

Universities and Building Resilient Leaders - A Holistic Approach to Public Administration Education in Romania

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Abstract: With the current geopolitical context, it has never been more important to develop strong, resilient leaders for today's public administration.

In recent years, particularly in the last 2 years, there has been a resurgence of armed conflict even in places where we thought democracy and military alliances like NATO were impenetrable safeguards against politics of domination through force.

And that's saying nothing of the rising geopolitical tensions generated by the Israeli - Palestinian conflict that is currently all over the news.

The world we're facing is already uncertain and prospects don't point to things improving any time soon. So we need resilient leaders in Public Administration now more than ever - people who can keep their cool under pressure, people with strong ethics and (hopefully) incorruptible hearts, who will not give in to economic or political pressures, people who think for themselves and make good choices - the kind of choices that are good not only to them and their party, but to others as well.

As Simon Anholt (2014) says in a TED talk entitled "Which country does the most good for the world?", "I don't want to live in a rich country. I don't want to live in a fast growing or competitive country. I want to live in a good country, and I so so hope that you do too"

Living in a "good country" and developing not just one, but a network of good countries absolutely needs resilient leaders.

And it is the university's role, particularly the Public Administration faculties role, to put the foundation for creating these leaders.

Curriculum and delivery is important, but even more important is the human examples the actual teachers give their students.

Leadership and resilience can be studied, but it cannot be taught. You don't learn how to become a good leader by reading a book, although paradoxically, you need to read quite a number of books if you are going to become a leader worth their salt.

This paper wants to explore what it takes to build resilient leaders for the Public Administration of the future, and to see what strategies the main Romanian Public Administration Universities are using in seeking that goal.

In order to do this, both quantitative and qualitative instruments will be used. We need to look both at the students and at the deans and teachers in universities if we are to get the complete picture, for looking at just one side or the other is getting only half the story.

We will explore through questionnaires and also a few carefully chosen interviews with faculty members from the main Romanian Public Administration Universities what they consider the main challenges of today are and what their strategy for addressing them and creating resilient leaders is.

And we will also apply questionnaires to the students of those respective faculties to see how much of the strategy envisioned by the deans and teachers actually reaches them and in what way are they impacted by what is being taught to them.

Are the educational strategies employed actually working for the students?

What if any effect do they have in developing students into resilient leaders?

And also, what do both students and teachers think should be done in order to assist the new generation of Romanian Public Administration specialists in becoming better leaders?

All of this and more are the research aim of this paper.