

Opinion

from DSc Svetla Yovcheva Koleva,

Professor at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, BAS,

regarding the materials submitted for the competition

for the academic position of **Professor**

at Plovdiv University Paisii Hilendarski

in the field of Higher Education **3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences,**

professional field **3.1. Sociology, Anthropology and Culture Sciences,**

scientific specialty **History of Sociology – Phenomenological Sociology and Socioanalysis**

In the competition for “professor” announced in the *State Gazette*, no. 92 of 18.11.2022 and on the website of Plovdiv University Paisii Hilendarski for the needs of the Department of Sociology and Human Sciences at the Faculty of Philosophy and History, as a candidate participates Assoc. Prof. Dr. Svetlana Temelkova Sabeva from the Plovdiv University Paisii Hilendarski.

1. General presentation of the procedure and the candidate

By Order No. RD-21-356 of 17.02.2023 of the Rector of Plovdiv University Paisii Hilendarski (PU), I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury of the competition for the academic position “**Professor**” in PU in the field of higher education 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, professional field 3.1. Sociology, Anthropology and Cultural Sciences, scientific specialty History of Sociology – Phenomenological Sociology and Socioanalysis, **announced for the needs** of the Department of Sociology and Human Sciences at the Faculty of Philosophy and History.

Only one candidate takes part in the competition – Assoc. Prof. Dr. Svetlana Temelkova Sabeva from the Department of Sociology and Human Sciences of the Faculty of Philosophy and History of Plovdiv University Paisii Hilendarski. The documents and materials submitted by the candidate **are in full compliance** with the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of Plovdiv University Paisii Hilendarski.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Svetlana Sabeva participates in the competition with 8 publications, including one monograph in Bulgarian, 5 studies (2 in English in scientific journals, refereed and indexed in global databases of scientific information, and 3 in Bulgarian) and 2 articles in Bulgarian in a refereed academic journal and in a peer-reviewed collective publication. *The List of scientific works of Assoc. Dr. Svetlana Temelkova Sabeva* (65 in total), correctly presented by type of

publications and in relation to the candidate's academic career, shows her rich publishing activity, independently and in co-authorship, as well as her constant involvement in the editing of thematic issues of prestigious Bulgarian journals (*Sociological Problems, Critique and Humanism, Heterodoxy*), in collective publications, in interviews with leading contemporary researchers, in scientific debates. I emphasize this part of the work of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Svetlana Sabeva as one of the most indisputable proofs of her contribution to building a critical public space of sociology in Bulgaria and to promoting scientific dialogue, without which there is neither high science nor university education open to science.

The *Report on Meeting the Minimal National Requirement* clearly shows that Dr. Sabeva's teaching, research, and publication activities exceed the quantitative values of the required indicators for holding the academic position of Professor.

2. General characteristics of the candidate's activities

The overall scientific, publishing and teaching activity of Assoc. Prof. Svetlana Sabeva is permanently connected with the scientific specialty of the competition – the history of sociology with an emphasis on phenomenological sociology and socioanalysis as fields of specialization of the candidate. There is a close thematic, problematic and methodological interrelation between the teaching courses and practical classes led by Svetlana Sabeva, the teaching aids she prepares, the diploma and doctoral students she supervises, the research and educational projects she develops, the papers presented at scientific conferences/seminars and the published works (see *Documents on teaching work; Documents on research activity*). The teaching, research and applied scientific activity of Assoc. Prof. Sabeva are inseparable from each other, mutually enrich each other and contribute to both research-based teaching and research and applied projects, fueled by the interests and curiosity of the students themselves.

In fulfillment of the role assigned by the scientific legislator to a member of the scientific jury, I will focus here on the latest monograph by Assoc. Prof. Sabeva *Overlivings. Phenomenology and Socioanalysis of Generative Time* (2023), insofar as it not only summarizes but also leads the way in the evolution of the author's analytical and critical thinking from understanding sociology and reflexive history through the sociology of everyday life and the world of living, phenomenological anthropology, and psychoanalysis to genetic phenomenology and the post-Bourdieu socioanalysis of self-inheritance. It is in this path that the most significant achievements of Assoc. Prof. Svetlana Sabeva in terms of both generative time as a theoretical problem that preoccupies her, and the

way traumatic experience in contemporary sociality and the related politics of life and death are made sense of.

First of all, the conceptual and theoretical “network” (in the author’s own words) built by Svetlana Sabeva to study the “simultaneous living of the un-simultaneity of lives”, of the everyday suffering of society, of biocapitalism, of “infectious sociality” is in fact a *continuous overcoming* of missing links and unproblematized moments in an author through the horizon opened by the conceptualizations of other authors. For example, Garfinkel’s ethnomethodology, which points to the dismantling of background expectations in everyday interactions, helps to overcome what Bourdieu’s sociology of inheritance does not reach, in which the positional and dispositional structures of the world are not transformed into a “sphere of vulnerability” (Sabeva, *Overlivings...*, 2023, pp. 47–57). Husserl’s non explicitly stated aporia between the kinaesthetic constitution of the lived body and the constitution of the embodied self is addressed through Aristotle’s notion of *koiné aesthesis*, and it is argued that “just as the body doubles into the lived and the physical, so the self in the world doubles into the kinaesthetic and the habitual” (ibid., p. 122). Or, the conditions for the possibility of the correlation between constituted and constituting are sought not through Husserl’s time of cognition, but through “the time of the world of living” with the practices of “continuously re-constituted [...] horizon forms of the historicity of life experience” (ibid., pp. 142–144).

Second, situated in Husserl’s late transcendental phenomenology, Sabeva works beyond practical and mental dualisms (psychic-semantic, individual-social, abnormal-normal), at the border between subject fields and analytical possibilities, and with a clearly stated phenomenological attitude, she discovers, names and analyses various *in-betweens* – the intersubjective and the intrasubjective in-between, the temporal in-between, the ungrievable as a phenomenon of the in-between, the infectious in-between as sites of coalescence of meaning-constitutive and biophysical (natural) entities, as “relations that are singularly established and generate their relata only in the events of relating”, which are both in relation to others and to ourselves (ibid., p. 10).

Third, through the research strategy of encounters and “shifting readings”, Sabeva develops two conceptual legacies, that of Husserl’s genetic phenomenology and Bourdieu’s socioanalysis, and constructs them as research fields whose conceptual density is achieved by placing them in mutual analytical perspective. In this sense, phenomenology and the socioanalysis of generative time are inseparable from each other not because of their common subject matter, generativity, but because of the mutually emergent and mutually unfolding aspects of their problematization. Thus, the sphere of vulnerability as “an oriented world whose core is lived corporeality and intercorporeality”, as “the affective space of suffering”, is as much a socioanalytic reading of

generativity as it is a phenomenological displacement of the very notion of suffering in the “light of the pathos turn in the notion of experience” (ibid., p. 57). The phenomenological concept of generative time and its derivatives “generative experience”, “generative subject”, “generative style of experience”, “transgenerative transmissions of experience”, etc. are phenomenalization of life itself in the human world with its ruptures of time of living and inheritances in the two spheres of co-existence, i.e. the inter-subjective and intra-subjective in-between. Thus, Sabeva accomplishes the turn from Husserl’s notion of the self’s inheritance to the socioanalytic notion of the personality’s inheritance and shows the multipolarity of self-inheritance as a generative structure (ibid., p. 145). In other words, Sabeva achieves a socioanalytic reformulation of the “sphere of vulnerability” by making explicit its generative architectonics, and the conceptualization of generative time at the border between the socioanalysis of suffering from society and the analytics of biopower becomes a key to reading and understanding contemporary politics of life and death whose “substratum” is the intertwining existential and political phenomena.

Fourth, Svetlana Sabeva does not stop at the phenomenological analytics of generative time but uses it as a basis for a phenomenological critique of contemporary forms of biopower and biocapitalism. Here again, the characteristic approach of her research style, which is the pledge of her achievements, manifests itself, namely the conceptual dialogue between different authors and the mutual illumination of potential ideas through phenomenological analysis. Starting from the thesis of the “splitting of the classical modern unity between labor and life”, Sabeva reveals contemporary biocapitalism as oriented towards investment in the productivity of biological life rather than human labor as well as the extraction of so-called “biologically earned time”, and draws a possible line of critical thinking towards capitalist biotechnologies and biopolitics which, while shielding the symbolic value of lives, are actually involved in the preservation of only some of them.

Last but not least, Svetlana Sabeva builds the conceptual vocabulary of phenomenology and socioanalysis of generative time with precision and sensitivity to the Bulgarian language. Thus phenomenological categories find their precise linguistic form.

3. Critical remarks and recommendations

My formal position as an evaluator of Svetlana Sabeva’s work in no way cancels my gratitude to her. “Thinking is gratitude” (*Denken ist Danken*), in Heidegger’s words, and in conclusion I would like to thank Svetlana Sabeva for the time she has given me to reflect and make sense of contemporary situations of pandemic and war, of ruptures in biographical and life trajectories, of crises in personal identity as “overlivings”.

And one more thing, the phenomenology and socioanalysis of generative time that Svetlana Sabeva builds, all the time referred me to Isabel Stengers' idea from *The Invention of Modern Science* (1993) about the birth of modern sciences "under the sign of the event", the event understood not as a topos but as the generative difference, as the differentiating, whose meaning is determined by the subsequent acts of repetition of difference. The pathos turn in the phenomenological notion of experience that Svetlana Sabeva pursues is in fact a working with "experience under the sign of the event", that is, of the pathos phenomenon as a phenomenon of recurrence that disrupts one's habitualized experience in and with the world and "unlocks" various practices of "being at", of being again in the world of life, in which meaning is continually constituted and re-constituted.

In the perspective of the horizon opened by Svetlana Sabeva, I would like to pose at least two questions:

1) With the shifted emphasis on listening to others' suffering, how does the question of "who listens", "how he/she listen", and "what he/she hears" stand? Is there a danger that the multiple voices of the narratives of the suffering will sink into the various figures, including those professionalized, of "open but unhearing ear"?

2) If the symbolic (un)valuation of life in the age of biocapitalism has a different index ("grievable"/"ungrievable" lives), what is the social value of "surviving" and "staying to live"? What worlds of care and strategies of security do these modalities of biocapitalist practice create?

CONCLUSION

On the basis of the analysis of the teaching, research and publication activities of the candidate and the mentioned significant achievements, I give **a positive evaluation** and **confidently and categorically recommend** to the Scientific Jury to prepare a report-proposal to the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Philosophy and History of Plovdiv University for the election of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Svetlana Temelkova Sabeva to the academic position of Professor in the field of higher education 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, professional field 3.1. Sociology, Anthropology and Cultural Sciences, scientific specialty History of Sociology –Phenomenological Sociology and Socioanalysis.

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Author of the Opinion:

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