

**UNIVERSITATEA DE VEST DIN TIMIȘOARA
DOMENIUL: FINANȚE**

**POLITICI PUBLICE ȘI TRANSFORMĂRI ECONOMICE.
CONTRIBUȚII PRIVIND DETERMINANȚII STRUCTURALI
AI DEZVOLTĂRII SUSTENABILE ÎN EUROPA**

REZUMATUL TEZEI DE ABILITARE

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2025

**WEST UNIVERSITY OF TIMIȘOARA
DOMAIN: FINANCE**

**PUBLIC POLICIES AND ECONOMIC DYNAMICS.
CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE STRUCTURAL DETERMINANTS OF
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN EUROPE**

ABSTRACT

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This habilitation thesis, entitled "Public policies and economic transformations. Contributions regarding the structural determinants of sustainable development in Europe", represents a synthesis of the scientific activity carried out during the postdoctoral period and a recognition of the almost two decades of involvement in higher education and research. The work highlights my professional path and the main results of the scientific research activity in the field of finance, obtained after the defense of the doctoral thesis and the acquisition of the PhD title in economics.

The habilitation process marks an essential moment in the evolution of the university career, representing the crowning of a professional path based on scientific rigor, didactic responsibility and devotion to academic excellence. It also involves assuming an active role in the training of future doctoral students, by promoting applied research and innovation in the field of economic sciences. Obtaining the habilitation certificate expresses commitment to the progress of knowledge and to the mission of contributing to the training of new generations of specialists in the field of Finance.

Between 2003 and 2007, I attended **undergraduate studies** at the Faculty of Economic Sciences of the West University of Timișoara, majoring in *Finance and Banking*. I graduated with an average of 9.96. I got a grade 10 both in the basic and specialised knowledge evaluation test of the undergraduate exam, as well as in the defence of the undergraduate thesis, entitled "Religious phenomenon and taxation", developed under the guidance of Prof. Mihai Mutașcu, PhD. During 2007-2009, I followed the courses of the **master's program** in *Finance and financial strategies of companies* at the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration of the West University of Timișoara. The weighted average of the years of study was equal to 9.95 (head of class). I defended the dissertation work developed under the guidance of Prof. Mihai Mutașcu, PhD, in July 2009, being graded with a 10. Starting in 2007, I pursued my vocation as a teacher in the field of finance, becoming an associate assistant (from 2009 full-time) in the Finance Department of the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration.

In 2008, I enrolled in **doctoral studies** in the field of Finance under the supervision of Prof. Ioan Talpoș, PhD. I was awarded the doctorate in Finance at the West University of Timișoara, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration. The title of the PhD thesis is "The foundation of fiscal policy based on public choice theory ". I defended my doctoral thesis publicly on 01.04.2011, at the West University of Timișoara. The thesis was evaluated by the

doctoral jury with the qualification "Excellent". The doctoral studies marked the beginning of a rewarding research career in the field of fiscal policy analysis, a direction that later expanded to the analysis of public policies and their impact on economic development.

With an experience of over 18 years in the teaching and research activity carried out within the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, I had the opportunity to strengthen my skills both in the educational and research fields. Throughout my career, I have carried out my responsibilities with passion, perseverance and enthusiasm, driven by the continuous desire to improve and achieve relevant and high-quality results. This approach has proven extremely productive, bringing me both professional and personal satisfaction, as well as increased visibility within the financial science community.

The most significant results of my research activity have been published in prestigious scientific journals. Among them, I mention the following:

1. Mura, P.O.; Donath, L.E. (2023) Digitalisation and Economic Growth in the European Union. *Electronics*, Volume 12, Issue 7, 1718. ISSN/eISSN: 2079-9292 DOI:10.3390/electronics12071718 WOS:000971299700001
2. Mura, P.O.; Donath, L.E. (2023) Government debt and economic freedom in the CEE countries. Less is more. *Prague Economic Papers*, Volume 32, Issue 4, pp. 350-366. ISSN: 1210-0455, eISSN: 2336-730X. DOI: 10.18267/j.pep.834 WOS:001056830100001
3. Mura, P.O.; Donath, L.E. (2025) The Circular Economy Footprint on Human Development in the EU and the UK. *Journal of Economic Issues*, Volume 59, Issue 3, pp. 832-851. ISSN: 0021-3624, eISSN: 1946-326X, DOI 10.1080/00213624.2025.2533725 WOS:001564786700001
4. Donath. L., Mutașcu M., Mura P.O. (2025). Impact of Energy Consumption on Income Inequality in CEE Countries. *Post-Communist Economies*, Volume 37, Issue 7, pp. 1009-1038. ISSN: 1463-1377, e-ISSN: 1465-3958. DOI: 10.1080/14631377.2025.2534920 WOS:001537925300001

My research activity took several directions in the years following my PhD. Thus, in the period immediately following this achievement, I tried to deepen the understanding of how fiscal policy measures can contribute to economic recovery, in the context in which the economic crisis of 2008-2009 caused strong recessions in the world, the European Union not

being exempted. Another direction aimed at analyzing the effects of implicit tax rates on some indicators of real convergence, the sample including the Visegrad states, along with Romania and Bulgaria. In recent years, research efforts have targeted topics related to sustainable economic development in the European Union and some influencing factors, such as the circular economy or digitalization. Last but not least, I tried to make a contribution regarding the understanding of how public debt affects economic freedom, as a precondition for sustainable development, or the reason why energy consumption can be a factor worthy of consideration in terms of reducing the degree of income inequality.

The research activity presents the main personal contributions and develops four major lines of inquiry, each with distinct sub-themes:

(1) *The circular economy and socioeconomic progress in the EU: an empirical assessment of the impact of waste recycling on the human development index (HDI)*. This direction analyzes the impact of waste recycling (as a proxy of the circular economy) on human development (as measured by the HDI).

(2) *Digitalization as a multifaceted growth engine in the European Union: an econometric assessment of digital policy indicators*. This section deals with the impact of digitalization on economic growth in the European Union.

(3) *Complex Interactions and Trade-offs in the Socio-Economic Dynamics of Central and Eastern Europe: Insights into the Public Debt-Economic Freedom and Energy-Inequality Nexus*. The chapter discusses how public debt influences economic freedom and how energy consumption shapes income inequality. These two dimensions capture essential aspects of contemporary socioeconomic dynamics in Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries – regions that are still consolidating their market institutions and pursuing sustainable development.

(4) *Fiscal Policies for Growth and Convergence: An Empirical Analysis of Taxation and Public Expenditure in Central and Eastern Europe*. The research in this chapter focuses on several own scientific achievements related to the basic coordinates of economic convergence for the Visegrad countries plus Romania and Bulgaria, as well as the impact of fiscal policies and productive public spending on economic growth.

Building an academic career in higher education involved a rigorous course, carried out in successive stages, each bringing specific requirements and increasingly complex

responsibilities. Unlike other professional fields, the university career is distinguished by vocation, animated by the passion for knowledge and training. Beyond the formal accumulation of degrees and titles, my career path illustrates constant commitment, perseverance and dedication to the field in which I operate.

From undergraduate studies, continuing with the PhD program and postdoctoral activities in economics, I approached each stage with a desire for continuous deepening and specialization. This course contributed to the formation of an interdisciplinary perspective and to the consolidation of a solid theoretical base. A university teaching career was a natural choice for me, pursued with determination and a genuine interest in supporting the academic development of students.

The objectives presented in this thesis express a solid commitment to academic excellence, to the development of education and research, as well as to the consolidation of an open, rigorous and performance-oriented university environment. Achieving these goals requires a strategic vision, constant effort and active involvement in promoting the values of science and university education.

Based on my previous activity and experience in teaching and research activity, my constant desire for progress and self-improvement, I am confident that I can have a successful activity as a doctoral studies coordinator.