

HABILITATION THESIS

STRATEGIC BUDGETING, FISCAL CONSOLIDATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN EU COUNTRIES

- SUMMARY -

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I am currently associate professor at the Department of Finance, Money and Public Administration, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, at “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iași, teaching both undergraduate and graduate level courses such as: *Public Finance, Local Government Financial Management, and Public Budgetary Systems*. I am responsible for the *Public Administration* Master Programme that is managed by my own Department and I am also academic supervisor for internships in Public Administration. I am the author or co-author of 16 books (2 as a single author) or course materials and 84 scientific articles, published at prestigious publishing houses (Emerald, Economica or C.H. Beck). Over the years, I was a member of the management team, expert in the field of education or scientific researcher of 12 projects/grants funded by national or international authorities and I held the position of Director for 2 research projects. The research outcomes had been disseminated among members of the academic community and among practitioners during my participation at over 100 national or international conferences. I am member of the Council of the Department of Finance, Money and Public Administration, Assistant Editor of the *Journal of Public Administration, Finance and Law* and member of the Editorial Board for two national journals, indexed in international databases.

The habilitation thesis summarizes the research activity following the successful PhD Thesis defense at the “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iași and the confirmation of the title by the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth and Sport based on the Order no. 4387 from 06.06.2011.

The first part of the thesis (*Section A*) summarizes the main academic (*Subsection 1.1*), professional (*Subsection 1.2*) and research achievements (*Subsection 1.3*) obtained along my career at “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iași. This part emphasizes my studies, the fields of academic and administrative activity and also my professional interests. A large part of the *Section A* of the habilitation thesis is dedicated to a significant part of my research activity and its results, structured as follows:

- Research direction 1. Architecture and functionality of the public budget systems;
- Research direction 2. Strategic budgeting, best practices and current prerequisites;
- Research direction 3. Fiscal governance, budget consolidation and related vulnerabilities;
- Research direction 4. Changes in the administrative and financial systems and the impact on their functionality.

All these four topics are being associated in my research studies with the problem of sustainable development.

Research direction 1 highlights the main scientific contributions regarding the structure and the functional relationships within public budgetary systems, based on the empirical investigations that I conducted starting with my Ph.D. thesis. This part also includes the best practices that I synthesized based on the experience of different unitary or federal countries studied, and the necessary public policies recommendations for Romania.

Research direction 2 (Strategic budgeting, best practices and current prerequisites) includes the main results of my research in the field of public budgeting techniques and the relationships between public budgets (fiscal transfers). Based on the empirical investigations that I have conducted on a sample of EU Member States, I made some recommendations for reforming the national public finance and public administration laws, introducing new concepts/instruments/mechanisms and prerequisites which were in part inserted into the legal framework.

Research direction 3, Fiscal governance, budget consolidation and related vulnerabilities, was taken mainly during the post-doctoral stage with the support of the Romanian Academy, through SPODE program (*Post-doctoral Studies in Economics: Program for Continuous Forming of Elite Researchers*). Starting from *hard-budget* theory, my research was consistently focused on the fiscal consolidation determinants, the practice of fiscal adjustments and its impact in the EU Member States. In this regard, I conducted a comparative empirical analysis including the crisis-response measures and their impact on public finance soundness, synthesizing the main lessons that the recent economic and financial crisis offered to us. A special attention was paid on one hand to the concepts of *smart fiscal consolidation*, *sustainable fiscal consolidation* and their possible approaches or prerequisites in international budgeting practice, and, on the other hand, to fiscal vulnerabilities, distribution of crisis costs in society and how can be different threats avoided in policy-making process.

Research direction 4. Changes in the administrative and financial systems and the impact on their functionality highlights the main results of different scientific studies that I have conducted regarding the practice and the impact of decentralization and self-government in European countries, part of them being published as a book chapter at Emerald Publishing. A special attention was paid to the trend of regionalization in the European Union, which responds to the spirit of “Europe of Regions”, our scientific papers including in this regard the basic prerequisites for the budgetary part of such a reform in our country.

The second part of the habilitation thesis comprises the future aims in the field of academic (*Subsection 2.1*), professional (*Subsection 2.2*) and research activities (*Subsection 2.3*). Thus, this part includes a career development plan, including my own perspectives on teaching, supervising and research activities. Future research directions include, among the continuation of my previous research, the problem of socio-economic resilience and its linked aspects (infrastructure, education, local investments etc.), determined by the actuality and importance of the issue and also by my professional position during 2018-2021 as scientific researcher in the Project PN-III-P4-ID-PCCF-2016-0166, *ReGrowEU - Advancing ground-breaking research in regional growth and development theories, through a resilience approach: towards a convergent, balanced and sustainable European Union*. Also, future research efforts will be focused on the evaluation of the effects that budgeting practice of EU Member States has on economic stability and growth, including the fiscal governance (fiscal discipline, budget consolidation and best practices), intergovernmental fiscal transfers, the impact of decentralization/regionalization on public budgets and the efficiency of public expenditures.

The final part of the thesis consists of the list of main references used in my research activity.