

Habilitation thesis

Prof. univ. dr. Sorin Dan Șandor,
Public Administration Department
„Babeș-Bolyai” University

1.1. Summary

This habilitation thesis presents the scientific, professional and academic achievements of the candidate in the field of public administration in the context of the actual stage of the research.

The first part of section II.1 of the thesis is a research-based perspective on public administration study. Public administration is a domain of study and research in which the main arguments are examined in regard with the status of public administration as a science, its sources (law, political science, sociology and management) and paradigms (or lack of), different approaches towards study and research in the field, and the main themes of research. The failure in developing a unified body of knowledge specific to public administration due to its multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary nature is seen also as the main opportunity of the discipline. Research in the field has yet to provide significant results, but there are some interesting developments. The main one is the development and refinement of new research techniques in areas like public policy analysis and program evaluation.

The presentation of the achievements in the field is structured on the main themes of research, namely:

- Public administration education;
- The public administration reform;
- Electronic-government;
- Organizational research;
- The use of research methods in Public Administration;
- Various research topics.

In the field of public administration education the achievements are related to the reflection about the state of public administration education in the context of the change in the dominant paradigm (from law to a more interdisciplinary approach). Sharing these ideas with other academics from the field or with the practitioners seemed to be important. One important step was launching a new journal, the Transylvanian Review of Administrative Science, in which I was involved as an editor between 1998 and 2003, and since 1998 as a member of the Editorial Board. This journal is the only ISI indexed Romanian journal in the field of public administration. Other papers analyze the situation of public administration education, from different points of view like, curricula, admission procedures, candidates, and

the adoption of the Bologna process in Romania and its consequences and the insertion of the graduates on the workforce market.

Public administration reforms was studied from two perspectives – one that focused on the internal workings of the reform (its trajectory, its pace, the instruments used, the goals, the objectives set at the beginning, the resources used, the organizations involved, etc.) and one that focuses upon the way in which the reform is perceived (by the citizens and by the public servants). The main impetuses for reform were the EU enlargement and integration processes, not only for the direction of reforms in Romania but also for the depth and rhythm of implementation. A serious effort to study the Romanian public administration reform was done in a research program within the framework of the National Research Programme CEE/CERES type 1, no 86/1.08.2006 in which I coordinated the activity as a scientific director. The results showed that reform of the public sector is considered to be mildly effective but is perceived as being chaotic, unstructured and uncoordinated over longer periods of time.

Other papers presented and analyzed different aspects or tools of the public administration reform like the Common Assessment Framework, performance measurement, satisfaction of the public administration customers, the training of Romanian public servants, public compensation schemes and the development of program evaluation in the Romanian public institutions.

The new Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) brought a lot of new assumptions about radical changes in the entire society and electronic government is the most significant change for public administration. The studies done in this field by the candidate are focused on: the challenges and opportunities that new ICT are bringing for the public administration institutions, the level of digital divide in Romania, the status of the development of the Romanian e-government, the electronic communication between local government and citizens, the relationship between ICT and public administration reforms.

Organizations (in this case public administration institutions) are a very important unit of analysis in the study of the public administration system. The candidate's studies in the field are concerned both with identifying the best methodologies for the organizational study and also to investigate organizational realities. The topics approached include: organizational diagnosis, the possibility of the apparition of rogue organizations in the context of administrative reforms, gender equality in public administration institutions or the needs of the public servants.

The use of research methods in Public Administration is discussed from the point of view of the candidate's teaching workload and presents the textbooks and papers published

which were devoted to the adaptation of the research topics to the needs of public administration, both from the students' point of view and also for the future and existing practitioners.

Other research topics were also approached. Elections are one of them, as a continuation of the doctoral work. Other research was concerned with the impact of several policies and societal actors: the capacity of the Civil Society to fight corruption, the influence of the church and religion in the present society, or the way in which scientific research was used in the establishment of the Romanian radio and television policy.

Section II.3 is devoted to the plans for the development of the professional, scientific and academic career.