research contributions

The monograph "Non-profit organizations - essence, roles, governance" is dedicated to a topic that remains insufficiently developed in the scientific literature, despite its essential importance for public government. Most of the current research dedicated to non-profit organizations focus on particular specific in one sector or another, on their legal status, on their role in providing one or other social service, etc. In other words, it is very rare case in the Bulgarian scientific literature, to have such a holistic view of the civil sector. From a scientific point of view, the author has developed in detail a methodological concept for the analysis of non-profit organizations at mezzo and micro level. The leading achievements of the candidate are related to the ingestion of mid-level theories to a specific analytical approach of non-profit organizations. This methodological innovation leads to a new understanding of their nature. The author successfully combines theories of social capital, with those of social participation and social solidarity. In addition, the author uses the approaches of neo-institutionalism, especially in the part including the understanding of governance. Governance is accepted not only as formal procedures and models for developing solutions, but also as an informal practice of interaction between the rulers and the governing. Thus, an understanding of the civil sector is derived as a means of improving/renewing public governance.

Without underestimating the all other contributions of the presented works, I am particularly interested in the next two. Connecting the organization's development (in terms of changing their government system, conducting leadership and government processes) with their role in achieving group values and generating public benefit. On this basis, Simenon Petrov brings out an understanding of the effectiveness of non-profit organizations. Enriching the understanding of efficiency beyond a purely economic one is not a new thesis, but the introduced understanding of the effectiveness of non-profit organizations as a contribution to the quality of governance processes is the author's own contribution. This approach wins my sincere sympathy because it not only develops theoretical concepts, but also allows for a more adequate assessment of non-profit organizations and specific public policies. The critical look at the understanding of the hybrid nature of non-profit organizations (not only through their "hard" organizational features and normative characteristics, but also through their participation in governance processes in specific sectors) contributes to the development of governance sciences. In addition, the author brings out a number of risks originating from the hybrid nature of the non-profit organizations. This approach

also has its practical importance – the use of such an understanding of the hybrid nature of non-profit organizations would boost their pro-active participation in the processes of public policy making and the provision of public services.

I fully accept all contributions submitted by the candidate. I believe that they are the result of the entirely personal research effort of Ch. Assistant Professor PhD Simeon Petrov.

Questions

Each innovative research inevitably raises questions. Since my own research interests in recent years gravitate around the issues of achieving the result of public governance, I am particularly curious how Simeon Petrov sees the opportunities for the practical application of the newly defined understanding of the effectiveness of non-profit organizations in terms of achieving public goals? Is it necessary and possible to incorporate such an understanding of effectiveness into the 'standard framework' for evaluating public policies?

3.Evaluation of participation in scientific and applied research projects.

Although the formal requirements for occupying the academic position of "Associate Professor" do not require explicit participation of the applicant in scientific and applied projects, it is necessary to note that Simeon Petrov has participated in many such. I have participated in many of these projects together with Simeon Petrov. His work on them has always been distinguished by correctness and high professional level.

4.Personal impressions from the candidate.

I know Simeon Petrov for more than 15 years, ever since a student in the Bachelor's degree program in Public Administration. All this time, it was with great satisfaction that I observed his growth into a scientist with excellent research qualities. In his work, Simeon Petrov is distinguished by exceptional integrity, purposefulness, correctness both as a researcher and as a colleague. Working with Simeon Petrov has always been a pleasure, and at the same time his thorough and critical look at my own work is essential for the development of my research. The overall scientific and teaching activity of Dr. Petrov contribute to the development of the specialty Public Administration – he is extremely devoted to the teaching work, his contribution to the management and organization of the training and research activities of the Department of Public

Administration is indisputable, and the high level of his scientific research contributes to the successful development and expansion of the scientific field of the specialty.

5.CONCLUSION

On the basis of the high quality of the presented scientific publications, as well as the excellent work of Simeon Petrov as a lecturer and researcher, I fully vote "Yes" for Simeon Petrov to take the academic position of Associate Professor in professional field 3.7. Administration and Governance (Public Management).

17.11.2022

Prepared the opinion:

(Assoc. Prof. E. Kalfova, PhD)