



*Anexa nr.6*

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## **REZUMATUL TEZEI DE ABILITARE**

**MORALITY, SCIENCE AND ARGUMENTATION. PHILOSOPHICAL RESEARCH  
IN APPLIED ETHICS, GENERAL PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE AND CRITICAL  
THINKING**

Domeniul de abilitare: Filosofie.

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In this habilitation thesis, which forms the basis for my application to obtain the title of doctoral supervisor in Philosophy, I briefly present my original contributions in this field since the defense of my PhD thesis and outline my plans for further development in both my academic and research career.

After a brief overview of my teaching and research career, I present, in the first part, my original contributions in three key areas: general philosophy of science, ethics, and critical thinking. The general philosophy of science was the focus of my doctoral thesis and my primary area of interest in the years that followed its defense. My publications from this period continue the work of my doctoral thesis, which examines the incommensurability thesis proposed by Thomas Kuhn. These papers can be grouped into three categories.

The first group of papers reconstructs and examines the thesis of linguistic incommensurability, as developed by Kuhn, particularly in his later works. My main paper on this theme, "A Similarity-Based Approach to Kuhn's No-Overlap Principle and Anomalies," reconstructs the no-overlap principle and anomalies as formulated by Kuhn in his later writings. Building on a Kuhnian observation, I develop a formal model based on the concept of psychological distance between objects, through which I explain the role of the no-overlap principle and the emergence of anomalies. Additionally, I critique the model developed by Andersen, Barker, and Chen in their book *The Cognitive Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Cambridge University Press, 2006). On the same theme of linguistic incommensurability, in my paper "A Conceptual Perspective on Scientific Revolutions," I offer a case study of the Chemical Revolution initiated by Lavoisier, demonstrating how the prior conceptual framework is gradually replaced by a new one.

My third research focus in the philosophy of science is the evolutionary approach to the development of scientific knowledge. Through a series of articles and conference presentations, I explore how the evolutionary framework – based on variation, selection, retention, and the concept of gene – can be applied to the development of scientific knowledge. I conclude that such a broad application does not significantly clarify the nature of scientific evolution, but evolutionary theory can still help explain certain aspects of scientific development.

The second area of interest, which has primarily occupied me in the past ten years, is applied



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ethics, especially in the field of business. In the area of business ethics, I authored a book titled *Business Ethics: Conceptual Structures and Applications* (ASE Publishing House, 2014). In the first two chapters of this book, I discuss how general ethical theories and those tailored to the business world – such as libertarianism and enlightened self-interest theory – can be applied to business situations. In subsequent chapters, I address various ethical aspects of the relationship between companies and stakeholders: employees, consumers, and society. In some articles, I also examine the ethical aspects of the employer-employee relationship, such as non-discrimination, personal life, and employees' rights to participate in decision-making. Additionally, in my book and in other papers, I investigate the strategies companies use to mislead potential buyers.

Another key research direction has been public sector ethics, in which I have written papers on foundational topics such as the distinction between ethics in the public and private sectors, the concept of the public interest, as well as ethical issues in specific areas like the use of artificial intelligence and nudging in the public sector.

The third area of interest is critical thinking, which I approach in a general sense, focusing on various aspects of argumentation. The most important work I have developed in this area is *Elements of Critical Thinking: Theoretical Landmarks for Social Sciences* (Pro Universitaria, 2022). This volume centers around the concept of argumentation and addresses a range of standard critical thinking topics, as well as some less commonly explored themes, such as instrumental reasoning. I also present alternative treatments of common topics like the correlation-causality distinction and definitions. Alongside this book, I have authored papers on two types of argumentation: analogical argumentation, especially in moral and legal contexts, and instrumental argumentation. The latter led me into the field of rational decision theory, where I examine how certain human actions can be argued to be irrational from an instrumental perspective. Additionally, I participated in two research projects focused on identifying how critical thinking skills and dispositions are useful in the current labor market and how they can be improved. These projects involved empirical research methods such as focus groups and in-depth interviews, providing me with the opportunity to engage in a type of research different from my usual work.

In the second part of my habilitation thesis, I present several research avenues that I intend to further develop in the same three areas. In ethics, I plan to explore three research directions: artificial



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intelligence ethics, medical ethics, and ethical aspects of implementing nudges. In the field of general philosophy of science, I am interested in examining how *The Last Writings of Thomas Kuhn* (University of Chicago Press, 2022)—which includes the unfinished manuscript of Kuhn’s *The Plurality of Worlds: An Evolutionary Theory of Scientific Development*—modifies his conception of the themes explored in my doctoral thesis and subsequent works. Lastly, in the field of critical thinking, I aim to further explore the application of analogical argumentation in mathematics and logic, as well as to examine the slippery slope fallacy and other sophisms from a non-standard perspective.

I conclude with a brief section outlining my plans for the development of my teaching career, including the intention to collaborate with colleagues on creating course materials for *Ethics and Academic Integrity*, focusing on issues specific to economic research.