

Abstract of the Habilitation Thesis

The habilitation thesis entitled "*Local Autonomy – Contemporary Challenges. A Special Focus on Non-Territorial Autonomy*" aims to present the scientific achievements attained throughout our academic career, as well as the directions envisaged for future research development in the field of administrative law and in related areas within the broader sphere of social sciences. This work represents an integrative synthesis of accumulated experience, relevant contributions, and perspectives of evolution in a complex and continuously evolving domain.

The first part of the thesis is dedicated to the presentation of the most significant scientific, professional, and academic achievements, resulting from teaching and research activities disseminated within the international scientific community and presented at prestigious academic events held both nationally and internationally. This section also includes a dedicated subsection outlining our professional trajectory, chronologically structured according to the stages of our academic career.

Our scientific and research activity has been conducted primarily in the field of administrative law—our area of doctoral specialization—under the guidance of two distinguished professors: Prof. Dr. **Antonie Iorgovan** and, after his passing, Prof. Dr. **Verginia Vedinaș**. Over time, the research directions naturally expanded towards the wider realm of social sciences, in response to the increasing complexity and interdisciplinarity of juridical and administrative realities. Completing a degree in psychology, alongside our technical and legal training, has strengthened an integrated perspective on the phenomena under investigation.

This multidisciplinary vision is reflected in the structure of the present work. The scientific results are presented in a dedicated chapter, through three subsections: *Courses and Monographs, Studies and Thematic Articles,* and *Research Projects*. Among the key works, we highlight the monograph "*Administrative Authorization. Theory. Practice. Jurisprudence*" (2013), based on doctoral research and considered—at the time of publication and still today—a unique contribution in the field. In 2025, we published another significant monograph entitled "*The Triad of Autonomies. Forms. Aims. Barriers. The Whole and the Parts in the Law of Autonomies – Local, Non-Territorial, and Functional*", which completes the research direction on modern concepts of autonomy, in the context of current democratic challenges.

The university chair entails a high standard of academic presence, quality, and integrity. These principles have guided our professional, academic, and scientific development. In the didactic field, we have always strived to support our courses with printed academic materials that are up to date, carefully analyzed, and adapted to contemporary needs—especially during recent times, which have reshaped the paradigm of academic activity and demanded new approaches. In administrative law, the adoption of the *Administrative Code* in 2019 necessitated such a rethinking. Consequently, we refer in the thesis to the course *Administrative Law – Vol. I. Introduction to Administrative Law. Political-Administrative Institutions* (2021), designed to meet students’ needs through an approach that blends tradition with modernity.

Our research activity is also evidenced by participation in over 50 academic conferences, both in Romania and abroad, organized by universities and professional associations in the legal and educational fields. The results of these participations—many disseminated within the international scientific circuit—are summarized thematically in the thesis, across both disciplinary and interdisciplinary lines. One direction focuses on *Administrative Authorities and Their Liability*—a fundamental starting point for any legal analysis of administrative phenomena.

Subsequently, entering a new stage, we expanded our focus to the societal impact of public authority activities. Research in this area, grouped under *Public Administration Activity*, explores principles and operational procedures within public institutions. A third thematic axis covers *Research on Autonomy*, extensively analyzed through a series of studies and academic articles.

This latter direction has significantly evolved within the framework of an international research project—presented in a dedicated subsection of the thesis—under the European research network COST, funded by Horizon 2020. We refer to the action *CA18114 – European Non-Territorial Autonomy Network (ENTAN)*, where we have coordinated the Romanian research network. This project aimed to explore how non-territorial autonomy could serve as a solution to conflictual situations in multiethnic communities—phenomena exacerbated in recent years by increased migration.

Under the same Horizon 2020 program, we were also members of the Management Committee of the action *CA19143 – GDHRNet – Global Digital Human Rights Network*, which addressed highly topical issues related to the challenges of the digital environment in protecting human rights, and the best practices that should be adopted by local, central, and European authorities.

Our most recent research contribution relates to participation, in late 2020, alongside partners from Serbia, Portugal, and Spain, in the drafting and submission (as secondary proposer) of the COST action *Intergovernmental Coordination from Local to European Governance (IGCOORD)*. The proposal received the highest evaluation score and is now approaching the end of its implementation. We believe this represents proof of our scientific growth and continuous engagement with international research networks and the global knowledge community in our areas of expertise.

As regards visibility and recognition, our published works have received consistent academic citations in internationally indexed journals. Editorial appointments, such as Associate Editor of the *Revista de Drept Public (Public Law Review)* and membership on the editorial boards of international journals—such as *Journal of Politics and Law* and *International Law Research*—further underscore our scientific reputation.

Chapter II of Part One outlines our academic and professional activity. Our journey in university legal education began in 1999 and has followed a natural progression through all academic ranks to the current position of Associate Professor. Between 1999 and 2020, we taught at the Department of Law, Faculty of Legal and Administrative Sciences, Constanța, Spiru Haret University, advancing through the roles of Teaching Assistant, Lecturer, and finally Associate Professor, as course coordinator in Administrative Law.

Since 2017, we have been collaborating with the Faculty of Law and Administrative Sciences at Ovidius University of Constanța, and as of the 2020–2021 academic year, we have held the position of tenured Associate Professor. This journey has been marked by professionalism, adaptability, and a constant focus on fostering an interactive learning environment and a constructive relationship with students.

Supervision of bachelor's and master's theses, participation in academic committees, involvement in national and international projects, and coordination of researcher networks all reflect our ability to guide young scholars in both educational and scientific endeavors.

Part Two of the thesis—*Plans for the Development of the Scientific, Academic, and Professional Career*—highlights the main teaching and research directions that will support our future development. To this end, we outline several concrete measures, taking into account the adjustments imposed by special circumstances such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

We also present proposals for future research projects, or for the continuation of existing commitments, aiming to combine our accumulated knowledge and experience in an interdisciplinary and efficient manner. Based on our current research and areas of specialization, we express confidence in our ability to offer guidance and support to future PhD students, thus contributing to the consolidation of legal education on the Black Sea coast.

As a prospective PhD supervisor, we intend to fully capitalize on our scientific and academic experience to support young researchers through a rigorous doctoral process. We will strive to maximize existing resources, promote international exposure of their academic work, and further expand our research networks. Ethical conduct and academic integrity will remain central values, alongside efforts to integrate doctoral students into the broader academic community.

The final part of the thesis—the Bibliography—includes general references used in the development of this work, as well as relevant personal publications arising from our academic research. It serves as a comprehensive record of the documentation that supported our scientific efforts.

In conclusion, this thesis reflects not only our academic path but also our way of life. Through daily teaching and research activities, we aim to explore and apply the practical value of administrative law within social realities. This is our way of fulfilling the academic mission: a commitment to knowledge, to responsibility toward students and society, and to contributing—through education and research—to the development of a democratic, informed, and functional society.

We strongly believe that administrative law, in all its complexity, reflects the evolving relationship between state authority and citizens. Therefore, the research of this domain must be continuous, contextual, and future-oriented. It is in this spirit that we hope our academic activity so far, and the future projects we envision, will contribute meaningfully to building a modern, open, and high-performing legal school on the shores of the Black Sea.

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