

**UNIVERSITATEA BABEȘ BOLYAI, CLUJ - NAPOCA  
INSTITUTUL DE STUDII DOCTORALE  
SCOALA DOCTORALĂ  
DE ADMINISTRAȚIE ȘI POLITICI PUBLICE**

**THE ROLE OF NGOS IN THE PUBLIC POLICY MAKING PROCESS.  
GOOD PRACTICES FOR STRENGTHENING THE INSTITUTIONAL  
CAPACITY OF THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

**HABILITATION THESIS - ABSTRACT**

Candidate: Ph.D Păceșilă Mihaela

**CLUJ-NAPOCA, 2021**

Currently, Păceșilă Mihaela holds the position of associate professor within the Department of Public Administration and Management, Faculty of Public Administration and Management, Bucharest University of Economic Studies (BUES).

The habilitation thesis highlights the most important researches carried out by its author after defending the thesis in December 2009 and gaining the PhD in March 2010. The thesis is structured in three sections: I. Academic, professional and scientific achievements; II. Evolution plans and professional, scientific and academic career development; III. References.

**The first section of the habilitation thesis** briefly presents the evolution of the author's academic and professional career, and the main achievements, as well as important aspects regarding the research activity carried out and its impact.

As regards *the university career*, the author held the position of junior assistant (February 2004), assistant professor (February 2007), lecturer (October 2011), associate professor (February 2019). The bachelor's and master's level courses and seminars taught by her are related to public administration, nongovernmental organizations and social responsibility, as follows:

- Administrative Science (bachelor level, starting with the academic year 2003-2004 – seminars; starting from the first semester of the academic year 2011-2012 - courses)
- Management of Nongovernmental Organizations (bachelor level, starting with the academic year 2013-2014 – seminars and courses)
- Management of Nongovernmental and Nonprofit Organizations (bachelor level, starting with the academic year 2015-2016 – seminars and courses)
- Basics of Public Administration (bachelor level, starting with the academic year 2003-2004 – seminars)
- Public Policy (bachelor level, starting from the first semester of the academic year 2006-2007 to the academic year 2018-2019 – seminars)
- Social Responsibility (master level, starting with the academic year 2017-2018 – seminars and courses)

Starting with 2006, the author is a member of the Research Center in Public Administration and Public Services which operates at the Faculty of Public Administration and Management within Bucharest University of Economic Studies. Moreover, starting with 2016, Mihaela Păceșilă is associate editor and reviewer for two journals of Bucharest University of Economic Studies which are indexed in international databases (Scopus, Clarivate Analytics, Proquest, etc.): *Theoretical and Empirical Researches in Urban Management* and *Management Research and Practice*.

The author's professional achievements include awards given for an article published in a Clarivate Analytics journal from red zone, quartile 1 (handed out by Bucharest University of Economic Studies, as well as through Program 1. Development of national research and development system, subprogram 1.1 Human Resources, Research results award - articles - competition 2016, within National Plan for Research and Innovation 2015-2020).

Starting with February 2015, Mihaela Păceșilă is a member of the Electoral Bureau of BUES, an impartial body with responsibilities for organizing and conducting the university referendum for choosing the way of appointing the rector of Bucharest University of Economic

Studies, for organizing by-elections to fill the vacated seats, for organizing elections for BUES Senate, faculty councils and rectors. In this Bureau, the author of this thesis held the position of secretary (February 2015-January 2019) and vice-president (January 2019-present) and was involved in checking and displaying the voting lists, updating the voters lists, distributing the ballot papers, centralizing votes and communicating the results, etc.

Starting with March 2015, Mihaela Păceșilă was designated by BUES as responsible for occupational safety and health (OSH) within the Faculty of Public Administration and Management. In this regard, she was involved in the activity of prevention and protection in the OSH field, in accordance with the legislation and methodological norms in force.

As regards *the scientific career*, the most important achievements of the author are grouped in four directions:

- the PhD Thesis

The PhD thesis deals with an important topic for academia and the public sector, while it analyzes the stages of the public policy process. The subject under study is examined from an interdisciplinary perspective, highlighting the most important trends in the literature regarding the stages of the public policy process. The central element of the PhD thesis consists in a model setting out possible change levers, while their application can lead to improving the public policy-making process.

- Dissemination of the research results

During almost 18 years, from October 2003 to the present time, the results of scientific research obtained by working individually or collectively, have consisted in:

- 4 ISI Web of Science articles with impact factor published in national and foreign journals;
  - 34 articles (of which 4 with WOS, but without impact factor) and two book reviews published in journals indexed in international databases and 1 article published in a national B+ journal;
  - 2 books published as single author, 2 books as co-author and 5 chapters in collective volumes, both as single author and co-author;
  - participation in 13 international scientific conferences in the country and abroad; the proceedings of these conferences were indexed in international databases;
  - presentation of 25 papers in international scientific conferences in the country and abroad as well as in national scientific sessions, either as single author or co-author.
- Experience gained in various research/institutional development programs/projects

The author of this habilitation thesis was involved in the implementation of several research projects as well as institutional development projects as:

- CNCSIS PN II project director, Human Resources Program, TD, obtained through competition at national level;
- member of the research team of 10 international and national grant projects obtained through competition at national or international level;
- member of the implementation teams of 9 institutional, social and regional development

projects financed by a regional, national or foreign entity.

- Research directions approached and developed after defending the PhD thesis

The last 11 years after defending the PhD thesis, the author's scientific achievements are structured on four research directions, as follows:

### ***Research direction I – Public policy***

The first research direction highlights important aspects on the development of theory and practice in the field of public policies. This component of the research includes the results of scientific documentation activities as well as of fundamental and applied research carried out to improve knowledge on the public policy making and implementation process, the concept and types of renewable energy, the quality of local transport systems.

Within this direction, three research sub-directions were identified:

#### ***Public policy process***

The most relevant evidences in support of this research sub-direction are 2 scientific articles published as single author and 3 papers presented at international scientific conferences.

The most important theoretical and practical contributions published in several separate papers were the following:

- Presenting the theoretical aspects on the public policy process. The author of this thesis has reviewed the main trends as well as the main models in the literature related to the public policy process and its stages.
- Highlighting a model of the public policy process. This model is adapted from the British Cabinet Office report published in 1999 (British Cabinet Office, 1999) and points out the characteristics of a modernized public policy process.
- Testing the validity of the proposed model on the public policy process in Romania. The author transposed the model into a questionnaire which was applied to the experts in the public policy making process at the central level.

The research methods used consisted of:

- method of document analysis (used in all five publications of this research sub-direction);
- method of questionnaire based-survey (*Testing the validity of the model for improving the public policy making process in Romania, 2011; Improving the public policy making process in Romania, 2015*).

#### ***Public policy of renewable energy***

To support this research sub-direction, the author of the habilitation thesis published 6 papers: 4 papers in journals indexed in international databases, of which one was indexed in ISI Web of Science (Clarivate Analytics) as well as 2 papers presented at international scientific conferences. Two of the articles published in journals were co-authored.

Within this research sub-direction, the author's contributions consisted in the following:

- Outlining some relevant theoretical aspects from the literature on the concept and types of renewable energy: wind, solar and geothermal energy.

- Analyzing the renewable energy sector in the EU member states. To carry out this analysis, the author worked closely with professor, PhD, Colesca Sofia Elena and lecturer, PhD, Burcea Ștefan Gabriel. The author made a classification of EU countries based on several criteria: share of renewable energy sources, share of renewable heating and cooling, share of renewable electricity and share of renewable energy in transport. Subsequently, the main features of renewable energy policy in each Member State were highlighted.

- Providing an overview of geothermal energy. In this regard, the author described the potential of geothermal resources in Europe and worldwide, analyzed the current trends in the energy market and geothermal industry and made a comparative analysis between the values expected by NREAP (National Renewable Energy Action Plans) for 2012 and data reported by EU Member States.

- Outlining an overview of solar energy. In this regard, the author provided accurate information on researches in the field as well as on the potential of this type of energy in European countries. She also carried out an analysis of the current state of market development, including photovoltaic capacity, solar photovoltaic electricity production and operating solar thermal power plants.

- Carrying out a synthesis on significant trends and recent developments in the field of wind energy. The author provides information on wind energy potential in Europe, evolution of wind energy market and industry as well as support schemes for wind energy infrastructure development in European countries.

- Carrying out a comparative study on renewable energy in three Balkan countries: Bulgaria, Romania, Greece. The author described in detail the potential, production and share of renewable energy in total consumption in the three countries, as well as the mix of policies and measures adopted in order to increase the use of renewables.

- Carrying out a comparative analysis on renewable energy sector in the Western Balkans countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Kosovo. Hereof, the author emphasizes the importance of renewable energy sources and reveals key information about the commitments made by these countries. Policies and support mechanisms for renewable energy sources in those countries are also analyzed.

The following research methods have been used:

- method of document analysis (because all 6 component articles used information from various scientific sources as well as national and international official and private documents);
- method of comparison (*Analysis of the Balkan countries policy on renewable energy sources: the case of Bulgaria, Romania and Greece, 2013 și Renewable energy policy in the Western Balkans: Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, Kosovo and Serbia, 2013*);
- cluster analysis techniques and Borda method (*Analysis of renewable energies in European Union, 2016*).

#### ***Public policy of transportation at local level***

Within this research sub-direction, the author's approach is based on the article *Analysis of passenger's satisfaction with the quality of the public transportation mode choices in Bucharest:*

*a fuzzy approach, 2017*, published in the journal *Economic Computation and Economic Cybernetics Studies and Research*, indexed in ISI Web of Science (Clarivate Analytics). The paper is co-authored with professor, PhD, Colesca Sofia Elena, professor, PhD, Ciocoiu Carmen Nadia, lecturer, PhD, Burcea Ștefan Gabriel and assistant Professor, PhD, Bugheanu Alexandru.

The contributions of the aforementioned paper consisted in analyzing the satisfaction of Bucharest passengers on the quality of public transport systems in Bucharest. In this regard, the fuzzy multicriteria analysis method was used and six groups of satisfaction factors were identified: convenience, comfort, reliability, safety and security, communication with passengers, price and affordability.

Within this research sub-direction, the following research methods have been applied:

- method of document analysis for reviewing the literature on the quality of transport services and the public transport in terms of passengers' satisfaction, as well as for identifying the determinants of passenger satisfaction;
- method of the questionnaire-based statistical survey in order to analyze the passengers' satisfaction and perception for having a broader perspective on the quality of the public transport system in Bucharest;
- method of fuzzy multicriteria analysis allowing the elimination of the subjective factor from the passengers' assessments on the quality of public transport systems in Bucharest.

### ***Research direction II – Nongovernmental organizations***

This research direction has addressed the nongovernmental sector, taking into account its increasingly important role in recent decades which makes it a distinct sector in civil society. The preoccupation of this thesis author with nongovernmental organizations materialized in several relevant publications: 1 article indexed Web of Science (Clarivate Analytics), 7 articles in journals indexed in international databases, 2 books published by prestigious publishing houses in Romania and 2 papers presented at international scientific conferences. Through these publications, the author addressed issues related to human resources motivation in NGOs, endowment - a tool for ensuring the financial stability of NGOs, NGOs involvement in contemporary society, role of the nongovernmental sector in Romanian society.

Within this research direction the author's contributions are the following:

- Identifying the scientific articles on the vulnerability of NGOs and highlighting the most important issues resulting from their investigation;
- Identifying the scientific articles on the social responsibility of NGOs and establishing the main topics arising from their analysis;
- Providing an overview of the literature on social responsibility of nongovernmental organizations;
- Explaining the endowment concept (endowment fund), its typology, as well as the advantages, disadvantages and problems encountered in its establishment;
- Providing an overview of the use and role of the endowment fund in supporting nongovernmental organizations in Romania as well as in developing and improving their programs;

- Presenting the NGO sector in general as well as some key aspects in its operation in Romania; mentioning the challenges facing the sector after 1989;
- Analyzing NGO evolution and development throughout history with emphasis on their influence and role worldwide;
- Analyzing the management perspective on the most efficient methods of motivating NGO human resources; identifying differences in motivation depending on the type of organization and field of activity;
- Reviewing the motivational theories in the literature and comparing them with the current practice of motivating human resources in NGOs to find out if there is an evolution over time.

Within this research direction, the author used the following research methods:

- method of document analysis (all 10 component articles of the research direction). The application of this method allowed: reviewing the literature on the concepts of nongovernmental organization; highlighting the types of endowment funds, their advantages and disadvantages, as well as their use in Romania; presenting the aspects related to the establishment and development of the NGO sector, its activities and role, as well as its evolution in Romania;
- systematic review of the literature (*Insights on social responsibility of NGOs, 2020*) allowing the author to examine a large volume of information to identify recent trends in the field of social responsibility of nongovernmental organizations, as well as regarding their vulnerabilities;
- method of questionnaire based-interview (*Analysis of key-motivators in the Romanian-NGO environment, 2014; The relationship between motivational theories and the current practices of motivating NGO's human resources in Romania, 2014*) to find out the most effective ways to motivate volunteers, employees and members of the NGO sector and whether there are differences in motivation depending on the type of organization and field of activity.

### ***Research direction III - The nongovernmental sector and its involvement in the public policy process***

This research direction analyzes the role of NGOs in the public decision-making process in European countries and in Romania, as well as the extent to which their involvement goes beyond the formal stage. The author's preoccupation with NGO participation in the public policy decision-making process has materialized in the article *The role of non-governmental organizations in the public decision-making process*, 2016, published in Review of International Comparative Management.

The contributions from the above article consisted of:

- presenting the main characteristics of NGO involvement in the public decision-making process in Romania;
- conducting a comparative analysis regarding the experience of several European countries on NGO involvement in the public decision-making process;
- identifying theoretical and practical aspects from the experience of European countries that can be implemented in Romania.

The methods used in the article that is part of this research direction consisted in:

- method of document analysis used to review the literature on NGO involvement in the public decision-making arena as well as to explain the NGO influence in the public decision-making sphere in Romania.
- method of comparison used for the comparative analysis of various aspects of NGO involvement in the public decision-making process in four European countries (UK, Hungary, Croatia, Estonia).

***Research direction IV – Good practices for strengthening the institutional capacity of the public administration***

This component of the research describes the scientific conceptual and practical results regarding civil servants professional training and public administration reform. An important element of this research direction consists of the quantitative research results which was carried out to identify the civil servants' perception on their participation in EU funded training courses and to analyze the effectiveness of civil servants' training system in the workplace.

The most relevant evidence in support of this research sub-direction consists of 3 papers written by the author of this habilitation thesis in co-authorship with the department colleagues: 1 article indexed in Web of Science (Clarivate Analytics) published in Transylvanian Review of Administrative Sciences and 2 articles published in the Journal Administratie si Management Public indexed in several international databases. The first article was co-authored with professor PhD Profiroiu Alina, professor PhD Profiroiu Marius and master student Mihalcea Ovidiu Alexandru while the other two articles were co-authored with professor PhD Colesca Sofia Elena and professor PhD Profiroiu Alina, respectively. By means of these papers the author approached the process of civil servants training and public administration reform in Romania.

The most important contributions highlighted in the three papers, from a theoretical and practical perspective, were the following:

- Investigating, from a theoretical point of view, the concept of professional training by highlighting the main factors influencing it;
- Reviewing the literature on the concept of public administration reform;
- Analyzing the impact of training courses on "project management" on the number of projects initiated and implemented by the Territorial Agencies for Employment in 2009-2015. The analysis is performed for the projects financed within the Sectoral Operational Programme for Human Resources Development 2007-2013;
- Analyzing the perception of 337 civil servants within the Employment Agencies regarding training programs effectiveness by examining the relation between the participation of civil servants from County Agencies for Employment in training courses and their innovation capacity;
- Providing an overview on the system of civil servants' professional training within the administrative-territorial units located in the South-West Oltenia Region of Romania;
- Exposing the stage of the reform and analyzing the dysfunctions of the Romanian public administration;
- Highlighting the main areas regarding the Romanian public administration.



Within this research direction the author used the following research methods:

- method of document analysis (in all 3 component articles of the research direction) to obtain theoretical and practical information about civil servants professional training, projects initiated and implemented by the County Agencies for Employment in Romania, public administration reform and stage of the reform as well as dysfunctions analysis in the Romanian public administration.
- method of the questionnaire-based sociological survey in order to identify the civil servants perception regarding their participation in EU funded training courses and to investigate the analysis of training needs in the Romanian administrative-territorial units.
- Chi-square test to validate the research hypothesis regarding the relation between civil servants attendance in training courses on 'project management' and their innovation capacity.
- Kirkpatrick Four-Level Training Evaluation Model used to evaluate four aspects of the training system: reaction, learning, behavior, results.

**The second section of the habilitation thesis** regarding the evolution plans aims at two directions: the scientific research activity and the didactic activity.

In order to increase the relevance and impact of the scientific research results, the author of the thesis will focus on the following aspects:

- submitting research projects to various national and international competitions, both as director and member of the research team;
- attending international scientific conferences in the field of public administration;
- developing scientific papers published in journals with impact factor in the field of social sciences as well as in journals indexed in international recognized databases.

As regards the development of teaching skills, the author proposes the following objectives:

- Diversifying the teaching methods, based on creativity and educational cooperation, by using innovative learning methods as well as interactive approaches based on information and communication technology;
- Updating systematically the syllabus and teaching materials in order to adapt to what is new, providing students with updated information;
- Involving in student activities: offering support to students in organizing scientific events, scientific circles etc.; organizing professional visits of students to various public sector institutions;
- Inviting personalities, as special guests at courses, experts in their field of activity, to give lectures to students;
- Involving permanently students in courses and seminars by using teaching methods focused on discovery and teamwork;
- Developing the students self-instruction skills;
- Giving lectures, as a guest teacher, at universities in the country and abroad.

**The third section of the habilitation thesis** regarding the references contains 353 bibliographic sources. Most of them are academically recognized publications, published in prestigious publishing houses as well as in internationally recognized journals.