HABILITATION THESIS SUMMARY

Challenges, Factors, and Limits for Socio-Economic Development

Habilitation field: *Economics*

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The main purpose of the habilitation thesis is to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the challenges, factors, and limits of socio-economic development, highlighting the originality of the research. The scientific activity has been carried out within the Institute of National Economy (INE) over the past sixteen years and has been focused on four main directions. This research activity has evolved following the attainment of a doctoral degree in Economics, with the doctoral thesis titled "Taxation and Economic Development". Within this habilitation thesis, the teaching activities conducted in recent years are also highlighted, activities that have capitalized on the results of the research conducted.

In accordance with current regulations, the habilitation thesis is divided into two distinct parts: Part I: Scientific, Professional, and Academic Achievements and Part II: Development Plans and the Advancement of Professional, Scientific, and Academic Career. In the initial section of the habilitation thesis, **the main scientific achievements**, as evidenced by publications in Web of Science indexed journals with an absolute influence score above zero, or in journals included in recognized international databases, are presented. The first chapter of the habilitation thesis delves into a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between fiscal policy and economic development. This chapter explores this relationship in the context of Romania compared to various other European countries. Within this chapter, an investigation of the "propagation effect" of taxes on the economy is undertaken, employing an input-output model to derive pertinent conclusions. The chapter also scrutinizes the crucial topic of tax compliance, exploring its implications on taxpayer behavior. Furthermore, various dimensions of taxation are discussed in the context of their impact on development.

The second chapter delves into critical themes concerning the challenges arising from socio-economic development within the context of climate change. It also explores the significant impact of eco-innovation, recycling, and eco-investments on the environment. A particularly pertinent aspect of this analysis is the endeavor to quantify both the magnitude and direction of the influence that eco-innovation and recycling exert on the consumption of natural resources. Within this chapter, a meticulous examination of the effects of eco-investments on waste recycling processes is conducted, alongside an exploration of household perceptions regarding the consequences of climate change. The chapter places specific emphasis on the

role of biofuels within the broader climate change discourse. In this context, it underscores the critical importance of raising awareness about the influence of climate change on both natural and cultural heritage.

The third chapter delves into the connections between economic growth, international trade, investment, and research and development spending. An essential facet of trade, namely intra-industry trade, is introduced to underscore its impact on economic growth. In the latter part of the chapter, it explores the determinants of intra-industry trade. Given the heightened intensity of trade among nations, this form of trade has progressively evolved, predominantly occurring between countries with similar factor endowments. It stands as a pivotal aspect in the development of international trade. Through these intricate analyses, the chapter endeavors to provide a deeper understanding of the interplay between economic growth, international trade, and other crucial macroeconomic indicators within the global economic context.

In the fourth chapter, comparative analyses are conducted to gain insights into tourists' viewpoints regarding various destinations. This chapter delves into tourists' perspectives, preferences, and experiences. Additionally, it examines the interconnection between tourism and economic growth, with a specific focus on the economic and social dynamics within this domain. Through these analyses, the chapter aims to identify pivotal issues concerning the impact of tourism on economies and communities. Furthermore, it explores how tourist preferences and perceptions can exert influence on the development of tourism destinations.

The second section of the habilitation thesis outlines **the trajectory for the advancement and growth of the candidate's professional, scientific, and academic career**. It begins with a presentation of the candidate's professional evolution and scientific research activities, with a particular emphasis on the ability to collaborate within research teams and effectively disseminate research findings in peer-reviewed journals indexed in Web of Science. Furthermore, the results achieved through participation in scientific activities conducted in collaboration with prestigious institutions in the economic field, both nationally and internationally, are highlighted. In this context, the fruitful collaboration with the dynamic and innovative team at the Center for Sustainable Development Research within INE deserves special mention, as it fosters creativity and nurtures a collaborative spirit.

The passion for the addressed thematic field will remain a priority in future research, with the aim of expanding and applying it in broader contexts, such as:

- **Developing the analysis of the interplay between taxation, digitalization, and economic development.** The interconnectedness of taxation, digitalization, and economic development offers a wealth of research opportunities, including: investigating the impact of digitalization on taxation (this involves exploring how digital technologies such as blockchain, artificial intelligence, or cloud technology influence tax collection and how digitalization affects tax evasion, along with strategies to combat it), examining e-commerce taxation (research in this area can delve into various approaches to taxing online sales and analyze the effects of these policies on the growth of the digital sector), exploring the taxation of digital income (this entails studying models for taxing multinational digital companies and assessing their implications for global economic development), addressing data protection and tax security (research here focuses on how digitalization can impact the collection and storage of tax data, and the development of security measures to safeguard this data), analyzing tax policies to promote innovation and the digital economy (research on tax measures that stimulate investment in new technologies and the digital economy, thus fostering economic development), and evaluating fiscal sustainability in a digital world (this involves investigating how fiscal policies can contribute to achieving sustainable development goals within the context of digitalization).

- **Investigating the significance and role of taxation in tourism (exploring optimal taxation in the tourism industry).** This research area entails identifying and evaluating the most effective policies and taxation levels that can maximize economic and social benefits within the tourism sector. It places particular emphasis on analyzing various tax components, including the tax rates for profit, income, VAT, and other taxes and contributions. Additionally, it considers tax incentives such as exemptions and deductions, as well as specific taxes applicable to tourism, such as resort taxes or entrance fees to national parks. Analyzing optimal taxation in the tourism industry necessitates a comprehensive and interdisciplinary approach. The objective is to develop tax policies that not only promote sustainable development and competitiveness but also generate economic and social advantages within this sector. It is crucial to account for the diverse characteristics of the tourism industry and its interconnectedness with other economic activities. Methods for analyzing optimal taxation in tourism encompass a range of approaches, including cost-benefit analysis, economic modeling, case studies, comparative analysis, SWOT analysis, and more.
- **Exploring intra-industry trade.** The analysis of intra-industry trade holds significant importance within the realm of economic and industrial development for several compelling reasons: economic efficiency (it enables the identification of sectors with comparative advantages, facilitating the efficient allocation of resources to industries that produce goods and services at lower costs; this enhanced efficiency can boost competitiveness and overall economic efficiency), diversification of the economy (intra-industry trade data informs decisions about diversifying the economy; overreliance on a single sector can render an economy vulnerable to market fluctuations or technological changes; identifying other sectors for investment helps reduce this vulnerability), export strategies (understanding intra-industry trade aids in the development of effective export strategies; specialized sectors can benefit from robust export markets, and comprehension of foreign market requirements and preferences can lead to increased exports), regional development (identifying specialized sectors in specific regions can play a pivotal role in job creation and reducing regional inequality), innovation and competitiveness (an understanding of intra-industry trade stimulates innovation and competition within industries, and companies can identify opportunities to develop new products or services within their sectors). The analytical methods for conducting intra-industry trade studies encompass a variety of approaches, including cluster analysis, regression analysis, comparative analysis, and more.
- **Tourism metadata research (Big Data).** These analyses provide companies in the tourism sector with valuable insights, enabling them to make informed decisions. This includes the ability to anticipate customer requests more accurately, predict future trends, and enhance overall consumer satisfaction and experiences. Comments on social platforms like TripAdvisor can be considered a form of big data, depending on their volume and how they are managed and analyzed. The term "big data" refers to extensive data sets, often characterized by complexity, which surpass the capacity of traditional analytics tools for data management. Effectively managing and analyzing such comments as big data necessitates the use of appropriate tools and technologies, including natural language processing (NLP) techniques and machine learning algorithms. Additionally, it is vital to adhere to data protection and user privacy regulations when working with comments and other personal data. Given the volume and

complexity of this data, specific approaches are required for processing and analysis to extract meaningful information.

In addition, future actions and initiatives will target priorities such as:

- supporting the career development in research of young employees at INE by promoting their involvement in research teams and encouraging their performance through diversifying the dissemination of research results;
- initiating and developing new thematic directions for research conducted at INE, tailored to future research trends;
- attracting doctoral students to research programs at INE, offering them support in developing the specific skills of a researcher;
- organizing thematic debate workshops for doctoral students and young researchers at INE to promote the exchange of ideas and interdisciplinary collaboration;
- adopting modern methods of collaboration and research within INE, with a focus on digitalization components, such as the use of online collaboration platforms where information, documents, and resources can be shared, projects can be discussed, and real-time collaboration can take place, facilitating access to relevant data and information and improving communication among researchers.

Within the future activities conducted at INE, the integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) into the research process plays a particularly important role. This integration can significantly contribute to improving the quality of research and developing the necessary skills in digital era. Thus, the following aspects will be considered:

- the use of online platforms such as Moodle or Google Classroom, which can facilitate the organization of interactive workshops and the involvement of students, master's students, doctoral students from the School of Advanced Studies of the Romanian Academy (SCOSAAR), and young researchers at INE; these platforms can be used for uploading materials, real-time interaction, tracking progress, and providing feedback;
- enriching the bibliography of the courses taught with the results of research conducted at INE, disseminated through articles and editorial volumes, which would provide an applied context and allow students to understand the connection between theory and practice;
- involving students, master's students, doctoral students, and young researchers from INE in online conferences, which can be facilitated through the use of multimedia resources such as videos and interactive presentations; this method can make research activities, result dissemination, and learning more engaging and visual;
- using studies and research conducted at INE as documentary material for game-based learning and simulations, which can help engage students, master's students, doctoral students, and young researchers in the learning process; this method can develop practical skills and bring participants closer to the specific work environment of advanced economic research.

Excellence in research is a result of continuous commitment, unwavering dedication, skill development, as well as the resources invested in research activities. This excellence can be achieved by researchers and is illustrated by the quality and impact of their work, innovation (the development of new ideas, technologies, or approaches that can revolutionize a field or make significant contributions to solving important problems), collaboration, partnerships, resources, and infrastructure.

The synergy between education and scientific research represents a fundamental pillar in preparing young individuals for the labor market and inspiring graduates to pursue a career in

research. In this regard, the integration of research into educational programs plays a crucial role, contributing to the development of essential skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, data analysis, and effective communication. Scientific research focuses on problem-solving and discovering innovative solutions, thereby providing opportunities to stimulate graduates' curiosity and creativity and motivate them to follow their passion for scientific research.

The direct connection between education and research adds relevance to academic content and prepares graduates for the demands of the job market. Involving students, master's students, and doctoral students in research projects provides them with the opportunity to work alongside experienced mentors and gain practical experience in their field of study. This mentorship contributes to the professional development of young individuals and guides them towards careers in scientific research. As a result, the synergy between education and research transforms into a dynamic and beneficial process for the future workforce preparation and the advancement of scientific research.

Research activities conducted at INE have been integrated with teaching, and in the future, the commitment to Romanian economic higher education will remain a priority, starting from the premise that there is an essential and necessary connection in both directions for a researcher. Thus, teaching activities will continue to play a significant role. The objective is to identify and inspire students and master's students with the potential to become researchers. Additionally, the dissemination of research results conducted at INE to students and master's students will continue, thereby contributing to the education of future generations of researchers.