

SUMMARY OF THE HABILITATION THESIS

MIGRATION AND SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Associate Professor Ph.D. Mădălina Cocoşatu

The habilitation thesis entitled “Migration and Sustainable Urban Development” constitutes a strategic research direction, proposing an interdisciplinary, innovative, and convergent approach to the complex interactions between migration and the mechanisms and processes of sustainable urban development. Its primary aim is to provide a rigorous scientific foundation for these interconnections and to identify future research trajectories within the field of administrative sciences. The subject matter of the thesis is fully consonant with this discipline, given the administrative and regulatory nature of the challenges associated with population mobility, migrant integration, and the implementation of sustainability principles in urban planning and development.

Furthermore, the habilitation thesis represents the culmination of academic achievements, offering a synthesis of the major themes of the author’s academic and scientific career. It demonstrates its relevance through an integrated approach to two key phenomena of the twenty-first century: population mobility and accelerated urbanisation.

The choice of subject was made in the context of the challenges faced by public institutions and local and central authorities in managing complex social and demographic phenomena — challenges that impose new requirements in the areas of strategic planning, public service delivery, social inclusion, housing, and infrastructure.

The thesis is structured into two interdependent parts: The Research Framework and The Evolution and Development of Academic Career.

The first part of the thesis consists five chapters whose content responds both to a current research need and to a practical imperative, with the potential to underpin new research directions within the field of administrative sciences.

The first chapter clarifies the fundamental concepts of sustainable urban development, with growing emphasis on the use of smart technologies, nature-based solutions, and the

circular economy, highlighting their relevance in the context of environmental crises and accelerated urbanisation. The thesis examines the principal characteristics of sustainable urban development and the role of public administration in consolidating it. Subsequently, the interference between migration and sustainable urban development is analysed, and a conceptual framework is proposed that links migration dynamics to the imperative of creating more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable cities.

The second chapter focuses on migration and its specific impact on cities and urban communities. It identifies typologies of migration and the demographic, economic, social, and cultural effects it produces. The chapter also presents examples of European and national policies and initiatives — including the European Pact on Migration and Asylum, Romania’s National Strategy for Sustainable Development 2030, and Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans — that support migrant integration and sustainable development.

The thesis devotes particular attention to the concept of the smart city, regarded as a catalyst for migrant integration and for the acceleration of the transition towards sustainable cities. In this regard, an analysis is conducted of the ways in which digital technologies, artificial intelligence, and social innovation can support inclusion and harness the potential of migrants within urban communities. European best practices are highlighted, including the “City GROW” and “Science4Refugees” projects, which demonstrate the potential of international collaboration and partnership in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

The thesis also incorporates a discussion of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with particular reference to SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). These objectives are correlated with public policies and with the involvement of public administration in ensuring a coherent framework of urban governance and social integration of migrants.

Chapter Three, “The Current State of Research in the Field of Migration and Sustainable Urban Development,” underscores the fact that over the past two decades, research in this domain has undergone significant development, driven by the acceleration of global population mobility and the intensification of urbanisation processes. A significant direction in contemporary research is the development of new models and theories that integrate migration within the framework of sustainable urban development. These models seek to address the complexity of the interactions between migratory flows and urban dynamics, proposing

solutions that favour social cohesion, economic growth, and environmental protection in contemporary cities.

The structure of the thesis is completed by a fourth chapter dedicated to the normative framework, with references to international and European regulations, as well as to legislation, policies, and strategies implemented at the national and regional levels in Romania. This normative framework is essential for supporting public administration and local authorities in the effective management of migration and in adaptive, proactive urban planning that responds to both the challenges and the opportunities presented by migration.

The conclusion of the first part presents future research directions, with emphasis on the development of comparative studies and on the identification of best practices in migrant integration and sustainable urban development. These new research directions aim both to complement the work undertaken to date and to open new perspectives in continuation of prior research, taking into account the evolution of the social environment in the coming years. At the same time, the development of new research directions seeks not only to contribute to the specialist literature, but also to generate practical recommendations for the decision-making process within a coherent framework of integrated public policies.

The second part of the habilitation thesis reflects the continuity and complementarity of the theme “Migration and Sustainable Urban Development” with the author’s prior academic and scientific activity, as documented through articles published in ISI- and Scopus-indexed journals, participation in international conferences, and contributions to interdisciplinary research projects. The experience accumulated in the field of governance and administrative innovation directly supports the capacity to coordinate doctoral programmes and to contribute to the advancement of scientific knowledge in the field of administrative sciences.

The habilitation thesis thus aims to provide a holistic, integrative, and rigorous framework for understanding and managing migration processes in correlation with the objectives of urban sustainability, thereby contributing to the development of well-adapted public policies and to the training of future generations of researchers and practitioners in the field of administrative sciences. Through this academic endeavour, the author pursues the development of an interdisciplinary perspective on the manner in which public administration must operate within the context of the 2030 Agenda, the green transition, and new institutional responsibilities.