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**ABSTRACT**

This habilitation thesis summarizes the main achievements of my research activity, from the completion of my PhD until today. The research activities were carried out both as part of my duties as a researcher at the “George Baritiu” Institute of History, and within the framework of research grants. These are presented chronologically and thematically in the first three parts of the thesis. Its fourth part is focused on the career development plan, and its final part presents the bibliography used in the writing of both this thesis and some other relevant publications.

One direction of research in this thesis, pursued primarily on the basis of unpublished sources, supplemented with published ones, refers to the role of the Austrian state in the process of economic modernization of Transylvania, more precisely to Vienna’s economic policies in Transylvania during 1850-1859. It deals especially with the role of the state, the intervention mechanisms through economic legislation, the institutional-bureaucratic levers and the way the state managed its economic patrimony in Transylvania (forests, mines, land properties, etc.) during that period. The study reveals complex aspects of the Austrian state's economic policies in Transylvania during 1850-1867. It offers a thorough account of the developments in the modernization processes as a whole during this period.

A second direction of research is represented by the analysis of direct investments of Austrian capital in the neoabsolutist and liberal period in mining, steel and the exploitation of non-ferrous metals. In this respect, in a case study, I examined the approaches of some private companies in the sense of concentrating the Transylvanian mining and the steel industry in a single enterprise - the *Society of Mines and Furnaces of Braşov*. I studied and reconstructed the way this enterprise was set up, the capital invested and the interest groups behind it, the management and development strategies, its successes and failures, the factors that determined specific evolutions.

The temporary existence of this consortium revealed the possibilities, but also the limits of capital export to the peripheral provinces of the Habsburg Monarchy in the second half of the 19th century.

Another element of novelty that research has revealed, one that is important not only for the economic history of Transylvania, but also for a broader understanding of social phenomena specific to the nineteenth century, is research on the history of prices. After presenting the methodological aspects that such research requires, after the quantitative and qualitative assessment of available data, I reconstructed whole series of prices for staple products (wheat, beef, pork, wine, and other products) for the entire 1850-1910 period, based on systematic comparative and mediated calculations. In the same way, the evolution of average wages in mining, metallurgy, and agriculture (day laborers), has been reconstituted. One of the main obstacles in trying to reconstruct the evolution of prices in Transylvania in the period 1850-1914 is the lack of availability of quantitative data presenting a corresponding continuity and accuracy. Research has of course been adapted to these limitations and constraints. I have analyzed some of the causes of price changes and provided a comparative perspective at the level of the Kingdom of Hungary. As a benchmark, I have chosen the prices of some products that were involved in both interregional exchanges, and in local production and consumption: wheat, beef, pork, wine. As a matter of course, the trends in the evolution of prices have been explained in the context of monetary developments and the macro-economic phenomena that accompanied them.

The conclusion is that in the period 1850-1910, prices recorded a continuous increase. For example, the average price of wheat increased by about 46.87% in 60 years, a trend characteristic of other regions of the Danube Monarchy too. But there are also times such as the seventh decade of the nineteenth century when, mainly due to specific conditions (especially climate fluctuations), prices in Transylvania are higher than average prices in Hungary. A certain converging trend is visible only towards the end of the 19th century.

Similarly, in the case of other products (bacon, pork, beef), prices increased dramatically in the 1850s, which was perceived as a real "price shock". A "second price shock" occurred in the decade 1901-1910, especially around 1907. Concrete examples are provided and the causes of this process are explained.

I then proposed a reconstruction of the evolution of the value of wages, as well as an analysis of real income, that is the result of the ratios between nominal wages and the evolution of prices.

In studying the evolution of income over time, I dealt only with direct individual income in the form of wages. I considered data on the evolution of wages in agriculture and industry in the same period, based on the average wages calculated according to statistical data and other sources of the time, more precisely, wages in mining and those paid in agriculture. Given that for the studied region and period the quantitative sources are poor and lacking in continuity over time, I proposed the following model of analysis: I took as a benchmark the values in the early 1850s, then those at the end of each decade from 1870-1910 for which there are satisfactory data. The average monthly salary in industry (mining) and agriculture has been calculated separately; prices for a number of commodities have been reconstituted; the monthly salary has been correlated with the prices of staple products at the end of the following decades: 1850, 1870, 1880, 1890, 1900, 1910; the results provide a partial quantitative picture of real incomes amid the economic developments in Transylvania in the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the next.

One of the conclusions of this research is that in Transylvania income did not increase significantly during the whole period in question, not even in nominal terms, except for the period 1850-1870, and the level from which it started was extremely low. Specifically, the real value of income decreased throughout the period up to 1910, when correlated with the evolution of prices.

The habilitation thesis ends with a synthetic career development plan that presents the main objectives of future research activity, directions and topics that I want to propose for the future activity of doctoral coordination.

The career development plan is structured on several levels and around several issues:

- Long-term research projects and themes;
- Publishing projects;
- Intentions and strategies for international cooperation, participation in international scientific projects and events; increasing scientific visibility by publishing in impact journals;
- Potential topics for doctoral theses in the field of economic history.