

THE BUCHAREST UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMIC STUDIES

HABILITATION THESIS

Scientific contributions to increasing the quality of life in the framework of sustainable development

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Bucharest

2023

SUMMARY

Quality of life is a concept of modern society. The evolution of society requires the permanent change of methods and tools for analysing living conditions, living standards and living demands of individuals and groups. Regardless of the need for development of the group, it is the individual's claim to life that determines progress. Why? Because the common, ordinary individual is the one who does extraordinary things because he wants his own good, first and foremost. Therefore, we could say that precisely this individualism would lead to societal development.

Quality of life means different things to different people. Quality of life can represent what a person might accumulate in order to have economic security, social assistance, and a general good impression of their well-being. But how does one define well-being, how does a person who has economic development feel, what is the lower limit below which one cannot pass without feeling economically and socially threatened? What causes a person to consider secure in conditions of economic uncertainty and what makes them feel comfortable during economic crises? Or, more recently, geopolitical and geostrategic crises? What is the connection, or is there even a connection, between quality of life and sustainable development? What are those fine dimensions that connect them? All these are questions that have marked scientific interest and to which public institutions and bodies with concerns in the field tried and managed to find the answer.

And obviously they also marked my interest in research.

This thesis is a summation of my research results and of the multidisciplinary teams I have been part of during my years as a university teacher. The research carried out in the period after the defence of my doctoral thesis in 2009 with the title “Economic performance of agriculture in the Giugiu-Ruse Euroregion”, concerned economic, social development and environmental economics, tangentially. The most intense research interests were in the area of rural economy and entrepreneurship, with social and environmental connotations, with approaches to sustainability. The last years of activity have been marked by the increased interest in the field of quality of life, and, implicitly, that of sustainable development. The explanation comes naturally: my postdoctoral research from 2011-2013 focused on specific elements of quality of life. After this stage, the interest in the environmental and social components acquired new values and were intensified in the elaborated works, by means of multidisciplinary teams.

The present paper is structured in four sections, each of which is structured in chapters and sub-chapters, depending on the topic addressed.

SECTION I – THE SCIENTIFIC AND SOCIAL CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH TOPIC has two chapters.

CHAPTER I – QUALITY OF LIFE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH, in which I made a synthesis of the main stages in the evolution of the concept of quality of life, I synthesized the results of a bibliographic analysis in scientific databases to identify the main semantic and conceptual links that quality of life achieves and I identified common elements with sustainable development.

CHAPTER II - COMPARATIVE STUDY ON THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN ROMANIA AND EUROPEAN STATES aimed to contextualize the theme of this thesis by means of a descriptive statistical analysis of the most relevant aspects regarding the quality of life and sustainable development, with the aim of emphasizing the interest shown in the concept.

SECTION II - RESEARCH RESULTS OBTAINED IN THE FIELD OF QUALITY OF LIFE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT has three chapters in which some research results considered to be among the most relevant in the fields of quality of life and sustainable development are presented, as they capture, analyse and synthesize the component elements of the three pillars. Thus, most of the achieved results have been disseminated in articles and scientific communications published in teams that have established themselves as working models for research activity, in which everyone contributes according to their own competence and abilities, and, obviously, research interest.

CHAPTER III – SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ECONOMIC PILLAR brings together works from the research areas of quality of life, economic growth and sustainable development, focusing mainly on entrepreneurship, business resilience, value chains. Entrepreneurship is considered the quintessence of development and economic growth, therefore, implicitly, quality of life. The economic pillar of the quality of life and sustainable development is subsequently approached from the perspective of energy independence, as a variable that can influence costs, respectively revenues and market position, as well as from that of the trade balance, as a way to ensure the development of national wealth.

CHAPTER IV – SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOCIAL PILLAR addresses mainly topics related to the quality of working conditions, as well as car sharing transport, as part of the general living conditions and life satisfaction, especially of the residents from the urban area. At the same time, topics of resilience of entrepreneurs and businesses that are developed within modern business support structures are addressed.

CHAPTER V - SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PILLAR gathers research aimed at two directions: on the one hand, there is more efficient management of waste to ensure the conditions of circularity, and on the other hand, innovative solutions are sought for the intelligent diversification of resources. Thus, European waste management models are analysed, models are proposed for Romania and modern ways of using biomass for energy are identified that could lead to increasing the resilience of agricultural farms.

SECTION III - THE ACADEMIC CAREER DEVELOPMENT PLAN establishes its premises, namely the statement given as a tenured teacher, the principles by which I guide my professional activity, the values I believe in. On this foundation, the career objectives are contextualized, defined and developed, in the four major directions: research, didacticism, relations with the economic environment and professional prestige. The plan is completed with a strategic canvas that highlights the key resources held to achieve the established objectives, as well as the key partners needed to achieve the objectives.

The main purpose of the university is to create knowledge and to transmit it to its students. As a researcher and university teacher, I must carry out this activity professionally. Research constantly opens up new horizons for me, stimulates me intellectually, and teaching gives me the satisfaction of fulfilling my mission. The university is the place where I find myself, and the students are my partners!

SECTION IV - BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES mainly includes the main bibliographic references cited for this thesis, as well as for the articles and research presented.

The didactic, scientific and publishing achievements, the presence and involvement in the activities of the Department of Agri-Food Economy and the Environment, in the activities of some institutions in the field of agri-food economy. I recommend myself as a specialist, with real contributions to increasing the prestige of the department, the faculty and the myself.