

OPINION

by Dr. Sci. Stefan Mateeff Mateeff, Honorary Professor of the New Bulgarian University, Department of Cognitive Science and Psychology, for participation in a competition for the academic position of Professor, professional field 3.2 Psychology, announced in SG No. 51 / 18.06.2021, with candidate Ass. Prof. Dr. Maurice Avram Grinberg.

Maurice Grinberg appeared in the Department more than 20 years ago. He was already associate professor and doctor of theoretical physics. Over the years, he worked in the field of cognitive psychology, achieving successes that I appreciate very highly. Below are arguments in support of my opinion.

Grinberg conscientiously presents for the competition a complete set of necessary materials - monograph, lists and texts of works, etc., as well as the exhausting tables required by ZRASRB and NBU. He applies for the competition with his monograph "Social Dilemmas: A Cognitive Perspective".

The first two parts of the monograph present the history, ideas and main points of Game Theory. Grinberg argues that data from behavioral experiments cannot be explained solely based on the Game Theory. The behavior of the participants is significantly influenced by psychological characteristics such as cooperation, altruism, reputation building, reciprocity and others. These facts show that the existing theories are at least incomplete and require the formulation of new hypotheses and models and their experimental verification. The arguments in these two parts are accessible to readers who have only a general knowledge of psychology.

The next two parts are related mainly to the study of the Prisoner's Dilemma Game. This game can be easily formalized; it may provide quantitative description of the factors that influence the strategies of the players. Grinberg analyzes in detail the existing patterns of player behavior. He points out that the models in the literature do not explore the specific mechanisms that lead to one or another outcome in the game and takes successful steps in overcoming this gap in the theory. He offers his own models, which take into account various cognitive factors. The models allow describing the role of cooperation between players, which has been established in numerous experiments. They also show that the involvement of specific cognitive mechanisms, as selective attention, leads to a good description of the

experimental data. A finding of particular interest is that the presence or absence of cooperation can be described by the appearance of Simpson's statistical paradox in the results. Grinberg develops a general formalism, describing a combination of the two situations - in cooperation and in the absence of cooperation. All models are supported by data obtained in real experiments as well as in simulations.

The monograph undoubtedly meets the requirements for a thorough and good scientific text. The presented models and empirical data are significant scientific contributions and merit high evaluation.

Grinberg presents an impressive amount of scientific papers. Most of them are in English. Some of them, 28, are separated as published in refereed editions. Works presented at scientific events in Bulgaria and abroad are listed in another section. Four chapters in books are also presented. The main topic in the works is decision making in the conditions of social dilemmas. The models presented by Grinberg do not consist simply of sets of words. We see mathematical and logical constructions that are subject to computer simulation and thus allow for verification and comparison with empirical data obtained from well-elaborated experiments. Together with Ass. Prof. Dr. Evgenia Hristova, Grinberg is an experienced experimenter. He employs ingenious psychological techniques for control of variables, for example, registration and analysis of eye movements in the decision-making task.

Social dilemmas are not Grinberg's only interest. At the beginning of his career at NBU, he participated in studies related to modeling and simulations of analogical thinking based on Kokinov's AMBR model. In recent years, Grinberg has entered the field of experimental philosophy and has participated in cross-cultural research on beauty estimation, moral responsibility, ethnomentalization and others.

Grinberg presents a list of 61 citations of his works. The majority of citations are in articles published in journals with a high impact factor. This shows a visibility and recognition of his works worldwide. I agree with the presented report on his contributions.

Grinberg is actively dealing with applied activities. As an example, I will point out the developments for children with disabilities. He is the founder and director of the Laboratory for the usability of products and services, which, among other things, was engaged in fulfilling a request from BulBank.

Grinberg is very active in participating in research projects. He reports 10 projects, all of which are international. Grinberg is a conscientious teacher. He has prepared seven courses for the programs in psychology and cognitive sciences in both Bulgarian and English. He has supervised bachelor's and master's theses, as well as three doctoral dissertations. He actively incorporates students in his studies, including them as co-authors. Grinberg also has executed significant administrative duties in the Department and in NBU. He is a member of the Faculty Council at the Master's Faculty, was a member of the Academic Council of NBU, and was Deputy Rector for Quality, Evaluation and Attestation, as well as Director of the NBU Evaluation Center.

I have known Maurice Grinberg for more than 20 years. High erudition, critical thinking and efficiency characterize him. Grinberg is a helpful colleague who is always ready to provide qualified assistance. He is an extremely suitable candidate for the position announced in this competition. His candidacy exceeds the requirements of the ZRASRB and NBU.

I strongly recommend to the Academic Council of the New Bulgarian University to elect Associate Professor Dr. Maurice Avram Grinberg for the position of Professor in the professional field 3.2 Psychology.

16.09.2021

Prof. Dr. Stefan Mateeff,