



***From Individual Action to Collective Consequences:
Contributions to Electoral Sociology and Social Research Methodology***

Abstract of the Habilitation Thesis

Doctoral Field: Sociology

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The habilitation thesis presents and critically evaluates the author's scientific, academic and professional career following the award of a PhD in Sociology on 20 February 2013. The thesis is organised thematically and argumentatively, rather than as a chronological account. The first section (Chapters 1-8) reconstructs the contributions, orientations and limitations of the research strands developed, whilst the second section sets out the plan for the author's future career development. The cohesion of the thesis stems from an interest in the relationship between individual action, collective consequences and the mediating role played by contexts, institutions, rules and the distribution of resources.

Electoral sociology, political participation, public opinion and electoral communication form the central thematic core. The research has evolved from voting decisions to territorial analysis, participation, representation, the Romanian diaspora and communication. The integrative model of decision-making and the taxonomy of the electorate developed in the author's book *Electoral Sociology. Elections, Voters and Voting Behaviour*, together with the contribution to the *Electoral Atlas of Romania (1990-2009)*, articulate the individual, aggregate, territorial and institutional levels. The analyses distinguish between the reference populations used to measure participation, between electoral results and access to office, as well as between the message and its reception, digital visibility and public opinion. Studies of transnational voting analyse the diaspora and the direct effect of votes cast abroad, as distinct from indirect influences, which require appropriate research designs.





Social research methodology constitutes an autonomous field and the cross-cutting infrastructure for thematic and applied research. The approach draws on Romanian sociological traditions and paradigmatic pluralism, and focuses on evidence construction, design, measurement, validity and inference. The volume *Introduction to Mixed Methods Research*, the first synthesis published in Romania and in the Romanian language devoted entirely to the field, links the fundamentals with research decisions. Integration is defined as a constitutive operation, through points of interface, integrated findings, meta-inference and traceability. The Romanian-English glossary proposes a coherent, internationally connected language that is, at the same time, open to revision.

Applied sociological research extends the analysis to vulnerability, services, communities and public policy. Studies on children with parents in detention, the extended family, long-term care and the distribution of services support a relational conception: vulnerability arises from the interaction between risks, resources, care, institutional responses and the community context. Mapping exercises, assessments and research on forced migration, together with public consultation, show that the formal existence of services does not equate to effective access, and that sociological research can inform public policy choices or specific intervention programmes.

The social economy represents a major area of focus, albeit one that is time-bound. The contributions concern the sociological definition of the field, the model of community potential based on needs, solidarity and participation, the national assessment, development scenarios and the evaluation of institutionalisation. The analysis of Law No. 219/2015 highlights the narrowing of the field's scope to the integration of vulnerable groups. Recent research on digitalisation, sustainability and social change forms a diverse, emerging field that brings together higher education, technology and employment, virtual tourism, 'de-influencing', sustainable consumption and education for sustainable development.





National and international projects, interdisciplinary collaborations, publishing activities, teaching resources and institutional responsibilities have supported the production and transfer of knowledge. This expertise has been integrated into teaching, student guidance, the development of the Master's programme in *Sociology of Organisations and Human Resources*, and into projects focusing on equity and internationalisation. The research areas do not all have the same level of maturity, and some results stem from cross-cutting, exploratory or non-probabilistic designs and from collaborative research. These limitations necessitate proportionality in attribution and generalisation, without undermining the coherence of a programme underpinned by methodological, collaborative, formative and institutional capacities.

The development plan organises the next phase around two pillars: electoral sociology, as the thematic core, and mixed-methods research, as an autonomous and cross-cutting methodological core. The priorities are longitudinal and comparative research on participation, representation and electoral geographies, with a focus on the Romanian diaspora and transnational citizenship, as well as testing the added value of integrating these methods. The aims are to establish a research group, a longitudinal electoral database, a digital atlas and, subsequently, a printed edition. The training objectives focus on methodological training within the doctoral programme, the coordination of theses aligned with demonstrated expertise, project-based learning and the formation of a community through seminars and workshops. Applied research will continue on a selective basis, whilst the social economy and recent themes will be revisited depending on relevance, resources and opportunities. The implementation plan distinguishes between actions that can be carried out independently and those dependent on approvals, data, partnerships and funding. The aim is to consolidate a programme in which research, teaching, doctoral training and institutional development support one another, with rigour, responsibility and transparency.

