Alexandra-Bianca Andrianu

Public Management Reform in Romania

The Development of Resilient Institutions

Presa Universitară Clujeană

PUBLIC MANAGEMENT REFORM IN ROMANIA
The Development of Resilient Institutions

•

Editor:

ALEXANDRA-BIANCA ANDRIANU

PUBLIC MANAGEMENT REFORM IN ROMANIA

The Development of Resilient Institutions

EDITOR:
ALEXANDRA-BIANCA ANDRIANU

PRESA UNIVERSITARĂ CLUJEANĂ
2024

Referenți științifici:
Prof. univ. dr. **Călin-Emil Hințea**
Conf. univ. dr. **Bogdana Neamțu**

ISBN 978-606-37-2267-7

Universitatea Babeș-Bolyai
Presa Universitară Clujeană
Director: Codruța Săcelean
Str. Hasdeu nr. 51
400371 Cluj-Napoca, România
Tel./fax: (+40)-264-597.401
E-mail: editura@editura.ubbcluj.ro
http://www.editura.ubbcluj.ro/

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

The study and analysis of institutional resilience and public management are crucial areas that require joint examination due to the complexity and rapid changes in the modern world. Therefore, a dynamic approach and model must be implemented to address the current needs of communities effectively. Furthermore, in light of external challenges, globalization, and geopolitical implications, it is essential to gain a better understanding of administrative reform and adapt accordingly to prevent future issues.

Consequently, this work aims to present the most relevant administrative reforms in the last decades, focusing on Romania and its challenges, forms, and strategies in terms of reform. The objective is to investigate the extent to which institutional resilience can be enhanced through new public management approaches and the potential impact of such enhancements. To achieve this, we developed a model (using SPSS and AMOS to conduct an EFA and CFA analysis) to gain a better understanding of the city halls examined in this study and to propose a customized model to improve their efficiency, performance, and resilience.

It is our hope that this work can serve as a starting point for discussion in our efforts to improve and develop the current administrative reform, making it more competitive, proactive, sustainable, and resilient.

Keywords: resilience; institutional resilience; resilient organizational culture; resilient leadership; administrative reform; New Public Management; Romanian administrative reform; public management; strategic planning; AMOS; EFA; CFA.

1. INTRODUCTION[1]

In the last few years, the concept of "resilience" has become a buzzword and a topic of interest for many researchers, practitioners, and public or private institutions. It is therefore safe to say that identifying the drivers of resilience and building resilience is a topic of interest. At the same time, we need to understand how exactly we can do this while looking at the current form of our administrative reform and to what extent it can have a positive (or not) impact on the subject. The first thing to understand is that resilience, or institutional resilience, is not a panacea, nor should it be treated as such. It merely provides us with tools to not only return to our starting point but also to move forward. This exploratory research seeks to open new perspectives on how we can test resilience and identify the drivers of resilience that should be considered when trying to build a resilience system model.

Therefore, the purpose of this research and the question it wants to address is whether **Institutional resilience can be increased by implementing new public management approaches?** Taking into account the major changes that the Romanian government has gone through in the context of becoming a European country and in the context of globalization and digitalization, this proposal wants to do an in-depth analysis of how the administrative reform has changed since the fall of communism and also how it has been affected in terms of performance, efficiency, and general wellbeing. Therefore, the focus and purpose of this thesis are to analyze and evaluate the current state of public administration reform, so that the final result can provide adequate guidelines to better implement it and ensure further development of administrative capacity. Simultaneously, we want to see to what extent can we create a model to see what influences (both positively and negatively) resilience. To have support and to learn more about the two concepts, we also have three

[1] From page 9 to 21 this section was extracted from Andrianu, B., "Public Administration Reform in Romania. A Short Introduction", in the volume Baba, C.C., Hințea, C.E. and Neamțu, B., "Evoluții și tendințe în studiul administrației publice din România. Viziunea tinerilor cercetători", Accent, 2021, ISBN 978-606-561-223-5 – sole author of the book chapter.

other secondary research questions that will serve as support in trying to build and test a model on resilient systems:

R.Q. 1: **What are the main elements that enhance New Public Management?** For this question, we will try to see from the total of aspects that contribute to public management, according to the literature review, which is the most pregnant and influential on the presence and maintenance of this approach.

R.Q. 2: **What are the main elements that enhance institutional resilience?** Here we will use the same method as in R.Q. 1, which will give us hints as to the recommendation we can make to improve the function of town halls and inevitably (or hopefully) increase their level of resilience in the future.

R.Q. 3: **Is there a linkage between NPM and institutional resilience?** The last research question is the one that will help us see to what extent (if any) there is a correlation between the two concepts, and thus help us answer the main question of this research, which was presented at the beginning of this section.

To do so, we must first identify the current *modus operandi* of city halls in terms of public management approaches and their current level of institutional resilience, as well as their main problems and challenges in implementing public management approaches and best practices.

Resilience studies, sometimes, tend to underestimate the importance of understanding the role of public institutions in shaping the regional systems for which resilience is measured (their structure, performance, and overall functioning). Thus, they examine the role of governance in shaping regional adaptive capacities and outcomes (resilience). In doing so, they focus on: the scope for policymakers to influence key resilience drivers, and the characteristics of governance that contribute to enhancing the capacity to manage, promote, and develop resilience (in a sustainable way, and not acting as a one-time thing).

The results obtained within this research are relevant in the sense of developing a model that can contribute to practice by analyzing and offering guidelines to public institutions on how to implement an appropriate management reform. By answering the research question, the results can be used by local authorities to improve their strategies and apply a managerial approach based on their current situation, size, and needs to increase institutional resilience.

Therefore, to provide adequate and relevant guidelines to public institutions on how to successfully apply a public management approach to improve the decision-making processes, efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability of their institutions, maximizing their benefits and resources for further development.

To achieve our purpose and answer the research questions, we developed exploratory research in our effort to create and test a model that can support our future research, improve the model, and be able to provide tailored guidelines for public agencies. For this purpose, we used the programs SPSS (where we carried out the initial Exploratory Factor Analysis) and AMOS (where we tested the factors and carried out a Confirmatory Factor Analysis) and where we created our path-way model to see the correlation between NPM and institutional resilience. After we created our model and saw the level of importance of each indicator (as seen in Table 11), we wanted to see what is the level of importance of each indicator on NPM and institutional resilience. The last test was done through SPSS, using the Artificial Neural Networks with the Multilayer Perceptron function.

The results were nevertheless interesting, but since this was an exploration and a model was built and tested from scratch, it also left room for improvement and for future research, in the hope that, once it is more accurate, it can offer adequate guidelines to city halls and not only (as mentioned above) to increase their performance.

Short presentation of context, administrative reforms, and problem statement

The shapes of the administrative reform, since the accession of Romania to the European Union, are in a way, in the process of establishing the most adequate and appropriate way to develop the administrative capacity and to undergo the Western system as well as possible. Therefore, one cannot ignore the need to introduce new, modern, and aligned with global trends regarding the organization of public administration, needs that have been overlooked or unable to be answered due to the lack of local and international experts, weak administrative capacity, political influences, along with outputs translation and implementation (World Bank, 2017, pp. 72-73).

With regards to the aforementioned, legislative, structural, and procedural reforms, along with those in public policies (Zulean *et al. apud.* Hințea, 2017) have started to be increasingly analyzed and discussed since the fall of communism and the change of the Constitution (1991).

All the aforementioned reforms were developed due to the great change in the expectations, needs, and demands of the citizens (Hințea *et* *al.*, 2002, p. 54), thus supporting the shift towards more developed public services to ensure the quality of life of the community and the general well-being. At the same time, we must be aware of the great changes that the country has undergone after the communist era and when exposed to international relations and cooperation, such as the European Union and NATO.

Not only do the needs of citizens put pressure on public institutions to initiate and implement appropriate reforms, but also the era of digitalization and the need for online services that could facilitate interaction between citizens and institutions and simultaneously increase the quality of services. As some authors put it (Matei, 2009, p. 122), the implementation of digitalization and digitization in public institutions reflects a crucial step in supporting a more open and integrated reform, along with supporting access to and dissemination of information (as a first step).

A predetermined problem is the rapid transition from a communist to a democratic and bureaucratic country, without adapting to the current situation, so many call Romania a pre-bureaucratic country and not at all a post- or managerial reform. Nevertheless, the public officials did their best to integrate and try to fit in with the other bureaucratized countries, therefore the main important step was in 1998 when the public authorities tried to introduce concepts such as decentralization and autonomy for local services to be closer to the needs of citizens and to ensure its status as a "welfare state". Another problem is that when the system was introduced, no one took into account the degree of bureaucratization they wanted to apply. Public managers should have taken this into account if their effort to develop the structure of public institutions - centralized forms of authority could and will cause blockages in the system and communication networks.

Another problem that needs to be addressed is related to the administrative culture of a country. Administrative reform develops over long periods, after years of practice and accumulated experience, and evolves in the most appropriate way to manage the actual state of a community. Meanwhile, in Romania, the changes were not at all linear, due to the fact that "the traditional administration changed over the last two centuries, change that involved the shift of several regimes, reconfigurations, transformations and adaptation of public administration, based on the external pressures that it faced" (Văduva, 2016, p. 29). Therefore, Romania lacks the stability of long-term development, because it has been hastily adopting certain reforms one after the other and has not been given the time to adjust, nor to implement and adapt them properly to the needs of the society at that time.

This lack of tradition and stability within a country's culture can develop into a very difficult-to-manage system, with many blockages and disruptions. Not only that but because of the "rush" and "chase" to develop a similar reform as other European countries, public officials missed a very important thing: stability. In order to put the theory into practice, one must understand all its implications, stages, and ways to make it to the advantage of the citizens, but due to the external pressure, the lack of skill in proper implementation made the system quite dysfunctional. The changes were rapid and Romania could not keep up with them in the sense that there was not enough time to make the reform stick because another external pressure came and changed everything again.

Another aspect that needs to be emphasized is the lack of trust, especially in strong states. Due to the fact that it was a post-communist country, people feared, did not trust, and did not agree with a very strong and dominant power because of the consequences it could lead to. The problem here is that the changes were not as gradual as one might think, but rather rapid and on the run, making it difficult for people to adapt and, more importantly, to understand and integrate them into their organizational and social culture.

Regardless of all the backlash, bureaucracy is still relevant and has a certain role in our society today because it provides stability, and a safe environment, and ensures a merit system through which the institution can achieve its purpose. The downside is not the concept itself, but the way individuals apply it. We, as a collective society, need to realize that it can be considered more than a "necessary evil" and learn how to adapt the variables of the concept to our current needs. For example, if one tries to apply the concept as it was applied in the past centuries, the result will naturally be negative or inadequate for today's circumstances.

For these reasons, in 2001 Romania was still perceived as an unstable and uncompetitive state. The dominant structures were mostly monopolies and oligopolies (little cooperation with private entities to develop a mutually beneficial partnership). Separately, the rapid implementation of New Public Management (NPM) led to a rapid fragmentation of a very centralized system to bring services as close to the citizens as possible. However, as mentioned above, the lack of experience with such a reform resulted in dysfunctions and overlapping of activities and services. The assumption that people would want to work together to develop a long-term and sustainable vision was overestimated, so many decision-making processes were contradictory, which meant a lack of coordination and proper management on the part of superiors. These rapid changes did nothing but create change in an unstable system, leading to a chaotic chain of events that left everyone disoriented and still, not understanding the meaning of the reform and its benefits - resistance to change due to lack of security, stability, and predictability, fear of the unknown and imposed reforms.

Due to these inconsistencies and the lack of know-how in introducing changes, most of the administrative reforms in Romania still have a political approach, thus limiting the focus on performance-based management approaches that can facilitate efficiency and increase the quality of work, relations between institutions and citizens and so on, through simplification, digitization, and digitalization.

Nevertheless, shocks and major events, such as the fall of communism, becoming a member of the European Union, the economic crisis of 2008, the COVID-19 pandemic in 2019, the war in Ukraine, oil shortages, inflation, the fear of recession, increase of prices (all the latter events mentioned are from the period 2020-2023), have proven that the administrative reform in Romania has yet to learn and develop an adequate and sustainable system, which will facilitate the capacity to bounce back, but also forward, to learn and become more adaptable.

Moreover, the bureaucratic system has undergone quite a lot of changes, and reforms such as New Public Management have been introduced, along with other reforms such as Neo-Weberian State, Public Governance, and eGovernance, which will be discussed in the following sections. Moreover, Romania experienced an impressive economic growth of 9.3 percent per year between 1992 and 2015 (Vintan *et al.*, 2018, p. 2). Therefore, this significant change and shift from the communist regime has allowed the country to open up to innovative methods that could facilitate the improvement of services, increase the quality of life, and reduce poverty levels.

In short, "the managerial approach has a different perspective and is primarily aimed at improving the operation of public administration through a superior organization. [...] The managerial approach focuses primarily on results rather than processes" (Hințea *et al.*, 2013, p. 73). Thus, management focuses on certain elements such as efficiency, effectiveness, and financial resources to facilitate the achievement of results and organizational performance, all elements that are mostly overlooked in the public sector, an issue that remains to this day and is still a crucial obstacle to the successful application of this approach in the current administrative reform.

The New Public Management (NPM) approach tries to bring a market-based management perspective to the public sector, to make it more competitive, to increase the quality of their services, to develop partnerships with relevant stakeholders on the market, and, overall, improve the general functioning of public institutions.

In addition, NPM refers to the following types of concepts and approaches to be developed in an administrative reform: decentralization and increased autonomy, "breaking up monolithic bureaucracies into separate agencies", introducing market mechanisms to promote competition among public institutions, being mission-driven rather than rule-driven and also customer-driven and customer-oriented, increasing responsibility and accountability, and setting explicit performance standards (Androniceanu, 2007, p. 156).

The struggle to adapt to this new reform is still a real challenge for public officials in Romania, given the difficulty they had in adapting to a new, unfamiliar reform immediately after the fall of communism, alongside the low levels of cooperation between the public and private sectors. This is because public officials have to think and act as managers, rewire the way they interact and identify stakeholders, and develop a resilient way of implementing strategies to meet the needs of the community.

Those above-mentioned occurred when Romania had to transition to a post-communist country and to adapt to the Western doctrines and reforms to help improve the administrative development, alongside economic and quality of life factors, and here a major problem is that instead of adapting the key elements, Romania applied *ad literam* the European/global practices, without considering the discrepancies between countries and without focusing on the major needs at that time. As a result, reforms such as New Public Management (NPM) were introduced due to globalization, the increase of expectations and demands of the public, and also due to technologies that put a lot of pressure on the public authorities to implement and adopt. NPM came as an innovator and promoter of change to replace the traditional bureaucracy that existed at the time. The economic, cultural, and political changes made public institutions adopt a more citizen-oriented approach to face the rapid changes and respond to the increased needs, but the new role wasn't properly adapted to the current situations or the administrative capacity, being implemented "in a hectic" without projecting the strategic planning into reality (Matei, 2009, p. 115).

Within the aforementioned reform, major focuses were on performance measurements and strategic planning, being considered an approach that will be able to facilitate an adequate development of public management in Romania, but due to the pressures on becoming more citizen-oriented and with the external pressures as well, a new reform was introduced: Neo-Weberian State.

This approach maintained the main principles of Weber's theory such as representative democracy, expertise and specialization, legal and rational leadership, and career-based hiring, and introduced concepts such as transparency and accountability, making it feasible and applicable to the needs of countries in transition, to help them shift their attention towards the external factors, focus that started to shift in 2004 by Romania, when it entered in the pre-European-member-state phase.

Neo-Weberian State perspectives were to preserve public services, to maintain a clear distinction between civil servants and their attributions, and to project an external orientation towards citizens, explained through the quality of services provided by public institutions and not only, external orientation but also result orientation to shift the focus towards achievements and not on procedures – to produce deliverables. Direct citizen involvement was another principle promoted by this approach, to facilitate their participation in the decision-making processes, (Cepiku and Mititelu, 2016, pp. 59-60), through simple (but effective) methods such as participatory budgeting.

The neo-Weberian State model, at first sight, is not that different from NPM but at the same time, is more reliable and easier to adapt in a country that is still struggling with bureaucracy adaptation and implementation because it only brings some new principles to the table and updates the existing ones to make a more approachable and citizen-oriented reform. All this being said, one can consider this reform more efficient and adequate to Romania rather than NPM but yet again, external pressures were sufficient enough to make the change.

"The classical approach to bureaucracy and its Neo-Weberian incarnation, are now considered by some theorists as feasible models for reforming the public administration in Romania. The argument here is that they can ensure stability, predictability, and continuity. Furthermore, these reforms are highly recommended for countries or communities that have limited knowledge of how to implement change, or where the trust in public institutions is low, thus making the Neo-Weberian state a base, a starting point, before moving on to NPM" (Văduva, 2016, p. 49).

But regardless of all the aforementioned, Romania is still struggling to find its identity in terms of administrative reform, developing a hybrid based on those aforementioned, creating a lot of cracks and issues in the system, and shifting the attention towards the effect instead of the cause of said issues.

Thus, the eGovernance reform was introduced, which means to increase the use of information technology to meet the needs of citizens, simplify and faster for them to access the services provided by public institutions. This reform of public administration has tried and is still trying to develop a much wider connection between institutions and between public institutions and other actors within and outside the community, to facilitate access to information and to develop new networks that can evolve into new projects for improving the system.

A much cheaper way of communicating and accomplishing tasks is facilitated by eGovernance. Some essential components support integration and motivational tools for both public managers and other ecosystem actors. The main components are joined-up governance to properly coordinate different agencies and develop a common infrastructure that can be used by the majority of them, to facilitate and ease cooperation and information exchange, to ensure a high level of transparency, and to develop the image of citizens as contributors, not just passive customers - a high level of citizen involvement in the decision-making process.

Another relevant element is the development of one-stop shops, where citizens can solve all their issues in a single place, thus eliminating the transfer from one department to another, making the process much easier and more convenient for them – this way, public institutions can facilitate bettering their image. Last but not least, it facilitates the increase of responsiveness, agility, and flexibility of public institutions, in order to have the proper means to compete with best practices from the market and other public institutions, regardless if they are at national, European, or international level (Văduva, 2016, pp. 52-55).

Another concept that is crucial to this thesis and which will support the final results is related to strategic planning and how the adhesion at the EU has supported Romania's capacity to develop realistic and achievable strategies, attaining in the end a much more developed administrative capacity which supports and makes crucial steps towards a better managerial reform.

Strategy and strategic planning refer to a projected image of a certain community/organization within a long period, but the long-term perspective is usually overlooked in the public sector due to political factors (mandates of mayors - 4 years, politicians, presidents - 5 years), which represents a major obstacle in the implementation of appropriate management reform in Romania. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to analyze also the success rate and the absorptive capacity of the country for strategies such as the National Development Plan (2007-2013), the Strategy for the Consolidation of Public Administration 2014-2020, or the National Plan for Sustainable Development 2030.

The rationale is to provide a better understanding of the current decision-making process and, hopefully, to dissect and analyze the links between strategic planning and public policy outcomes. As George *et al.* (2019) note, we need to focus on how institutions “systematically develop strategies, conduct internal and external analyses, define goals, and develop plans” (p. 812). The relevance here is that depending on how an organization or a public institution develops its strategic planning, it will have a direct impact on the type of policies it implements or considers.

One must know how to properly develop a strategy, especially because since the adhesion to the European Union, Romania, like other member countries, is a beneficiary of operational programs that help boost the economy in different areas (agriculture, technology, entrepreneurs, etc.) but also the administrative capacity, to be able to support the economic growth, alongside qualitative services offered to the public.

As argued by the World Bank (2017), “to support the longer-term goals of economic growth, improved social conditions, and good governance, the Operational Program for Administrative Capacity Development (PODCA) focuses on creating and strengthening the legal and institutional framework needed to improve service delivery.” (p. 50). Therefore, the operational programs 2007-2014 and 2014-2020 had the objective of supporting administrative development in terms of digitalization, improving partnerships between public, private, or other relevant stakeholders, and improving the quality of services and the overall image of public institutions.

But, due to an incomprehensive reform and lack of organization and know-how in terms of absorption capacity and proper strategic planning, Romania ranked the lowest in this category, with a “modest performance”, being able to absorb by 2019 only 27% of the total allocated funds, meaning only 10.02 billion euros out of the total 36.7 billion euros available (Fonduri Structurale.ro, 2019, p. 1). Regardless of the 83% contracting rate, Romania is still behind in having an adequate strategy to seize the opportunities for economic growth.

All the aforementioned must include elements such as leadership, organizational culture, performance and productivity, efficiency and effectiveness, and the direct linkage between desired outcomes and obtained outcomes (Hințea, 2007, pp. 11-13), for it to paint a coherent and realistic picture with regards to the current administrative reform and with regards to the proper means to better adapt it to the present state, to support an innovative and sustainable administrative development.

Some essential steps towards a more stable public management reform were the development of monitoring procedures adapted to the needs of the institutions, making sure that public managers (known as public servants) were on the right track toward achieving their goals.

Another "breakthrough" towards a more developed administrative system was the introduction of an information technology system to facilitate the flow and transfer of information and communication, last but not least, they managed (with small steps) to adopt a more collaborative approach and try to cooperate with private or other public institutions to develop new projects.

The staff was transformed from a "machine" to a human being with needs and values that must be respected, satisfied, and preserved in order to produce results at their maximum professional level, and also the interaction between public servants and citizens started to look more "friendly" and approachable; also integrated to a certain extent the change of view towards citizens - "we are here to serve their needs, not the other way around", seeing them as customers and listen to their needs; the paternalistic approach of public institutions began to diminish and a new collaborative approach began to flourish, but again in a very incremental way. Another relevant aspect that needs to be mentioned is that the needs of citizens began to diversify, which was a good thing because it pushed public officials to develop new services to improve the quality of life, to bring in external expertise in certain areas (for example, information technology), and to develop public-private partnerships to meet those needs.

Based on the aforementioned, there have been some improvements but we still have a long way until we reach that much-needed stability. We have to understand that client-oriented public management cannot be achieved if we do not work towards community development and on long-term vision that includes at the same time, a resilient-based approach. Moreover, we need to understand that equality and equity are not the same thing, therefore, much more emphasis on supporting citizens to learn how to apply their rights is needed in order to offer them the empowerment to make a demand and take a stand for their needs in order to survive or to have an increased quality of life. People need to work together in order to develop as a nation and to fight for the common good, not for their own. Maybe the second works better in the market because it forces people to produce new, innovative services, but in the public realm, the strategy and approach that needs to be used is interconnectivity and the development of an integrated and collaborative ecosystem, especially if there is the will of developing joined-up governments such as one-stop shops for citizens.

In order to ensure resilient development, public managers "should support and commit to the need for changes and their implementation" (Profiriu, 2005, p. 17). In order to reinvent the public management reform and to ensure its stability and sustainability, consider the following:

disseminate information regarding the reform and mobilize citizens and interested parties to support the initiative (also, integrated within the organizational culture), make a clear and comprehensive analysis of the reform, in order to ensure that it will fit the requirements of the community and that it promotes a quadruple helix model for developing synergies, collaborate and learn from best practice models from international public managers and institutions, promote best-practices of resilient institutions, view the reform as an open source for innovation and new approaches that facilitates the involvement of citizens in the decision-making process, determine strategic priorities and maintain a position of transparency, accountability, and openness to the needs of citizens (*ibidem*).

But for this to work, we need a clear base in which we must develop the reform. The problem with Romania is that it is still dependent on external funds and aid to put itself on its feet and try to be on the same page with the other European countries. Moreover, real action needs to be taken in order to develop the much-needed administrative capacity that will be able to sustain the development of an integrated and collaborative public management reform.

Overall, from all the debates and contradictions regarding the type of reform Romania is having or towards which is heading, my main conclusion is that all these trials and reforms are built on the bureaucratic "skeleton" and none of them were implemented to completion. The thing that needs to be stressed is that Romania never found its place with regards to its administrative reform mostly because of the situations faced: after communism, the bureaucratic reform was rushed, then a different approach, a mode open bureaucratic state (Neo-Weberian State), then, under external pressures, New Public Management was introduced and now, we are trying to apply as best as we can public governance and eGovernance.

Hence, we, as a state, did not quite find our place when talking about public management and government development because we started on the wrong foot. We never truly got to that much-needed stability and that is why we faced so many challenges with regards to transparency, collaboration, and trust between public servants and between public servants and citizens.

Moreover, the issue of the Romanian administrative reform is too much debated, because we cannot say with certainty that the majority is based on NPM or other types of reforms. Nevertheless, we have to admit that, despite all the struggles and misguided actions due to the lack of knowledge and expertise in implementing a certain reform, Romania has managed to develop quite a lot in the last decades in terms of increasing the quality of life, using e-governance in more and more institutions and becoming more open to the public in the sense of cooperating with it. We can say that, regardless of all the challenges, Romania is on the right track to find the reform that suits its needs and that will bring to the surface the best practices and the maximum level of efficiency.

If public officials focus on the needs of citizens and international collaborative projects for community development, we could have a change of stabilization and adaptation to the dynamic environment in which we are today, but this means listening to the actors of this community: citizens, private entities, universities, etc., because they know best the challenges they face - public managers should have an overview of the situations and implement and put into practice what is best suited to the current situations, in order to achieve an innovative and sustainable long-term vision.

Managerial reform is considered to be “the way” to a successful, innovative, and efficient public administration, which can promote further development and national growth. Therefore, the transition of a post-communist country in an era of globalization must be analyzed in depth in order to develop the appropriate instruments that can facilitate the country’s adaptation to reform. This managerial reform will reveal the benefits of having a motivational agent who can improve and implement efficient long-term strategies that can transform the way public institutions work and offer a broader perspective regarding their direction.

To conclude this first section, the pressures of globalization, external factors and partnerships, citizen awareness, involvement and demands, digitalization, and other crucial factors have not yet been analyzed in depth concerning public management reform and how it can support its further development in Romania.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The public sector is always under the microscope and is a subject as old as time because of its enormous impact and direct effect on society. Over time, we have tried to find better ways to improve its functioning and find more efficient methods to coordinate it, but unfortunately, we still have a lot to learn and understand in terms of administrative reform and not only. The question is about the purpose of the existence of the public sector compared to the private sector. For example, in terms of success, the private sector can look at the profit rate of a fiscal year, whereas in the public sector, things become more complicated due to its complexity and interrelated elements that need to be taken into account, such as education, health, quality of life, environmental issues, security issues, equal and fair distribution of resources, and so forth, and also measuring success is one of the biggest challenges in the public sector (Stevenson, 2013, pp. 8-9). Because of the complexity and because it has more implications than in the private sector, the pressure is consequently higher and more intense than in the private sector. When we talk about pressure, we are talking about the constant changes in communities (in terms of needs, problems, or external pressures) that the public sector has to take into account and find feasible solutions to solve them (e.g., reduce social exclusion, extreme poverty, air pollution, etc.) in time and reduce the negative consequences caused by said problem as much as possible.

A recent example is the COVID-19 pandemic and how the authorities tried to reduce the number of cases and deaths and to support the medical system as much as possible. In this context, we can look at the level of efficiency of the lockdown (to what extent it helped to reduce the spread, awareness campaigns on how to stay protected, vaccination campaigns, how they stopped the spread of fake news, etc.). So even though the risk and pressure were also there and it affected the private sector tremendously, the public sector had to consider the whole community, not just a specific area of activity, and the way they handled their decision-making processes and actions had a greater impact on the development of events.

Henceforth, we must understand the administrative system and its many forms, changes and consequently challenges that it has faced over the years, in order to be able to determine what kind of reform can better respond to our needs in this constantly changing era (in terms of needs, but also political, financial, environmental, geopolitical, social aspects).

The following sections have the intention to present the main concepts used in this exploratory research, from a general, theoretical perspective, towards a more practical one, related to the Romanian context and the different trends that were adopted over the years, highlighting the main changes and the shapes it took over the years.

3. TRADITIONAL PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Since the beginning of time, public administration existed and ruled in various forms, since the early Han dynasty, ancient Egypt, the Roman Empire, Byzantine Empire (Hughes, 2017, p. 45), but to some extent, history never failed to repeat itself in modern times under the form of excessive formalization and standardization, which created challenges in terms of developing an adequate administrative reform to facilitate change, resilience, innovation, and sustainability.

"Personal" administration as mentioned by Hughes (2017) was dominant in the early stages of public administration, where loyalty, nepotism, personal interests, financial benefits, and political affiliation (Suwaj, 2012, p. 582; Hughes, 2017, pp. 45-46) represented the main characteristics of the reform for the most of the eighteen and nineteenth century. Thus, the well-known concept of the "spoil system" was representative in defining "public administration"; the major problems and the high levels of corruption determined the reforms from the beginning and min-nineteenth century to take place and create an impersonal, structured, rational system, based on merit, experience as well as expertise. The expansion of this *quid pro quo* mentality as Chakrabarty and Chand (2012) put it had to stop and the traditional model of bureaucracy emerged and developed, to offer stability, predictability, and most importantly, legality.

Woodrow Wilson

A major issue that persisted was the high level of politicization of public administration, which consequently led to the corruptibility of the system, hence Wilson's arguments on the dichotomy of administration and politics. As mentioned by Hughes (2017), Woodrow Wilson was adamant on the idea that the spoils system and the level of corruption were dominant because public officials were appointed in the interest of the party and a clear separation of the two spheres was an urgent matter to be taken care of. This is how the need to install "the idea that the administration could be an apolitical instrument in the public sphere" (Hughes, 2017, pp. 54-55) in order to increase its efficiency and also to institute its main purpose, which is to serve the needs of the public and ensure along with maintaining the general welfare, has begun. In this way, political representatives will have the role of decedents and civil servants will have the role of executors, supporting the installation of impersonal and neutral commitment, accountability, responsibility, and objectivity in execution. In this sense, some theorists have also pointed out that it is difficult to completely separate the two spheres because they are interdependent and one cannot exist (or execute) without the other, motivating this argument with Wilson's logic. If we have politicians to decide and administrators to implement, how can you be sure that the policies implemented by the latter won't harm or interfere with the general welfare? Standardized checks and balances need to be put in place to ensure harmony, and to protect the main purpose of public administration.

In addition to Wilson and his idea of increasing performance, efficiency, and being more task-oriented through merit-based hiring, other theories began to emerge that attempted to develop "ideal one-stop shops" in terms of organization, especially at the beginning of the industrialization period - the development of classical organizational theories. Chakrabarty and Chand (2012) summarized that the aforementioned period was mainly focused on the universality of administration, without taking into account the context, needs, or administrative stability (or lack thereof). Therefore, some of the most important general principles were based on efficiency, rationality, division of labor, coordination, unity of command and direction, and centralization of authority (Chakrabarty and Chand, 2012, pp. 50-51).

Henry Fayol

In this regard, Henry Fayol was one of the main representatives of this movement, emphasizing the importance of coordination, specialization, control, command, planning, and organization (Laegaard and Bindslev, 2006, pp. 15-16; Chakrabarty and Chand, 2012, p. 51). The principles of coordination, control, and command are (mainly) related to hierarchical distribution in an organization, which means that as an organization grows, managers must ensure that they can monitor the tasks of employees to ensure a certain level of performance. Therefore, Fayol introduced the concept of "span of control", which means that there is a limited number of subordinates a manager can have, consequently, a span of command must also be in place to avoid conflicting tasks (Laegaard and Bindslev, 2006, p. 16; Jones, 2013, pp. 143-144).

Standardization, or "routine work" as some call it, is another key element in classical administrative theories, and it is mainly concerned with standardizing employees' "behavior to make their actions predictable [...] by socializing them into organizational norms and values" (Jones, 2013, p. 155). This allows managers to increase their span of control because their supervision is reduced and they can focus on other specialized tasks.

Frederick Taylor

Another important contributor to this movement was Frederick Winslow Taylor and his theory of scientific management, systematization of work, and centralized decision-making processes to ensure that resources were conserved. As a result, in the 20s and early 30s, Taylor developed some key principles that supported his scientific approach to work and how to manage that work through experimentation to improve worker performance and efficiency. This approach has four key principles at its core: the scientific analysis of work, the scientific selection and training of workers, the implementation of science by workers, and course the core elements of traditional public administration - standardization, division of labor, rationality, and specialization (Hughes, 2017, pp. 56-58; Laegaard and Bindslev, 2016, pp. 14-15; Chakrabarty and Chand, 2012, pp. 56-58). The idea of doing more with less, especially in the Industrial Revolution, was a beak of the past that promoted a reward and punishment system to motivate employees and increase their productivity to a centralized control point that had an overview of production alongside the fact that solidified the principles of the other theorists of the time (Wilson, Gulick, Weber, Fayol, etc.).

Although these principles and ideas were profitable for managers (by maximizing output), they were considered inhumane working conditions for employees because of the high demands and low wages they received. This is a recurring criticism that traditional public administration has received over time - the negligence with which the human resources have been treated in terms of social interactions (or rather, the lack of them), rights, needs, and emotions. Besides the financial benefits that could be obtained for being as efficient as required by the management, there were only repercussions left if said standards weren't achieved; this led to overworking the employees, thus undermining their needs and desires, underestimating their power and ignoring the human factor in exchange for focusing on the machine/standardization factor. Unfortunately, the Industrial Revolution brought us a better understanding of the processes of standardized work and gave us a starting point to develop reforms that can increase performance, and efficiency along with control and optimization of processes.

Max Weber

The above-mentioned goes hand in hand with the ideology of one of the most influential researchers, who formed the school of thought for the classical approach, along with the current public administration, and developed the "skeleton" on which public and private institutions founded their structure and organized their work. Max Weber agreed with Wilson on the principles of the spoils system vs. merit system and developed the theory of bureaucracy.

According to Jones (2013), "bureaucracies can be defined as an organizational structure where individuals can and are held accountable and are mandated to follow agreed-upon rules and procedures that dictate their behavior within that organization" (p. 156). In other words, we are looking at a form of organization that is consistent with Wilson's ideas of rationality, accountability, responsibility, standardization, specialization, and division of labor to increase efficiency and promote the values of the merit system that has been established.

To ensure the implementation and instauration of said principles in (especially) public institutions, Weber developed a series of principles and core characteristics to his "idealistic" model of bureaucracy. The first principle is related to one of the three models of authority developed by the sociologist, which are: *traditional authority*, which is based on the inheritance of authority, on historical aspects (monarchies, tribes), *charismatic authority* - the personal traits, characteristics of a person that contribute to influencing a group of individuals to achieve that person's goals (passion in speech, gestures, body language), and *legal-rational authority*, which is included in the first of Weber's principles.

Legal-rational authority refers to the fact that an individual has authority over a group of people only because the function, the position held in the institution gives that person authority, and not because of their personal traits, characteristics, or affiliations. As a deduction, this stands with the principles of the traditional (or classical) approach of public administration and the creation of impersonal relations with subordinates or citizens; that is, it moves away from the "personal" administration that existed at the beginning of the eighteenth century, where nepotism, political affiliation and personal interest dominated in the public sector. This principle is linked to the idea of continuity and vocation that public servants have in their line of work and how important it is in terms of their level of expertise and experience in the field. The "holding of office," as mentioned in Hughes (2017), is followed by rigorous training and regular testing to ensure that the impersonal system flourishes and maintains the much-desired trust and confidence in the administrative system and its values (pp. 51-52).

Another key principle relates to hierarchy and hierarchical organization. This principle aims to ensure that everyone knows their place and their assignments, and responsibilities in the structure and can follow clear rules, norms, and standardized procedures that can support the continuous development of the system. In the same way, we can talk about controlling the behavior of individuals to make their actions stable, predictable, and aligned with the organizational goal. This type of control can help you better monitor your organization and have a span of control that can support your performance - in this regard, specialization, standardization, and division of labor play a fundamental role.

Written rules and regulations help to maintain the way the organization works and can provide guidance in terms of tasks, and responsibilities and can help future employees to better understand the organization's history, way of working along with its core values. In the same vein, "the integration and coordination of organizational roles at different levels and between different functions is enhanced by rules and standards" (Jones, 2013, p. 158).

On this account, we can see the similarities in the approaches of traditional public administration and how essential control, centralized authority, division of labor, specialization, standardization, coordination, hierarchical organization, and other aspects form the basis of the new, "modern" public administration that developed in the early 1970s.

Accordingly, bureaucracy can be seen as an instrument to enforce fairness, rationality, and a clear set of rules to produce results, to set a clear hierarchical distribution where everyone knows their place, tasks, and responsibilities, where we have both horizontal (looking at different issues and how they are related) and vertical specialization (a clear division of labor). In addition, the reform strongly emphasized the importance of the merit system, thus separating the individual from the position (the position gives authority to the individual, not the individual himself) and setting clear evaluation processes to maintain high levels of performance and efficiency (Jones, 2013, pp. 160-162; Meier and Hill, 2007, p. 57; Egeberg, 2012, p. 145).

As presented above, bureaucracy came to stay and had a universal application in institutions, establishing a clear dichotomy between politics and administration, and at the same time accompanying democracy. This was the idea, this was the vision of Weber and the traditional administration, but instead of becoming this "universal" way of organizing, based on written rules, norms, and procedures, it turned into a "necessary evil" because of the rigidity and bureaucracy that it created over time. That is why today's bureaucracy is mainly associated with incompetence, inefficiency, and resistance to change - in short, something we need to change as soon as possible. This is also related to the other theories that supported the development of traditional administration.

Challenges with the Traditional Public Administration

Their theories may have worked in the Industrial Revolution, but problems related to the exploitation of human resources began to surface, showing how little or no attention was paid to their needs and how they were manipulated to increase production. At the same time, this universality, this "one best way" was another big problem in the traditional approach, because it limited the options to solve a problem, to approach an opportunity, and again contradicted the principle of efficiency that was invoked in all the theories presented so far. The ignorance of equifinality brought them other negative points from the perspective of the modern world and showed (through practice) how ineffective and disorganized they are in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, and how immediate and essential administrative reform is.

As van de Walle mentions in his article (2014), the Weberian model was efficient but lacked innovation, and the strict rules, regulations, and structures posed a major challenge in the face of adversity or the unknown (p. 3).

Van de Walle (2014) highlights the fact that even though society is in a rapidly changing loop, public administration has largely resorted to "streamlining and strengthening organizational procedures and relying extensively on processes of standardization" (p. 3). This has not only put pressure on the public sector due to changing demand (both in terms of type and quantity of services) but has also made the sector vulnerable to shocks and unknowns. Therefore, when stability and predictability are at risk, public officials must find an appropriate way to change the reform concerning the current needs of the community.

However, the problem here is the generalized and universal use of bureaucracy as an "excuse" for the incompetence, inefficiency, and lack of adaptation of public officials (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2017, p. 73). As a result, "formalized bureaucratic structures are geared towards productivity and control, not creativity and innovation" (van de Walle *apud.* Thompson, 2014, p. 4), and can therefore be quite vulnerable in the face of adversity, creating instability and inability to take appropriate action. This is due to the misconception or misunderstanding that ideologies from the early 1930s could work in the early to mid-1990s.

Nevertheless, one must admit the importance of clear procedures, rules, and formalization, especially when it comes to public administration. No matter how dynamic and unpredictable the environment is, one must have the assurance that public services will not cease to exist and that they will have the capacity to survive and continue to deliver. Therefore, stability and predictability in services and procedures can provide citizens with security when interacting with institutions.

However, it must be mentioned that even if we have certainty in action, we can also have a decrease in creativity and innovation due to the rigidity of the existing system, where mistakes cannot be made and therefore risk-taking is not as encouraged or well seen. "Formalization, especially excessive formalization, can affect an organization's ability to act in a changing environment and can have a negative impact on innovation capacity and organizational memory" (van de Walle, 2014, p. 6).

Another misconception (Kennedy, 2017) that has been highlighted is that some believe that the public sector should be approached and run similarly to the private sector. However, the reality is that being able to run a successful business does not automatically mean that one has the necessary skills and knowledge to run a public administration. The author explains this by the fact that the public sector has many more factors that are interrelated and interdependent, therefore, the general welfare must always be sought in the face of individual needs - the values and democratic norms must always be kept in mind when introducing elements of "public management ethics and performance" (Kennedy, 2017, p. 571).

In addition to the complexity of the public sector and its many implications, this sudden jump from bureaucracy to NPM was not the best way to approach the reform, especially because the focus was mainly on the negative parts of bureaucracy (rigidity, resistance to change, inefficiency, overly centralized hierarchy, etc.) and not on the positive parts.) and not on the positive parts (stability, equity, merit system, predictability, specialized human resources, etc.), thus turning it into the aforementioned "necessary evil" and forcing this unnatural transition, which created further problems and cracks in the system in some states and some administrations (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2017, pp. 72-73).

This mechanical approach to structure (or "machine-like state"), way of work, and strong formalization and standardization was indeed required and, in a way, efficient in the Industrial Revolution, but new, adapted approaches and reforms need to be put in place, to address the issues, needs, and demands from the modern world.

Because the traditional model was not anymore able to cope with the fast changes or pressure from the rise of the modern world, it became its main saboteur in this dynamic and growing world, where networks, connections, technology, and information are everything. This is why, in 1968 at the Minnowbrook Conference I, the concept of *new public administration* was created and was considered a break-through that started the revolution and changes in reforms (among other aspects of course), but most importantly, changed the way theoreticians, practitioners, and the general public looked at the way organizations functions and interact with their environment. This means that equity, rule of law, ethics, responsibility, and accountability alongside promoting the idea of "change, not growth" (Chakrabarty and Chand, 2012, pp. 109-110) in the public sector are just a few of the ideas that became more and more popular and set the starting point for the progression of administrative reform.

Hence, we made the transition from a rational, rigorous way of thinking and a science-based approach in work from the mid-1960s, towards a management-based approach (New Public Management) in the late 1970s-late 1990s (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2017, p. 11). But the bridge in between - the Neo-Weberian State (NWS) - was skipped and maybe this can be an explanation for why we are going further away from NPM and moving towards this middle-ground approach.

4. MODERN ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM

When talking about reforms, especially administrative reforms we look at changes produced by policies developed by political or managerial representatives, to produce changes in the system, procedures, policies, and structure, to better serve the community, taking into account at the same time the "quality of organizational thinking" (Christensen and Laegreid, 2012, p. 511; p. 517).

The Neo-Weberian state represents one of the most important small steps that started the shift away from a traditional administrative system, but it emphasizes the professionalism and specialization of civil servants and their specific role in the implementation of "the law and the decisions of politicians" (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2017, p. 173), responding to both citizens and politicians (here, again, the issue that Wilson and Weber promoted - the clear separation between administration and politics, so that no illegal acts or confusion of roles can be introduced). Furthermore, as Bouckaert (2022, p. 26) mentions, this model needs to encapsulate the old and the new, having the traditional legacy - hierarchical organization - but also looking at the modern aspects - being market-oriented (thus organizing internally and externally to meet the needs of the community) and creating networks, i.e., being proactive in policies and responding to citizens' needs. An ideal model (or at least a functioning one) should have "guaranteed and inclusive routine service delivery, combined with effective management of chronic crises of governance, and driven by constant innovation for government and society" (Bouckaert, 2022, p. 26). In a sense, these are the ideas that have led some states, and some countries, to realize the way to the urgent shift to NPM, and now, their attempts to implement an "in-between solution" to help them have a better understanding of the current needs, current shortages and misinterpretations that are currently present in our communities.

New Public Management Reform

Change was inevitable, and governments felt the pressure from the beginning of the 1980s and 1990s to adopt a more market-oriented approach, to "reconnect the state with its citizens" (Toonen, 2012, p. 500), and to develop a management approach that could reduce the prevailing problems, in addition to reducing the development gap between different regions. Thus, external, international pressures, accession to the European Union, and the beginning of globalization were only some of the reasons for change. In other words, "abandoning central planning [...], beginning the process of privatization or re-privatization, limiting the influence of state administration, [...] acquiring a new attitude to the management of public affairs" (Suwaj, 2012, pp. 582-583) were merely some of the most important reform efforts to introduce and install the New Public Management approach.

The traditional view is that "public management is the responsible exercise of administrative discretion, while the more recent conception adds [...] attention to decisions, actions, and outcomes, and to the political skills needed to perform effectively in specific managerial roles" (Lynn Jr., 2012, pp. 19-20). In this context, we can assume that "competent managers are performance-oriented" (Bresser-Pereira, 2007, p. 41) and therefore need autonomy in their actions. And here we can see the shift from the traditional paradigm of administration as a simple executor or strongly process-oriented, to a more modern approach where we have a result-oriented approach, thus a pressure (economic, social, geopolitical, technological, etc.) to be more efficient, to have *value for money*, to be performant and to implement a market-type form or organization.

"*Stripped of its technical jargon, NPM can be defined as a series of new experiments in public sector management based on market principles of efficiency and economy to make the moribund public sector work*" (Chakrabarty and Chand, 2012, p. 111). This means that some core elements will come into play and redefine the way the public sector worked up until the late 1970s to late 1990: firstly, the citizens changed their roles, from simply tax-payers to clients, shifting the entire purpose and policies with their interest in mind. This empowerment tried to promote a more active (in terms of involved) community in the decision-making processes or public debates, hence making the process more result-oriented rather than process-oriented as the traditional models were. Another key aspect is the focus on performance-based evaluation processes, thus increasing the efficiency level of tasks and general organization on them and injecting market-based tools such as competition, accountability, active participation, partnership-involvement, having a more strategic approach on issues and of course, supporting more flat organizational structures (Chakrabarty and Chand, 2012, pp. 117-119; Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2017, pp. 9-10; Hughes, 2017, pp. 86-90; Heinrich, 2012, p. 32) to increase communication and to be able to act much faster (than in the old, bureaucratic-type hierarchical structure).

Early public management reform (or NPM) started in the UK and New Zealand due to economic and institutional pressures but also because of the few potential institutional challenges, thus the privatization process began, alongside increasing performance through output budgeting (increasing accountability) and by planning strategically and on long term expenditures, budgets, investments and so on, shortly becoming the "new norm" and started to experiment with different tools and methods (Kettl, 2005, pp. 9-14; Christensen and Laegreid, 2012, pp. 512-513; Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2017, p. 212). Implies that the new administrative model will transform the current structure, and will have clear, precise goals, clear outputs, and a managerial approach to face the economic adversities and not only. But due to its rather technical side (at least in its early stages), NPM ought to be used on economical, technical, and rational policies, whereas in social areas such as health, education, social services or culture, other methods, models should be used because of the complexity of the topic and the difficulty to measure success (and this can also reason with the 3 E's promoted by the NPM model in New Zealand and the UK – efficiency, effectiveness, and economy). As Steccolini (2019) explained, management "research and praxis began to emerge from accounting due to organizations' increasing need for management, organizational, and [...] accounting tools" (Steccolini, 2019, p. 261), hence the materialization of this model in New Zealand and the UK when they were at their peak of economic vulnerability.

The 3 E's come into play in the American model of NPM as well, where empowerment of employees represents a key strategic factor to increase efficiency, and performance and to sharpen their relation with their leaders, together with putting the needs of the customer (citizen) first, by using market-based tools to deliver qualitative services that are tailor-made for their specific needs, thus cutting down the red tape (Lynn Jr., 2006, pp. 110-111) by focusing more on results than on processes (simplifying procedures, cutting costs, have value for money). But of course, they (the 3 E's) were not the only characteristics that stood at the rise and implementation of NPM.

Simplifying procedures has been possible because the focus has shifted from inputs to outputs, which means being more aware of the results you want to achieve. Once you do that, it becomes easier (at least in theory) to achieve the desired goal because you are no longer tied down by procedures, protocols, and other stifling steps that are imposed. By achieving this, "flexibility, deregulation, and the use of market mechanisms by governments" (Colak, 2019, p. 520), along with adaptability, can be significantly increased and help them become more resilient and less resistant to change.

Table 1. NPM tools. Source: Cepiku and Meneguzzo, 2011, p. 20

The New Public Management tools

Components	*Tools*
Adoption of business management techniques	Pay for performance, performance budgeting, external recruiting
Service and client orientation	Citizens' charters
Market-type mechanisms	Outsourcing, public/public and public/private competition, purchaser-provider split, vouchers
Delegation of authority and flexibility	Disaggregation of units, leaner and flatter organizations, hands on professional management
Performance measurement	Output control and accountability, standards of performance
Discipline and parsimony	Program and output budgeting, recruitment restrictions, downsizing
Political-administrative separation	Negotiated term contracts for senior civil servants, creation of executive arm's length agencies
Widespread use of e-government	Front-line services and back-office rationalization
Regulatory reform and simplification	One-stop shops, measurement of administrative burdens and red tape

It is recommended to specify at this point that not all states implemented the same version of the reform nor that the reform was in its "purest" form, but regardless of this, all of them had at their core the same components, as presented in the table above, developed by Cepiku and Meneguzzo (2011). It encapsulates quite well the main "ingredients", to flatten the organizations, strengthen the leadership style, and promote a more united organizational culture that has the same values and the same sense of direction towards a common goal. But simultaneously, the separation between the political and administrative spheres, still represents a dilemma, in the sense that politics is mainly about negotiation and bargaining for certain policies or decisions, and (especially nowadays) civil servants tend to act similarly for funds, projects, programs or for local or national development strategies.

Regardless of some inconsistencies (as expected from new reforms), transparency is another key aspect of NPM that shifted the attention from the old to the new, representing another turning point from a spoiled, corrupt system to one focused on meritocracy, thus increasing the ethical standards, especially when it comes to the partnership between public and private actors (Christensen and Lægreid, 2011, p. 467). In doing so, it promoted dialogue, communication, and open interaction between civil servants, elected officials, and citizens, with the latter holding the former accountable for their decisions and for their actions – as mentioned before, citizens stand at the core of all operations. Meaning that they are no longer passive members of a community, but active participants (Bourgon, 2007, p. 17) who have a voice and a role in creating and maintaining the general wellbeing.

Not only were citizens empowered, but so were civil servants, moving away from the classical Weberian approach where they were mere executors with no say in policymaking (Uwizeyimana and Maphunye, 2014, pp. 95-96). By giving them power as well, responsibility and accountability came along, and this made it easier to monitor performance and efficiency. Performance should be measured at all levels (Hughes, 1992, p. 293), and clear, quantifiable targets should be set to determine the extent to which activity should be stopped, continued, or changed - again, the "responsibility" component comes into play, improving service delivery (through privatization or public-private partnerships) and also equity (Andrews and van de Walle, 2013, p. 765).

This is in contrast to the classical model where "equal treatment for all" was the norm. Each group is different, has different needs, or has a different social, cultural, and economic background or current situation, so we need to be more specific in our approach. This is why a "coherent policy paradigm" (Goldfinch and Wallis, 2010, pp. 1100-1101) was needed - to ensure that an objective assessment of needs, trends, and wants was developed and that the "do more with less" approach was implemented through management methods, helping elected officials, civil servants and citizens to have a better understanding of their current situation and to have a vision that encompasses all their needs (of course, depending on the specific requirements of each social group).

Henceforth, appropriate measures were put in place, trying to encourage the modernization and adaptation of public administration to current trends (of that time), to improve reciprocity and unity, and to heighten administrative capacity in the process (Cheung, 2005, p. 259). These measures looked at "*the managerial perspective, which aims to guide public systems towards new principles and instruments to be used, [...] the political perspective, which aims to promote new forms of legitimacy, and the legal perspective, which aims to make the public sector recognize the socio-economic changes in society*" (Calogero, 2010, p. 31). These were the main areas of interest that were at the basis of the development of the aforementioned concepts (performance, efficiency, transparency, etc.), in order to focus on the stagnation of the previous reform and to start the ascent of the new one. These areas are also present in Table 2, developed by Mauri and Muccio (2012), where we can see the tendency towards a market-type approach that puts the needs of citizens first and does not treat them equally while injecting competition into the public sector (thus increasing efficiency and performance).

Table 2. Main points of NPM. Source: Mauri and Muccio, 2012, p. 49

Paradigm	New Public Management
Description	Post-bureaucratic, management based on competition
Main focus	Results
Managerial objectives	Reaching pre-established levels of performance
Definition of "public interest"	Grouping of individual preferences
Performance objectives	Use of inputs and outputs aimed at their economic management (efficiency) and the ability to understand and meet consumer needs (effectiveness)
Dominant accountability model (transparency)	Upward accountability based on the definition of performance levels to reach; external accountability based on market mechanisms
Preferred provision system	Private sector or well-defined independent public bodies
Relevance of performance measurement systems	High. Final objective is competitiveness according to market logic.

Accordingly, we can sum up the NPM reform in its three main pillars, as follows: firstly, *disaggregation*, to flatten the organizations and to make them more flexible, secondly, *competition*, to promote diversification of services, providers, and products and to increase innovation, and thirdly, *incentivization* (Dunleavy *et al.*, 2005, p. 47; Margetts and Dunleavy, 2013), to increase and promote performance and performance-based incentives, accelerating thus, a more efficient and strategic-based way of thinking.

All being said, this approach, especially at the end of the Industrial Revolution was considered by some a breath of fresh air, but by others a radical switch that can affect the stability and legitimacy of public administration because of the rapid privatization, of handing with way too much ease the responsibility of delivering public services to private entities, and this (if not monitored constantly) could lead to corruption, manipulation or influence for personal gain, from the private agents (monopolizing a crucial service). Therefore, besides its remarkable ideas and methods, it certainly had some flaws and issues.

Challenges with New Public Management

As new reforms emerge, the old ones are flooded with criticism and eventually, transformed obsolete to let new approaches shine and confuse civil servants even more. In the case of NPM, the main issue was related to its ambiguity and to the fact that there isn't a clear name to put behind the developer of the reform (as it is with Weber and bureaucracy, Taylor with scientific management, Gulick with POSDCORB/administrative management, etc.), besides New Zealand Treasury – but it's not that helpful. At the same time, the model lacks advocates, and no one to stand by the model and try to improve it. These elements can further the issue that was aforementioned related to its focus more on the economical, technical side of a community, and not necessarily on the social (soft if you will) aspects (hence, the 3E's).

Another problem is related to the specificity and complexity of the public sector and this misunderstanding that privatization is a universally accepted solution to solve all problems, thus following the footsteps of traditional public administration, where its representatives strongly suggested that a reform should be created based on the "one best way" principle (Cepiku and Meneguzzo, 2011, p. 20), which is incorrect.

Administrative reform should be tailored to each state, depending on its socio-economic situation, level of development, and current needs or shortages, and not be transformed into a trend (whether it works or not, I'm going to implement it anyway).

All in all, with its positives and negatives, it has changed the vision of the public sector and has been the starting point of an administrative reform that is more focused on the creation of networks, more open, more resilient, and more transparent cooperation between all the actors involved. What needs to be addressed is that in this day and age, it's inappropriate to continue and call this reform "new," even if it is considered revolutionary and innovative by some.

"Public management" in its many forms has truly changed the way people, public officials, and the private sector interact with or refer to public administration, but at the same time, change or adaptation is still needed to increase and promote efficiency, performance and, most importantly, resilience.

The role of politicians in administrative reform

Regardless of Wilson's idea of dichotomy between politics and administration and Weber's active support, to ensure a system based on merit and a knowledge-based selection of public servants, politics is irrefutably present in all activities of the executive, being defined by its decision-making processes along with its exercise of power through negotiations, bargains and by defining the responsibilities of administration (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2017, pp. 165-166; Meier and Hill, 2007, p. 53). For example, "As reform began to take shape in New Zealand, elected officials were asked to develop performance indicators and incentives to achieve them, to establish monitoring and evaluation tools, and to be clear, specific, and realistic about what exactly they wanted to achieve" (Kettl, 2005, p. 79), and this was possible only through negotiations and debates. But the issue in question is, with all the administrative reforms thus far and with the idea of focusing more and more on public management, on performance-based rewards and recognition, on this continuous struggle to negotiate, to bargain for different policies to be put in place, the line between politics and administration is becoming progressively thinner. And because of that, management might cross the line into political territory and vice-versa, simply because management or administrative reform refers to political reform as well and both use their structural design to fulfill public goals, through negotiations, discussions, debates, and of course, diplomacy (Christensen and Laegreid, 2012, p. 517; Kettl, 2005, p. 78; Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2017, p. 165).

Therefore, **the relation between the political and administrative structure is essential in determining the direction towards which the reform is headed** and what policies are implemented to achieve that said direction, but at the same time to critically analyze the conundrums created (giving power to citizens or politicians?) and the context of the reform (and the need to introduce it). A risk in this case can be the accelerated delegation of responsibilities from politicians to public servants, thus creating impediments in the latter's activity. As Pollitt and Bouckaert (2017, p. 168) and Christensen and Laegreid (2012, pp. 517-518) mention in their work, the general influence and "esteem" of politics is a crucial factor in the successful implementation of the NPM model, and they give the example of Anglo-Saxon countries, where the delegation of the responsibility of politicians was not a present or influential phenomenon, thus favoring managerial approaches and shrinking the political influence. Meier and Hill (2007, pp. 53-54) also support this idea because there is a clear limit to political influence/power, and the context, and the environment in which they deliberate and negotiate must be taken into account. Moreover, we find another conundrum in their work as well, related to promoting decentralization, which in itself represents an instrument to reduce political power (Meier and Hill, 2007, p. 54), but at the same time, "the need to strengthen political control and accountability" was becoming more apparent (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2017, p. 168). So here is the dilemma: How can we ensure unity and harmonious cooperation between politics and administration, but at the same time strengthen the positive results of modern reforms, where citizens are at the center of every policy, every decision, and every proposal? Because this is the main impasse we face, regardless of the type of administrative (and political) reform and its implications; and here, know-how and competence might come into play – you can have the instruction book set up step by step, but you also need the right tools and resources to put those instructions into action and to build the right things, with the right instruments and right intentions.

4.1. Performance Measurement and New Public Management

Performance measurement is not an innovation of the modern world, but rather a growing trend in the public sector, along with NPM approaches that have encouraged the development of better, improved, and adapted tools and instruments to measure performance and effectiveness. In this context, more and more attention has been paid to public managers and their strategies to determine (in an objective and quantifiable way) the level of effectiveness and accountability of public officials. For this purpose, performance management started to grow as a general approach and, as Heinrich (2012) suggested, to determine someone's level of involvement, some types of information are needed, such as: based on resources, processes, productivity, outputs, on results and impacts (p. 33).

Henceforth, performance management has as its main objectives to be more efficient in terms of "size, cost and functions", to be more financially accountable, to increase transparency in public institutions, to simplify and update functional systems, and to "develop a realistic performance-based compensation policy" (McAdam *et al.*, 2005, pp. 257-258).

However, these are only a few of the elements that a performance manager must consider. One must remember that all members of an organization work as a whole, as a unit and individual activities fulfill (or sabotage) the vision and mission of that organization. This is where the performance manager comes in: the extent to which they have the ability to "align organizational goals with individual goals, develop individuals' skills and knowledge, support change efforts" (Teeroovengadum *et al.*, 2019, p. 449), and make them committed to the organization and its mission. Therefore, one may be productive and have an adequate level of performance, but if the rest of the team doesn't have a similar level, then we face a general obstacle that should be addressed as soon as the core of the problem is identified, through carefully thought-out strategies that can solve the cause, not the effect.

To avoid the above situation, it is necessary to identify the training and development needs of the employees and identify strategies that can put them into play in such a way that we can foster an organizational environment that is open to change, has clear performance goals, values individual initiative, has an overall positive image in the community, and has a strong leadership and organizational culture.

But here is another conundrum: when we talk about public administration and its many forms and reforms to modernize it, we always look at it from a theoretical point of view, meaning that we base our trust in merit-based recruitment services, and sometimes overlook the still highly politicization aspect (Tudzarovska-Gjorgjevska, 2015, pp. 132-133) that, in a way is ubiquitous and can affect management involvement in evaluating performance, in giving performance feedback (which sometimes is neglected) or to identify strategies to handle poor performing staff. In this case, feedback and feedforward are quintessential in monitoring the activity of the organization, of the employees (van Helden and Reichard, 2019, p. 160), and the extent to which they achieve their performance standards or, on the contrary, they have to improve in certain areas.

Another problem that a performance manager may face is the lack of internal and external organizational coordination and the absence of a shared vision, which inhibits the initiative of leaders to introduce change and optimize the use and exchange of resources based on clear performance plans and strategies.

Arguably, this is a good motive to have "performance-based incentives" (Beriv, 2012, p. 63), with clear and achievable "performance-related criteria" (Beriv, 2012, p. 62) that employees are aware of, to help the performance manager use "the performance data in decision making, especially concerning core functional areas" (Amirkhani *et al.*, 2019, p. 384) concomitantly using "performance information" (Abdel-Maksoud *et al.*, 2015, p. 534), thus creating a supporting institutional environment that promotes organizational learning and a favorable organizational culture which maintains the glue between employees, between employees and leaders, being open to diversity, change, and innovation.

Amirkhani, Aghaz, and Sheikh (2019) and de Waal (2007) argued that there are some fundamental elements in implementing performance management systems and in creating and supporting high-performance organizations. In their arguments they emphasize the importance of setting the performance tools based on strategic planning and setting long-term goals to be achieved by individuals, to maintain the continuity of the organization and to ensure that they have a common vision and direction, creating clarity in actions and a more focused, output-based approach. By doing so, one can reinforce the stable incentive-based structure to facilitate outcomes in a precise and efficient way and to make it easier to identify the weaknesses and to dispose of unnecessary, suffocating procedures and processes, thus simplifying the tasks and, why not, finding suitable ways to use technology in your favor (Amirkhani *et al.*, 2019; de Waal, 2007).

What needs to be understood is that when we talk about public management, performance management, strategic planning, and so on, we talk about organizations as open systems, that have a constant exchange of energy, information, and resources with the external environment of the organization. This means that it is important to identify potential partners, stakeholders, and competitors and to have a constant assessment of the needs of the clients (citizens). McAdam *et al.* (2005) suggested that if we have a clear performance framework, we can have an improved understanding of how can we analyze and approach different stakeholders (to have a more diverse range of windows of opportunities), how to create added value and involve them in our strategic planning processes (p. 260). Creating networks and having an open approach (and long-term collaborations with stakeholders) can support the continuous development of the organization, understanding the level of performance, what needs to be done, and how to better face change and adversity.

Performance and performance management approaches strive to "stimulate cross-functional and cross-organizational collaboration by making teamwork and collaboration a top priority" (de Waal, 2007, p. 181), in addition to financial benefits, understanding how to use resources efficiently, how to better manage staff and deal with sensitive situations, or "defining precise performance measures" (Amirkhani *et al.*, 2019, p. 392). Therefore, in order to create a resilient, performance-driven organization, it is essential to promote organizational learning principles that support continuous learning, idea sharing, brainstorming, and encouraging an experimental mindset (de Waal, 2007, p. 181).

However, none of the above would be possible without a core aspect of organizations: people. Individuals are the ones who shape the organization, hence the importance of observing their interaction within the organization and with the external environment as well, this is where leadership and organizational culture come into play. To create a high-performance organization (but not exclusively), human relationships, loyalty, and interactions are highly valued; people are respected and treated fairly; a learning mindset is fostered; relationships between leaders and followers are based on trust and a shared direction that helps everyone develop into a better version of themselves (de Waal, 2007, p. 182).

This is only possible if the leader of the organization can lead by example, by being transformational and inclusive, and of course by nurturing and promoting an organizational culture that can impose strong values of transparency, flexibility, meritocracy, openness, unity, and community. This "sense of belonging" is essential in developing strong organizational cultures, and the leader's role is to maintain the unity of the group through his or her actions while instilling a sense of responsibility, rewarding innovation and initiative, inspiring people to overcome their shortcomings, keeping individuals focused on results, and finally, making the performance standards, measures, and tools known and understood by the team, along with the consequences for low performers.

In conclusion, performance and performance management are key tools in having a more equitable and structured way of assessing and monitoring performance, but at the same time, it is crucial that those who implement these tools have the know-how and expertise to interpret the results and take the appropriate actions in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of individuals, have an adequate set of skills to manage poor performers, and set reasonable and fair incentives based on the results achieved.

Above all, leadership and organizational culture are other key aspects that can influence the direction of the organization and the clarity of organizational goals. The leader should empower employees to take initiative, develop their skills, and adopt a meritocratic mentality in their actions while maintaining open relationships with their stakeholders.

4.2. Strategic Planning and Administrative Reform

In the context of resilience or institutional resilience, strategy is a crucial aspect that can help us set a direction, an action plan, or a blueprint of our activity to guide us in our efforts to move forward. Therefore, it is important to analyze strategic planning in both aspects (resilience and administrative reform), especially because of its high implications.

"«Strategy » is a term deriving from the military, referring to the overall objective of winning the war, as opposed to «tactics» – the lower-level objective of winning a particular battle" (Hughes, 2017, p. 222). Meaning that we make decisions and actions based on long-term results, having a very clear purpose in mind, alongside a common direction. Strategy also represents a proactive approach of management, to collaborate with key stakeholders and identify the current (and future trends in needs) needs and develop a projection in the future on how you want your community, and your organization to look into the future and what actions are you taking to move towards that direction (Hințea, 2015, pp. 102-103).

To develop a strategy, we must first conduct an organizational diagnosis or preliminary analysis to see exactly where we are, what we lack, what we are good at, and what we can improve in the future. In doing so, we look at the major resources (financial, human, physical, technological, time, etc.), the goods and services the organization provides, the purpose, mission, and goals of the organization, its structure, and how people interact within the organization. Organizational culture (introduced in the following chapters) is a key aspect of the rise or fall of an organization. It is critical to have a strong organizational culture (i.e., a stable, unified group that works for the organizational vision and not against it) and to constantly monitor and understand their interactions, their behavior within the organization, and how to better handle conflict or crises.

In addition to the internal environment, you also need to look at and analyze the external environment - political, economic, social, technological, legal, environmental, demographic factors, competitive advantages, and what opportunities or threats might result from going (or not going) in a certain direction. Thus, a SWOT or PESTLE analysis might be a good place to start to see exactly where you stand in relation to your community. One goal, however, is to identify the key elements (the key strategic factors) that will affect you in a decisive way and over a long period (Hințea, 2015, p. 106), and what you can do with them to work in your favor. Henceforth, strategy and strategic planning can help organizations define their vision, mission, and goals and provide customary tools to achieve them.

As Bryson (2012) mentions, strategic planning is a clearly defined effort to implement or produce certain actions that can help with the guidance of an organization, meaning that we don't look at a singular element, but we look at a set of approaches that have the ability to respond to certain situations or contexts (p. 50).

Therefore, the first thing we need to do when initiating a strategic planning approach is to develop a preliminary analysis and analyze the main elements of our community that can directly or indirectly affect us. This means looking at the economic factors (local budget, GDP, average salary, etc.) over the last 5-7 years to establish a trend, alongside understanding trends in demographics, education levels, social aspects (social inclusion/exclusion, poverty rate, unemployment rate), infrastructure, administrative capacity (and here we can even look at political stability, level of development, absorptive capacity, the generally perceived image of the public sector, etc.), quality of life, health factors (as a result of which we will be able to develop a strategic plan).), quality of life, and health factors (such as life expectancy or access to medical equipment), to determine where your community is headed and whether that is where you want it to go. At the same time, we need to "scan" our community to see if we have any competitive advantages (what do I have that others don't; what can I do better than others; what can I create to develop an advantage) by comparing our community to a similar one (in size, population, GDP, local budget, etc.) and see how we can improve ourselves.

We also need to analyze the key strategic areas that have the potential to be developed and bring us closer to achieving the vision (=mental projection of where we see ourselves in the future). These areas can be determined based on the preliminary analysis and based on which sectors, and areas we want to expand, develop, create (inclusiveness, cultural city, digital city, etc.), and implement projects that can help this area to flourish.

This is why the vision, goals, the general and especially specific objectives must be interconnected and constantly monitored. We need to know exactly what problems or shortages we are approaching, but at the same, we need to analyze the potential risks, obstacles, and changes that might occur in the period of our implementation (usually between 5 to 10 years) and to have some strategies "an ace up our sleeve" in case some things don't go as plan.

Some of the issues identified in trying to implement or at least start a strategic planning process related to the simplicity with which a problem is tackled, meaning that the analysis and the diagnosis will not be able to see the big picture or to fully comprehend the needs, wants and requirements of their organization or community, therefore, it might not be able to fully achieve the set of objectives or general goals. Another point is related to the context of the public sector and its known level of rigidity and slow response rate in the face of adversity, change, or potential risks that might surface in the implementation period. This can have a domino effect by shifting the attention or better said, the blame to bureaucracy and its promotion of lack of accountability and responsibility.

Therefore, moving further from the purpose of this strategic planning process and risk of not being able to set clear, SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, timely) objectives or even focus more on short-time achievements than on long-time ones, including therefore the political factor, which has again certain direct or indirect implications – the Office being held by a political representative, for example (Hughes, 2017, pp. 239-242).

On the other hand, if everything is done well, strategic planning doesn't only benefit the community, but at the same time actively contributes to "promoting strategic thinking – acting and learning, improves decision-making, enhances organizational effectiveness, responsiveness, and resilience, enhances organizational legitimacy and can directly benefit the people involved by helping them better perform their roles, meet their responsibilities, and enhance teamwork and expertise" (Bryson, 2012, p. 51).

To be fair, it is truly a difficult process to embrace all those components but at the same time, it is achievable through discipline, proper management, and a set of directions that can be used as guidelines to have a successful implementation, and to avoid falling in decline. We mention management because strategic planning and strategic management are not synonyms but one encapsulates the other, meaning that management is the glue, the coordinator of the strategic planning process and its appropriate implementation and evaluation.

To conclude everything that was stated and argued regarding strategic planning and management, one must understand the trends and most importantly, the direction towards which this approach is headed and how can we improve the way we organize our work or diagnose our organization and community. Strategic management at least, is no longer only about organizing and making sure that rules, procedures, deadlines, and whatnots are respected but also about inclusivity, knowledge-sharing, critical and strategic thinking, and partnership development.

This strengthens the argument that we need to have clear instruments and methods (to be quantifiable) to measure and monitor the success rate of a strategy. Unfortunately, in some cases the evaluation of the strategy is being overlooked or made just to "check a box" and here we fail the most, nearly all the time, and also, because we don't (always) have specific strategies, that respond to the specific needs and shortages from our community (a problem that we also identified in administrative reforms).

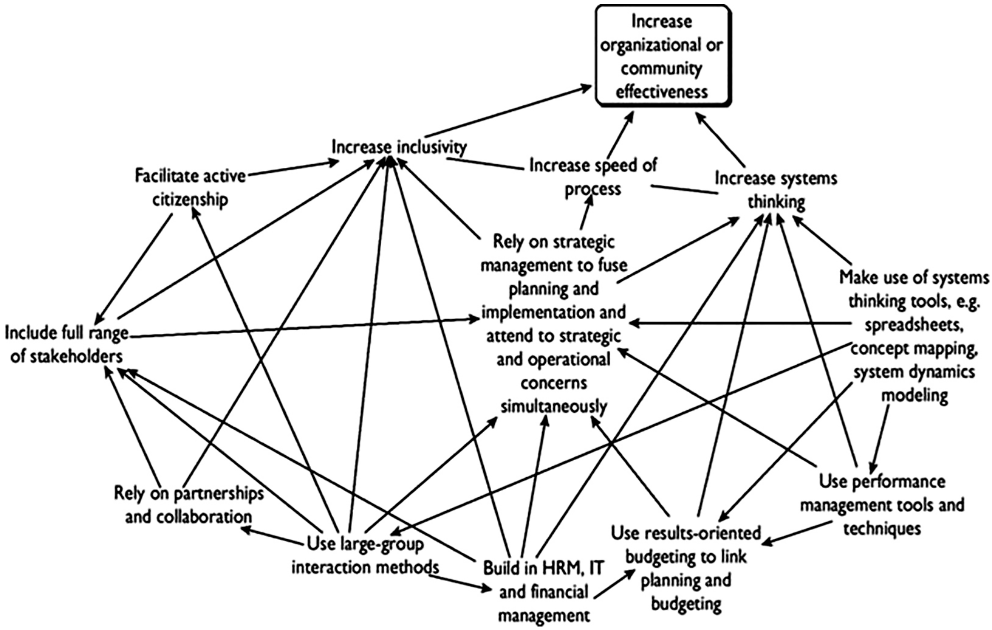


Figure 1. Current trends in strategic planning and management.
Source: Bryson, 2012, p. 58

Lastly, as seen in Figure 1 presented above, community development can be achieved through community involvement and openness to different stakeholders, key actors that have a better image of the current state than others, stakeholders that can bring know-how, experience, and better tools to help the strategic managers in their implementation process.

Therefore, strategic planning should not be about checking boxes off or writing reports for the sake of writing them, but about community and community involvement, inclusiveness, openness, innovation, collaboration, and stimulating the market and the public sector to innovate and have a performance-based approach in their actions.

But about creating networks, and partnerships, through open and transparent collaborations, having a better understanding and judgment regarding the big, real issues in a certain community, and developing a special set of skills that involve critical thinking alongside knowledge-based decision-making and an ability to identify the windows of opportunities when the case or context requires it.

4.3. Public Administrative Reform in Central Eastern Europe and Post-Communistic Countries

When we talk about reform, especially in Central and Eastern Europe and the post-communist countries, we need to understand the complexity and diversity of the countries involved, as well as their heritage (mostly post-communist countries) and what administrative changes they have made to improve their public administration and which have had the greatest impact. As mentioned above, external pressures from membership of the European Union, economic, social, and cultural pressures, and government instability were just some of the factors that forced European countries to develop new reforms to meet the needs of their citizens.

Kopric (2017) examined some of the main "problems of contemporary administrative systems" to better understand their challenges in implementing a reform that will have a positive and long-term impact on their community. The first issue was related to the complexity of the structure and interdependence of administrative systems, as well as the constant change of tasks and purposes (taking into account the period - 1980-1989 - when the autumn of nations took place and many states left the Soviet shield). Another problem was related to the different levels of development of the states and their difficulty in adapting their systems to the dominant forms of reform, while at the same time trying to adapt this reform to their contexts, level of development, know-how, and ability to adapt to changes or institutional resilience (Kopric, 2017, p. 40).

Under the rule of the Soviet Union, most European countries had a common dominating element which was "accepting nearly every agenda concerning public life with a simultaneous lack of skills in properly satisfying social needs" (Suwaj, 2012, p. 581), meaning the backward evolution towards the spoil system and politicization of public affairs. Socialism thus advocated incompetence, inefficiency, and nepotism once again, making it more difficult for states that were under direct soviet influence to develop a sense of resilience and to adapt to market-oriented reforms with a somewhat decent speed. Therefore, due to high levels of corruption, politicization, budgetary deficiency, and centralization of power, post-communistic countries had more challenges ahead, in order to introduce democracy, to be market-oriented, to promote performance (introducing the merit system), and of course, to begin the adhesion process to the European Union.

But before we talk about administrative reform in the post-communist states of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), we need to clarify a few aspects. First and foremost, a process of democratization had to be installed in order to protect individuals, citizens, and their fundamental rights. The introduction of freedom of speech and thought was also part of this laborious process, as was the beginning of privatization and the implementation of an open, market-oriented approach. Some countries implemented New Public Management (NPM) approaches as early as the 1950s and had a radical approach to modernizing public administration (strategies with a top-down approach that created urgency, but at the same time the context of the reform and said country and lack of proper analysis of risks could create unwanted consequences), while others (most of the states) took a more incremental approach (a step-by-step approach that left room for analysis of risks and potential problems, thus creating more complex systems, but their implementation does not signal urgency, thus will take longer to be accepted) to prepare for their accession to the European Union and to strengthen their cooperation with other states (Suwaj, 2012, pp. 583-586; Kettl, 2005, p. 80).

As one might assume, the latter were post-communistic states, freshly liberated from the Iron Curtain and that legacy was still obvious – being more difficult to adapt to changes and to implement reform that is adequate to the context and also accepted by public officials, citizens, and European representatives. The issue was obvious even in implementing taxing systems and in the attitude of civil servants; for example, Romanian civil servants were not willing to take accountability in terms of changes and to move forward from the centralized type of administration (Verheijen, 2012, p. 526; Suwaj, 2012, p. 586).

Hence, there was an urgent need for change, to move further from the traditional approach and to install a future-oriented political culture, which can develop in time institutional resilience and also, strategical thinking. By 1999 EU was the largest trading block and regardless of it slowing down in terms of adhesion of new member states, its rapid growth started from 2001 to 2008 when the economic crisis hit (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2017, pp. 267-268).

By 2004 clear administrative systems were put in place and countries from the CEE advanced their adhesion process to strengthen European collaboration and uniformization, by putting in place clear, legal frameworks to amplify the merit system and to abolish nepotism and incompetence in Office at the same time. Henceforth, some of the main ideas of reform surrounded the following: “strategic priority setting and resource allocation, human resource management and financial management” (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2017, p. 271). By doing so, the intention was to use models from the private sector, to introduce reasonable, examination and training sessions, and to ensure (hopefully) a high level of diligence in the public servants’ work, but by 2007 very few new member states implemented this idea.

Notwithstanding the long road ahead, the new states were not doing as badly as one might think, but then the economic crisis hit in 2008. And while the older member states had a harder time recovering, the Baltic states, the poorer ones, were able to bounce back faster (Verheijen, 2012, pp. 528-530). Theoretically, one would assume that a rich state would be more resilient than a poorer one, but in this case, the Baltic, post-communist states were able to bounce back, be more resilient, and face adversity much more easily only because they had less to lose. Therefore, because they didn’t have much to lose, they were able to bounce back and bring competition to the market faster than larger, more developed, and advanced countries.

Another obvious indicator of the communist heritage some states had was related to the development rate of the new EU member states from 2004-2007. As Pollitt and Bouckaert (2007) mention, their adhesion “formed a much less economically developed group than the earlier members […] because they emerged from communist rule of the Soviet Block” (p. 268), meaning that there were significant economic, social, technological (and others) discrepancies between states, putting pressure on the Union and on how it can manage the reform of its structure, so it’s aligned with its values and goals.

To conclude what was said in this section, the general sentiment is mixed. On one hand, there is a desire to implement approaches from the NPM model, but at the same time, there still is a strong sense of confusion and misunderstanding. Taking into context the complexity of the required change, its abrupt pace didn’t help nor support its appropriate implementation, especially because the model lacked a coherent starting point and a clear path to follow.

Consequently, CEE, being in search of its *bona fide* ideology, is missing from its perspective the immense difference between states and member states and because of this, some theoretician considers that the jump from a centralized bureaucracy to public management was too big to make it a success story and recommend for a more appropriate doctrine, meaning the Neo-Weberian State, which is closed to the communistic heritage that some of the states have (Kopric, 2017, p. 43; Suwaj, 2012, p. 590).

What lessons have we learned?

First and foremost, we must agree that there is no "pure" form of reform, regardless of the type of ideology of said reform. Secondly, we need to understand that reform changes didn't happen because of a sudden global trend or because all states and all countries looked at New Zealand and the UK and unanimously agreed that NPM was the best reform and that everyone should adopt and implement it. On the contrary, most reform changes had different reasons and different missions they wanted to achieve. Economic vulnerability, external or internal pressures, public sector inefficiency, corruption, ineffective processes, and lack of overall coordination are just some of the reasons behind reforms.

Since the late 1970s, rapid and sometimes drastic changes began to emerge along with the idea of incorporating trips and tricks from the private sector (hence the spreading wave of privatization, especially in post-communist countries in the autumn of the nation) to increase performance, efficiency, transparency, accountability, and so on. However, these reform changes didn't start without some challenges - traditional bureaucrats who didn't want to become accountable and accept the changes, lack of political commitment, and the inability of governments - this is a recipe for disaster and can provide a foresight for the short-lived life of the reform (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2017, pp. 214-226; Rahman *et al.*, 2013, pp. 300-302).

This is why communication, implication, and information are key in reducing the resistance to change and implementing something that will become the new *status quo*. But to do so, one must signal the urgent need for change and the aforementioned pressures and problems identified by states were "in the right place, at the right time", for administrative reform to take place.

What else needs to be addressed is that although administrative reform (mainly public management reform) "conquered" the world, we must understand and look at the context (level of development, political stability, the general image of public administration, etc.) of each country and how well and adjusted the reform was. As mentioned by Christopher Pollitt and Geert Bouckaert (2017), "*reform has been consistently wider, deeper, faster, and more rigorously implemented in the UK than in Belgium. It has been accomplished with less overt party-political warfare and accusatory stereotyping of the Nordic countries than in Australia or New Zealand. It has resulted in far deeper changes to the procedures and culture of the top civil service in Australia, New Zealand, and the UK than in Germany or France*" (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2017, p. 220). This should not be surprising taking into account their different backgrounds, but at the same time, it is interesting to see how they are inclined to similar tools, such as performance, partnerships, and privatization, regardless if they implemented the same reform or not.

What have we learned? Generalizing a reform approach will mostly fail or be short-lived, thus, personalized reforms must be thought out to specifically answer to the needs, shortages, and inefficiencies that are in that specific state. Context is key, therefore, changes in demographics (or different trends in "customer behavior") or other social changes, in technology, climate, political, and geopolitical changes must be constantly monitored and analyzed, to prevent failure in reform and to become more resilient in the face of adversity (2008-economic crisis, 2019-COVID-19 pandemic, 2022-war in Ukraine, 2023-energetic crisis and oil crisis, a.o.) and to implement strategic planning approaches for long-term horizons. Lastly, a clear dichotomy can't realistically be put in place, but a more transparent, open, and coherent approach to the relation between politics and administration, alongside the active involvement of the citizens in the decision-making processes, might positively influence their collaboration and reduce corruption or illicit influences from one or the other.

4.4. Post-New Public Management and Hybridization

New Public Management or the actual Public Management approach was a great initiative to promote openness and cooperation between the public and private sectors and to bring into the discussion the important role of citizens, but at the same time, the problem was that it was taken as a solitary tool, instead of adding to the principles and making them tailored to the specific context. That's why new reforms emerged and took its place, but if you take a step back and do a comprehensive analysis of how things work and not how they are on paper, you can see that a hybridization process has taken place and we have mainly an "all you can eat" reform, which means that we have a little bit of everything.

As a result, a paradigm shift began to emerge, transforming its initial form into a more governance-based system, focusing on a more collaborative and open approach, oriented towards networks, stakeholder connectivity, and negotiation processes, as opposed to the competitive form of the NPM model (Muccio and Mauri, 2012, p. 50).

Understandably, due to external pressures (again), due to globalization and the thinning of political, social, and state borders (Bevir, 2012, p. 95), market-based actions were not enough in the sense that consumerism was no longer the only concept, but network management practices

(Wiesel and Modell, 2014, p. 176) and negotiation tactics (to emphasize the notion of "open governance") were needed to face the new challenges and ever-changing trends of needs. This is why and how the 'shadow of the future' (as described by Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2017, p. 125), i.e., New Public Governance (NPG), emerged and promoted a more network-based approach.

When talking about governance, Jann (2007) presented a very clear, but also generalized idea, stating that it incorporates "*various forms of regulation of social issues and solutions to collective problems, including hierarchic decision-making by states monopolizing the legitimate use of force, cooperation between governments and networks of other public and private actors, and the growing self-regulation and self-coordination of non-governmental actors and civil society" (Jann, 2007, p. 18).*

In this definition given by Werner Jann (2007), we can see that the attention altered from a market-based, economic-focused approach, to a more open, negotiation-based approach, where new concepts such as civil society, social capital, public-private partnerships, collaboration, and network management began to emerge and replace the now "old" paradigm.

This change in direction and values has shifted attention from the economic and market mentality, where citizens are perceived as customers and consumerism is key, supported by competition and incentive-based performance methods, to civic engagement, to the involvement of stakeholders and partners in decision-making processes (meaning that they are not only consulted, but truly have a say in the changes being negotiated), and to make citizens active partners who directly influence the decisions and actions of public institutions, which now focus on "inter-organizational processes", but have a say in the changes that are negotiated), and the transformation of citizens into active partners who directly influence the decisions and actions of public institutions, which now focus on "inter-organizational processes and outcomes" (Wiesel and Modell, 2014, p. 178; Ansell and Gash, 2007, pp. 544-545; Jann, 2007, p. 26).

In other words, we are now talking about more open discussions and a collaborative process that includes team and trust-building mechanisms, an acknowledgment of the interdependence of public and private actors (thus blurring the line between the two), and, of course, a shared understanding of the vision and direction we are moving towards (Ansell and Gash, 2007, p. 550). In this context, leadership is key, along with a strong organizational culture that embraces change whenever necessary. We need a leader who can be trusted, who can set clear rules, and who can develop an organizational culture that values continuous learning, and diversification, and promotes a safe environment for experimentation.

Therefore, trusteeship, civic responsibility, and equity (Christensen and Lægreid, 2002, pp. 290-291) are core values that are promoted to increase the empowerment of citizens, allowing them to voice their concerns, ideas, proposals, and needs, but at the same time making them an active part of this transition by giving them the necessary tools to engage in community development.

Digital-Era Governance (DEG) in the context of hybridization

But of course, with the emergence of new technologies and taking into account the digitalization movement that is growing at a rapid pace, a new "global wave" (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2017, p. 126) took place, one of the Digital-Era Governance (DEG), that tries to include all the previous ideology but adapt them in the current era of technology. With the advent of IT&C, this reform seems like a natural transition, especially because communication has become easier and more accessible, making it less difficult to create and maintain networks and find long-term stakeholders to work with. Information has also become more accessible, which can further support the more accurate identification of needs and the appropriate techniques to address them.

To better understand DEG, we can look at its three main pillars, which are: reintegration, needs-based holism, and digitalization (Dunleavy *et al.*, 2005, p. 480; Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2017, pp. 125-126; Margetts and Dunleavy, 2013). The first one, *reintegration*, refers to "de-crumble" the public sector and to reunite governments that were separated by NPM in the hope of simplification. This reintegration doesn't necessarily refer to the "old" centralized government but mainly tries to transform and merge it into "usable packages" (Dunleavy *et al.*, 2005, p. 480) for citizens to access them more efficiently. Secondly, *needs-based holism*, as its name suggests, aims at creating client-focused communication channels and access to information, to be more flexible and to improve the relationship between citizens and public institutions, and to respond more efficiently and faster to the changes in the external environment (in the community). The general purpose of this feature is to "create agile, flexible and resilient government structures, that can have the ability to respond in real-time to problems, instead of catching up with them only after they passed or they are no longer relevant, urgent or important" (Margetts and Dunleavy, 2013). And lastly, *digitalization*, looks at the familiarization and compliance of the public sector with electronic channels of communication, in order to replace the traditional methods (paper, fax machine, physical documents, letters, etc.).

Hence, advancing the e-government movement, to fully take advantage of the opportunities that this transition to digitizing operations can offer, in a collective effort to abolish redundant tasks or processes and to further involve citizens in the changes that are implemented to develop and adapt the public sector which, alas, strives to "become its Web site" as an outcome (Dunleavy *et al.*, 2005, p. 480; Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2017, pp. 125-126; Margetts and Dunleavy, 2013).

At first glance, this looks as a legitimate, even logical transition in the digital era but at the same time, we must understand that reforms (especially) are not "pure", in the sense that it is quite difficult to have only one form of a reform and completely eliminate the previous ones. Moreover, yes, digitalization and technology are key in development and it is the future in all its forms. Technology is indispensable, especially now in the 21st century, but at the same time, we need to remember a quintessential element: context. Not all states develop at the same time, not all states have the same or similar background, therefore digitalization might be way too big a step for some, whereas, for others, it's a natural and organic transition (Estonia for example, and its digitalized public administration) that was easily implemented.

On this account, when talking about administrative reform, especially with the current and still progressing forms, interpretations, and trends, we must acknowledge their organic (or indirect, unintentional) hybridization, in a venture to find the most adequate form for the current and future needs of that state/community and its citizens (again, the irrefutable importance of context and why it is important to have a clear, objective and well-documented strategy).

The Hybridization Process

Wiesel and Modell (2014) have provided a very well-written definition of the concept, summarizing its main features and characteristics: "*Hybridization is defined as the process through which elements of diverse governance logistics are integrated into context-specific configurations of governance practices [being seen] as key driving force for the prosperity of different conceptions of public sector consumerism to become more or less strongly embedded in the organizations under deeper examination*" (Wiesel and Modell, 2014, p. 177). Bringing back the argument regarding globalization and how borders between states started to become thinner and thinner due to geopolitical implications, in addition to the discrepancies in development, different administrative (and political) reforms began to merge, blending different characteristics to work together (for example, having a market-based approach whilst perceiving citizens as active partners in the decision-making processes and in building a vision, but at the same time having clear rules and knowledge-based hiring and training procedures).

Moreover, we can observe the tendency of combining economic values with a managerial approach and a change in role for citizens, who now are amassing the society as a crucial part of their belief system, making them decedents in the course of action and not only simple observers (Christensen and Lægreid, 2002, p. 269; p. 284). As one can see, we no longer talk (necessarily) about a transition but rather about a transformation in (or a layering in) doctrines and ideologies, to better adapt to the constant changes that occur in the external (and internal) environment of the organization.

For example, Polzer *et al.* (2016) looked at the forms of hybridization that NPM, NPG and WPA (Weberian-style Public Administration) suffered over the years and they came to the following conclusions: firstly, we have a combination of those reforms and not necessarily a "parallel co-existence" as the authors mention, meaning that, as aforementioned, we take a little bit from each doctrine and try to create something that works for us, but what is interesting in their research was the fact that WPA's ideas are more dominant than the ones of NPM and even of NPG, the latter "taking the world by storm' with its theory and principles. Their study concluded that the eradication of the traditional bureaucratic approach will not only create instabilities but will also sabotage the possibility of a new reform to be introduced and implemented. Therefore, this layering and hybridization of reforms are crucial not only for the stability and incremental changes of institutions but also to ensure the "infrastructure" on which one can build a new administrative reform (Polzer *et al.*, 2016, pp. 85-87; p. 90).

On account of Pozler *et al.* (2016) research, one can better understand that complete separation or annihilation of reform is nearly impossible and even not recommended if a more modern, adapted, and resilient approach is desired to be implemented, due to the "roots' that the old doctrines have installed. Goldfinch and Yamamoto (2019) are in agreeance with this idea because, as they have observed in their study, instruments from NPM, NPG, and post-NPM overlap (being focused on performance and performance-based incentives; citizens are perceived as partners/collaborators; further develop partnerships to increase the network; focus on strategic planning and management, etc.), thus recognizing the complexity and multiple implications of reform and reform alteration.

Henceforth, hybridization, layering, and combination of different paradigms are more than welcome, even encouraged, but it must be done with a clear idea, vision, and strategy in mind, otherwise, it can create more problems than solving them. Again, to do so, we need good leadership, a strong organizational culture, and resilient teams that can work together to achieve and implement an administrative reform, "tailor-made" to fit the needs, wants, and challenges of a community. Citizen involvement and active participation alongside stakeholders is a key aspect that should not be overlooked by public managers.

To conclude, regardless of the type, shape, or form of the reform, one must keep in mind some key elements that should always be present and those are motivation – to have that sense of urgency and desire to change for the interests of your community, not because of external pressures, secondly, to be consistent in the changes and the direction of the reform (chaos rarely brings anything good), to have stability and predictability; to maintain an incremental pace in change, so it becomes the norm and also to be accepted by everyone, and lastly, to create and maintain "a functional management system in the public sector" (Hințea, 2020, pp. 9-11) through cooperation, participation and openness.

5. RESILIENT INSTITUTIONS AND ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM

Resilience has become a "buzzword" in recent years and continues to grow in popularity, despite its long history. Municipalities, and local, national, or international institutions are making sure to include a resilience approach in all strategies, work projects, and public policies, alongside "innovation" or "digitalization". But what exactly is resilience?

In short, the importance of resilience is to help institutions move forward, achieve positive outcomes, and face uncertainty. This discussion in the context of administrative reform, especially concerning NPM, is valid in the sense that in times of uncertainty, we need to be able to develop valid strategies that can support our development. From now on, when we look at resilience, we need to take into account all the aspects that it encompasses, aspects that will be presented in the following sections (resilient leader, resilient organizational culture, resilient individuals - who form resilient institutions).

To put it in short, resilience refers to the ability of a system to face adversity and "withstand stress without suffering harm" (Griffiths, 2018, p. 715) and to have the ability to bounce back (return to its initial form before the shock), but also to bounce further (adapt, learn, grow) so it will not be put under similar forms of pressure or stress. Hence, trying to find tools and mechanisms that can help with strengthening (or creating) adaptability and more adequate responses to different external pressures, challenges, crises, or the unknown, in other words, to develop the ability to "reach tasks that are developmentally or contextually salient" (Gucciardi *et al.*, 2011, p. 424).

Therefore, a more open or inviting view of change and development, making organizations (as an example) more transparent, more accountable, with a more strategic way of thinking, thus increasing their ability to learn, to collaborate, to be more flexible, to better understand errors or problems when they occur (and find better solutions to them), and to function as an open system.

Henceforth, there are numerous factors at play for an organization to be "able to continue making the *moment-to-moment* adjustments [and to be] safe from *exiting* (extinction) via a collision" (Wenzler *et al.*, 2009, p. 2), thus incentivizing the idea that organizations, in order to do so, need to be performant, be collaborative, open and transparent with the external environment (in a constant exchange of energy, information, and resources), to develop the capability to be self-organizing, and to not run from change but to embody it (in the mindset of the team, of leadership and the organizational culture's values).

It's important to note that not all change is resilience-related, and not all change will increase or decrease the level of resilience of an institution, community, individual, etc., but the nature of the change, and how it is implemented, monitored, and evaluated is what matters. Accordingly, resilience and resilience thinking are not a panacea and shouldn't be treated as such (notwithstanding some of its "holistic" implications), because we will only be setting ourselves up for failure. If we're talking about institutions alone (i.e., public administration), they are embedded in a specific environment with specific needs, challenges, and pace of development. Change is constant, dynamic, and therefore crucial for them to function as open systems and to achieve "the ability to change the behavior of its (institutions') components - individual and organizational agents - in response to external stress and to remain beneficial to its constituent agents" (Harrison, 2003, p. 13). In particular, what needs to be trained is the resilience mindset (Bănică *et al.*, 2021): to foresee and anticipate risks (that is why strategic planning and preliminary analysis are important) and also to increase "the potential for transformative learning" (Radu, 2018, p. 75), ergo to move away from returning to the original state before the disaster and towards a different state that is more adaptable and can better face the new circumstances or contexts.

These changes don't happen overnight, nor is there a "golden ticket" to success. It takes time, knowledge, openness to change, or better said, understanding the change and why it is needed, how it will impact the community, what the long-term effects will be, and so forth. Consequently, resources (financial, human, time, material, knowledge) and how they are distributed or used is a key aspect that needs to be considered and monitored because it is an indicator of an institution's ability to identify the main problems and the main priorities, along with the action plan (Sciulli *et al.*, 2015, p. 434; Iordan *et al.*, 2015) that need to be pursued; this represents another link between resilience, public management and strategic management, but also the importance of including resilience thinking in strategic planning and decision-making processes.

To manage the aforementioned, we need to first and foremost ask the question of what exactly needs to be resilient and how. Duit (2016) argues that two main aspects need to be taken into account when talking about institutional resilience: firstly, "societal functions", meaning basic infrastructure and public services that are offered by institutions (healthcare, education, safety, sewage systems, water, electrical supply, etc.) and secondly, "the structure of public administration" (p. 366), where we look at its ability to react in face of adversity, at the stability (or vulnerability) of its structure and the unity of direction and common understanding of the success of its members.

Teamwork, citizen engagement, trust, and open collaboration are just some of the few key elements that nurture resilience, but besides them, we need a leader who "is concerned with change, new approaches and assembling a vision that provides meaning to motivate and mobilize staff" (Burnside-Lawry and Carvalho, 2016, p. 6) for every piece of the puzzle to fall in the right place, at the right time and to facilitate the capacity of leaders, of public institutions to "engage in actions and processes for implementing appropriate policies and strategies" (Iordan *et al.*, 2015, p. 628) that can truly corroborate with the organization's vision alongside the needs of the community and its representatives. Because crisis management should be further developed and leaders should have a better understanding of the *modus operandi* of their institution, community, and what exactly needs to be done and where. This is why it is important to have an organizational culture and environment that can boost institutional and community resilience. To do so, commitment, hard work, active involvement, collaboration, openness, and research, represent just a few of the aspects that need to be included in the resilience development process.

5.1. Resilient Leaders[2]

It is imperative, especially when we talk about resilience in the context of institutional resilience, to also talk about the people who make up the institution, their working environment, and the dynamics that arise from their interactions. Therefore, in both NPM and institutional resilience, leaders are a critical factor in the success or failure of an organization. This motivates the importance of this subchapter and provides the context for the design of the variables in the practical part of this research.

---

[2] From page 61 to 67 the theoretical aspects were extracted from Andrianu, B., "Resilience at the Workplace through Empowering Leadership. A Comparative Analysis", 2021, The 29th NISPACee Annual Conference – conference proceedings

When we talk about quality of life in the workplace, and empowering or inclusive leadership, we must consider the importance of the ability to create a safe, comfortable, and resilient environment for employees to ensure high levels of performance. To do this, dealing with problems, challenges and other adversities is crucial when we talk about empowering leadership behavior, because it has a major impact on the level of motivation and commitment of employees.

But here we need to be careful about the connotations of empowerment and how this action is used by leaders because we are talking about giving or taking power to others. The leader or the process of leadership (generally speaking) is to intentionally influence someone or a group of people to achieve a certain purpose, goal, or mission. One tactic to do this (concept introduced in the 80's) is to empower employees to take initiative and think for themselves, thus the leader has the ultimate power to give or take away the "free will" of employees. This is why Obolensky (2014) argues that "self-empowerment, and the context in which it emerges and flourishes, is more important than giving empowerment" (p. 116).

Ergo, leading by example, coaching, showing concern, informing, and having a participative decision-making process (Tau *et al.*, 2018, p. 2) are only a few behaviors in leadership that can support strengthening the team to face adversity and "will enhance subordinates' ability to thrive" (Tau *et al.*, 2018, p. 2).

This is especially important when we consider the impact leaders have on their teams and their overall performance. If the leader is not able to enhance and improve the interest, motivation, and commitment of the employees, then the chances of facing and overcoming shocks or setbacks are considerably reduced and the resilience capabilities are enormously reduced.

This is the reason why concepts such as leadership, teamwork, and institutional resilience are often used to increase performance and efficiency in the workplace and also to create an inclusive environment that can support intelligent and continuous learning development.

Thus, when we talk about resilience, we are talking about the ability to face adversities and develop a positive adaptation to new changes (Förster and Duchek, 2017) by learning new skills that can help one to reduce their negative consequences or impacts in the future. Depending on one's ability to be flexible, learn, and develop an organic system where change is easily accepted or not, becoming resilient can be an easy process or a more difficult one. At the same time, depending on how well-developed an institution or community is, the losses can be more significant than in less developed communities or institutions because there are more stakes at play.

On the other hand, when we talk about resilient leaders, we are talking about the leader's behavior in certain situations; therefore, contextual leadership and their ability to face difficult or urgent matters in a way that the team is well coordinated and there is a certain focus on the goal, a focus that is equally known by everyone. And as Howard and Irving (2013) argued, a leader should be the one who removes the obstacles for their team (p. 679), but also gives them the tools to do it themselves when the leader is not present. This is related to what Obolensky (2014) questioned about empowerment vs. self-empowerment, and how important it is for a team to not be dependent on the leader, but to have a mind of their own, to develop their learning abilities and their desire to explore new ways of doing things. In support of this idea, Jin *et al.* (2017) confirm the fact that in the relationship between leaders and followers, there should be a mutual exchange of influence (p. 306) in order to increase the latter's capabilities and make them more self-efficient, high-performing, and resilient in their actions.

By giving them autonomy, it is possible to foster creativity, innovation, sustainability, and out-of-the-box thinking, because they have a sense of belonging and of being valued for their diversity and active participation in achieving the organization's goals.

The dynamic and complex process in which the leader is situated can show their level of resilience through different factors, but also through characteristics they possess, such as situational factors, confidence level, self-organization, level of adaptability and openness to change, social support and general interaction with their team (Förster and Duchek, 2017, pp. 285-286). It's important to emphasize that the leader alone cannot be the sole creator of a resilient institution or workplace. Because institutions, organizations, are complex, sometimes chaotic systems and there needs to be a general understanding of how important each element, each aspect is in this kind of environment and how vulnerable it is to external trends, adversities, or pressures. And perhaps this complexity, this chaotic and dynamic environment is what makes a leader resilient. Because leadership and resilient leadership is not an easy task and certainly not created overnight. It is a mixture of elements, of hardships, of sacrifices (of time, of self-interest, of recognition, etc.), of self-sacrifice, and of self-differentiation.

The latter is defined by Howard and Irving (2013) as "a person's emotional capacity to function in a way that is not overly dependent on the opinions of others and is thus related to identity and self-awareness"

(p. 683). Self-awareness is something that is misunderstood most of the time, or rather, people have the impression that they are self-aware when in fact they lack it, and this can be a self-made trap that creates illusion and a false sense of self. Unfortunately, this is where feedback comes in and plays its part - self-evaluation is important, but also being evaluated by your peers, and your team, is key to having a clear understanding of your actions and how they affect the shared vision. This is why it is important to create an environment that fosters openness, continuous learning, and diversity, which helps to strengthen the unity of the group and the quality of the organizational culture.

A resilient leader must present a set of clear values, to set a common understanding for success and which are the means to reach it, be effective and efficient in judgment, in actions, be in constant communication with their team, and be engaged in their belief system. Because there's a method to his madness, a resilient leader should create and foster a shared vision that can foresee future adversities, and improve the accountability and involvement of each individual (Sacmaroska and Shikova, 2015, p. 121-122; Valero *et al.*, 2015, p. 6) in the grand scheme of things and embrace change – an aspect that should also be promoted and embedded in the organizational culture, especially in public institutions where needs are in constant change and alongside globalization, they need to have a strategic planning approach that can anticipate transitioning trends and potential challenges that might come.

Furthermore, as Farrar (2017) mentions, a resilient leader must be open to change and accept it as a part of a natural path toward sustainable development. Even though altering culture might seem difficult, especially if we talk about rigid institutions, it must not be ignored. If one doesn't adapt or create competent strategies, then facing adversity will be more difficult and will result in more negative consequences or a longer time to recover, overcome, and learn from said adversity, ergo creating a snowball effect that will create long-term vulnerabilities.

In the context of public institutions, the aforementioned can have a much greater impact on the community if public servants are slow to act when faced with adversity or change, or simply do not have the know-how to respond to a situation. Gray and Jones (2018) suggest that in today's dynamic environment, employees should have the ability to "adopt adaptive mental, emotional, physical, and behavioral responses" (p. 139) to face potential shortcomings and stressors that may arise. But who trains them? Who provides them with these skills and the tools to develop them? This is one of the major issues that is not being addressed. We are asking over-qualified people, with mental and physical stability, to work in a rotten and outdated system that does not offer a clear set of performance evaluation methods, nor a support system of any kind, especially in the public sector.

Consequently, change should come from within, starting with the structure and procedures and ending with the people. But change is always difficult, and it is never recommended to act abruptly in the public sector because it could negatively affect the only reason for its existence: the well-being of citizens. Again, this is why strategy matters and why resilient leadership is crucial to instill resilience in employees and the institution as a whole. Individuals, employees to be exact, may be resilient on their own (have their optimism, be proactive, have a set of skills to face stressors more easily), but if there is no one to encourage this aspect, it may start to fade away (in the work environment) and stagnation will take its place.

This is why the role of the leader is to create a shared vision, a strong organizational culture, and a united team, hopefully, a resilient team that can contribute "towards building resilience" (Nguyen *et al.*, 2016; McEwen and Boyd, 2018). The task of a leader is never easy, but the rewards are outstanding if everyone does their part and acts in unity, if resources are scrupulously distributed to overcome stressors or vulnerable times, because "a stitch in time, saves nine' and we need more individuals with this outlook on the things they set into motion.

Finally, organizational learning should be promoted more to help individuals develop these kinds of skills and to have a better understanding of why things are going or behaving in a certain way and what they can do about it to stop the negative effects - that is, they should be empowered and take initiative without waiting for someone to give them that power. Because it is obsolete to have a resilient leader who gives their team autonomy and empowerment them if they are not given the proper tools to use these aspects to their advantage.

Empowering Leadership Questionnaire (ELQ) Model

For example, the Empowering Leadership Questionnaire (ELQ) developed by Arnold *et al.* (2000) focuses on how leaders can empower their teams to perform not by being part of the team, but by providing leadership (p. 250) so that the team feels encouraged and safe to share ideas, set goals, and focus more efficiently on the assigned task. In addition, "subordinates should also develop sufficient motivation to work autonomously" (Amundsen and Martinsen, 2014, p. 7), making them responsible for their tasks and ensuring that they are aware of their responsibilities, but at the same time giving them the necessary confidence.

Empowering leadership doesn't only mean empowering your employees to work on their own, but also "developing empowering leadership skills, resilience, healthy relationships, and conflict management skills while achieving productive goals" (Tau *et al.*, 2018, p. 2) and facing adversity with ease, being open to change and helping people to thrive, especially in difficult times.

Thus, within the ELQ survey, we have eight main dimensions, which are delegation, initiative, goal focus, effectiveness support, inspiration, coordination, modeling, and guidance, which will be presented in the following lines.

Delegation refers to the ability of leaders to give subordinates the authority to engage in and initiate various tasks without their supervision, or better yet, without micro-managing the employee's activity. The initiative is related to the leader's ability to allow employees to take initiative on their own without assigning them different tasks or responsibilities.

Being goal-oriented from an ELQ perspective means that the leader is interested in how well the team can achieve the set goals and makes sure that the team is aware of and equally understands the goals of the institution.

Effective support from the leader means that the leader can make objective assessments and help the team improve by analyzing their strengths and weaknesses and developing a learning system through which they can improve their skills.

Being a leader who inspires his or her team is crucial to building a strong and cohesive team. This is only possible if they are enthusiastic about the future and can encourage their team through the power of example or by constantly communicating with their team.

Coordination and group management are essential elements of maintaining a strong team and, as a leader, ensuring that everyone is aligned with the vision and mission of the organization. In addition, an empowering leader ensures that his or her employees' goals are aligned with the organization's goals.

Modeling or leading by example "refers to a set of behaviors that demonstrate the leader's commitment to his or her work as well as the work of his or her team members" (Arnold *et al.*, 2000, p. 254).

Last but not least, it is important for an empowering leader to guide his or her employees, to show them how they can better organize themselves, their work and tasks, and how they can develop within their institution. Thus, it is important for an empowering leader not only to show

how things are done within the institution, but also to offer support, to allow them to participate in decision-making processes, to interact with them, and to provide guidance whenever needed to ensure that they provide high performance and increase their efficiency.

5.2. Resilient Culture

Organizational culture is a very vague, ambiguous but at the same time very crucial aspect for an entity to be analyzed and understood. Culture refers to a shared set of values, beliefs, and perspectives within a group of people, trying to explain the unknown through symbols, thus providing stability and order. Paul and Fenlason (2014) describe culture as “dark matter in physics and cosmology. The theory and evidence support that there is a tremendous effect on galaxies and stars but the source of this effect, the actual *dark matter* itself cannot be seen” (p. 571). Culture has depth, is unique, and helps individuals to be committed and loyal to the organization if the written and unwritten values are aligned with theirs, and it is being maintained by being transmitted to new members through stories, rituals, symbols, heroes, examples, and so on. “Culture is both a here and now phenomenon and a coercive background structure that influences us in multiple ways” (Schein, 2010, p. 3) because it has history and it’s based on tradition, on events that had a great impact on us and how we perceive certain happenings, thus managers should have a better understanding of culture and its implication (Sackmann, 2011, p. 189; Wynen *et al.*, 2014), to use it as another instrument in their “toolbox” to manage their organization.

This is why culture is so difficult to change but also to understand. It has multiple layers and it influences the way the organization is perceived, the activity of the organization, and the behavior of its members (and how they are selected and integrated). According to Schein, to understand organizational culture, we must look at the three main layers: artifacts, written and unwritten values, and underlying assumptions. The first layer is about the things we can see, touch, hear, taste, and smell – the elements that we can observe through our five senses, being easy to identify them (the dress code, the architecture of the building, their interactions, rituals that can be observed, etc.) but quite difficult to interpret them correctly because culture is a very subjective matter. A formal dress code to some might mean a very rigid environment whereas to others it might mean professionalism or that it inspires trust.

This is why it is important to understand the symbolic part of the organization and to see what is the meaning of those artifacts for the members of the organization. Secondly, we have shared values, which can be observed in the way they interact with each other, “how things should be vs. how things really are” – the unwritten rules within the organization (this is another way to transmit the culture to new members, to see to what extend they align with these values). And thirdly, the underlying assumptions represent the deepest level of culture because it is seen as the core of the whole existence of the organization and its members. These can be observed in their daily activities and are so rooted in their behavior that they are even considered as “taken-for-granted assumptions”, especially when they are reinforced when a stressor, adversity, or challenge takes place.

This last layer, the “deepest part of the iceberg” can have negative effects on the members as well: if these assumptions are contested or contradicted, instability and fear get installed. These presumptions have so much depth that a different perspective (or an opposing one) can’t be deliberated nor accepted by the members because their beliefs or their assumptions have been tested so much in the past (again, culture has tradition and history), that a new way of doing things is perceived as unacceptable. This is why, when we’re trying to change aspects of the organizational culture, we must have a very good strategy and a smart approach, but more on that later.

This is just one of the many methods to analyze and understand to a certain degree organizational culture and its high implications and influences on behavior and how the elements within an organization interact with each other. The organization in itself is a very complex system and by looking at what makes an organization “click’ we can use our learnings to create more stable and harmonious systems, that can be more resilient and open to change.

It is most important to understand how “values influence employee willingness and preparedness to contribute towards the attainment of organizational goals” (Sanchez-Runde *et al.*, 2009, p. 306) and also important to see how the leader can reinforce that influence and embed the individual values to the organizational ones, in a way that it can create an efficient, performance-based climate. This is accomplishable only if motivation and perseverance are present, alongside a strong culture that is focused on the human aspect of the organization, having the ability to “positively affect job satisfaction” (Sackmann, 2011, p. 214), and if that said organization can promote continuous learning, adaptability, innovation and diversity as core values, in a mission to strengthen resilience (at individual, team, leader and organizational level).

Linking the aforementioned with what Obolensky (2014) said with regards to empowerment or self-empowerment and regarding organizational performance, to build a strong culture and to make sure that the organization is going in the right direction, the employees must be involved in the decision-making processes, to have good motivation-scheme and performance-based incentives. Not only that but also to maintain an open and safe climate because "by clarifying the importance of their work, employees experience increased levels of personal meaning, which yields higher levels of commitment and loyalty" (Ehrhart *et al.*, 2014, p. 162).

Sackmann (2011) analyzed in their study the linkages between culture and performance, and their results showed that there is a very strong connection between the two concepts, and if done correctly, it could also lead to the ability to bounce back in case of adversity and also to bounce forward because you already have the right tools to learn, adapt and develop. On the other hand, they concluded that, besides the strong correlation between the two, the external environment plays a crucial role (and how the organization interacts with it) but also, the internal one, in terms of clarity of the goals and the way they can be achieved. Lastly, as expected, bureaucratic or hierarchical organizational cultures have more difficulties in facing shocks, adversities, or different challenges, take more time to adapt to change (or embrace it), and present a lower level of performance, when compared to other types of culture (pp. 210-217).

To achieve the aforementioned, an interesting strategy would be to have an error management culture approach, to facilitate experimentation and innovation in the way employees manage their tasks. As Keith and Frese (2011) mention, error management culture "applies the idea of error management to the organizational or unit level" (p. 140), meaning that it shifts the attention towards finding solutions after an error has occurred and this goes hand in hand with forming a resilient organizational culture, assuming that the members also learned from that error and can install strategies to prevent future mistakes. By doing so, the organization can be more innovative, performant, efficient, and more willing to experiment (Wynen *et al.*, 2014) and public managers can use these instruments to improve their services because "error management culture allows errors to happen and encourages and allows individuals in the organization to learn" (Keith and Frese, 2011, p. 144), rather than just inhibiting their curiosity and creativity.

However, the public sector and its implications are quite complex, and multiple variables must be taken into account, to introduce changes to the pre-existing culture and its variations. As previously stated, culture is based on tradition, on history and it's formed in time. It takes a lot of time to create a stable culture and even more time to try and alter its original form because individuals are skeptical to change especially when they are not aware or don't fully understand the implications or the direct or indirect effects it might have on them. This is why communication and collaboration are key – change should not be sudden, but debated; change should not be made only by management, but all together, making the individuals aware and accountable for the changes that are proposed.

Ergo, when we want to introduce change, we should create a sense of urgency and crucial need for change, as the entire existence of the organization depends on it. At the same time, it is important at what variables we look at when we try to change the organizational culture because you can't change it *per se* but you can change the behavior of individuals by stating very clearly which behaviors are accepted and which aren't, by making changes in policies and leadership approaches. Concomitantly, employee engagement is imperative in finding the best strategies to implement change and to make it the new *status quo*, because involving them in debates, presenting them with what the change consists of and what the main implications of that change, creates a sense of partnership belonging and commitment to change (Paul and Fenlason, 2014, pp. 571-579).

Consequently, a preliminary analysis or a diagnosis of the organization and its culture is required because you need to understand what works and what doesn't to develop strategies to tackle the shortcomings and to make sustainable alterations in the current culture, to achieve the desired one, as showcased in the case study presented below, on local public institutions in Cluj-Napoca, Romania.

Cluj-Napoca Case Study[3]

One of the main concerns of policy and decision-makers across Europe and beyond is to build resilience to bounce back and create the right environment to thrive in response to challenges. It has become

[3] The practical part from the article Andrianu, B., "Resilient Organizational Culture: Cluj-Napoca Case Study", 2020, Eastern Journal of European Studies, vol. 11, no. 1, pp. 335-357 – was used to showcase the concept; the main findings are from page 70 to 87.

imperative to develop adaptive and proactive capacities to face unprecedented shocks and challenges. For this, societies and their representatives must be able to develop the necessary expertise to face current and future challenges. Therefore, this section presents the case of Cluj-Napoca, Romania, mainly the resilience of public institutions based on their organizational culture.

The relevance of this section lies in the intention to analyze the resilience indicators in the public institutions of Cluj-Napoca, based on cultural factors. This analysis has not been done yet in Romania, due to the lack of knowledge and familiarity with the concept of resilience. Moreover, in Romania, only a few studies have been developed on the topic of resilience. Therefore, this could be an added value for future research, thus supporting the recognition of this concept (Radu, 2018).

Organizational culture and cultural resilience are used as a starting point to understand the current situation in public institutions and their ability to face and overcome challenges, and how they do so. Therefore, this case study addresses the link between the two and also the current situation based on the literature review on cultural resilience and by applying the Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument - Competing Values Framework developed by Cameron and Quinn (1999; 2011) to the public institutions from Cluj-Napoca. If this provides valid results, the method can be tested on a larger scale (national, European) to analyze the resilience capacity and provide further recommendations for future research.

In order to determine the ability of the public sector to face and overcome shocks, a thorough analysis of the relationship between the cultural elements that support performance development is crucial. By analyzing their ability to learn from different events, one can determine their level of performance and their ability to adapt.

In addition, it is necessary to see the specific elements that make their organizational culture congruent or not, whether the values, the criteria of success, and the long-term strategy are commonly understood by the policymakers. This is a crucial element, especially on this topic, in terms of what really makes a strong organization - common symbols, definitions of success, the depth and nature of their unity and integration, and most importantly, the unquestioned underlying assumptions that guide all activity within the organization.

For a culture to resist, it must be passionately and fully shared. This ensures the cohesion of the group, limits the sense of uncertainty, and increases the sense of belonging. In the case of total devotion, we can speak of strong cultures that have values that are deeply rooted in the unconscious, that have been validated and accepted over time, and that individuals cannot deny. Otherwise, one can talk about weak cultures that do not have the capacity to think/act/believe collectively, individuals offer different symbols to events and are not fully accepted. In such organizations, due to inconsistency between goals, inability to associate with the organization, with other individuals, or with the declared values of the organization, the productivity and motivation of the employees can drastically decrease. In such situations, the individual will hardly adapt, and will not be able to perform, and if he encounters the slightest change or shock, he will handle it with great difficulty and in some extreme cases could lead to the disintegration of the group.

If the general opinion is that policymakers need to withstand shocks and become resilient, then a deep understanding of their organizational culture and how they operate is crucial, because then support, guidance, and appropriate expertise can be offered to help maintain and also develop their capabilities to facilitate the ability to bounce back.

Organizational Culture in Public Institutions

Organizational culture has often been underestimated, and not considered as a factor that can influence the activity of an institution and its interaction with the external environment. But the implications of organizational culture have been felt due to the influence it has on the behavior of individuals in a collective state, within an organization. The concept is often described using symbols and meanings offered to various events or happenings in order to limit insecurity and uncertainty and to provide a sense of membership familiarity. Individuals try to find and give different meanings to the circumstances in which they find themselves, in order to be able to accept them more easily and at the same time overcome them.

According to Schein (2010), culture is pervasive and dynamic, influencing the behavior of individuals at multiple levels, and providing stability, guidance, and a sense of belonging. Culture is shared and has continuity, it is deeply embedded in our way of doing things, it gives meaning and significance to activities, and rituals and offers explanations for the unknown, in a way it offers a sense of control over the elements around us.

Organizational culture may be broadly defined as the set of values, convictions, certainties, and ways of behaving that are shared and endorsed by the members of the group or collective. Values are deeply ingrained and it is almost impossible to change the organizational culture of a group as it evolves over time and beliefs/visions are shared by all members and passed on to new generations that become part of it. Resistance to change is therefore quite high, and resiliency can be difficult to implement when individuals fail to see how it will affect them.

Culture implies stability, provides coherence and a pattern to rituals, climate, and values, and sets an accepted way of behaving (Schein, 2010, pp. 16-17). It has been learned and passed down through generations of thought by a group, but only after it has been proven successful and an appropriate way to deal with challenges, shocks, or daily activities.

We should emphasize the difference between national culture and organizational culture before presenting the OCAI model of Cameron and Quinn. The former refers to the socialization process that takes place in the first years of life, within the family, the entourage, and the school, which lays the foundations that constitute the basis of the main assumed values of the individual, depending on the environment in which he developed. Organizational culture refers to the same set of elements, but within a tighter (organizational) framework that adapts to the external environment where it develops and integrates certain values, key elements, beliefs, and traditions to create stability and define strategies.

Therefore, the national culture is a larger umbrella and the culture of an organization is influenced by it. It is imperative to mention this because the cultural resilience of a community can be easily assimilated with that of an organization.

The spoken and unspoken rules need to be analyzed and deciphered in order to effect change and improve performance. Furthermore, according to the authors, if the concept is not understood within the organization, resilience can decrease and the unpredictable, shocks or challenges will not be handled accordingly, creating insecurity, unbalance, and even dissolution of the organization.

The Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI) analyzes six dimensions: dominant characteristics, organizational leadership, employee management, organizational glue, strategic emphases, and success criteria, at two levels: current and preferred. These are then analyzed through the framework of competing values, which is made up of four elements: One is related to the flexibility, dynamism, and openness of the organizational culture; the second is focused on integration and the internal environment; the third is focused on the external environment in opposition to the other; and the last is in opposition to the flexibility, meaning that it’s focused on control, stability, and regulations.

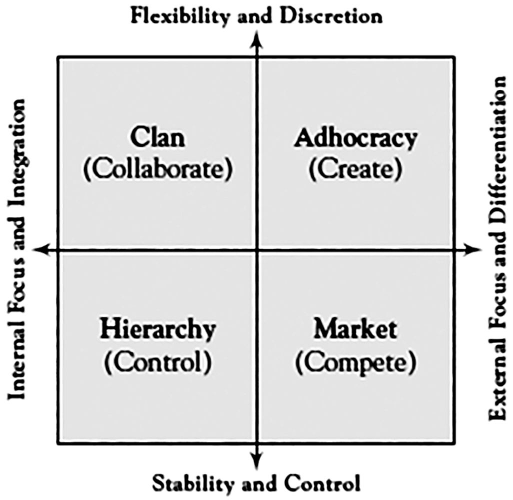


Figure 2. The Competing Values Framework by Cameron and Quinn (2011).
Source: Cameron and Quinn, 2010, p. 39

Last but not least, the instrument focuses on four main types of culture, which are determined by the six dimensions of the OCAI, which will be briefly presented in the following section.

The first one is the culture of hierarchy, which is highly specialized, focused on rules, meritocracy, impersonality, accountability, clear regulations with a vertical hierarchy, and a chain of control (Cameron and Quinn, 2011, p. 42). These types of organizations are highly formalized and standardized, work processes are very clear, and the structure is generally stable. We expect that most of the responses and results will show this type of culture as present in the surveyed institutions.

In this type of culture, leaders focus on coordination, direction, and monitoring and the value drivers are efficiency, uniformity, continuity, and consistency (Cameron and Quinn, 2011, p. 53).

The market culture is mainly focused on competition, and risk-taking, and exists in a very dynamic and fast-paced environment. It is mainly present in large private companies that invest and expand tremendously.

Cameron and Quinn (2011) suggest that the leader is a hard driver and a great competitor, and the main value drivers are profitability, market share, and goal orientation, which is the achievement of the goal (Cameron and Quinn, 2011, p. 53).

The clan culture highlights Weber's traditional authority, focused on a small group of individuals who are loyal and committed to their work, deeply involved in the organization, and work similarly to a family business if we can make that comparison.

In this type of culture, the leader is seen more as a mentor and facilitator who supports teamwork, and the organization as a whole is driven by commitment, communication, and development (Cameron and Quinn, 2011, p. 53).

Finally, adhocracy culture is slightly different from the others because one of its main goals is to "foster adaptability, flexibility, and creativity when uncertainty, ambiguity, and information overload are typical" (Cameron and Quinn, 2011, p. 49). Thus, this type of organizational culture is often found in dynamic and competitive environments where new products and services are constantly being produced and delivered.

Here, the literature refers to innovators and risk-takers, people who have an entrepreneurial spirit and are willing to make frequent sacrifices to realize their visions. Creativity is more than welcome, as are agility, motivation, and enthusiasm.

Organizational culture has become an increasingly studied concept, especially in public administration in Romania, as one of the main determinants of performance, motivation, and perception of the institution's image (Hudrea, 2015; Roșca and Moldoveanu, 2010; Hudrea and Tripon, 2016; Rus and Rusu, 2015).

Moreover, due to the complexity of the concept and its general applicability, organizational culture is a topic debated in different fields of activity (economics, psychology, sociology), the reason being the development of an exhaustive understanding of the behaviors of individuals and their inflections (Reisyan, 2016, pp. 18-19).

The importance of understanding the framework in which leaders find themselves and the need to associate them with the group has made it necessary to deepen the subject with visible, physical connotations (language, clothing, mimics, architecture, etc.) to symbols and values that are not so visible or verbalized, but individuals act according to them, without doubting these.

Hence, by understanding organizational culture and its implications, we can determine, predict, and even develop resilience to face shock and stressors in a way that can promote bouncing forward, generating pro-activity, acceptance of change, and innovation.

Resilient Culture in Public Institutions

Cultural resilience is mostly discussed in the literature from a national or ethnographic perspective, not necessarily from an organizational perspective (Daskon, 2010; Gunnestad, 2006; Holtorf, 2018), but it can be aligned with OCAI through their similar elements, which will be presented in the further discussion.

A resilient culture has the ability to accept and overcome challenges by sustaining and flourishing itself, to have the ability to become more adaptive and adapted to future shocks.

Cultural resilience can be understood as "the ability of a cultural system to absorb diversity, cope with change, and evolve. Cultural resilience implies both continuity and change: Disturbances that can be absorbed are not an enemy to be avoided, but a partner in the dance of cultural sustainability" (Holtorf, 2018).

Thus, when discussing resilient cultures, the tendency is to refer to strong cultures within communities and organizations that have the capacity not only to recover but also to learn and evolve, making them sustainable and providing the network and security that individuals need. As Gunnestad (2006) puts it, "culture includes the values, norms, rules, and ways of life that one receives from the generations that have gone before, and how each new generation interprets and adapts them to its own life and society", with adaptation and unity making a culture resilient.

Determining the level of tolerance to uncertainty can be done by connecting the type of culture that is established by the literature to be more resilient, compared to the other. So far, it has been established that "resilience can be defined as the ability to bounce back from adversity, frustration, and misfortune" (Ledesma, 2014, p. 1), which is fundamental for an organization to maintain and develop its culture in order to survive. A shared understanding of the mission and raison d'être is built over long periods among people who share common traits, patterns, and certain affiliations, making it easier for them to act toward the common goal. As a result, strong cultures tend to become more resilient over time, thriving and developing a strong sense of belonging, identifying and developing a stronger sense of purpose, and becoming receptive and proactive to change and stressors.

According to Bell (2002), "a resilient culture is built on the principles of organizational empowerment, purpose, trust, and accountability" (Bell, 2002, p. 2). It has the capacity to develop skills and abilities to cope with shocks and change and to share the culture with future generations.

"The robust organizational culture has a strong sense of corporate purpose cascading down and across the organization. It is this strong sense of purpose that holds the organization together. It aligns individual, work group, and

organizational goals as a continuum. A resilient culture is built on strong trust among employees, management, suppliers, and partners" (Bell, 2002, p. 2).

The need for unity and a sense of belonging and identity are powerful elements that can make an organization resilient from a cultural perspective, especially when there is a deep and embedded reason for acting to achieve a certain goal that must have greater meaning and impact for the group. This social glue provides guidance and support, has a compelling influence on their sense of insecurity, and eases the integration and adaptation process for new generations to come.

Investing in clients and people in general, innovating and sticking together in times of adversity, providing support, mentoring, and empowerment (Everly Jr., 2011) are elements that some consider essential to nurture and strengthen cultural resilience. Not to mention that these common elements, along with the others provided by the literature, can be used as a starting point to derive the core values of an organization.

If it is to match Cameron and Quinn's instrument with the literature on cultural resilience, it is made clear that an organization can be considered as having a resilient culture if it is closer to the clan culture, as presented by the two authors. This means that the respondents should aim towards that type of culture in the "now' or "preferred' state, being focused on flexibility, unity, having a high concern for people and customers, having as characteristics teamwork, loyalty, openness, and a safe environment.

After establishing the predominant culture, we can also determine the preferred type of culture at a general level and also, the actual and preferred culture by all the six dimensions aforementioned in between the brackets. Afterward, we can assume the level of resilience based on the literature review which showed us that an organization has more chances to having a resilient culture if it is similar to the clan culture, known for its characteristics based on collaboration, teamwork, unity, and sense of belonging of employees.

The Competing Values Framework will support the research by determining the diversity and area of focus of the organization, whether the predominant culture promotes flexibility or control if it is focused on the internal or external management, and how they are reflected in the dominant type of culture of the surveyed public institutions.

This study has a convenience sample of 150 public servants from Cluj-Napoca's public institutions who responded to an e-mail for the OCAI distributed among them, scoring their actual and preferred state within their institutions, based on the six dimensions. Participants had an average age of 42.29, where the youngest respondent was

21 years old and the oldest was 67, out of which, 33% were male and 67% were female. With regards to educational background, the majority of the respondents had a master's degree, most of them bachelor's degree, and 4 of the respondents mentioned having a PhD. degree and a minority only finished high school or have had other types of educational background.

The respondents were asked to fill in the provided survey (OCAI) with a total of 24 questions, grouped in pairs of four for each dimension (dominant characteristics, organizational leadership, human resource management, organizational glue, strategic emphases, and success criteria), with the purpose of analyzing the perceived actual situation and the preferred one. Each dimension used in the competing values framework has the purpose of identifying the appropriate type of leadership, values, quality strategies, and human resources management for each type of dominant organizational culture and its orientation (internal or external focus, flexibility or stability, and control).

Hence, based on each type of persistent organizational culture, and of course, with regards to its orientation (flexibility, internal focus, etc.) the specific type of leader and leadership style can be determined, along with specific quality strategies and adequate theories on effectiveness and values which will emphasize on the characteristics of that culture.

Table 3. Cultural Profile. Source: author's calculation

Results

	Current	**Preferred**	**Differences**
Clan	22.77	30.26	7.49
Adhocracy	17.17	19.45	2.28
Market	24.24	24.99	0.75
Hierarchy	35.82	25.30	-10.52
Total	**100.00**	**100.00**	

Table 3 represents the given scores for the current and preferred situation, grouped by the four types of organizational culture analyzed by OCAI. The differences between the two show the desired direction and change and if it is higher than 10 points then action should be taken in order to reach or get as close as possible to the preferred situation so one can maintain and secure a stable and strong culture within one's organization.

In the present case, it is obvious that the dominant type is the Hierarchical Culture, with a score of 35.82 points, which means that the emphasis is on a very formalized structure, where efficiency and long-term thinking are top priorities, along with performance, procedures, rules, and regulations. As it is oriented to the left, the competing values framework suggests that the organization has an internal focus with a need for control, predictability, and stability to survive. In second place is an interesting scenario, the market culture (24.24) with a focus on the external environment, being result-oriented and competitive, and in third place with a difference of only 1.47 is the clan culture where teamwork, loyalty, and commitment are the glue of the organization.

From the results on the current situation, it can be speculated that regardless of the small differences between the points, the prevailing culture emphasizes stability, internal focus, planning, and achieving goals.

The discrepancies between the actual and preferred state are quite obvious in two dimensions: hierarchy and clan. The least preferred type and with a difference of 10.52 points between them is the hierarchy-type culture, which can be translated into a need for decentralization of the decision-making process to empower people to try new, alternative, and innovative ways of performing their tasks and reduce micromanagement methods to facilitate equifinality.

The second major discrepancy is related to the clan culture, with an increase of 7.49 points compared to the current state, which means that employees need more involvement in decision-making processes, have a need for horizontal communication, and leadership must support teamwork, recognition, and develop an environment that facilitates innovation.

Therefore, from the general analysis, a conclusion can be drawn that there is a potential for a resilient culture, which is supported by the literature, that is, it can be nurtured and developed if the organizational culture promotes flexibility, loyalty, trust, understanding, and also accountability and provides a sense of belonging.

In the following lines, we will present the cultural congruence of the six dimensions: dominant characteristics, leadership style, management of people, organizational glue, strategic focus, and success criteria. Successful and resilient organizations should and most often do have a congruent culture, which means that they face shocks, stressors and conflicts with considerable ease, whereas incongruent cultures are a red flag and require change and restructuring if they do not want to fall into decline.

Table 4. Dominant Characteristics Scores. Source: author's calculation

Dominant Characteristics

	Current	Preferred	Differences
Clan	20.81	26.78	5.97
Adhocracy	17.12	20.79	3.67
Market	25.54	30.38	4.84
Hierarchy	36.52	22.05	-14.47
Total	100.00	100.00	

When we look at the aforementioned, we emphasize the basic assumptions, general elements that define the type of organization and offer a suggestion about it. In this case, one can see again, a great difference (14.47 points) between the current and preferred state in the hierarchy culture, which is in the first place in the actual state, meaning that some of the dominant characteristics are related to processes, formalization and regulation, and the employees are very well specialized and have clear procedures for their tasks.

According to Cameron and Quinn (2011), the values in the hierarchical type are related to "efficiency, consistency and uniformity" (Cameron and Quinn, 2011, p. 53) with a strong focus on control.

On the other hand, in the preferred situation, market culture is in first place with an increase of 4.84 points compared to the current state. This may indicate a need for diversification, risk-taking, and improving productivity and innovation. It also indicates a need for more motivational elements to support commitment and loyalty to the main goal of the organization.

Table 5. Organizational Leadership Points. Source: author's calculation

Organizational Leadership

	Current	Preferred	Differences
Clan	24.58	28.25	3.66
Adhocracy	18.05	20.18	2.14
Market	26.35	25.12	-1.23
Hierarchy	31.01	26.46	-4.56
Total	**100.00**	**100.00**	

This dimension refers to the dominant type of leadership in the prevailing culture and how the leader is perceived by the employees. Looking at the current and preferred situation, it is obvious that the differences are quite insignificant and it can be assumed that the leader is perceived as a coordinator who is efficiency-oriented and monitors activities (hierarchy culture: 31.01 points), at the same time the leader is a competitor, producer and demands results (market culture: 26.35 points).

In addition, the leader can facilitate teamwork and become a mentor when employees need guidance (clan culture: 24.58), and in some cases, the leader is perceived as an innovator and visionary who sometimes takes risks for the greater good and well-being of the organization (adhocracy culture: 18.05 points).

Considering the high impact and influence that a leader has on the organizational culture and especially on the resilience of an organization (Everly Jr., 2011), it can be considered positive that there are no major differences between the current and desired state.

Therefore, resilient leaders who support and foster resilient cultures should "use positive reinforcement to increase the frequency and intensity of desired behaviors, provide constructive feedback when individuals fail so that they can see what went wrong and emerge from the experience with a positive mental framework and expanded decision-making boundaries" (Mallak, 1998, p. 12), provide a flexible and inclusive work climate that supports innovation, and create a sense of involvement and relevance within the organization.

Table 6. Management of Employees Points. Source: author's calculation

Management of Employees

	Current	Preferred	Differences
Clan	25.13	31.82	6.69
Adhocracy	17.03	19.07	2.04
Market	24.19	23.99	-0.20
Hierarchy	33.66	25.13	-8.53
Total	**100.00**	**100.00**	

The employees or the human resources management are crucial for the promotion of a resilient organizational culture, and here the focus is on the elements, characteristics, and roles that must be ensured in order to support homogeneity within the group.

When comparing the current and desired situation, the differences between the clan culture (with an increase of 6.69 points) and the hierarchy culture (a decrease of 8.53 points) are the ones that stand out, meaning that change must be promoted to increase the strength and resilience of the organization.

"The management of employees is concerned with secure employment and predictability" (Cameron and Quinn, 2011, p. 75), which is an obvious element that is met in the hierarchy culture (33.66 points), followed by efficiency assessment and improvement. Furthermore, in the clan culture (25.13 points), the focus is on teamwork, consensus, motivation, cohesion, and support of commitment, which means that there is high attention to the needs of employees, creating an inclusive environment to promote creativity and productivity.

Within the market culture, the demand for results and deliverables is high and competition is the main driver, but at the same time, risk-taking and innovation are not in the spotlight (adhocracy culture - 17.03 points) for the management of employees in the analyzed sample due to its low points.

Table 7. Organizational Glue Points. Source: author's calculation

Organizational Glue

	Current	**Preferred**	**Differences**
Clan	22.41	36.10	13.69
Adhocracy	19.11	23.22	4.11
Market	23.28	25.69	2.41
Hierarchy	35.20	15.00	-20.20
Total	**100.00**	**100.00**	

Organizational glue refers to the elements, rules, and patterns that hold the organization together, strengthen it, and unify it against shocks, stressors, or negative changes. Within this dimension, as in the previous dimensions, there are two major differences between the current and preferred organizational culture: hierarchy and clan type.

From the data collected, we can determine that rules, procedures, and regulations are the main elements that keep the organization working accordingly, based on the dominant culture - the hierarchy one (35.20 points), followed by the desire to win (market culture with 23.28 points), by loyalty, unity, commitment and trust (clan culture with 22.41 points) and lastly, the need to experiment has a certain implication in keeping the organization running (adhocracy culture with 19.11 points).

The hierarchy culture presents a difference of 20.2 points between the current state and the desired one, meaning that significant changes need to be made in terms of focusing on other elements rather than formal rules to maintain the embodiment of the organization.

Moreover, in the clan culture, there is a difference of 13.69 points, suggesting the need to promote loyalty and motivation among employees to make them more involved and develop a sense of belonging.

Table 8. Strategic Emphases Points. Source: author's calculation

Strategic Emphases

	Current	Preferred	Differences
Clan	21.62	30.45	8.83
Adhocracy	16.62	20.53	3.91
Market	23.58	23.64	0.06
Hierarchy	38.18	25.37	-12.81
Total	**100.00**	**100.00**	

The long-term strategy defines the focus and direction of the organization and its culture and establishes the important elements that keep the organization on the same track or support its development.

According to the dominant culture (hierarchy with 38.18 points), the strategic emphasis is on efficiency, stability, and continuity, in contrast to the emphasis promoted by the immediately following market culture (23.58 points), which is on reputation, competition, and on setting and achieving goals.

If the two previous types are goal-oriented, the strategic emphases of the clan culture (21.62 points) are more people-oriented, focused on their development and cohesion within the group.

As in the previous cases, the main differences between the current and preferred state are in the hierarchy (difference of 12.81 points) and the clan culture (difference of 8.83 points), which means that the focus should be shifted to elements that combine task and people orientation to support performance, along with motivation and belonging.

Table 9. Criteria of Success Points. Source: author's calculation

Criteria of Success

	Current	Preferred	Differences
Clan	23.00	29.59	6.59
Adhocracy	14.81	20.14	5.33
Market	21.23	24.18	2.95
Hierarchy	40.96	26.09	-14.87
Total	100.00	100.00	

Finally, based on the dominant culture types, this dimension seeks to present the organization's definition of success, how success is viewed and determined, and on what basis.

As expected, taking into account the fact that the discussion is about public institutions, the hierarchy culture received the highest score (40.96 points) in the current state, which means that efficiency is a crucial element to determine success, along with low costs and predictability, while in the clan culture (23 points), success is determined based on recognition and interest in employees and their achievements.

The most worrying aspect in this last dimension is the difference of 14.87 points between the current and desired state for the hierarchy culture. Considering the inconsistency in the understanding of the criteria of success, especially in the public sector, it may suggest a need for renovation and clearly explain the mission, the steps to achieve it, the milestones, and how they are quantified as criteria of success. Otherwise, the fact that people have different meanings of success can lead to inconsistency in implementation, misunderstandings, and overall lack of unity, making them vulnerable to change, shocks, or stressors.

A similar study developed in Slovakia in 2016 showed that the predominant type of culture in the current situation is the hierarchical one, while the preferred type of culture is the clan one (Ližbetinová *et al.*, 2016), which proves the need for more modern and innovative ways of organizing the workflow and dealing with shocks and stressors in a non-disruptive way.

After a detailed analysis of all six dimensions, we can say that there are six major differences between the current and preferred state in terms of hierarchy and clan culture, which can be translated into the need for debureaucratization, facilitating processes, increasing decentralization and having a more people-oriented approach, facilitating motivation, personal and professional development of employees, increasing their commitment and loyalty to the organization. Therefore, the organizational culture can be considered clearly congruent and there is a lot of room for improvement, especially in terms of shock-absorbing capacity.

Limits and Further Research

The limited number of respondents made it difficult to generalize the final results at the county level and further persistence is required to provide more consistent data and results, and due to the opportunity, that OCAI provides, some surveys were not included in the database because they were filled out in mirror symmetry, thus invalid for this research. In addition, the limited data on resilient culture at the organizational level may have influenced in one direction or another and may have altered the final results and conclusions, but by cross-referencing similar elements, the trail was narrowed and sustained to reach a common point.

Because few studies have been developed on the subject of cultural resilience, but more on cultural heritage in Europe, there is a limitation in the ability to compare different case studies and see what methods have been used and applied to foster organizational resilience. Therefore, the exploratory side of the case study provides a starting point to explore more broadly the implications and different approaches used and tested in building cultural resilience in public institutions.

Another element is the subjectivity and ambiguity of the subject itself - organizational culture. The concept has so many different colors, understandings, and interpretations that it is difficult to find common ground with another individual, even if there is a vague and civil understanding of the observable aspects.

Conclusions

Several studies and research (Hudrea, 2015; Roșca 2010), limited in number and geographical scope, have been carried out at the national level, with the result and conclusion that there is an organizational culture with a predominant bureaucratic element, with a relatively short-term strategic focus, which can be considered a worrying factor considering the purpose of public institutions, but in a way understandable due to the influence of political factors (e.g. 4-year mandate of mayors). With the exception of their final results and suggestions, the analysis did not cover the resilient element, hence the purpose of this exploratory research.

The constant presence of the hierarchical type of culture within this sample can be explained by the fact that the Romanian public management still has a very political approach, instead of focusing on leadership techniques to guide the implementation of an adequate bureaucratic system, which can better reflect the reality of the present time. In the same sense, the need for debureaucratization and the increase of digital public services can explain the focus on more clan-like cultures, which can allow them to facilitate the processes and ensure a more fluid exchange of information.

Criteria of success must have a similar meaning within organizations if future resilience strategies are to be developed, as shown in the results, implying a need for focus orientation towards a long-term strategic investment compared to those based on political values.

The implications and impact of cultural elements on organizations and their resilience capacity cannot be ignored or underestimated because, as it was presented, the need for belonging and security within a group is crucial for an entity to overcome shocks and/or changes.

Furthermore, its ambiguity stems from the fact that the literature refers to organizational culture as a way of thinking or, in other words, a shared view of social reality based on the negotiation of meanings, symbols, and interactions between individuals (Alvesson, 2011, p. 14). These elements were commonly found in the literature review on resilient cultures and also in the data.

Civil servants began to feel the difficulties of working in hierarchical cultures where everything has to go through various procedures, rules, and regulations in order to become a deliverable, and the fact that the preferred tendency was towards the clan culture, one can only speculate that there is a significant need to change to a more flexible and people-oriented way of working at a general level.

In addition, the comparison between the current and preferred types of organizational culture showed that cultural resilience is somewhere in the middle, on the subtle line between below and above average. Based on the literature review, a culture can be considered resilient if it offers sufficient flexibility, so it can adapt quickly to change when needed, must be based on tradition, trust, and loyalty, so there is a constant on its members and not only that, but also familiarity - knowing what your group thinks and how they act in different situations can be a tremendous advantage in the face of shocks.

From the results, we can say that there is great potential, especially if public servants are open and transparent with their needs and find a way to implement change so that it will still preserve the interest and well-being of the community and at the same time facilitate more involvement in decision-making processes, generating equifinality.

As a study from Slovakia, developed in 2016, shows, public institutions need to understand that with the traditional methods that exist in the hierarchical culture, improved qualitative methods need to be implemented, removing the barriers within the system that limit the efficiency and effectiveness of services (Ližbetinová *et al.*, 2016, 175).

Therefore, if one wants to promote and increase the resilience capacity of Cluj-Napoca's public institutions, it is necessary to support innovative actions and conduct a thorough self-diagnosis, showing what the real, main challenges are, what options are available, which one is the most feasible, and how to implement it, so that future shocks will have less impact on the institutions and society as a whole.

However, a worrying point that can sabotage the development of a resilient culture is the different understanding of success criteria, as shown in the above results, because this can lead to divergences and weaken the unity of the group. We emphasize this because culture helps individuals give meaning to their work and daily lives, provides comfort and security, and if the milestones have different meanings for different individuals within the group, then other indicators such as performance or efficiency can fall into decline.

In conclusion, the impact of culture on the way policymakers act and react to shocks and different stressors should be analyzed in depth in order to better understand their resilience capacity and, more importantly, what can be done to facilitate and accelerate resilience capacity. If some of the key common elements of organizational culture can be linked to the current challenges, then this could be a first step in identifying some key drivers of uncertainty and building resilience into future strategies and policies to move forward and thrive in the face of adversity, not just recover and return to the pre-shock state.

6. THE LINKAGES BETWEEN NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT AND RESILIENT INSTITUTIONS[4]

Are there clear links between NPM approaches and institutional resilience? Is the level of resilience higher when NPM approaches are implemented? These are some of the questions that should be answered in further research to promote a better understanding of how public management and administrative reform as a whole influence the resilience capacity of public institutions in Romania. This chapter gives us a brief insight into the idea that will be analyzed in this research, helping us to have a better understanding of the common aspects of the two main concepts of this research.

We believe that this is also an interesting aspect to determine, in the sense of "which reforms were most responsible for building resilience" and what are the specific characteristics of each reform that had a positive contribution to enhancing institutional resilience (as a main point of discussion). At the same time, we should preface that from this point on, the topic related to administrative reform, NPM, or institutional resilience will be focused on Romania, in order to give context and explain the main changes we've gone through and to have a better understanding of the final results and the main areas that need to be addressed, improved or developed.

We also need to understand that after the fall of communism, Romania was caught up in the internal and external pressures for change, so a new public administration reform had to be implemented. However, the lack of knowledge, experience, and understanding made the officials implement reforms *ad literam*, not based on the current needs of the country. In the face of constantly changing demands, their credibility, stability, and resilience began to fade, as did their ability to develop sustainable and realistic strategies.

4 From page 89 to 97, this section is extracted from Andrianu, B., "The Linkage Between New Public Management and Resilient Institutions. A Theoretical Approach", 2020, The 2020 NISPAcee On-line Conference for PhD Students – conference e-proceedings – being the sole author of the article.

Public administration reform has always been a major debate in terms of what approach is appropriate for the level of development of particular communities. There has always been a great misunderstanding about how to properly implement public management approaches to facilitate sustainable development through strategic planning, thereby increasing institutional resilience. However, the lack of knowledge, skills, and proper training in this area, in addition to the external and internal pressures on transition countries, has limited the implementation of a logical management system and its ability to embody strategies to enhance institutional resilience.

The classical Weberian approach to the public sector and the functioning of bureaucracies have dominated until recent years and have shaped the current administrative system, making it rule-based, efficient, and impersonal, thus ensuring equal access for all, stability, and predictability. However, recent years have shown that while the reform has proved its worth, it has also demonstrated the urgent need for change and innovation in the public sector.

The involvement of political figures in the development of resilient administrative reform can be and is perceived as a tool for re-election, but at the same time it can be a first step in developing "alternative policy approaches to disaster management with a focus on local capacity and community building" (Aldrich, 2016).

Therefore, when trying to understand how some communities recover faster, have less loss and damage, and can adapt faster than others, one should not exclude the political factor, even though it may or may not follow its interests. The reasoning is that you have to include all the elements involved to facilitate an increase in resilience - all the elements are interconnected, and in order to avoid similar challenges, you have to make sure that the system is aware of the damage. So, the financial factor, for example, is very important. Depending on how self-sufficient a city, an administration, or a public institution is, one can be more or less resilient in the face of disasters or shocks.

Faced with these adversities and crises, New Public Management (NPM) approaches have been introduced over the years to try to fill the gaps and insufficiencies in public institutions. When we look at the said concept, we are looking at a market-oriented approach that intends to increase performance, introduce strategic planning for a better organization, increase efficiency, and give value for money - increase the quality of products and services. But the implementation and integration of such an approach has been quite difficult and still is in some cases due to the "late start" we had in becoming a developing country due to communism, "plagued by corruption, inefficiency, collapsing infrastructure, income inequality, war, political crisis and lack of employment. The prevalence of these obstacles in the developing country machinery has implemented development activities a Herculean task" (Puttaswamy, n.d., p. 3).

As NPM was introduced, we have to discuss about the public managers and their role in the administrative system due to the great changes. Kennedy (2017) raises the importance of "constitutional literacy" and how one must understand that it is one of the main elements that ensure the foundations of synergistic connections within communities and define the rights, laws, and boundaries that must be followed. In this context, public managers must keep in mind the reasons behind all superficial or unreasonable decisions and create a common language that ensures a balance between existing and new policies (pp. 567-568).

The pressure on public managers to succeed and solve various problems is sometimes unimaginable, and the question must be asked: to what extent can we rely on their skills and knowledge to ensure the resilience of public institutions? We need to be aware of the main differences between the public and private sectors and acknowledge the fact that in the former case, there are more implications, synergies, and interrelated factors (investors, quality of life, political factors, budgetary constraints, etc.) than in the latter.

In an attempt to overcome these problems and properly implement public management to support resilience, it is necessary to analyze the link between strategic planning and organizational performance, and how simple tools such as SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis or PESTLE (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, and Environmental) analysis can provide institutions with a broader picture of their current position and how to present their vision and goals for the long term (George *et al.*, 2019 *apud.* Dror, 1983).

By adding these types of tools to the development of a strategic plan, one can have a more rational and systematic approach to the matter, increasing the performance of the organization as a whole, with an improved outcome and a clear representation of the parts that need improvement. To be clear, these tools are a simple first step in scratching the surface of the problem. Involving individuals in the strategic planning dimension, having a relevant group of stakeholders from different backgrounds, developing partnerships, and being aware of the internal and external environment are just a few elements in creating a clear strategy that is consistent with the key elements of public management: being efficiency-driven, improving performance, having a rational approach to things, and being accountable for the success or lack of it, of a strategy or plan.

Another key element in developing a resilient characteristic, in the sense of being more adaptive and transformative, is related to the level of knowledge public institutions have about their community and their ability to create a local environment that facilitates partnerships between different entities, different fields, and sectors (Aall, 2019, pp. 71-72).

Aall and Crocker (2019) suggest that in order to be a resilient and inclusive institution, one must pay attention to potential external investors, how they can be involved in the policies, and how the policies can ensure broad coverage so that no group feels rejected (p. 73). This element is essential not only for the institutions but also for the image that one wants to create for the community. Depending on the degree of openness to new partnerships and the leader's ability to communicate the vision, a public administration can develop a resilient and inclusive strategy that will support it in the face of adversity or the unknown, and thus face challenges with a significant degree of support.

The above underscores the importance of creating functional synergies within a community, reinforcing their trust in each other and public institutions, thus facilitating the process of change in case of adversity or keeping up with the rapid changes in technology, needs, and services. When communication is open and dialogue is transparent, all relevant actors from the community will have a more appropriate response and become self-sufficient.

Thus, NPM approaches, if properly implemented, can be a useful tool, increasing not only the resilience of public institutions but also the trust of citizens and better strategies and policies. However, as Dan and Pollitt (2015) mention in their paper, the lack of coordination, "sufficient administrative capacity" and misrepresentation of the approach can delay the chance of a stable administrative reform.

On the other hand, institutional resilience is also at risk of being misrepresented in public institutions. Due to the current vulnerabilities and inconsistencies, one cannot truly fulfill the concept of overcoming adversity and bouncing back.

Therefore, it is important to have a clear basis on the similarities between public management and institutional resilience, and as further steps to analyze to what extent the implementation of NPM elements can support the resilience of the institution. Thus, the table below tries to highlight the common features:

Table 10. Similarities between public management and resilient institutions based on literature. Source: author's compilation

New Public Management	Institutional Resilience
Stability, is a sense of belonging, behaviors approved and shared by a group (Schein, 2010).	A sense of purpose unites the organization; individuals see the goals as a continuum of activity (Bell, 2002). They absorb diversity, handle change, and continue to develop (Holtorf, 2018).
Evaluating, planning, showing initiative, inform (McGannon, 2006).	Develop "action plans" that can help individuals to adapt with ease to unknown situations (Connor and Davidson, 2003). Continuous learning, self-efficacy, sense of meaning, evaluation, and communication.
Flat hierarchy	Loose hierarchy
Long-term objectives for the organization	Improve the quality of the organization
Exploitation and specialization	Exploitation and diversification
Manage complex elements	Embrace complex elements
Increase resources & value quality	Support the development and adapt to resources
Strategic planning with a holistic approach	Analysis of a stressor and its effects from a holistic perspective
Strategic thinking and problem-solving skills	A better understanding of problems and solution-finding abilities
Promote flexibility and innovation.	Organizational learning characteristics
The leader sets the vision and direction	The leader is involved in the change processes and facilitates the tools in this regard.

From what we could gather at first glance, there are some similar elements, but also some differences, as one would expect. If we talk about the ability to overcome shocks and bounce back, that is, to recover and reposition oneself in the situation before the shock, one can do that to some extent if there is clear strategic planning, if the organization has clear objectives and performance standards that can be monitored. At the same time, if we look only at the theoretical aspect, we can say that these elements can also help the organization to bounce forward, that is, to improve and adapt to future shocks and thus increase its resilience.

At the same time, the fact that we still talk about public management instead of public governance or e-governance shows a lack of coordination with the European administrative reform and a lack of confidence in the competence of public officials to properly implement changes that can benefit not only the institutions but the community as a whole.

The concept of resilience is rather new in Romanian institutions, so it is interesting to see how many cases, changes, and policies we can actually identify this concept and how well they can face adversities, major changes, and shocks such as COVID-19. Notwithstanding the government's quick action in imposing restrictions and lockdowns, the coordination and control of the disinformation showed otherwise. Its level of control over the situation was not the most pleasant (especially due to the reluctance of citizens, not to say that other states were much better, but the ineffectiveness of solving citizens' needs (regarding COVID-19 or other aspects) has once again proven the failed hybridization of different reforms (Weberian bureaucracy, New Weberian State Model, NPM, public governance, e-governance) just to try to be in line with other member states. And while this fast-forward change was tried repeatedly without the necessary expertise, it led them to a substandard level of resilience.

Consequently, this exploratory research has identified, as a first step, all the common aspects of public management and institutional resilience, while trying to test in future research whether institutions that have been able to implement the former approach also have the latter, and to what extent this research question is viable (is resilience more present in institutions that respect the principles of public management?).

This section aims to identify and present the main links and similarities between public management approaches and resilient institutions, and to raise the question: are institutions that implement this approach more resilient than others? How can it be successfully implemented to enhance their ability to cope with shocks, adversities, and emergencies?

Administrative reform is necessary for public institutions not only to recover but also to move forward. Without adequate strategic planning, leadership, and organizational culture, resistance to change is inevitable, as is vulnerability to adversity. There needs to be a common understanding of resilient institutions and their ability to buffer themselves, to be able to maintain their inner core (values, identity, purpose), using public management approaches to achieve this. In this respect, resilience can be seen as the flexibility to adapt without crossing thresholds of identity, i.e., the degree of change that is possible before becoming something completely different.

Romania still has to learn how to perfect the art of strategic planning and administrative reform concerning the current needs, circumstances, and context in which we find ourselves. In this sense, we can see how much more work there is to be done, but in all fairness, steps have been taken and are still being taken to provide a system that can meet the needs of its citizens and its other partners at the European level, but there is a lot of work to be done and a lot of changes to be made in mentality, approach, vision and community development as a whole.

Ergo, it is necessary to start a discussion, a debate on how well the two concepts are connected, how compatible they are, and how we can use this information to expand and improve their ability not only to bounce back but also to bounce forward.

What Drives Resilience, in the context of New Public Management?

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, both "institutional resilience" and "new public management" are complex concepts and have a major impact on the well-being, level of development, or even success of a community or entity (regardless of its field of work). Both require the ability to adapt, to be flexible, and to grow. For this reason, we believe it is relevant to look at the main characteristics that drive resilience, elements that are also present in the latter concept of this analysis, and drivers that will also be used (see Table 11) in the operationalization and methodological section of this research.

Henceforth, we must start with the importance of the **Leader** and their influence on all aspects that involve the organization. We have already touched on this subject in the "Resilient Leaders" subchapter but it is important to reiterate and bring the discussion back in this context. After all, the leader is the one who sets the vision, the direction, and the "action plan" of their team. They are the ones who should facilitate continuous learning, support their team, and create an environment in which the individuals have a common understanding of success. Moreover, they can be a facilitator of change, or an opponent of change, thus their influence is quite high.

In the context of institutional resilience, for example, a stressor would be the lack of attentiveness or aggression from the leader, lack of involvement, coordination, or general control over the situation.

Another key aspect is the **Organizational Culture** and the general organizational environment. Where they stand with regards to simplifying procedures, being flexible, having an efficient-based approach to things, and if they are united enough as a group to face adversity and to have the capacity to also learn from it. In the context of both resilience and NPM, we should consider aspects such as group unity, loyalty to the group, shared and accepted values, and the influence of subgroups (if there are any and what is their level of involvement).

Here we can have as stressors the lack of unity, cooperation, or communication among members, a weak organizational culture, a low level of feeling of belonging to the group, and also the lack of a shared common vision. This can also go hand in hand with a weak leadership style, which can contribute (even from a passive position) to creating a fragile environment.

Organizational Learning is another key concept that can bring both institutional resilience and NPM to fruition because it incorporates the two concepts above and "puts them into practice", so to speak. That is, it creates a safe environment where individuals have the opportunity to express themselves and encourage thinking outside the box and diversity of thought. In addition, we need a leader who can initiate this approach, along with providing the right tools to evaluate, improve performance, and guide the members of the organization towards a "continuous learning mentality", empowering them to take initiative and become more autonomous.

In this case, the stressors would be, first of all, the lack of tools (technology, procedures, lack of resources) to facilitate the learning process, the lack of freedom to express or explore one's ideas, poor communication, and the constant promotion of the *status quo.*

The last driver presented goes hand in hand with another, namely **Performance**. Usually, this concept is undoubtedly considered as the main characteristic of NPM, even a defining concept, some might say. But in reality, you can be performant under any reform or way of working. Frederick Tailor and his way of organizing work was efficient and performant. It was dehumanizing and did not value the human resource. Sure, but it was efficient. The point of this "dramatic observation" is that performance should be considered as an external driver because we can be performant but not resilient at the same time.

In terms of stressors, we can talk about inadequate or even lack of feedback, lack of monitoring activities or even evaluations, or infrequent evaluations, lack of performance-based incentives, unrealistic deadlines, lack of disciplinary action for underperformance, or even unclear performance standards.

Finally, **Individual Resilience**, in a way, summarizes and incorporates all of the aforementioned drivers, because in this case, we are talking about the situations and contexts in which the individual finds him/herself and his/her response to these situations. Yes, we are talking about the personality and personal background of each individual, but at the same time, especially at the organizational level, we need to talk about the working conditions, their work-life balance, their support (or lack of it), teamwork or general cooperation with colleagues or superiors. All of these aspects have a direct impact on the quality of life at work, the level of performance, the level of engagement, and in some way can influence employee turnover.

What we need to know for our research is how are the general working conditions, their work-life balance, how they get along with their colleagues (if they can count on them in the face of the unknown or challenging situations), or on the contrary, we have stressors such as: lack of cooperation with colleagues or superiors, lack of stability in the workplace, unreasonable working hours, lack of support, and so on.

More specifically, **teamwork** is a key aspect in increasing the resilience of individuals, teams, and workplaces, because organizations rely on individuals, their cooperation, and their ability to critically analyze a problem while trying to find the best solution, developing an adaptive and flexible way of thinking.

Therefore, when we talk about either concept, we need to have a holistic approach when trying to determine which elements are the most dominant and which can positively influence their development and contribution to improving the way we think about work.

7. ROMANIAN CONTEXT ON ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM

The previous chapters looked at the concepts from a more general perspective, in order to give the reader an understanding of the two main concepts used in this research. From this section on, we will look at them from a more focused perspective, in the context of Romania and from the perspective of the multiple reforms, changes, and adaptations that the administrative system has faced in the last thirty years.

When we talk about reforms, especially in a post-communist country, we have a lot to unravel and analyze in order to fully understand the changes and synergies that have been created to reach the present point. Moreover, when we talk about Romania, we are talking about a special case, where the reforms in public administration took many turns, not at all linear. They were mostly carried out after the fall of communism, due to external, European pressure to be in line (from a governmental point of view) with other countries. Thus began the "chaos" of administrative reform.

We mention chaos because strategic planning in post-communist countries is relatively different from those without this background, because there are specific areas that need to be addressed. First, the limited understanding of strategic planning and its purpose made the process look more like a formality and had a more political approach than necessary. Secondly, the lack of experience in this area was more than obvious, as there was no training and know-how on how to organize and coordinate debates or focus groups (Hințea, 2015, pp. 104-105; Hințea and Țiclău, 2017, p. 395). Finally, there was no strategic thinking or intentions to understand.

At the end of the 2000s, Romania tried to make progress towards a more modern reform, in its attempt to restructure and reorganize the administrative *apparatus*, hoping to increase administrative capacity and improve administrative management. This sudden acceleration began in the government plan 2001-2004, which had as a main purpose to increase the country's chances of joining NATO (which happened in 2004) and the European Union (EU 2007).

In 2001, the Law on Free Access to Public Information (law no. 544/2001) was adopted with the hope that public officials and citizens would improve their relationship and cooperation, along with several other laws, regulations, and emergency ordinances to facilitate transparency (law no. 52/2003) and increase the involvement of civil society in debates or activities of public interest. As Popescu (2011) presented in her paper, the law no. 544/2001 was implemented by the citizens in the following 5 years, but as the author presents in her study, there was an obvious decrease in the citizens' request for public information (until 2006) and some of the main reasons for this are as follows: firstly, the lack of management to organize clear procedures to offer the required information and the lack of training for public officials to act professionally.

Secondly, the inconsistency of the law itself. That is, it was not sufficiently developed to be correlated with other normative acts, therefore some information was restricted from free access due to these loopholes (Popescu, 2011, pp. 123-124). These are just some of the reasons why we saw little or no movement, and even today (in most cases) the cooperation between citizens and public officials is still dysfunctional, and the strategies to improve the image of the public sector, still need to be perfected (Dincă and Mihaiu, 2019 pp. 18-20; Popescu, 2011, pp. 122-123; Hințea and Țiclău, 2017).

Decentralization (transfer of competencies) was another buzzword and a reform that wanted to be accelerated and achieved, and here we can already see the problems with the Romanian administrative reform - too rushed, done without a long-term vision, without a clear picture of why we are doing these changes and how we can implement them so that they can be sustainable and have positive effects. This criticism is also available for the other objectives proposed in the 2001-2004 plan: the depoliticization of public services and the complete elimination of bureaucracy (Dincă and Mihaiu, 2019 pp. 23-27).

The fact that reform is poorly implemented is not necessarily the fault of the reform, but of those who implemented it, because they lacked three key strategic principles, as presented in Hințea and Țiclău (2017, p. 420): "predictability and coherence" - as presented below, the constant change of prime ministers and their agendas created a lack of trust on behalf of citizens, "managerial performance" - limited know-how in managerial approaches, and "rational use of public resources" - the waste of resources that was presented quite constantly in this chapter.

This process continued and in 2006 a new law on decentralization was adopted, which clarified the allocation of resources to local authorities, their classification based on their administrative capacity and finally the clarification of competencies (administrative and financial to strengthen local autonomy), but at the same time its usefulness was questioned because it left "a considerable gap between the policy framework and its implementation [...] and there was a real lack of accounting and financial accountability at the local level" (Cepiku and Mititelu, 2011, pp. 312-313, *apud.* Profiroiu *et al.*, 2006), which again reinforces the argument of a lack of knowledge and experience (along with a lack of willingness to learn or receive advice) in administrative reform, which only led to more confusion and waste of resources.

Accordingly, reform shouldn't be implemented as is, but based on the current trends, needs, and future orientation. Furthermore, to align with EU requirements and to advance in the accession process, Romania started to reduce the number of ministries, in the hopes of becoming more efficient (Matei, 2009, p. 82) but instead, it only created more confusion and overly complicated the entire process.

The 2005-2008 Government Plan, on the other hand, had different priorities that were more aligned with EU accession and trying to meet the requirements imposed through directives by EU directives, and with NPM principles. This means a more focused approach on defending Romanian democracy and also the movement of privatization, or better said, the transition from a paternalistic "all hands on deck" state, to an "invisible hand" approach, thus reducing the state's intervention in the economy and supporting the development of SMEs.

It should also be noted that during this period (but to be more precise, between 1997 and 2006), some of the most important privatizations took place, such as the biggest failure - Petrom being sold to OMV in 2002, but also the biggest success – BCR to the Austrian Erste in 2006. Another major issue that was reiterated and updated was the intellectual property aspect and the consumer protection domain that was overlooked up until this point (Dincă and Mihaiu, 2019 pp. 41-43). Subsequently, more "modern" principles started to emerge in this period, such as the rule of law (reinforcing the *Rechtsstaat*), "good governance, accountability, preventing corruption, efficiency, cooperation and coherence, transparency, consultation of the civil society and social dialogue and public-private partnership" (Matei, 2009, p. 89), elements that came to the officials" attention due to the external pressures and because now, Romania had to comply to the regulations of two major supranational institutions (NATO and EU).

In 2008, the economic crisis hit and severely affected Romania, in terms of government stability, private companies, and overall challenges that were quite difficult to overcome due to the previous inefficient way of resource distribution. As a result, the government plan for that period (2009-2012) was mainly focused on anti-recession strategies, such as "maintaining the single tax rate at 16% and reducing the budget deficit to a maximum of 1.7% of GDP for 2009 (compared to over 3.5% in 2008)" (Dincă and Mihaiu, 2019 p. 49). Thus, the program had in mind the protection of economic agents and the prevention of a possible recession, while ensuring the protection of vulnerable groups (suffering from poverty and extreme poverty). However, apart from this shock, which was felt all over the world, there were no other notable changes (in terms of reforms or legislation). This period is a strong indicator of the lack of resilience thinking and irrational decisions taken by public authorities, creating a snowball effect of wasted resources, lack of management, know-how, and preparedness.

What was fortunate for Romania at the time, was that in addition to having a low level of resilience, the country had a relatively high level of recovery, as it had little to lose compared to other developed countries from the western part of Europe (Andrianu *et al.*, 2021, p. 57). Nevertheless, the crisis only added to the fragile relationships that existed in terms of public-private partnerships, trust in government capacity, and overall poor quality of life. And now, with the COVID-19 pandemic that put more private entities out of business in the period 2020-2022, with the invasion of Ukraine on January 24, 2022, an unfortunate event that is still taking place, shortages of oil, energy, grains, all these external factors are actively contributing to a sure recession.

To emphasize the lack of strategic vision, "over 40.000 investment projects were already started by 2011 but never completed" (Hințea and Țiclău, 2017, pp. 402-403), which once again shows the lack of experience in planning, cooperation, and proper coordination of resources (which again contributes to the waste of everything).

In 2013-2016 the focus was mainly on increasing the absorption rate of European funds by simplifying procedures (another principle of NPM), continuing the development at the national level to reduce the discrepancies between Romania and other member states (as of 2023, Romania and Bulgaria are still at the bottom of the ranking in term of development and economic growth) and of course, digitization and digitalization of public services (Dincă and Mihaiu, 2019 pp. 77-80).

With regards to the operational program on administrative capacity, Romania received 553.191.489 euros from the European Union, having a total budget of 658.296.768 euros, after adding the national budget put at disposal for this program. By 2019, Romania managed to spend only 23% out of the total allocated budget (European Commission, 2020a).

In addition to the above, it is necessary to add the digitization of public services, where Romania is still fighting for the last place, due to a serious lack of coordination between public institutions regarding the implementation of this type of service, the lack of general know-how regarding the use of this technology and the migration of specialists (European Commission, 2020b).

On a brighter side, we have made some progress in the digitalization area, using NPM approaches and lessons if we might say, by developing the National Strategy regarding the Digital Agenda for Romania 2020, where it was estimated an investment of 3.963,8 million euros to promote and implement digitalization at a national level. But again, management and institutional structure are some of the main elements that must be worked upon if Romania wants to reach a certain success. The fact that there is still poor coordination between institutions and strategies, we will face economic losses and also the trust given by the EU in terms of financial responsibility.

The tone of the 2017-2020 Government Plan changed to a more European-influenced one, in the sense that now the focus was (more) on inclusiveness, open cooperation with citizens, transparency, efficiency, responsibility, accountability - all principles of public management and all already existing in developed countries. But besides what was written on paper, which sounded very promising, in reality there was a lot of instability in government (Dincă and Mihaiu, 2019 pp. 124-133) and the constant changes of prime ministers (Mihai Tudose - June 2017-January 2018; Mihai-Viorel Fifor - January 16, 2018-January 28, 2018; Vasilica-Viorica Dăncilă - January 29, 2018-November 4, 2019; Ludovic Orban - November 4, 2019-December 7, 2020; Nicolae Ciucă - November 4, 2020-December 7, 2020; Florin-Vasile Cîțu - December 23, 2020-November 25, 2021), only added to the insult. These constant changes are another indicator of the lack of coherence and predictability, and their agendas did little to no good in the process of improving and modernizing the public sector and implementing a coherent administrative reform that can respond to the needs, trends, and pressures from citizens and external entities (the huge implication of geopolitical aspects). On the contrary, it has only highlighted their incompetence and lack of strategic and resilient thinking, further reducing citizens’ trust in central public authorities.

When the pandemic hit, Romania acted rather quickly and installed a three-month emergency state until May 2020 and by December 2020 the vaccine was available in our country as well but the vaccination process was slow and disappointing at best because "by the surge of the fourth wave, only 30% of Romanians were fully vaccinated" (Dascălu, *et al.*, 2021), regardless of the constant campaigns and the high accessibility to the vaccine, misinformation and fake news were dominating the authorities calls for rationality. And here we can sense a subtle touch of irony but more concerning, the very high level of mistrust in public authorities, that made Romania "to enter the fourth epidemic wave with no restrictions, an insufficiently vaccinated population, and a completely divided society" (Dascălu, *et al.*, 2021).

On February 24th, 2022 Ukraine was invaded by Russia and the whole world stopped and couldn't turn their attention away from it. In response, NATO, Schengen members, EU members, and neutral states boycotted Russia and its resources but this only backfired by creating shortages of oil, energy, grains, and other crucial resources. What has been overlooked in some analysis is the geopolitical pressures and influences that are constant denominators in all the administrative reforms, and changes, and it truly shows how dependent we are on resources and how fragile political alliances really are. And now, the biggest fear in all of this is the possibility of authoritarian Russia and China uniting against the democratic West.

As of 2023, Romania is still not a member of Schengen, which caused a lot of controversy with the with the Austrian representatives in our country, who argued that Romania is still not ready, the level of corruption is still very high, and also, the decline was motivated by the fact that Romania was in the same "package" as Bulgaria, thus making the vote negative for us as well.

This spillover effect of having misfortunes after misfortunes in administrative reform can be reasoned because of **the "tiredness" of the system** and because the lessons from past experiences or from similar countries were never learned or even taken into consideration. Thus, there is an urgent need to clarify and quantify the resources in such a way that will be distributed toward the relevant services, supporting this way a societal and economic development. Therefore, an adaptation of the system to public management approaches can facilitate an efficient way to use and distribute resources within and among institutions, and will also come in service to reduce the conundrums in administrative and financial capacity. As one might think, if there is administrative capacity then the participatory budgeting aspect is seen with better eyes and can improve the way resources are distributed, supporting efficiency, performance, and sustainable development.

Regardless of the major impact that public management can have in the public sector if implemented according to the current context and demands, one must also take notice of the ways resources are distributed and how well they respond to the requirements of the community. Thesari *et al*. (2019) emphasized on the fact that sometimes there is not a clear response on how to divide the resources in a way that will satisfy both "government demands" and "the problems of society" (Thesari *et al*., 2019, *apud*. Joyce and Pattison, 2010).

There is a clear link between strategic management and resilience, and an urgent need to address this poor coordination of strategies. The discrepancies, lack of transparency, highly bureaucratic procedures, and poor communication channels, together with the lack of adequate training in accessing and absorbing funds, have caused a significant delay in the country's ability to align itself with the other member states.

In addition to all of the above, investment in knowledge transfer and human resources is needed. If strategic planning in terms of coordinating the distribution of resources isn't properly implemented, Romania will have great difficulties in reducing the poverty gap between itself and the other member states. As mentioned in the report prepared by the World Bank in 2017, due to the weak administrative capacity, shortcomings in the coordination of programs targeting poverty, social exclusion, and other key aspects do not come late. In the same sense, the weak integrated ICT systems (pp. 14-15) and a disorganized communication system between institutions put the country in the last place in the successful absorption rate, below the average capacity of the EU.

To conclude, if public institutions would improve the way they manage their resources, and have a holistic rather than individualistic approach, whilst having an open attitude towards change, then they could ensure "*respect for the law, more transparent public policies and a better quality of life for citizens, since the government acts as a provider of essential services for the population, such as education, security, health, especially for citizens who rely exclusively on the services provided by the local government*" (Thesari *et al*., 2019). Alas, many issues have yet to be solved and taken care of, starting from the incompetency and unwillingness to change from the top to the poverty and lack of education from the bottom.

Changes towards a better future are being made, but not necessarily by public representatives, but by private actors, and hopefully with them leading by example, we will have the changes we (sometimes so desperately) need, and that can help to achieve a more educated, resilient, digitized, inclusive and adaptive country.

7.1. Strategic Planning and Management in Romania

It is important to note the difficulty of implementing public management approaches and best practices in unstable, bureaucratic institutions with relatively low resilience and high resistance to change.

Public administration is seen and perceived as a traditional and rigid type of organization, and public institutions are still discussed as a traditional form of organization, forged after Frederick Taylor's scientific management theory and Weber's bureaucracy, where everything has its place, must be done in a certain way ("one best way" approach), everything must be standardized, rules and regulations are the ones that dictate the way of working, and a high level of impersonality to reduce corruption (at least in theory). However, the reality is a little bit contrary to the general opinion, because public institutions have raised the bar in terms of increasing their productivity and innovativeness, due to the high demands of the community, which are changing faster and have different specifications, characteristics and becoming more and more complex. Therefore, public institutions in Romania had to find a way to better respond to these demands, because the classical ways did not fit anymore and reform had to take place; hence, today we talk about public management when referring to the activity and structure of public institutions.

Public management "can be seen as the effort of setting and achieving organizational objectives based on resource economy, efficiency, and effectiveness" (Hințea *et al.*, 2013, p. 73) and is a concept developed to give new perspectives on how to improve the activity of an organization and to use innovativeness and entrepreneurial skills and not only, to find the most suitable solutions for reaching the highest level of performance and satisfaction. Moreover, one of the main elements that one must keep in mind when talking about project management is strategy development and strategic planning, hence the ability to build a vision and operationalize it to reflect the future development of the organization/community, having a long-term orientation, taking into account the elements of the internal and external environment, possible risks, opportunities and develop or focus on the competitive advantage.

Strategic planning is neither a new approach nor an innovation, and public institutions are starting to use it more and more to develop strategies at the local and central levels, to face the dynamic change of needs, technologies, and opportunities they face, to position themselves in front of the competition (when it comes to grants or funds) and to improve the quality of life of citizens (Hințea *et al.*, 2012, pp. 60-61). But what exactly is strategic planning?

Thus, when we talk about the term "strategy", we are referring to the proactivity of a manager to act instead of reacting to a certain situation and turn the scenario in his favor, to have a long-term perspective and integrate it into the organizational culture, to clearly determine your core values and to focus on the internal and external environment when making a decision (Hințea, 2015, p. 102). Therefore, when we want to develop a strategy, we have to set our values and mission very clearly and the members of the organization or community have to have a common understanding of them in order to create a strategy that benefits everyone and supports these values. Furthermore, due to the fact that a strategy has a long-term approach, we must analyze all the factors of the environment (internal and external) and create realistic scenarios to better position ourselves in front of the competition, making us more resilient in a certain way.

Following the same line of thought, "to plan is to deduce the likelihoods or possibilities of the future from a certain and complete knowledge of the past" (Gulick, Urwick, eds. Fayol, 1937, p. 103), one of the earliest concepts considered in public administration, which has the basic characteristic or role, depending on one's preference, to analyze all the elements of the past, the most important shortcomings and achievements, and to make a proper diagnostic in order to plan for and improve the future. This basic idea can help you promote strategic thinking, a resilience-based approach to decision-making, and a more flexible and learning organization.

Taking the two terms together, we can say that strategic planning is a process in which we determine the direction of the organization/community and establish the ways to reach that direction, taking into account the environment (internal and external), analyzing and clearly stating the vision and mission, core values, what types of actions are required to achieve the goal and what resources are needed to do so. In other words, "strategic planning refers to a disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape the nature and direction of an organization's activities within legal boundaries" (Bryson, 1988, p. 73).

To elaborate, we need to determine and set a long-term orientation for the further development of an organization/community, using strategic planning to do an X-ray if we may call it like that on ourselves, to better determine our position concerning our main competitors, our advantages, disadvantages and what innovative actions should we take to ensure resilience, sustainability, and prosperity. It might look like a difficult process for one to make a diagnosis of oneself, but the idea behind it is to develop the capability of integrating into the organizational culture the core values and long-term way of thinking. Henceforth a strategic approach means being able to have a "resource-based view" of the capabilities of the organization and to understand the need to learn, adapt, have an inclusive decision-making process that can increase and support its competitive advantage (McGrath and Kim, 2014, pp. 399-400).

We have mentioned core values because they "are the essential and permanent principles of an organization […], require no external justification […] have intrinsic value and importance to those within the organization" (Collins and Porras, 1996, p. 66). Thus, they must be clearly stated and integrated into the organizational culture, as same as the "core purpose, the most fundamental reason for the organization to exist" (Collins and Porras, 1996, p. 66), otherwise, the manager and its team will not have a clear image nor a common one of their direction and will create impediments in trying to reach the vision.

When the aforementioned are clear for all members of the organization/community, one can further the discussion of strategic planning by establishing/developing competitive advantage and using it to bring added value to oneself to exploit the opportunity window. "Competitive advantage is obtained when an organization develops or acquires a set of attributes (or executes actions) that allow it to outperform its competitors" (Wang, 2014, p. 33), meaning that one must analyze their competition and their self, find the proper set of resources or capabilities to create a favorable position for themselves and use it to have added-value and more benefits compared to competitors.

The concept of competitive advantage is used mainly in the theories of strategic management, the latter being a means to implement strategic planning. Thus, when we talk about strategic management, we talk about "how it emphasizes the adaptation of the organization to environmental demands and opportunities. It assumes that rational, analytical processes, such as strategic planning and budgeting, interact in a dynamic and complex way with the behavioral aspects of the organization" (Rabin *et al.*, 2000, p. 495), thus, strategic management has the ability to not only change or set the vision of the organization, but also affects the organization as a whole – from its structure through its type of leadership or organizational culture, having a constant focus on the ecosystem in which the organization exists. In other words, "strategic management is the process and approach of establishing an organization's goals and objectives, developing policies, programs, paradigms, and plans to achieve those goals and objectives, and allocating resources to implement the policies, programs, paradigms, and plans" (Omalaja and Eruola, 2011, p. 61).

Therefore, strategic management is an important part of any institution and it began to be integrated into public administration as well, to face the complexity of demands and challenges in their functionality and levels of adaptation to the fast-forward and dynamic community where they are. What we need to understand is that this concept also refers to resource allocation, evaluation and monitoring processes, implementation, and strategic planning. The latter began to be increasingly used in public administration, as mentioned above, with the purpose of setting the core purpose, and values, defining the vision, mission, and objectives, and operationalizing them to make a comparative analysis of the past, between ourselves and the competition, and determine after the diagnosis the competitive advantages in order to project a long-term strategy that should be (if carefully planned), resilient, innovative and sustainable.

Last but not least, when trying to apply strategic planning in public institutions, one must be aware of the following characteristics or better yet, challenges, divergent from the private sector. These characteristics are: the mission of public institutions that limits the flexibility of strategic management due to the fact that it's defined based on regulations, the low level of competition can be a downer when trying to define the competitive advantage and forces the focus on a truism, grants or funds from the center level, general objectives that are difficult to be operationalized to measurable things, short-term orientation, political influence due to the 4-year mandate of the elected representative that needs fast and tangible deliverables to ensure their future election, lack of know-how or expertise to develop strategies and minimum risk state of mind – being afraid to be accountable for a strategy (Hințea *et al.*, 2012, pp. 63-64) – which has a long-term vision and if the scenarios don't reflect the reality, a lot of resources can be lost and they don't want to risk it.

But how present is strategic planning in Romanian public institutions? Hințea *et al*. (2015) conducted a study to see to what extent these principles are implemented and embedded in their way of making decisions or approaching different scenarios. In their results, they found that the majority of public officials had strategies or implemented a planning process only because they had access to European funds, and not necessarily because they saw the process as beneficial in the long run. However, some officials recognized the importance of strategic planning and its influence on sustainable and resilient community development.

Furthermore, a problem observed in their study was related to the lack of monitoring and evaluation of the strategy and its impact (so they don't have clear performance indicators that can be measured). Consequently, the main challenges identified in the study are: lack of know-how in attracting stakeholders and long-term partners, lack of knowledge on how to define the vision, mission, specific objectives, and clear tools to measure performance, as well as lack of competencies in strategic planning, implementation, and evaluation (Hințea *et al.*, 2015, pp. 35-41).

These results go hand-in-hand with Profiroiu *et al.* (2013) research that looked at the perceived level of performance in public institutions and their findings indicated low levels of performance due to "the influence of political factors" (p. 189) and because of the absence of clear strategies, of evaluation and monitoring tools and because of a lack of vision (pp. 189-190).

On the other hand, if done correctly, strategic planning can bring indisputable benefits such as: developing critical and strategical thinking, thus making better decisions, increasing performance, efficiency, and motivation by involving the employees in the process of establishing future actions, thus ensuring a stable work climate (Ilie *et al.*, 2021, p. 540). This is why it is important to foster a knowledge-based economy, where strategies are implemented for the right reasons (not only because we have to or for EU funds), to positively contribute to a more performant and resilient public sector that can efficiently respond to the needs of citizens, thus increasing the quality of life and the wellbeing of the community.

To illustrate all stated above, we will present the main elements of strategic planning and strategic management in public administration by analyzing Braşov's 2030 Development Strategy, to see how much they have respected the main principles of the strategic approach and what else can be done in order to improve it. Thus, this analysis will focus on the strategic approach of Braşov and analyze the way they have developed their Sustainable Development Strategy for 2030 and what main elements have they used in order to integrate all the fundamental and significant elements to increase their competitive advantage.

Braşov's 2030 Sustainable Development Strategy Case Study

The strategy of Braşov was developed through the Operational Program for the Development of Administrative Capacity in order to facilitate the decision-making process at the local level and to develop the local development strategy, as stated in their disclaimer.

They stated that the Strategy 2030 has the purpose of organizing the efforts of the public administration and potential partners or stakeholders, to develop the city with a focus on the disadvantaged areas, the sustainable, smart, and integrative development of the city, and to transform it into a competitive and attractive place in accordance with the European context (Braşov.2030, p. 3).

From the above, we can say that their approach and envisioned direction are optimistic and in line to project an image into the future, but we must analyze the content and context of the strategy through the preliminary analysis and by determining the strategic profile before making assumptions.

Preliminary Analysis

The preliminary analysis can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the key areas or domains that the strategy aims to address, as well as the overall development trajectory over time. By examining a range of local indicators, including demographics, education levels, administrative capacity, infrastructure, financial resources, and quality of life, it is possible to gain insight into their evolution over time and to develop different scenarios. By analyzing these types of indicators, it is possible to ascertain the extent to which a community is aware of its own problems and assets. This allows us to make an informed assessment of the strategy's potential for success and to identify any discrepancies between the current position and the desired vision. Without a realistic and complex analysis of the past and present situation, it is difficult to achieve a clear understanding of the current position and vision, as well as the resources, expertise, and means required to achieve them.

In the case of Brașov's Strategy 2030, the following areas were chosen for presentation: demographic evolution and prognosis, housing, workforce, education, science and research, social services, health system, economy, tourism, culture, sports, transport and logistics, infrastructure, environment, and local public administration. A preliminary observation is that the data utilized in the strategy is limited to 2009 and in some cases, 2010 and 2011. However, to develop a realistic and sustainable strategy, it is essential to utilize the most recently generated data. This is because the utilization of outdated data may result in discrepancies between the anticipated and actual outcomes, thereby complicating the process of adapting to the evolving situation.

One illustrative example is the population forecast. In 2010, the total population was recorded at 276,914, a figure that began to decline from 1990 onwards (Braşov.2030, p. 12). The population scenarios presented were characterised by a pessimistic outlook, with a projected decline of

58,000 citizens by 2030. It is also important to consider the historical context of Romania as a communist country. Following the collapse of the communist regime, there was a significant level of migration, which contributed to a reduction in the population. Furthermore, the birth rate also declined.

In light of the aforementioned factors, it is evident that the observed decreases were a natural consequence of the post-communistic era. The prognosis at the time did not anticipate potential improvements that could have increased the population level, such as an enhanced quality of life, academic development, a reduction in poverty, job creation, and others.

It is crucial to highlight this aspect, as the strategy primarily focused on the observed population decline. However, should Brașov succeed in enhancing its appeal and registering annual increases, it will face a significant challenge, as the strategy indicates that they are preparing for a smaller population.

Another pertinent issue to address is the workforce and labor market, which has prompted some concerns and appears to require attention. The issue at hand is that the supply of jobs is significantly lower than the demand, necessitating the identification of effective solutions for job creation or entrepreneurial support. Additionally, the education factor plays a pivotal role in this context, with the two elements being inextricably linked.

The issue of a shortage of qualified workers in humanistic, social, and financial fields is becoming increasingly pressing. This is despite the fact that there are more people with higher education than there are qualified workers. The Braşov 2030 strategy (pp. 35-37) highlights this discrepancy. It is pertinent to mention this, as population fluctuation and a city's capacity for development are influenced by factors such as employment opportunities, educational attainment, and infrastructure. These aspects were not addressed in the study case.

Finally, the Braşov 2030 strategy lacks an analysis of quality of life and does not appear to prioritize this aspect. Nevertheless, Braşov is regarded as a city with a high quality of life, particularly in terms of safety perception, cleanliness, peace, multiculturalism, and culture (Petre, 2018). Consequently, the working groups responsible for developing the strategy should have considered this aspect and attempted to transform it into a competitive advantage. However, from their perspective, cultural activities and heritage are of greater importance in the country's development.

The Vision

In defining the vision, it is essential to consider the preliminary analysis, the opinions of citizens, working groups, and other stakeholders involved in the strategy, as well as all relevant aspects for the sustainable and resilient development of the community. The vision must integrate all the essential elements of the municipality, elements that are connected to its values and can be defined through a projection into the future (15-20 years), which will highlight the key elements taken into consideration and approaches to be developed.

The Development Strategy of Brașov 2030 lacks a clear definition of the vision, with only the key elements being identified. These will be further presented in the Strategic Analysis chapter. Consequently, Brașov is focused on creating a compact, mobile, tourist, cultural, protective, and innovative city (Brașov.2030 p. 203-204), but there is no motto, slogan, or representative phrase integrated into the strategy.

Strategic Analysis

As aforementioned, a strategy should have defined the key elements that create the vision and put the community in an advantageous position. Hence, Braşov defined the 6 elements that form the vision and are targeted for future development, as follows: (Braşov.2030, p. 204)

- Compact city – focused on a sustainable urban structure through monuments and building protection, improving the living conditions, economic development, and supporting the development of cultural sectors, to increase the quality of life and reduce social exclusion;
- Mobile city – transport improvement within the city;
- Touristic city – develop touristic and marketing strategies for cultural and creative pylons;
- Cultural city- supports cultural capacity, having as a result socio-economic development and an increase in the feeling of belonging of citizens;
- Tutelary city – development of social services, healthcare, and educational services;
- Creative and Innovative city – is focused on Braşov’s innovative and competitive capacity, concentrated on smart growth and environment through cultural industries.

Another gap in Braşov's strategy is the fact that they have not defined the working groups, but merely mentioned the involvement of Braşov City Hall and other relevant stakeholders. Even though they do not have definite working groups, they have developed a Coordinator Group and 5 thematic focus groups, and they have developed meetings with the focus groups, public debates, public surveys – sent to citizens, and last but not least, organized meetings with specialized institutions on the main domains from the strategy.

All those activities were developed before and within the writing of the strategy, showing no future actions to maintain or any other relevant information about the working groups.

Strategic Profile

In this section, the developers of the strategy must concentrate all the data and create a methodology that will answer the main strategic problems and define the strategic profile of the municipality.

In the following subchapters we will try to define the strategic profile of Braşov and based on the data from the strategy to determine/predict its success rate and at the end to make some observations and recommendations.

Strategic Concept

Braşov's 2030 strategy is mainly focused on **culture and creativity**. Here we discuss about cultural heritage, cultural activities, and cultural regeneration, this factor being one of the most important from the strategy and on which they put the most emphasis on. Their approach was quite interesting, especially because they tried to integrate all the other important factors from the strategy, in the context of cultural and creative activities and developed **5 main strategic objectives:** (Braşov.2030, pp. 205-209)

1. The first one is related to urban revitalization through culture, making the city a fully functional one by having a diverse and inclusive cultural offer.

They talk here about the equal distribution of culture and cultural activities and not being concentrated only in the city center but dispersed throughout the city, so every neighborhood or area will have access to these types of activities, not being forced to go to the center to participate in them. From this perspective, is a good initiative that will encourage participation and access to cultural activities and might have a positive impact overall.

2. Protecting the cultural heritage and cultural identity.

This strategic objective is focused on the restoration of cultural heritage, and its protection and also to offer educational opportunities in this field - to specialize individuals in cultural intervention and protection. This objective has an interesting approach in the sense that they do not only want to restore the cultural buildings but also, create new living areas and restore old apartment buildings to increase the quality of life.

Another interesting and innovative approach to this objective is the fact that they want to support entrepreneurial development in traditional communities (communities focused on cultural heritage) and support incubators for traditional handicrafts.

Therefore, through the second strategic objective, they want to improve the quality of life, support entrepreneurial activities within the cultural heritage, and also support local handicrafts. From this perspective, they have a very interesting and innovative way of integrating different domains and areas to develop their community.

3. Supporting cultural and creative diversity, developing offers that favor interactivity, using new technologies, and participating in the European circuit of cultural values.

Within this objective, their focus is on creating and supporting creative clusters, innovation, experimental labs, and new forms of artistic expression. Here, the focus is on the **educational part:** create entrepreneurial and project management educational programs, develop creative abilities, support young adults in projects that integrate technology and cultural access; urban development: urban regeneration using creators; and indirectly, if we read all points, they want to increase the **quality of life** by supporting local talents, offering scholarships and grants to young artists and so on.

The objective is somehow clear on what it wants to achieve, but the technological part is very minimalistic presented in the sense that it only specifies online access to cultural activities (websites, online schedule, etc.) and supports young adults in granting access to their projects. Thus, the issue should have been more detailed if they wanted to be taken into consideration as a relevant aspect.

4. Creative economy – development of cultural entrepreneurship and support cultural and creative industries, to increase the economic competitiveness of the county.

Here the discussion is very similar to the second strategic objective, going again, on the same subjects and issues, without bringing something new, that can have added value. Thus, this objective brings nothing new.

5. Development of synergies with the educational, economic, touristic, and workforce sectors to increase the quality of cultural offers and consumption.

In the last strategic objective, we do not have any clear directions or main actions that must be taken for its achievement. The development of synergies or partnerships must be mentioned and also, the involved stakeholders must be named, so the insurance of sustainability will be clear.

Key Strategic Factors

When developing a strategy, it is of paramount importance to be exceedingly clear about the Key Strategic Factors (KSF), as they constitute the very essence of the strategy and the principal elements on which the strategy must focus. In the event that the KSFs are not adequately defined, the strategy may risk focusing on elements that are not relevant to the sustainable development of the community. Once the strategic factors have been defined, it is possible to create different scenarios (optimistic, pessimistic, and realistic) that can show a direction or possibility of outcomes. These scenarios can then be used to determine the types of actions that are necessary to achieve the preferred goal. However, to ensure that the preferred scenario is applied in reality, it is essential to monitor the KSF and note any slight changes. Given that strategies are long-term, trends, needs, or requirements may change, and a key strategic factor may no longer be relevant in seven to ten years and need to be replaced by another.

In light of these considerations, it can be argued that the key strategic focus of the city of Brașov is culture and tourism. This is due to the city's emphasis on culture, which is reflected in the strategic concept previously mentioned. Furthermore, Brașov boasts a rich cultural heritage, an intriguing culture, and a tradition of organizing cultural events and manifestations. These elements serve to attract tourists, in addition to the city's appeal during the winter season.

Braşov has a high tourist capacity and is a tourist attraction in all seasons, including winter sports, cultural activities, sightseeing, and visiting historic monuments. This makes it an essential element for the city's development and sustainability.

They have devised a strategy to integrate the two and enhance their visibility at the national and international levels. However, there is still considerable scope for improvement in terms of modernizing the tourist areas, facilitating access for disabled people (not all tourist attractions have special access), addressing the infrastructure deficit, and reducing the cultural quality in favor of tourism profit (Braşov.2030, pp. 167-169).

Competitive Advantage

Upon analysis of the strategy, it becomes evident that **culture** (cultural activities and heritage) represents the city's primary competitive advantage. This is due to the city's diverse cultural infrastructure and facilities, as well as its commitment to the rehabilitation of cultural buildings and heritage and integration into urban design.

Tourism also represents a significant competitive advantage, given the city's array of tourist attractions, which are available throughout the year. These include summer activities and festivals, museums, and cultural activities, as well as winter sports and sky destinations. The city of Brașov has made considerable progress in this area, with the construction of highways linking it to other destinations. However, there is still room for improvement in the development of tourist facilities, modernization, and adaptation to the needs of tourists.

The city's **scientific and research capabilities** represent a third competitive advantage, with 21 research centers and 11 specialized laboratories for prototyping and development. Moreover, the city boasts a number of distinctive research facilities, including the Potato and Sugar Beet Research & Development Center, which is equipped with its own dedicated research facility.

Strategic Problems

The primary strategic issues identified in Braşov's 2030 Sustainable Development Strategy pertain to the **mismatch between labor supply and demand**. As previously noted, the local market does not align with the educational institutions or the skills of the population, creating a significant imbalance between the two. This discrepancy has led to difficulties in matching jobseekers with suitable employment opportunities. Moreover, the issue has been addressed in a minimalistic manner, with no clear direction provided for its resolution. Furthermore, although tourism has significant potential for growth, it has not yet reached its full potential. There is a need for significant investment in modernising equipment and improving the quality of the experience.

The strategy has not considered the potential of **new technologies** for integrating them into the development of services, products, and jobs. This limitation may impede the proper implementation of the strategy due to its inability to align with the new trends, tendencies, and demands. Furthermore, the necessity to make changes to meet this need will require significant financial, temporal, and human resources.

The existence of highly **vulnerable groups** in the impoverished neighborhoods of Brașov represents a significant challenge that must be meticulously examined in order to minimize social exclusion. The aspiration to modernize and make the neighborhoods more inclusive may give rise to concerns among citizens, potentially leading to a multitude of future difficulties. This issue can also be related to the aged population, which is a national concern due to an increase in life expectancy and migration. However, it is crucial for stakeholders to be aware of these demographic factors in order to create an inclusive and balanced community development.

Finally, **stakeholder analysis and definition** are still vague and general. The lack of a clearly defined set of stakeholders involved in the development and implementation of the strategy presents a potential challenge when attempting to apply specific objectives. In the absence of a clear stakeholder engagement strategy, there is a risk of encountering resistance and a lack of support for the implementation process.

Strategic Directions

The city of Brașov has considerable potential for development, which must be harnessed in an innovative and inclusive manner to meet the needs of its dynamic and diverse community. Based on our review of relevant literature, we can identify several key strategic directions that align with the 2030 development strategy. These include:

Cultural and urban regeneration and integration can confer additional value upon the city, thereby reinforcing its distinctive character and appeal. The city has a wealth of potential and expertise in this area, which presents an opportunity to establish itself as a leader in culturalism at the European level if acted upon effectively.

In relation to the first strategic direction, the city has the potential to **promote multiculturalism and multicultural heritage** due to its history. By recognizing its identity as a development factor, the city can leverage its unique position to foster new partnerships at the national and international levels, positioning itself as an integrative and open community.

In a similar vein, the community has the potential to create its **unique identity** through a robust marketing campaign that reflects its key strategic objectives. This could serve as a creative means of attracting stakeholders to their cause, not only for implementation but also for other forms of support.

Given the community's **high tourist potential**, it is likely to be able to attract grants for the qualitative development of services and tourist attractions. This can result in the creation of indicators for the key strategic factors, which should be monitored on an ongoing basis. This will help to create a clearer image of the needs, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the situation.

Finally, even if this element is not integrated into the strategy, the potential for development can be realised by **creating competitions for technologies** to be used in the implementation of the strategy. This will help to develop the potential of the community in this area and support the creation of new jobs.

Operational Projects Portfolio

The 2030 Sustainable Development Strategy for Brașov has been meticulously delineated, delineating in great detail the projects, development path, involved stakeholders and partners, methods of finance, expected results, sustainability, and period of implementation.

Consequently, the strategy's coordinators initially developed the main development priorities, which were then used as a foundation for the development of projects specific to each domain.

The comprehensive presentation of proposed projects for each key area demonstrates accountability and ownership of the strategy. Rather than being developed merely as a checklist, the strategy is being utilized as an instrument for the sustainable and resilient development of Braşov. The following sections detail the projects developed in accordance with the Braşov.2030 document (pp. 328-406).

- Compact city – 43 projects;
- Mobile city – 41 projects;
- Touristic city – 28 projects;
- Tutelary city – 22 projects;
- Innovative city – 47 projects
- Increasing the level of professionalism in administrative activities – 6 projects.

The aforementioned are based on the key domains and are meant to reach the envisioned development of the city by the year 2030, all projects have their Gantt chart for the period of 2011-2020, and the long-term expectations are set from 2020 to 2030.

Hence, in this section, Braşov has developed a very good analysis of the types of projects that need to be implemented to fulfill the general objectives.

Monitoring and Evaluation Systems

Finally, the monitoring component of the projects outlined in the strategy can be considered relatively straightforward, particularly when compared to the complexity and scale of the projects themselves.

The main monitoring instruments proposed by the authors are the urban monitoring system and annual reports, followed by meetings with the coordinating group managed by Braşov City Hall, thematic meetings, neighborhood meetings, the development of a concept for public relations and marketing, and the creation of a checklist to measure progress based on a list of indicators for each proposed project (Braşov.2030, pp. 422-424).

A checklist model has been proposed for each project, with the main success indicators to be checked in the annual report. With regard to the implications of the strategy and the interconnectivity of some projects, it is our opinion that the monitoring process should have been more elaborate and complex, showing the real progress over time, in order to identify and avoid potential risks.

As previously stated, the system is somewhat simplistic and may fail to identify crucial elements that could impede the implementation of projects or unexpected events that could disrupt their execution.

Conclusions

When attempting to devise a strategy, particularly for a city, it is imperative to consider a multitude of variables that may impede, facilitate, or alter the potential for growth. Consequently, a substantial amount of scrutiny and data must be subjected to rigorous analysis in order to develop a realistic forecast for the future. In addition, a strategy must be flexible and open to the unexpected, allowing for the appropriate freedom to act and make changes in response to new demands. It must not only be flexible but also transparent and inclusive, particularly in the context of a community. Every interested actor must have a say in key elements that affect them directly and indirectly, and must always have access to the strategy.

In regard to the 2030 Sustainable Development Strategy of Brașov, it can be argued that a significant amount of concentrated effort, expertise, and analysis has been invested in projecting the future of the city, particularly in light of the period for which the scenario has been projected: 2030. A comprehensive and detailed analysis of the community has been developed, yet there are still numerous gaps.

One recommendation is related to some of the key elements that were overlooked. These include working groups that were not defined, important elements such as workforce and job availability that were overlooked and merely introduced as projects for every key area specified, the vision that was not properly defined but only the elements that composed it, and so on.

Consequently, in order to develop a strategy, it is essential to consider and incorporate a number of pivotal factors that are fundamental to the creation of a realistic representation of the current situation. Furthermore, it is of paramount importance to examine all relevant elements in order to project a realistic image of the future.

Finally, for a strategy to fully represent the vision of the community, it must be accepted at the general level. This entails representing the values, needs, assets, and potential of all the actors that compose it. The generation of added value and innovativeness is contingent upon the establishment of a clear identity and the adherence to it. This entails the creation of a commonly accepted vision.

8. METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

As stated in the "Introduction" section (chapter 1), the main question of this research is: **Institutional resilience can be increased by implementing new public management approaches?** – a question that will be answered with the help of the following other ones:

R.Q. 1: What are the main elements that enhance New Public Management?

R.Q. 2: Which are the main elements that enhance institutional resilience?

R.Q. 3: Is there a linkage between NPM and institutional resilience?

The objective is to provide appropriate, realistic, and objective recommendations and to propose tools that can analyze the administrative reform and that can support its better implementation within the public sector, based on a clear system of performance and productivity indicators, clear cost-benefit relations, that is, to obtain the maximum from each output and to promote a long-term orientation in terms of strategies that show how the administrative reform will transform in a longer period.

In order to answer the research question, we need to look at some main indicators such as: the perceived level of performance and how performance is evaluated within the institution, along with its level of innovation, but also the perceived barriers they see in achieving a certain level of performance and innovation. These indicators will be used to understand to what extent public management is present in the organization, alongside leadership, work rhythm, and conditions. At the same time, individual resilience is essential to understanding the overall level of resilience in institutions. Individual and institutional resilience go hand in hand because if the individuals aren't resilient, neither is the organization. The main indicators used in this analysis to answer the research questions are presented below:

Table 11. Indicators. Author's interpretation

Indicators	**Operationalization**
Leadership style	Resilient Leadership (voice and accountability, social relations, equality at work, social support), open mind.
Individual Resilience	Motivation, productivity, performance, resistance to change, working in groups, teamwork.
Organizational Culture	Cultural Resilience (loyalty to the group, devotion and involvement, teamwork indicators, care for others, quality of life at the workplace).
Performance	Productivity, involvement, quality of work, employee engagement, the opportunity to contribute and achieve the organizational mission (FEVS), innovation, performance evaluation, barriers to innovation.
Organizational Learning	Adaptation to change (low resistance to change), understanding the tasks, having adequate tools to develop your way of working, and the existence of clear tools to evaluate one's ideas.
Work-Life Balance	General work conditions, work environment, motivation, stress, burnout.
Institutional Resilience	Organizational resources, work-life balance, adaptability, and flexibility levels, support in innovation, risk-assessment tools, and openness.
New Public Management	Performance measurement tools, feedback, innovation, strategic-oriented approach, organizational design, change-oriented organizational culture, resilient leadership, external orientation.

To determine the level of resilience, the instrument is split into 15 different question blocks, having 11 secondary indicators that will be tackled in this research: general working conditions, teamwork, leadership, work environment, motivation, work-life balance, performance and performance evaluation, innovation, organizational culture, reaction to change and organizational learning. The secondary indicators used in the instrument have the purpose of creating variables, based on the EFA analysis, to test their relation with the main indicators of this research: **New Public Management** and **Institutional Resilience**. The reason for this is that our variables are composed of several elements (as shown in the table above) and in this way, we were able to integrate more defining elements, instead of having only one question per variable.

By analyzing the aforementioned we can have an idea of the level of institutional resilience and to what extent it is influenced by public management approaches (innovation, clear performance indicators, just evaluation processes, general work environment, and ability to adapt to change).

To do so, the programs SPSS and AMOS were used in this analysis. With SPSS we performed EFA (Exploratory Factor Analysis) to identify our main factors and also to create, from the multiple indicators, variables (resilience, public management, leadership, organizational culture, organizational learning, teamwork, performance, and work-life balance) that were latter used in correlations and regressions. After we extracted our factors from SPSS, we continued our analysis with AMOS, to perform a CFA (Confirmatory Factor Analysis) to see if indeed our model is valid and if it confirms. Lastly, we also created a path-way model (also in AMOS) after we saw the validity of the model). We also used correlations using Spearman's test in SPSS (because the data was normalized) and regression to see if indeed resilience is influenced by public management, and vice-versa, and which aspects are the most influential. Lastly, we used Artificial Neural Networks (ANN) with the multilayer perceptron function in SPSS to see which variable is the most influential in enhancing public management and resilience, respectively.

Before looking at the primary data analysis, we must first analyze the context and the level of development of the regions. For this, we looked at and analyzed data relating to the general image of Romania, of Romania in contrast to the other members of the European Union, then we continued our analysis at a regional level, looking at the general image and aspects such as demographic evolution, migration, and the current strategies developed by the Regional Development Agencies. This aspect is relevant because it gives us a glance at the current state of the country. After all, the well-being of the population, the shifts in demographics or the level of poverty, is a reflection of the administrative capacity and its ability to answer to the needs of its citizens.

8.1. National Context on Reform. A Secondary Data Analysis

As presented in the theoretical framework, thus far, some crucial elements can indicate the level of institutional resilience or which can contribute to the measurement of resilience, alongside the fact that the concept is quite correlated with public management approaches. Moreover, "an institution is resilient if it maintains its effectiveness over time, despite changes and shocks" (Andrianu *et al.*, 2021, p. 56), but if it is to look at the Romanian context and the changes that occurred, we can conclude that institutional effectiveness and ability to recover were quite affected, one of the reasons being the lack of experience and knowledge, together with the lack of adequate performance measurements and strategic planning approaches, some areas (better-said institutions) were more affected and took longer to recover.

Ergo, in this section we will focus our attention on a general description of Romania, in terms of demography and demographic distribution, overall life expectancy and we will look at some official documents concerning innovation capacity and the analysis of the general system of performance management to see to what extend the main flaws, issues, and incoherencies are identified and addressed properly.

Afterward, each region will be briefly presented to offer context and a better understanding of their specific needs in terms of public services, overall quality of life, and general well-being.

The data used for this section was collected from The World Bank, Statista, Global Economy, Transparency International, "The Democracy Matrix" project developed by the University of Würzburg, Germany, and the TEMPO database, developed by The National Institute of Statistics (INS).

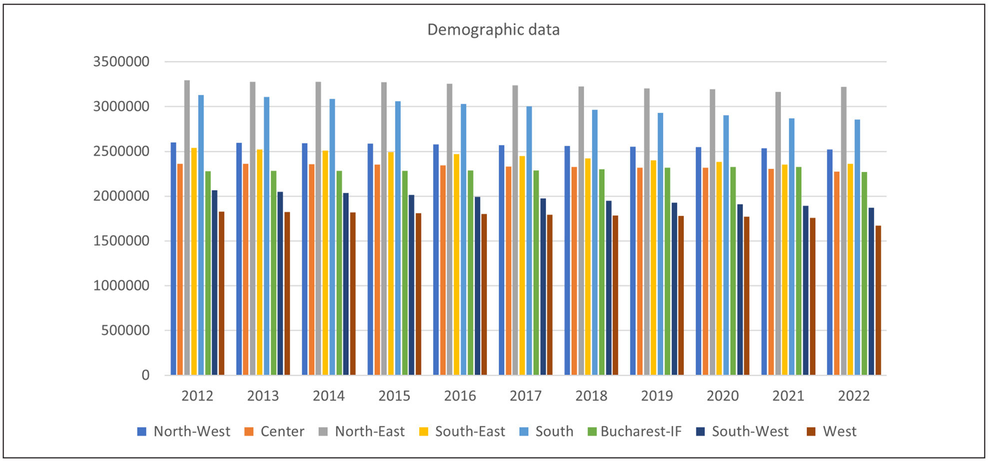


Figure 3. Demographic data. Source: TEMPO, INS.

In terms of the demographic evolution (better said, involution) at a national and regional level, we can see from the data extracted from INS (TEMPO database) that the population in 2012 was 20.095.996, with 1.053.541 more residents than in 2022 (where the total population registered at 19.042.455).

The region that suffered the most (as seen in Figure 3 above) is the Western one, immediately followed by the Southwestern and

Bucharest-Ilfov. The regions with the highest density of population are the Northeastern and Southern ones, noting that Bucharest municipality has the highest population density (in terms of county alone).

Table 12. Life expectancy. Source: TEMPO, INS

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
TOTAL	74.2	74.69	75.15	75.41	75.35	75.5	75.68	75.8	75.92	76.05	75.13
North-West	73.9	74.36	74.71	75.01	75.06	75.21	75.43	75.62	75.77	75.94	75.09
Center	74.7	75.16	75.63	75.94	75.91	76.01	76.18	76.28	76.41	76.54	75.7
North-East	73.75	74.41	74.91	75.09	74.99	75.15	75.35	75.36	75.35	75.64	75.01
South-East	73.88	74.24	74.68	74.91	74.9	75.11	75.13	75.14	75.19	75.26	74.81
South	73.69	74.21	74.7	74.96	74.97	75.1	75.2	75.34	75.4	75.4	74.4
Bucharest-IF	76.59	76.87	77.17	77.43	77.43	77.39	77.52	77.77	77.92	78.07	77.03
South-West	73.68	74.32	74.9	75.13	74.93	75.32	75.62	75.87	76.16	76.3	75.59
West	73.98	74.47	75.02	75.31	75.04	75.2	75.46	75.59	75.83	75.93	75.05

Furthermore, in 2021 Bucharest-Ilfov registered the highest life expectancy, immediately followed by the Center and Southwestern regions (with approximately 2 2-year difference), all being above the national life expectancy. On the other hand, in the Southern region, there was registered the lowest lifespan rate, of only 74.4 years old, alongside the Southeastern region with 74.81 years old, thus being a difference of almost three years between the highest and lowest average age registered at a national level.

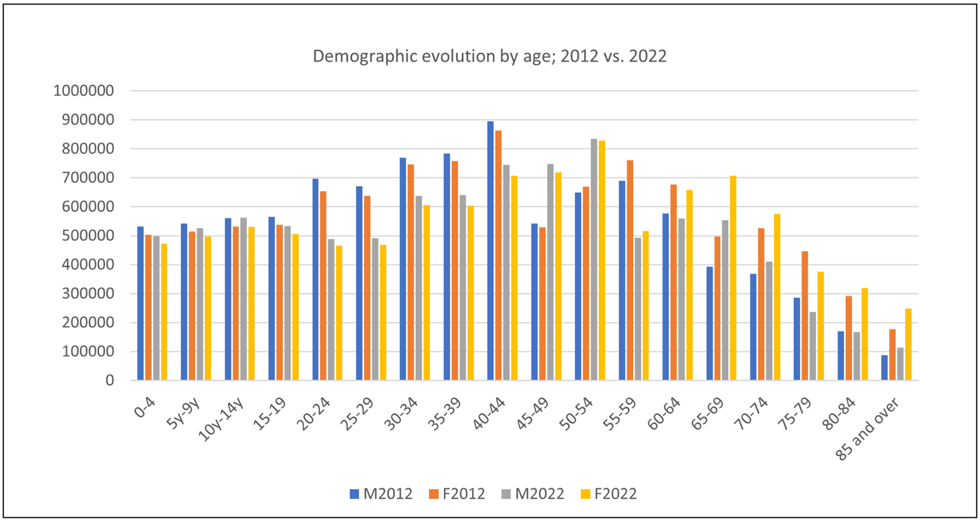


Figure 4. Demographic distribution by age and gender; 2012 vs. 2022. Source: TEMPO, INS

The negative natural growth at a national level is delaying the economic growth and development of the country because of a lack of qualified and able workforce, whilst simultaneously putting pressure on an already overworked healthcare system that doesn't have the necessary tools (nor management) to face the constant pressures that come from an aging population.

This is also presented in the figure above, where we can see that while in 2012, both genders were predominantly in the 20-44 age group, in 2022, their dominance is mainly in the 30-54 age group. With this, industries can't evolve, change, or adapt to the new, innovative technologies and European and global pressures.

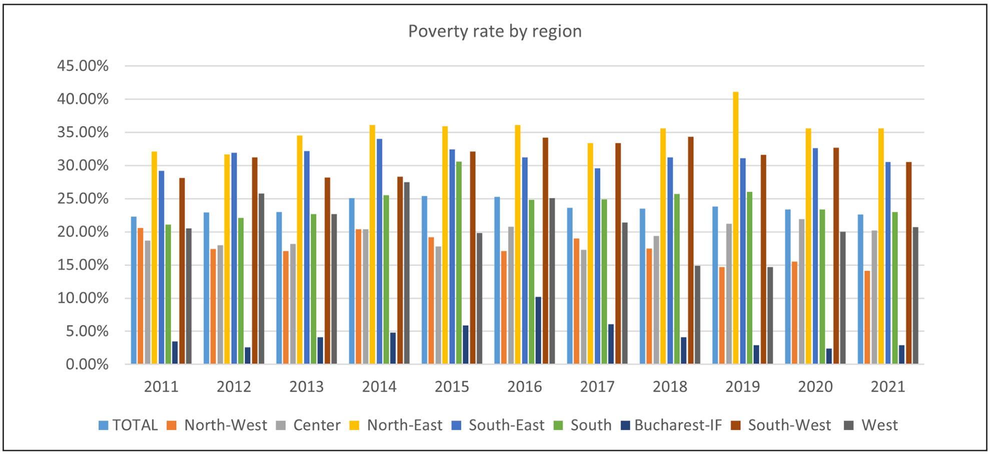


Figure 5. Relative poverty rate. Source: TEMPO, INS

The fact that the Northeastern region is the poorest in the country is already common knowledge, but what is interesting to note in this section is the discrepancies between the regions in the West of the country (which have a lower poverty rate) and those in the Eastern side (with a higher rate).

Here speculations can be thrown regarding the closeness to Europe on one side but at the end of the day, everything resumes to the ability of public authorities to invest, plan, and implement strategies in a way to reduce inter and extra-regional differences. But to do so, a strategical-oriented approach should be put into place, alongside clear performance measurements, clear goals, and open communication and collaboration with key actors from the region or community (academia, private entities, NGOs, entrepreneurs, and so on), to truly have the pulse of the situation and to establish together an action plan that will benefit all.

Performance Measurement Systems[5]

And this is available not only to the region mentioned but to all. And an issue that constantly inhibits the performance and flexibility levels of public institutions is, ironically, the performance measurement itself, because it does not follow a structured, objective, and quantifiable instrument, method, or tool to truly test the abilities and competencies of public servants. Thus, some may fall through the cracks and be responsible for the dissatisfaction of citizens or stakeholders. In an effort to identify the main issues and try to solve the problem, ANFP (2020) has conducted a thorough analysis of the performance measurement system of public servants, intending to identify the main shortcomings and possible solutions.

Henceforth, the evaluation of public servants (in the Romanian system at least) is merely based on a one to five scale, where one means "unsatisfying" and five is "very satisfying" or "very well", a scale that tries to encapsulate the entire yearly activity of a public servant, which, is most of the time, treated as a formality rather than a true evaluation and examination of their capabilities and knowledge in their field of work. This is the main issue that was also identified in ANFP's analysis of the performance measurement systems: the fact that neither the assessor nor the assessed takes this evaluation seriously, thus affecting in this way the performance and motivation level, because there is nothing challenging nor "inspirational to put in more effort". Concluding that these evaluations are merely used to promote employees, and not necessarily to motivate them to be more performant, and efficient or to use the feedback (because there is none) to improve their general work routine.

Another problem that has been highlighted is the improper and (sometimes) political appointment and evaluation of high public officials. Regardless of their official non-political status, it was noted that in most cases the person occupying this position is changed or temporarily occupies it, especially after the reshuffle of the government, thus creating instability in terms of continuity and mistrust among citizens. On the other hand, public managers have a very difficult and laborious evaluation process, regardless of the inability of the institution to actually organize this type of evaluation.

5 The information, references and plans of action were retrieved from ANFP's report on their 5th outcome regarding the analysis of the performance measurement systems: https://www.anfp.gov.ro/R/Doc/2021/Proiecte/SIPOCA%20136/Output-uri/5.1%20Performance%20Management%20analysis_revizuit%20RO,%20November%2005,%202020.pdf, pp. 50-81; 91-112.

On the one hand, this is understandable because they are hired on a contractual basis to improve the local public administration and adopt a more modern administrative reform, but on the other hand, this acceleration of progress and change will only create more confusion or just open new positions for the sake of it, without understanding the actual responsibilities of a public manager (and this we will see in the "Regional Context" section below, where we can see a long list of public managers, but not all of them have their activity reports uploaded on the official websites).

Furthermore, the fact that most public servants receive the "very well" rating (and if not, it is contested and usually they win), promotes only stagnation and the *status-quo*, resulting in a great challenge for public managers to try and reason or change it, especially when is more power in numbers than in common sense or in the need of change for the better (completing the equation with a lack of support from superiors, we have on our hands a recipe for mediocracy). The managers use this "strategy" to try and encourage their employees by giving them high scores regardless of their real performance, but in reality, they don't reward the high-achievers – those that truly deserve that ranking (resulting in a decrease in motivation), but in exchange they reward mediocracy and stagnation, creating challenges in taking administrative and strategic decisions because the evaluation doesn't reflect the reality of the situation.

Consequently, the results of the actual performance measurements are merely formal, and administrative, and don't reflect the reality of the situation, due to overestimation in one aspect and underestimation in another. In addition, the constant turnover of personnel (especially in the case of senior civil servants) provides neither stability nor the opportunity to develop or at least to be promoted. Not only that, but the temporary appointments and the constant change of the person occupying the position (a high public official) discredit the idea of a culture oriented to performance and strategic thinking, having a negative impact on productivity, morale, motivation, and the intention to compete for that position (knowing that it will not last long), thus creating unpredictable situations and indirectly promoting short-term strategies, visions or action plans (the very opposite of the idea of strategic planning and public management).

These issues are the result of a general misunderstanding of what "institutional strategic planning" really means, in the sense that the focus is still on processes rather than results. Both public servants in execution and management positions are still focused on "how" to do things and not on "why" to do things or "towards what outcome", ergo, promoting a general attitude of "evaluating activities, not performances" (ANFP, 2020, p. 58), in translation, evaluating the ability to tick boxes without a final, clear outcome or end (therefore an inability to simplify procedures nor increase their efficiency).

In other words, we can clearly see a lack of understanding of the outcome, and the purpose of their actions, thus the focus still remains on their daily activity and routine, obeying the *epistola legis* and not the *spiritus legis* as it was mainly intended – resulting in a delay in introducing performance measurement tools that can help individuals to concentrate more on results rather than on processes, thus improving the quality of their work, increasing motivation and even competition within the organization. As a result, the evaluation mechanisms that want to serve the purpose of increasing efficiency and having a more modern approach to work, are reduced to merely administrative tools that serve only the purpose of formality.

Continuing this train of thought, another issue is related to the typology of evaluation (qualitative and quantitative) and how it is used to measure performance. The most crucial observation that was showcased by ANFP (2020, pp. 60-61) was related to the high standardization of indicators in evaluation, indicators that do not always (or necessarily) focus on performance but on activities (again the attention is on processes, not on results), making it difficult to assess the complexity of some tasks (policy evaluation, increase the quality of interaction with citizens, solving qualitative, sensitive tasks or tackling sensitive topics), ergo, making it inefficient to measure or to determine the level of performance of particular areas of work. This, alongside the deficiency of clear feedback channels (or the lack of clear recommendations to improve the workflow or the strategic approach of activities), negatively contributes to the accountability of public servants regarding the quality of their work.

Their accountability is further diminished by the fact that there isn't a common understanding between institutions and managers of the detailed quantitative indicators, there is a minimized level of technology and digitalization used in the process of evaluation, nor does the evaluation process include open dialogues between the assessed and assessor. Hence, the information regarding the collaborations and interactions that the public servant had with other colleagues, citizens, or other institutions is left up to debate, meaning that sometimes crucial or at least relevant information (that might change the final score) is overseen.

Not to mention that the motivational strategies are merely extrinsic (financial remuneration), translated in bonuses or increases in salary, but most institutions and most public servants consider that rise *ad normam*, and not necessarily as an indicator for performance. This goes hand in hand with the lack of clear tools or mechanisms to sanction poor performance, the lack of strategies to detect the early stages of poor performance and to act upon them, the lack of feedback, and the lack (or insufficiency) of programs or courses that can help employees to understand their shortages and improve their efficiency, alongside a lack of intrinsic motivational approaches.

All these aspects are linked to the fact that public managers and public management approaches are still at an early stage of development and do not offer sufficient opportunities to respond to the specific needs of individuals or groups, which means that there is still a clear lack of initiative or know-how on how to initiate training programs that focus on outputs, on results, and not on processes and on how to tick boxes; because the latter contradicts the sole purpose of public management, which is to simplify procedures by focusing on results and on how to achieve them most efficiently. This is underscored by the lack of support or training for public managers to improve their skills as leaders or role models for their employees, thus increasing the critical need for a leader, someone to look up to in times of need; which is also counterproductive is the fact that those who are successful leaders (or role models) are either not rewarded, promoted or recognized for their efforts.

As a consequence of everything that was stated above regarding the shortages of performance management tools and instruments, there is a clear need for a more targeted approach in trying to solve those issues, in an effort to improve administrative capacity. Ergo, a first step would be to offer public managers more support in evaluating their employees and to train them in how to use a more strategic approach in identifying (in an early stage if possible) and approaching poor performance. To do so, it is recommended to use a diverse variety of information channels regarding their activity, to have an improved and more objective image about their actions. Secondly, ANFP (2020, pp. 91-92) recommends the self-assessment as a great tool for public servant to reflect on their activities and to have a better understanding of their weak and strong points, alongside their needs for improvement and development; what must go hand in hand with auto evaluation is the adaptation of the current indicators to match the specificity of departments, specializations and to create a common understanding for all of them.

This, together with open and constant communication with the superior and with other colleagues can form a sense of direction and can help them find new ways to address current challenges and enhance intrinsic motivation. To do the latter, managers can try to implement strategies to create an organizational climate that promotes safety, openness, transparency, which encourages communication. Simultaneously, constant feedback, recognition of efforts, promoting teamwork, and showing appreciation are other tactics that managers can use to enhance intrinsic motivation, combined with financial remuneration and public recognition to increase the quality of life at the workplace and motivation (extrinsic).

Ultimately, more continuous training opportunities are required, both for managers and executants to expand their knowledge in their field and to discover innovative ways to approach their work, constructive feedback and a role model are essential aspects in developing a performance-oriented culture, alongside encouragement in taking initiative, being more involved in the decision-making processes, being made accountable, communication and collaboration – there represent only a few of the recommendations and changes that are required, to increase administrative capacity and resilience through public management approaches.

As of now (2023), ANFP[6] is taking action in the current PNRR (Programul Național de Redresare și Reziliență - The National Recovery and Resilience Program) by being involved in the C14 component (Good Governance), reform no. 3 regarding performance measurement in public institutions. The purpose is to continue enhancing their level of efficiency by introducing an improved system of evaluation that can showcase the most relevant and crucial abilities that a public servant should have in their activity, emphasizing individual evaluation and recognizing the specificity of each area or department in which they carry out their responsibilities (setting in place a clear strategic planning of human resources).

Innovation in the Public Sector[7]

The lack of predictability, trust, transparency, limited involvement of the private sector, NGOs, or academia in innovation, as well as poor coordination between stakeholders and policymakers (European Commission, 2021, p. 112), are just some of the obstacles the country faces when trying to improve research, development, and innovation. The constant struggle

---

6 The operationalization of the competent staff from the public administration: https://www.anfp.gov.ro/continut/OPERATIONALIZAREA_CADRELOR_DE_COMPETENTA_DIN_ADMIN.

7 The information, references and plans of action were retrieved from OECD's report on the innovation capacity of public institutions in Romania: https://gov.ro/fisiere/pagini_fisiere/OCDE_-_Raportul_de_evaluare_a_capacitatii_de_inovare_a_administratiei_publice_din_Romania.pdf.

to develop synergies between different institutions and to act according to a quadruple helix model (a collaboration between public, private, and non-profit organizations, academia, and civil society) is becoming more and more evident and shows that urgent changes are needed to develop a clear action plan that can respond to the constantly changing demands and influences from the extra-institutional environment. This is especially true when it comes to cooperation between universities and public institutions, which is usually „hampered by a lack of awareness of the academic offer, as well as by bureaucracy and red tape” (European Commission, 2021, p. 141), thus narrowing the window of opportunity and inhibiting new, innovative ideas and initiatives, actively contributing to the scarcity of human resources in the field of innovation, research and development.

Besides the poor collaboration between stakeholders, the governance framework of the innovation capacity is also in a degraded state due to poor leadership, lack of coordination, know-how, and unclear performance monitor systems (as presented in the section above) for innovation and research. In addition, “institutional factors, such as clear roles and responsibilities and institutional resilience in the face of political change, can also play an important role in creating space for innovative efforts and ensuring continuity” (OECD, 2022, p. 45). But to ensure these aspects, clear monitoring and performance evaluation mechanisms must be implemented and used in a way that can foster resilience, critical thinking, and long-term visions (contradicting the classical idea of being “just an administrative act”, as was criticized in the aforementioned section).

Innovation potential exists in Romania’s public sector but to achieve it, there is a lot of work to be done, starting with leadership, the organizational culture and design, and ending with the core procedures and way of doing things, that sometimes get in the way because of their exaggerated focus on procedures, instead of results. It is common knowledge that leaders have a great impact on the cohesion (or lack of it) of the group, on the mentality, and on the success or failure of a project, program, or even of the organization overall. Especially in the public sector, the most difficult thing a leader can do is to take risks; because the risks taken in the public sector have a higher impact than those in the private one, this is why some public leaders miss out on certain windows of opportunity. But to forward innovation, some risks must be taken, and some hinder it due to their low levels of tolerance to adversity (indicating also low levels of resilience in case the unknown hits).

This inability to take risks can hinder in the long run the ability of the organization to learn, adapt, and understand the changes that are taking place around it, thus making it unable to perform at an expected rate because of its incapacity to change. In the case of Romania's public institution, we can state that innovation is not as present and defined as one with think, neither in strategies nor in day-to-day action, because there isn't a clear, common understanding of what "innovation" means and does to support the further development of public institutions and the communities in which they activate.

Understandably, "evaluation, impact assessment, and learning strategies are critical to developing and refining innovative approaches that meet stakeholders' needs and help organizations achieve their goals and priorities" (OECD, 2022, p. 84), but if there isn't enough expertise in the current government system to properly implement such mechanisms, they will become (as they already have) just another formality instead of supporting simplification and improving administrative capacity.

Through the OECD's analysis of the innovation capacity of the Romanian public sector, we have identified seven key action points that Romania should address if public officials truly want to transform the public administration reform into an innovative, sustainable, and resilient one. First, ambition isn't a direct driver of innovation, meaning that clear, concrete systems need to be put in place, not just the "desire" to be innovative. Furthermore, the lack of coherence in strategic planning and policy development can be counterproductive to performance because of the paradoxical approach of "reducing bureaucracy by creating more bureaucracy to reduce the bureaucracy that already exists".

Furthermore, for change to become the new *status quo*, it needs to be introduced, exercised, and set in place as a standard to do certain tasks, not as an exception. Secondly, "individuals want to innovate, to learn and to develop but there are times when the system itself is withholding them from innovating and from being performant" (OECD, 2022, p. 94), meaning that without the formalization of innovation and with little to none tolerance to risks or mistakes, individuals will most likely do a *sisiphic work* until they have no resources left and give up to the system. This is why flexibility, adaptability, and openness to change are key factors that should be exercised and introduced as a norm in public institutions.

Thirdly, change usually should take into account the entire organization and how the elements within said organization are interconnected, are influencing each other, and how strong their connection is, because changing one aspect of the organization without looking at the aforementioned can create a negative domino effect. Hence, a holistic approach is recommended to make sure that the organizational environment is developing as a whole (reducing in this way the potential discrepancies between departments in terms of resources), and this should also happen at a community level.

"The Romanian Public Service needs to attract, train and utilize the modern and multi-disciplinary skills that are needed to innovate" (OECD, 2022, p. 99), this is especially crucial in the context of having a very underdeveloped workforce in the research, development and innovation area. To nurture education, life-long learning, and training and to enhance performance, the ability to explore and experiment should also be promoted as an integrated part of improvement.

The fifth lesson is related to what was said in the previous section, but also at the beginning of this one, i.e., the cross-sectoral partnerships that are (in some cases) overlooked, thus losing a lot of potential and opportunities, simply because of the lack of experience of public institutions in this area. An open approach is needed to attract key stakeholders to actively participate in policymaking while supporting a more meaningful and effective strategy that promotes collaboration, transparency, openness, and engagement.

The sixth aspect is related to what the Romanian government usually lacks: trust, transparency, integrity, and accountability. In an effort to hinder and change these opinions, these perceptions of public institutions, clear actions and results are needed to demonstrate their ability to develop, implement, and evaluate policies that have a positive impact on the community and are specifically designed to improve its quality of life and general well-being.

Lastly, digitization and digitalization represent other key aspects that can influence innovation positively or negatively, and this should be one of the most important aspects that public institutions take into consideration when developing strategies in this sense. Especially because of the constant development of technology, the constant changes in the lives, needs, and demands of citizens, and because of external pressures (from EU members, non-EU members, and internationally). This is crucially why, "embracing digitalization is an important tool for innovating and is key to developing broader structures to ensure that digitalization leads to better outcomes" (OECD, 2022, p. 109), but at the same time, it is important to have a clear structure, a government that supports development and accepts change, that embraces technology and has clear systems put in place to make sure that its citizens are aware of each change, maintaining an open communication line and a high level of transparency and collaboration (both with citizens and stakeholders).

Ergo, in the continuation of this section, we will look at the following elements: *rule of law, voice and accountability, political stability, trust in institutions, government effectiveness, democracy, corruption,* and *resilience*.

In short, the idea of *Rechsstaat* from the nineteenth century refers to the importance of law over the state and the obedience of policies or actions to the law instated. This idea transitioned into what is known today as the "rule of law" and it means that no one is above the law, the law and the Constitution must be implemented and everyone must obey them.

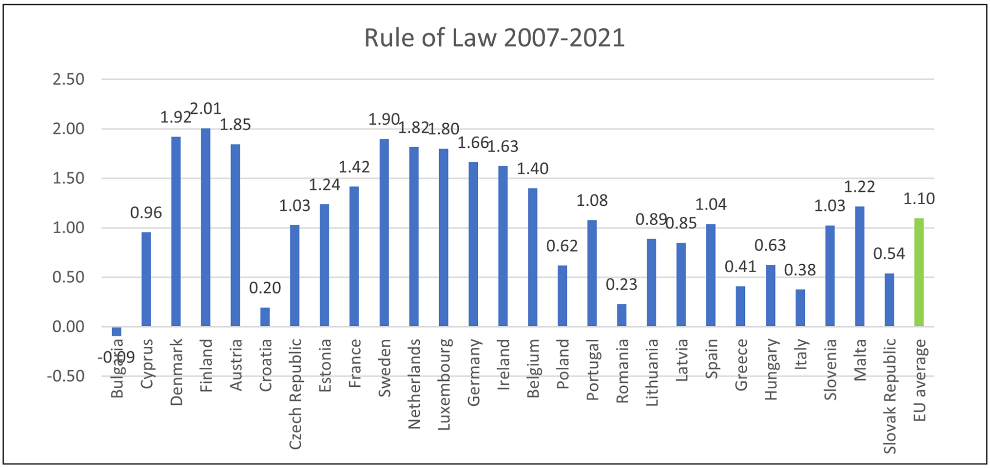


Figure 6. Rule of law at the EU level. Author's calculation. Source: The World Bank

Rule of law can be described as the ability of a state to offer equal access to justice, to reduce crime, violence, and inequalities, to reduce corruption, and to ensure that the fundamental rights of citizens are not tampered with not inhibited. Therefore, it is crucial for the development of a state (regardless if we talk about economic growth, quality of life, administrative capacity, etc.) to make sure that the laws that are promulgated are aligned with the needs of the citizens and the current (including future) issues that might come.

In Figure 6 we have the visual representation of the average estimate score of the EU members from the last 15 years, ranging from -2.5 to 2.5 and as we can see, Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania, and Italy have obtained the lowest scores in the selected period, thus hinting at the level of incoherence and inefficiency in the legislature and in its stability. In education alone, Romania changed approximately 19 times in 10-12 years the Minister of Education and the law constantly changed to suit the new agenda, thus creating a lack of predictability, and a lack of understanding regarding what outcome is desired and through what means it can be reached, ergo contributing to the increase in illiteracy and school abandonment.

At the same time, a low score in the rule of law can also suggest a high level of corruption, a lack of trust in public institutions, and in their abilities to face shocks and to properly handle change. Improvements were made, especially since 2007 when we barely became EU members (and scoring -0.11) and later in 2008 the economic crisis hit (-0.2), we managed somehow to face the new changes and adversities and increase our score in 2016, reaching 0.47, only to lower again in 2021 (0.41). During the pandemic is understandable for the scores to lower again, especially because of how the lock-down was managed, how inefficient the vaccination campaign was, and how we were left without a government at the peak of the pandemic (a censure motion was invoked), and how public officials organized the distribution of tablets to students with limited or no access to internet (especially in the rural areas). Henceforth, there is a lot of room for improvement, particularly on account of the fact that even at our peak, the highest score was below 1.

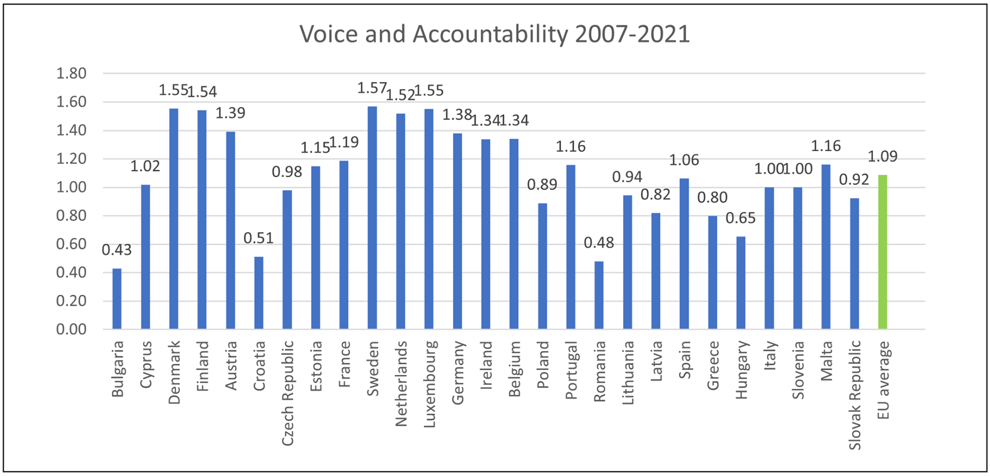


Figure 7. Voice and accountability at the EU level. Author's calculation. Source: The World Bank

"Voice and Accountability measure perceptions of freedom of expression, association, and the media, as well as the extent to which a country's citizens can participate in electing their government" (The World Bank; Andrianu *et al.*, 2021, p. 56). Therefore, it is important to understand to what extent citizen's needs and issues are taken into account and if their voices are heard, alongside the level of answerability to those demands (or the lack of it).

As in Figure 7 (Rule of Law), the scores range from -2.5 to 2.5, and the average has been taken over the period 2007-2021 to give a clearer picture of this driver of resilience (to ensure there is no bias, shorter periods have been taken into account and no major differences have been identified). Unsurprisingly, the Nordic Member States are at the top of the ranking, while Bulgaria (0.43), Croatia (0.51), Romania (0.48), are at the bottom with scores below 1, immediately followed by Hungary (0.65), Greece (0.80) and Latvia (0.82). This shows a lack of strategic thinking in the sense of not being able to have a long-term vision, not being able to take into account the real needs of citizens, and not having clear decision-making tools that embody concepts such as open cooperation, partnership, innovation, or adaptation to change.

After Romania entered the European Union, all its reforms were focused on absorbing funds, but as mentioned previously in other sections, alongside this one regarding the national context, the public official lacked vision, didn't have the proper knowledge to develop strategies nor to implement them or even to evaluate the final results; consequently, in 2012 and 2013 the country had the lowest scores (0.32, 0.31 respectively).

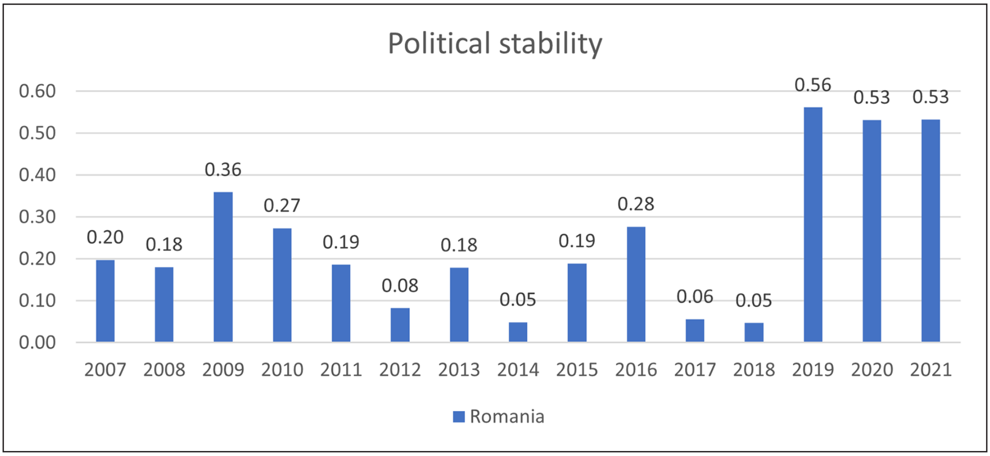


Figure 8. Political stability in Romania. Author's calculation. Source: The World Bank

Political Stability refers to the stability or instability of a political structure and analyzes the likelihood of protests, violence, or even terrorism that can lead to the overthrow of the government. Political instability can lead to frequent changes, lack of strategic thinking (i.e., short-term vision), lack of trust, and high levels of corruption. This is why we chose to present only Romania for this indicator because we wanted to show the year 2014, when the presidential elections took place, alongside protests in the second round of voting, in fear of a Social Democrat winning, and this can be seen in Figure 8 above, where we see a worrying score of 0.05 in political stability.

Another tense period was 2017-2018, when the streets were filled with anti-corruption protesters due to the Emergency Ordinance no. 13, which allowed political officials to commit acts of corruption under a certain amount of assets (which was quite high), thus enraging citizens (their voice was silenced and their trust in official figures was significantly lowered). Another aspect that really increased instability was the gendarmerie's attacks on citizens during these protests, which only increased the level of violence, anger, and mistrust.

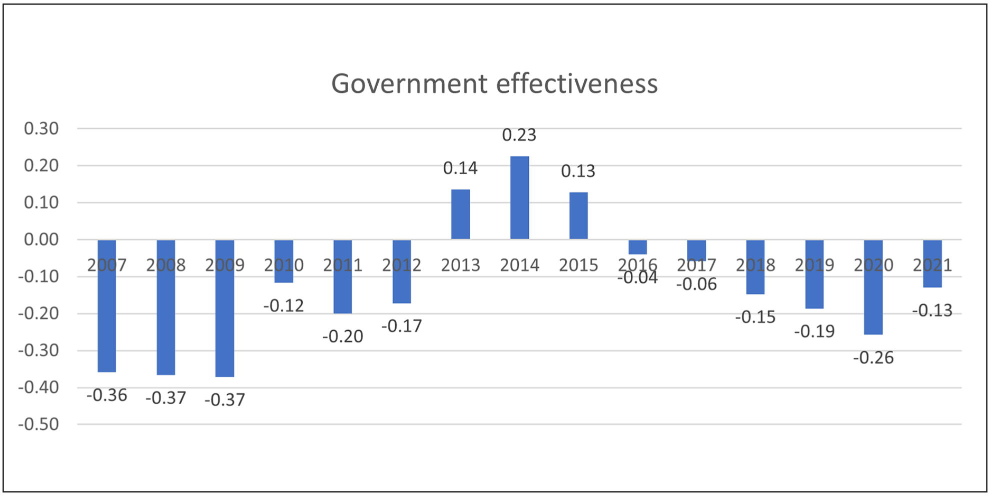


Figure 9. Government effectiveness in Romania Author's calculation. Source: The World Bank

Consequently, the effectiveness of government is also affected, having negative effects on the quality of policies the quality of public institutions, and their answerability capacity to the needs of citizens, without responding to political influences or pressures. In Figure 9 we can see the lack of performance and efficiency of the civil service in the beginning stage of our adhesion to the EU, and its continuous low score when the economic crisis hit in 2008.

Ergo, in terms of the resilience of governance systems and compared to other member states, Romania had indeed a high level of resistance to this shock, but at the same time, had a lower recovery speed (Andrianu *et al.*, 2021, p. 66). This is illustrated in Figure 10 and shows the trends and the evolution of resistance when the shock hit (in this case the shock taken into account is the economic crisis in 2008) and the recovery process (up to 2018). To do so, we looked at indicators such as "legal enforcement of contracts, respect of property rights, rule of law, corruption, voice and accountability and trust in the political system" to see to what extent there is potential to enhance and nurture the resilience level of institutions through public management approaches (encourage performance, creativity, adaptability, innovation, etc.). In the figure below, we can see that Denmark and Greece had the highest "recovery scores", whereas Malta, and Bulgaria had the lowest scores.

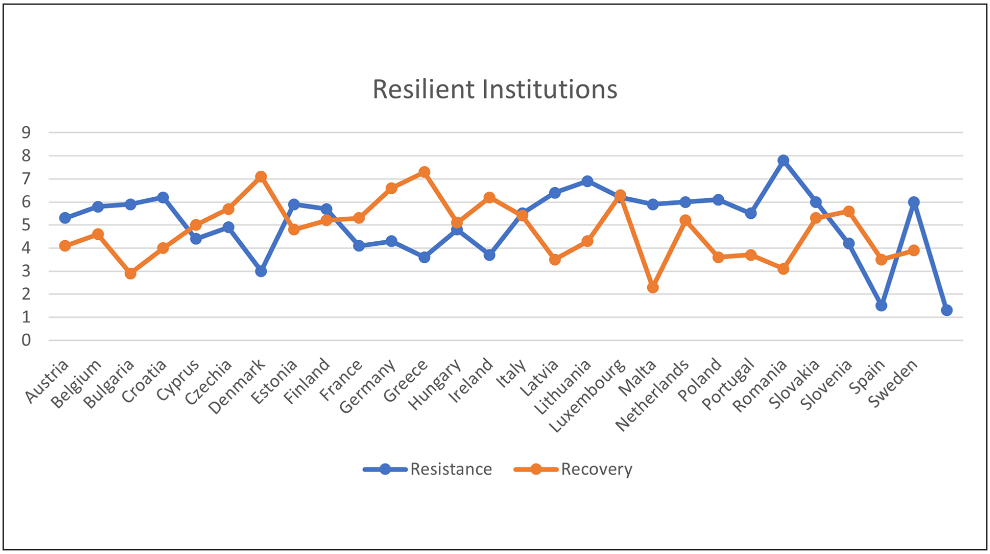


Figure 10. Resilient Institutions. Source: author's calculations

But all bad for good (or almost good) in terms of democracy, according to "The Democracy Matrix" Project conducted by the Chair of Comparative Politics and German Government at the University of Würzburg. Prof. Dr. Hans-Joachim Lauth and Lukas Lemm started this project in 2016 and it is still ongoing, analyzing democracy and its hybrid forms. As seen in Figure 11 below, we have a comparison between 2017 and 2021 and the study focuses on the following dimensions: political freedom, political equality, political control, and legal control. The scores look very appealing and reassuring that we are going in the right direction, regardless of the "deficient democracy" label that was attributed, due to the corruption scandals from 2017-2018.

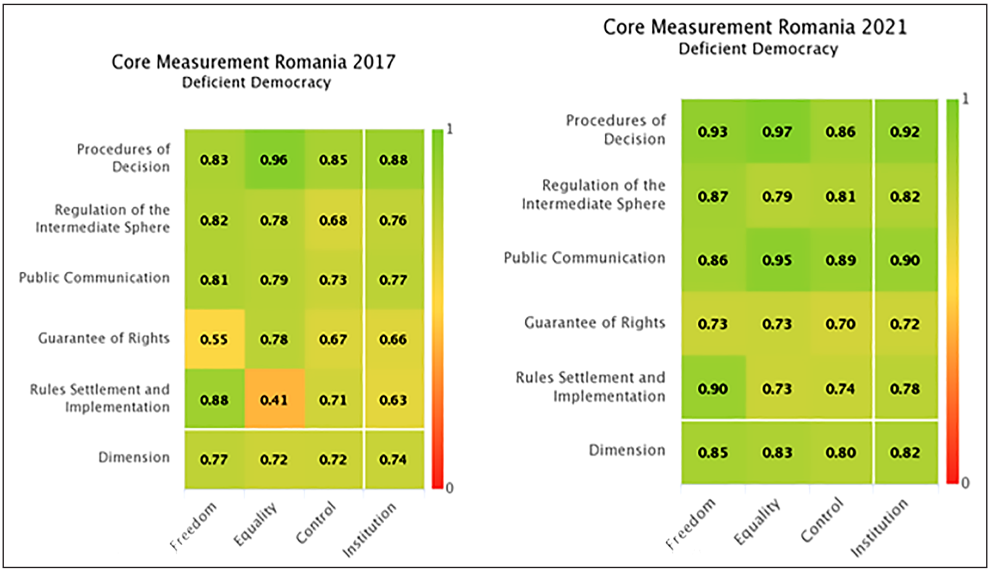


Figure 11. Democracy Measurements. Source: The Democracy Matrix Project

Therefore, "procedures of decision" has as indicators free election (0.83 in 2017; 0.93 in 2021), equality in vote (0.96 in 2017; 0.97 in 2021), and legality of vote (0.85 in 2017; 0.86 in 2021); similarly, the "regulation of the immediate sphere" looks at the freedom to move, to organize movements and as in the first dimension presented, major changes were not observed in the five-year period. On the other hand, a score improvement was felt in the "independence of the judiciary, legal security" (0.55) component, in freedom (linking to the issues with corruption from that period), and in the "equal treatment by Parliament and PA" (rules settlement and implementation).

Henceforth, this can also argue the results obtained by Romania between 2012-2022 in the Corruption Perception Index (as seen in Figure 12, below). Unsurprisingly, Romania alongside Bulgaria, Hungary, Greece, and Croatia are at the bottom of the ranking, being perceived as some of the most corrupt countries in the European Union, due to their level of poverty, lack of trust in public officials, and sometimes political instability. Alongside those arguments, we can also include the ineffective anti-corruption initiatives, limited accountability, and the reduced sentences of officeholders that don't constrain these types of behaviors. Moreover, the communistic legacy that Romania has, is another indicator of the high levels of perceived corruption.

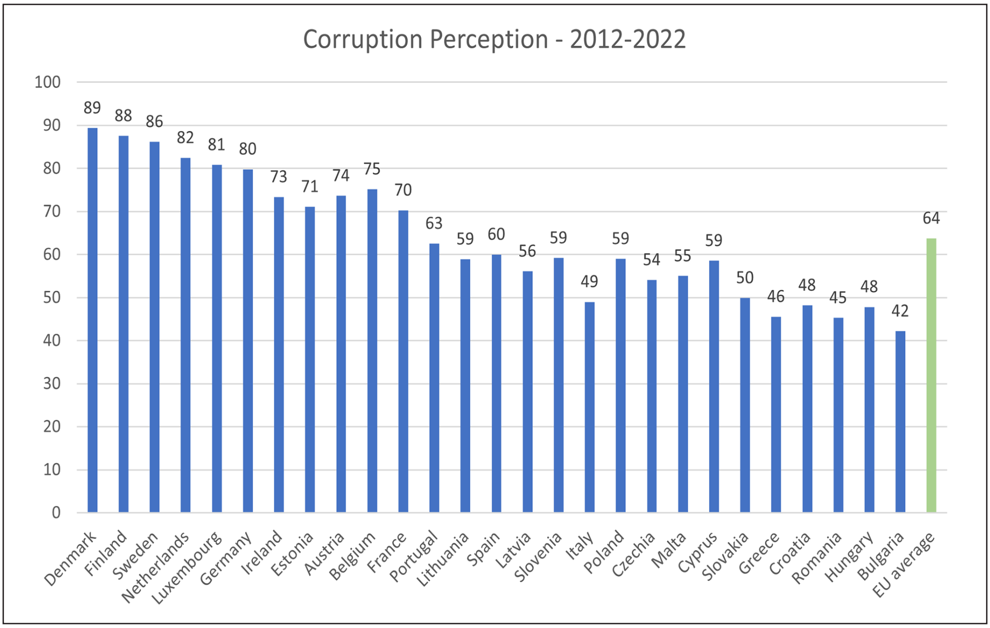


Figure 12. Corruption perception index. Author's calculation.
Source: Transparency International

Actions in this direction were taken, through the Anti-Corruption National Strategy 2021-2025 and by improving the old whistleblower law (abrogating Law no. 571/2004 and promulgating Law no. 361/2022), to encourage these types of initiatives and to better protect the identity and integrity of the individuals that want to report acts of corruption in their institutions. The initiative exists, but raising awareness regarding "small acts of corruption" must be done as well, considering how embedded this behavior is in our culture and way of thinking.

8.2. Regional Context and Administrative Reform

In this section, each region is briefly presented in order to understand the main differences in terms of development and to have a better idea of the strategic directions of each of them. The data used for this analysis come from the TEMPO database of INS, the regional development plans for the period 2021-2027, the regional innovation scoreboards developed by the European Commission for the period 2012-2020, and the European Social Progress Index for 2016 and 2020.

The aim is to provide a general understanding of the basic components of quality of life in order to see to what extent their regional development plan takes into account the main needs or shortcomings identified in the preliminary analysis. Obviously, the general well-being of a community is a reflection of its administrative capacity (or lack thereof) in terms of efficiency, clear identification of needs, level of development (technological, social, etc.), and also demographic aspects.

North-East Region

The North-East development region is formed out of the following territorial administrative units: Bacău, Botoșani, Iași, Neamț, Suceava, and Vaslui and it's bordered by Ukraine (North) and the Republic of Moldova (East).

Table 13. Demographic data N-E. Source: TEMPO, INS.

N-E	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Male	1627466	1623476	1625592	1624152	1616554	1609698	1602776	1593754	1588852	1572285	1588417
Female	1666738	1655322	1649833	1648058	1640180	1629875	1619956	1609046	1604038	1591180	1633402
Total	**3294204**	**3278798**	**3275425**	**3272210**	**3256734**	**3239573**	**3222732**	**3202800**	**3192890**	**3163465**	**3221819**

As seen in the table above, the population of the North-East region had a total population of 3.294.204 in 2012, out of which 1.627.466 were male and 1.666.738 female, and in the last 10 years, it only decreased by 72.385 citizens, reaching a total of 3.221.719 people by 2022. What can be observed in this trend is how constant the population change is and how little it fluctuates. In terms of age distribution and average age which is around 39.9-40.6 years old, we will see a recurring trend due to the aging of the population and heavy migration of youth to more developed regions, towards the development polls or usually to other European or non-European countries for studies and/or for better job opportunities.

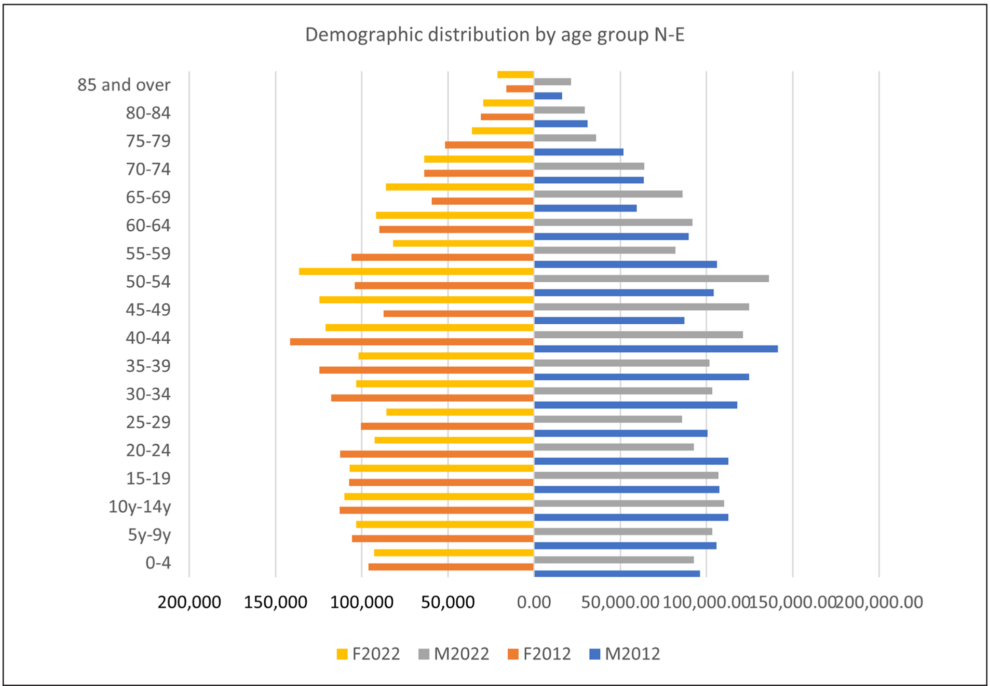


Figure 13. Demographic distribution by age and gender North-East region 2012 and 2022. Source: TEMPO, INS.

In terms of the demographic distribution based on age and gender, we can see that the changes between 2012 and 2022 are not that significant, the general age group being 30-50 years old, whilst the population under 25 years old is more reduced due to the negative trend in the natural growth. As presented by ADRNE (2023), in 2019 it registered (the natural growth) values of -2.2%, being the sixth year that the birth rate decreased (ADRNE, 2023, p. 69), thus being an active contributor (among other factors) to the depopulation of rural (mostly) and urban areas.

Table 14. Life expectancy North-East region. Source: TEMPO, INS.

North-East		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total	**Urban**	75.32	75.85	76.31	76.42	76.42	76.78	76.98	76.98	77.11	77.46	76.5
Male	**Urban**	71.89	72.58	73.1	73.19	73.06	73.28	73.52	73.51	73.61	73.97	73.02
Female	**Urban**	78.74	79.05	79.42	79.55	79.69	80.2	80.34	80.35	80.51	80.84	79.89
Total	**Rural**	72.39	73.14	73.68	73.92	73.77	73.77	73.95	73.92	73.77	74	73.65
Male	**Rural**	68.73	69.55	69.98	70.07	69.97	70.03	70.31	70.24	69.9	70.17	69.87
Female	**Rural**	**76.62**	**77.26**	**77.9**	**78.36**	**78.17**	**78.09**	**78.16**	**78.24**	**78.38**	**78.57**	**78.2**

With an average life expectancy of 75-80 years at a national level, we can see in the table above that there are some evident discrepancies between genders, in both urban and rural areas. The first observation is that the females in urban areas have the highest life expectancy, immediately being followed by those in the rural areas, whereas the males in the rural areas have the lowest life expectancy. According to the data processed from INS, there is a difference of (on average) 6.24 years between the genders in the urban area and an average of 7.31 years in the rural area.

Life expectancy, life expectancy at birth, and causes of death represent key factors to take into account when trying to determine the well-being and the quality of life of a community. This also can determine the administrative capacity and the ability of public institutions to intervene in key, sometimes crucial areas of a community, being able to have a strategic approach in their actions.

In ADRNE's development plan for 2021-2027 it is mentioned that "the main cause of death is diseases of the cardiovascular system, followed by tumors, digestive diseases, traumatic injuries, poisoning and diseases of the respiratory system" (ADRNE, 2023, p. 76), pointing out at the same time the fact that at EU's level, some of the aforementioned affections don't represent any more life-threatening factors. In this sense, the absence of doctors and medical infrastructure is highly felt and has extremely severe consequences on life longevity and the prosperity of the population.

Ergo, this factor alongside the lack of job opportunities, lack of education opportunities, the corruptibility of public institutions, lack of support, and so on, are active contributions to the migration and especially definitive migration of the population. In 2021, 24.72% of the N-E population alone (11.66% male and 13.07% female) migrated definitively (being the region with the highest percentage). This means that we have increased in the number of mono-parental families, children raised by relatives, or just decreased in the number of students, future students, and future workforce because the entire family moved abroad.

Thus, in terms of trends, this positive one of migration is a concerning factor that should be taken urgently into consideration and to offer opportunities for people to come back permanently. But to do so, public, private, and NGO entities should develop a clear and well-defined network to reduce the negative effects of this movement.

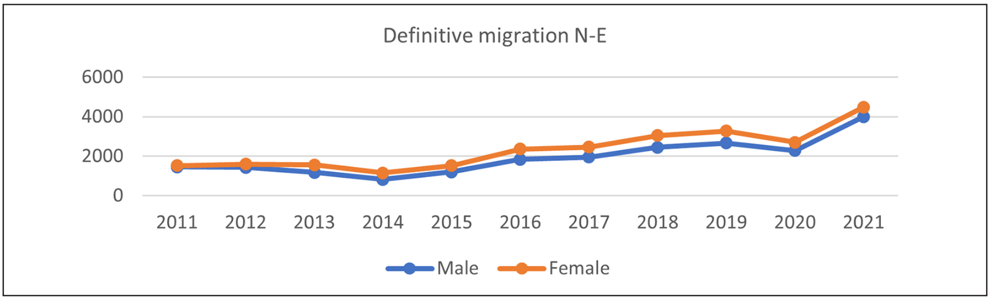


Figure 14. Definite migration N-E. Source: TEMPO, INS.

Alongside all mentioned above, the unemployment rate represents another crucial aspect that can determine the population to move and try to find more favorable circumstances for themselves. For example, in 2018 the highest rate in the region was in Vaslui (8.6%), followed by Bacău with 6%, and the lowest scores were registered in Botoșani (3.1%) and Iași (3%), thus having a total of 57.530 (at the end of 2018) registered unemployed people (ADRNE, 2023, p. 90).

Table 15. Relative poverty rate N-E %. Source: TEMPO, INS.

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total	22.30	22.90	23	25.10	25.40	25.30	23.60	23.50	23.80	23.40	22.60
N-E	32.10	31.70	34.50	36.10	35.90	36.10	33.40	35.60	41.10	35.60	35.60

It is common knowledge that the North-East region is the least developed one in Romania and it shows in the percentages presented above that the values are over the national ones. Hence, here we can include issues such as: the inability to pay bills (at all or on time), inability to have unexpected payments or financial urgencies (hospital, home repairs), insufficient funds for vacations, or places to spend one's free time, lack of opportunity to find better-paying jobs (ADRNE, 2023, p. 96).

High poverty rates, alongside early school dropout, can start a snowball effect (and it already did) of low quality of life (because of the poor public services as well) that can hardly be reversed (an aspect underlined in the 2012 innovation scoreboard developed by the European Commission, where Romania was classified as "modest-low" in 2007 and 2011, and "modest-medium" in 2009), especially when public and private entities don't collaborate.

Finally, in terms of school dropout (19.5% in 2018), the main reasons mentioned in the development plan were related to the lack of resources to perform the act of teaching and learning (material resources such as poorly supplied classrooms or schools, the poor financial situation of the families, lack of counseling, role models or lack of adequate intervention and support from public entities. Therefore, socioeconomic factors, environmental factors, and educational factors are just a few aspects that negatively impact the learning pathway of students (ADRNE, 2023, pp. 132-133). An uneducated population is a lost population, whose window of opportunity can be forever closed, thus continuing the vicious cycle of unsatisfactory public services, incompetent public authorities, and a low quality of life that will only further motivate the population (or the remaining of it) to emigrate.

Henceforth, **the main issues** identified in the North-East Regional Development Plan are hinting at the **lack of economic diversity** in terms of jobs, having **a reduced input in the national GDP** (10% in the 2013-2017 period), alongside the fact that it has the **lowest development capacity and competitive capacity in Romania**. Moreover, it is a modest innovator (at best) and has a modest level of performance when it comes to new technologies, creativity, entrepreneurship, and change capacity (ADRNE, 2023, pp. 252-253; p. 323).

Needless to say, all the above-mentioned problems were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which once again delayed the much-needed progress in economic growth, education, innovation, and technology (among others). This aspect is also mentioned in the problem analysis section of the Development Plan, together with the perceived inter- and extra-regional disparities (Vaslui and Botoșani are the poorest counties in the country), which create difficulties in becoming competitive from an innovative point of view (as mentioned in the Innovation Scoreboards and the Social Progress Index, both developed by the European Commission), especially due to the reduced contributions to the R&D sector, the inefficient economic capacity and also the lack of strategic vision on behalf of the public authorities (ADRNE, 2023, pp. 330-331).

Furthermore, in the last 5 years Romania (with all its regions) was situated at the back of the rank in terms of innovation, but regardless, at least in the North-East region (the rest will be presented in the following sections), we can see some improvements in some key areas, some which are relevant indicators in determining the level of institutional and governance resilience (personal rights, personal freedom and choice). The data gathered from the European Social Progress Index for the period 2016 and 2020 is presented and explained below:

Table 16. Social Progress Index[8] North-East region.
Source: European Commission, 2022.

Social Progress Index 2016 & 2020	N-E-2016	N-E-2020	Differences (2020-2016)
Opportunity	**44.88**	**33**	-11.88
Personal Rights	4.47	27	22.53
Personal Freedom and Choice	53.57	59.2	5.63
Tolerance Inclusion	50.52	34	-16.52
Advanced Education	35.69	18	-17.69
Foundation of wellbeing	**42.26**	**43.2**	0.94
Access to basic knowledge	49.6	43	-6.6
Access to information & communication	33.89	43.3	9.41
Health and wellness	46.91	41.7	-5.21
Environmental Quality	39.57	44.8	5.23
Basic human needs	**43.35**	**60.2**	16.85
Nutrition and medical care	42.63	57.5	14.87
Water and sanitation	31.68	47.3	15.62
Shelter	40.8	68.5	27.7
Personal security	60.72	68.7	7.98

The most significant improvement that we can notice is regarding *basic human needs*, with an increase of 16.85 points due to the significant values obtained in said category (especially for shelter which had the highest growth since 2016). In this indicator, we have the following aspects that are looked upon: nutrition and basic medical care (which looks at the mortality rate, infant mortality, lack of medical care, lack of food or other basic resources), water and sanitation (lack of drinkable water, lack of toilets, uncollected wastewater, sewage treatment), shelter (cost of housing, satisfaction with housing, overcrowding of the living space, lack of insolation) and safety (homicide, murder and general crime rate, nighttime safety, road, and traffic accidents or deaths caused by poor infrastructure, old buildings that represent a safety hazard for the population).

Foundation of well-being had a little improvement for access to information and communication (9.41) and environment quality (5.23) but the

[8] We used the European Social Progress Index: https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/information-sources/maps/social-progress/2020_en. The scoring range is from 0 to 100.

rest of the values decreased (thus scoring negatively). In this indicator we have access to basic education knowledge (enrolment rate, early school leaving, dropout rate, promotion of only lower levels of education)-here, all the variables were underperforming in the scoring from 2016, access to information and communication (online services or interaction with public institutions through internet, rate of individuals with internet at home– the first one is underperforming in this region), health and well-being (premature mortality from untreated, but treatable diseases, premature mortality from hearth diseases, general health, medical checkups, average life expectancy) and environmental quality (air pollution-pm10, air pollution-pm 2.5, air pollution-ozone, noise pollution, grime, smog, illegal landfills, or any other elements related to environmental protection that are taken care or not by the authorities).

The most worrying aspect on the other hand is *opportunity* because, regardless of the impressive result of personal rights, the other crucial elements (tolerance inclusion and access to advanced education) had a significant drop in score. Here must also take into account before anything else that the end of 2019 and the period 2020-2022 was marked by the pandemic where tensions were very high, schools were closed, lockdowns were imposed and all this happened with little to no adequate organization, coordination and preparation.

In this indicator (opportunity) we have personal rights (trust in the legal, and political system, in the police, in the responsiveness of public authorities, quality, and accountability of government services) – a surprisingly high score compared to 2016, personal freedom and choice (freedom over life choices, teenage pregnancy, youth dropouts, employment rate, corruption), tolerance and inclusion (gender gap, the impartiality of government services, tolerance and protection of vulnerable groups, tolerance for immigrants, for minorities, for homosexuals, community safety gap)-here, unfortunately, there is still to this day a very low level of tolerance for the LGBTQIA+ community, access to advanced education (tertiary education attainment, tertiary enrolment, lifelong learning).

In terms of public managers, Bacău has six public administrators (two in Bacău County, Sascut, Mănăstirea Casin, Hemeius and Caiuti), Botoșani has three (Botoșani and in the commune Ungureni and Răchiți), Iași has also three (Pașcani city and in the communes Lețcani and Prisacani), Neamț on the other hand has seven public managers (in the cities Piatra Neamț, Roman, Bicaz, Târgu Neamț and in the communes Tibucani, Alexandru cel Bun and Romani), Suceava has only one in the county and Vaslui has none.

Overall, the score is average but what should be addressed is the fact that there is no regional strategy to enhance and strengthen administrative capacity or to develop performance measurement tools that can be put in place to increase efficiency.

South-East Region

The South-East development region is formed out of the following territorial administrative units: Brăila, Buzău, Constanța, Galați, Tulcea, and Vrancea, and has an opening at the Black Sea, thus, already a very important key strategic factor-having commercial harbors. The region is also bordered in the East with Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova and with Bulgaria in the South.

Table 17. Demographic data S-E. Source: TEMPO, INS.

S-E	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Male	1242933	1237292	1232938	1223755	1211802	1201409	1189854	1178019	1168807	1152166	1148012
Female	1296016	1286062	1276865	1268827	1258066	1245896	1233205	1220383	1212500	1199470	1213612
Total	2538949	2523354	2509803	2492582	2469868	2447305	2423059	2398402	2381307	2351636	2361624

The region's population represents 12.4% out of the entire population of Romania, being registered in 2022, 2.361.624 residents, notably with 177.325 less than in 2012, meaning a higher decrease in residents than in the N-E region; here the difference might seem considerable but we must be aware of the fact that the previous region has the highest density in the population at a national level. The negative fluctuation trend is similar, slowly but steadily decreasing which is expected due to the general negative natural growth of the population, as a result of a decrease in the birth rate, mobility, and migration (national or international).

In terms of average age, it increased by two years in the last 9 years (41.3 years old was the average age in 2012 and in 2021 was 43.2), and in 2021 the average age of females was 44.9 and for males was 41.4 years old.

Table 18. Life expectancy in South-East region. Source: TEMPO, INS.

South-East		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Urban	**Male**	71.57	71.83	**72.35**	**72.64**	**72.59**	**72.77**	**72.87**	**73.08**	**73.1**	73.05	72.33
Urban	**Female**	78.46	78.79	**79.25**	**79.7**	**79.65**	**79.85**	**79.94**	**79.83**	**80.27**	80.63	79.83
Rural	**Male**	68.36	69.02	**69.35**	**69.33**	**69.46**	**69.72**	**69.47**	**69.36**	**69.22**	69.14	69.2
Rural	**Female**	76.8	77.07	**77.62**	**77.86**	**77.71**	**77.9**	**78.1**	**78.2**	**78.21**	78.28	77.99

In 2021 the life expectancy didn't surpass 80 years old, but as expected females in the urban area have on average the longest life expectancy and males in the rural areas have the shortest one. This is understandable taking into consideration the fact that on average women have a longer life expectancy and men usually are in hands-on jobs that can result in long-lasting injuries, death, or other diseases, especially in rural areas where health services are not so developed or spread around but usually situated in the residence commune, meaning that the access to them is more difficult or simply there is not the culture or habit to go to a clinic or hospital when signs of illness appear.

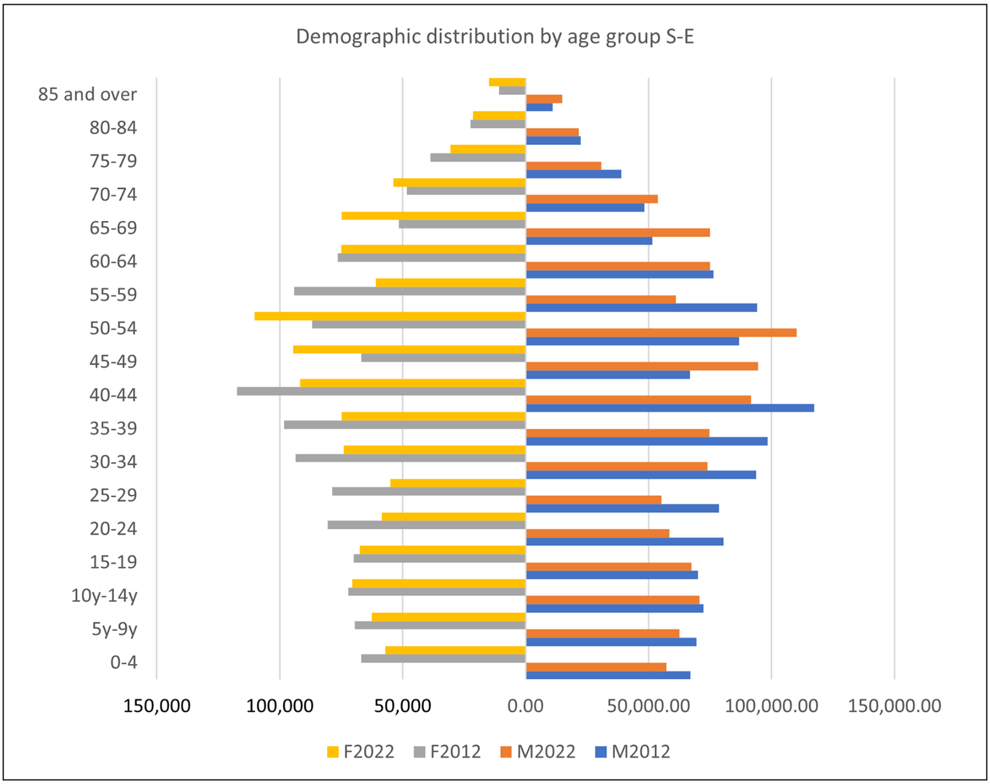


Figure 15. Demographic distribution by age and gender South-East region 2012 and 2022. Source: TEMPO, INS.

One aspect that can be noted from Figure 15 is the obvious shift of age, from 40-44 years old in 2012 (both genders) to 50-54 years old in 2022, thus maintaining the narrative of the aging population due to the elements previously mentioned. This aspect represents a clear influence on the economic power of the region but also at a national level because industries or areas of interest can suffer alteration or even become obsolete because the workforce is reducing yearly; especially in Constanța can represent a tremendous issue because the harbor is in danger of not being able to be exploited to its full economic potential (both commercial and in tourism).

As stated in Vrancea[9]'s region profile, "**the economic activity of the region in recent years** (2015) **is characterized by the decline of industrial branches, generating the liquidation and/or restructuring of large enterprises** (with a negative impact on unemployment) and the establishment of small and medium enterprises" (p. 23), henceforth there is an urgent need of a proper plan of action that can revitalize the region due to its immense potential.

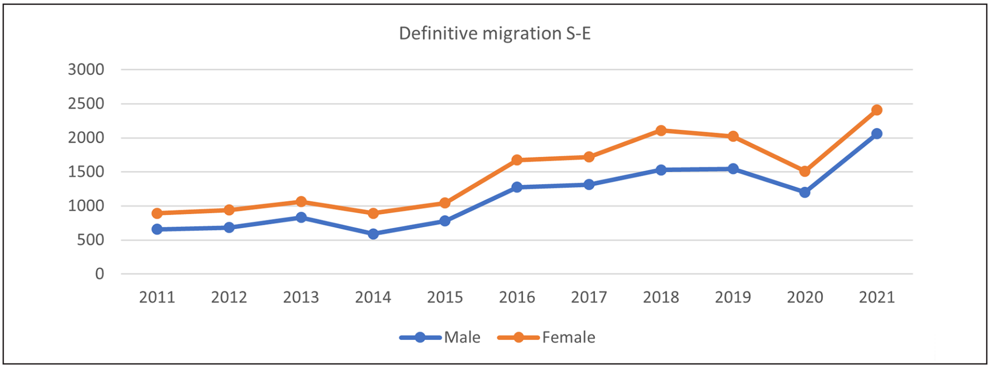


Figure 16. Definite migration S-E. Source: TEMPO, INS.

The "dying art of industries" and the lack of job opportunities are felt and observed in the tendency of the population to migrate, especially (as seen in Figure 16) after the mobility restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic were lifted. One concerning aspect on the other hand is the fact that Galați, which is a university town has the highest rate of unemployment (29.9%) registered in 2021, immediately followed by Buzău (22.4%) and Constanța (17,8%).

Table 19. Relative poverty rate S-E %. Source: TEMPO, INS.

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Nationwal lvl	22.30	22.90	23	25.10	25.40	25.30	23.60	23.50	23.80	23.40	22.60
South-East	29.20	31.90	32.20	34	32.40	31.20	29.60	31.20	31.10	32.60	30.50

9 Consiliul Județean Vrancea (CJ Vrancea), 'Profilul socio-economical Regiunii Sud-Est': https://cjvrancea.ro/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Profilul-socio-economic-al-Regiunii-Sud-Est.pdf

With a **high level of unemployment and a constant trend of migration**, it is unfortunately understandable why the Southeast region is the second poorest region, especially because of the low incomes and the inability to develop an efficient tourism infrastructure (in Galați and Constanța) that can support a smart way of using the resources, thus there is a clear need but also an endless development opportunity based on the Black Sea and the Danube alone, but the issue is related to the low fund-absorption, distribution, and capacity of the local authorities, alongside the need of a development strategy (which will be briefly presented below) that can address and target these issues. And this urgency of change is accelerated by the port of Constanța and its extremely important position as a juncture between EU and Romania in terms of imports and exports alongside oil exploitation (which again, a very well-thought strategy is required to shield the industry from price fluctuations-as it happened in 2022 when the war in Ukraine started) and tourism (because the infrastructure is very outdated, it can lose competition in the face of Bulgaria and/or Turkey). The importance here is also doubled by the fact that Constanța is a growth pole and a key player for the region.

Table 20. Social Progress Index South-East region.
Source: European Commission, 2016; 2020.

Social Progress Index 2016 & 2020	S-E-2016	S-E-2020	Differences (2020-2016)
Opportunity	**39.92**	**31**	-8.92
Personal Rights	39.87	24.6	-15.27
Personal Freedom and Choice	42.96	53	10.04
Tolerance Inclusion	46.12	30.7	-15.42
Advanced Education	31.51	20.1	-11.41
Foundation of wellbeing	**45.5**	**42.8**	-2.7
Access to basic knowledge	52.95	42.6	-10.35
Access to information and communication	38.56	47.4	8.84
Health and wellness	42.55	39.7	-2.85
Environmental Quality	48.6	41.4	-7.2
Basic human needs	**43.34**	**59.2**	15.86
Nutrition and medical care	37.82	50.6	12.78
Water and sanitation	33.16	53.3	20.14
Shelter	40.92	68.1	27.18
Personal security	64.46	65.8	1.34

Compared to the previous region, here we see a lot more issues in terms of the social progress index, especially in *opportunity* where we have a general decrease of almost nine points, but more upsetting is the quite significant decrease for personal rights and tolerance. Instead of promoting social inclusion and protecting the rights of vulnerable people, we see quite the opposite. In this indicator we can observe that the trust in the public institution has lowered considerably, being an indicative of their administrative capacity and institutional resilience at the same time.

Ergo, in the Southeast Regional Operational Program 2021-2027, **the main focus is on increasing their economic capacity and competition**, to increase the **quality of life and infrastructure**, to **improve public services** and to develop in a sustainable way, embracing at the same time the **technological advancement**. To achieve this general objective, they focused on seven regional strategic objectives with the purpose of reducing inter and extra regional discrepancies and to accelerate economic growth and economic innovation.

The first objective is to energize the entrepreneurial environment through research, development and innovation, enhancing at the same time the collaboration between the research and private sector and to promote partnerships and open discussions between entities from different fields, creating networks. The second objective is focused on creating smart cities, where, through digitization and digitalization citizens can be more active and involved in their community and can have a better communication with public institutions. While the approach is admirable and shows openness to progress, the seventh strategic objective, related to administrative capacity is not as well developed as it should be in order to facilitate as final output more performant public servants.

Thirdly, a cleaner environment and adaptation to climate change by reducing carbon emissions and transitioning to green energy and by doing so, the infrastructure (fourth objective) must also be adapted, improved and designed in a way to bring added-value to the region.

The fifth strategic objective wants to improve the quality of the educational process and at the same time, to tackle the issue with overcrowding classes (as mentioned in the Regional Operational Program, 10% of schools are in this situation, Constanța, Galați, Buzău and Tulcea being the most exposed to this phenomenon that can inhibit and discourage students to continue going to school).

Lastly, of course, tourism and the valuable resources that the Danube can bring if the infrastructure is smartly done and also, maintained because here usually is the biggest issue-something is being implemented, but it is not evaluated (properly) and then, it is forgotten and maintenance or sustainability is overlooked, resulting in a waste of resources and a lack of performance or capacity (ADRSE, 2020, pp. 2-10).

Another way to show improvement and the "usage" of public management approaches, is the presence of public managers in city halls to help with the coordination of tasks and to support the attraction of funds in the community. Hence, Constanța has five public managers (Mircea Vodă commune, Harșova city, Eforie, Băneasa and Medgidia), Galați has seven (Galați, Tg. Bujor and in the communes Ivești, Mastacani, Schela and Scinteiesti) and Vrancea has three (Odobești and in the communes Slobozia-Bradului and Vinatori). Buzău, Brăila and Tulcea on the other hand don't have public managers (Buzău had until 30.12.2021 but the person occupying the position was named state secretary in the Ministry of Development, Public Works and Administration).

South Muntenia Region

The Southern Muntenia Region is bordered only by Bulgaria in the southern part of the country and the region, being separated by the Danube River, and it is composed of seven counties: Argeş, Călăraşi, Dâmboviţa, Giurgiu, Ialomiţa, Prahova and Teleorman, representing 14.5% of the total territory of Romania (ADRS-Muntenia, 2022, p. 8).

Its strategic position around the capital Bucharest can be a pillar of development and connection with other key aspects, but at the same time it can be an obstacle in itself, being overshadowed by it. On the other hand, the location on the Danube (in Călărași, Giurgiu and Teleorman) represents an extremely important factor in terms of tourism, but also trade and transport, but the problem here is mainly related to the poorly developed infrastructure (ADRSMuntenia, 2022, p. 10) and the lack of strategic vision in exploiting and valorizing the potential of this competitive advantage.

Table 21. Demographic data S Muntenia. Source: TEMPO, INS.

S	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Male	1526380	1520485	1513063	1501775	1487237	1475848	1458649	1443476	1430818	1413020	1390907
Female	1602419	1587665	1572660	1559984	1544318	1527485	1506766	1487210	1472393	1455974	1463902
Total	3128799	3108150	3085723	3061759	3031555	3003333	2965415	2930686	2903211	2868994	2854809

In the table above we can see the population movement and evolution in the last ten years, meaning that if in 2012 the total population of the region was of 3.128.799 residents (1.526.380 male and 1.602.419 female), in 2022 the population declined with 273.990 people due to the negative natural growth and migration, having significantly declined the density of the population.

Table 22. Demographic evolution 2012-2018 by county. Source: ADRSMuntenia, 2022.

County10	Negative evolution
Argeș	-26064
Călărași	-18614
Dâmbovița	-22882
Giurgiu	-13857
Ialomița	-14600
Prahova	-37332
Teleorman	-37278

In the table above we can see that Prahova County had suffered the most in this process, immediately being followed by Teleorman, the effects being visible not only in the rural areas where it is more obvious due to the lack of services, infrastructure, job opportunities or support from authorities to return to the commune or village, but also in the urban area it's starting to negatively impact industries, resulting in a lack of workforce.

The average age in the region is around 42.5-43.7 years old (41.8 years old in men and 44.8-45 years old in females) and in the table below we can see that in terms of life expectancy the trend is constant in the sense of gender and area of living. In the urban area, the average life expectancy in 2021 was 75.88 years old and in the rural area was 73.55 years old (again, lack of near medical facilities, proper equipment, specialized doctors, etc.). Unfortunately, the increase in life expectancy in the period presented (2011-2021) was of only 0.81 years in the urban area and 0.64 years in the rural area.

Table 23. Life expectancy South Muntenia region. Source: TEMPO, INS.

South Muntenia		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total	**Urban**	75.14	75.73	76.12	76.34	76.33	76.39	76.59	76.78	76.96	77.12	75.95
Male	**Urban**	71.59	72.39	72.84	72.94	73.1	73.27	73.29	73.35	73.79	73.79	72.46

[10] ADRSMuntenia's website: https://www.adrmuntenia.ro/date-demografice/static/1433

South Muntenia		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Female	**Urban**	78.64	78.95	79.27	79.6	79.43	79.35	79.72	80.04	79.94	80.25	**79.3**
Total	**Total**	72.59	73.1	73.67	73.95	73.94	74.13	74.17	74.25	74.21	74.13	73.23
Male	**Rural**	68.68	69.37	70.1	70.29	70.17	70.38	70.45	70.47	70.47	70.32	69.47
Female	**Rural**	76.96	77.2	77.54	77.96	78.1	78.28	78.32	78.49	78.43	78.49	77.62

The medical system and its quality represent a key determinant in the quality of life of a person and its longevity as well. From the development plan for the South Muntenia region we can gather the fact that, at least in men with ages between 20 and 59 years old, the main causes of death were hearth diseases and the irregular function of the circulatory system, alongside "stress, lack of job security, depression generated by losing it" (ADRSMuntenia, 2022, p. 105) and other "modern" diseases that are acting as a silent killer, specially stress because it can provoke "deaths caused by heart disease, ulcer, cirrhosis, psychosis alcoholism, suicides, accidents and homicide" (ADRSMuntenia, 2022, p. 105).

These elements are a direct key factor that can influence the quality of life, and this is an alarm signal for public authorities to take action and introduce improvements in key areas such as health and education systems, as well as social services - special support to help citizens find jobs and reduce social exclusion and extreme poverty.

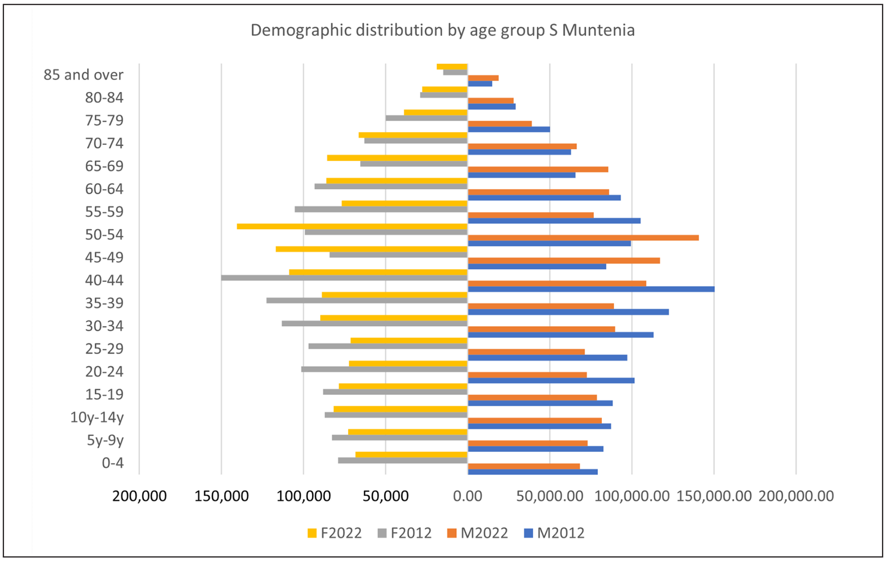


Figure 17. Demographic distribution by age and gender South Muntenia region 2012 and 2022. Source: TEMPO, INS.

The pressure on the medical system will only worsen if action isn't taken in time, especially because there is a severe **lack of medical professionals in the region** (the lowest number of doctors in the country) and a lack of polyclinics in the entire South Muntenia (ADRSMuntenia, 2022, p. 380), because of the aging trend of the population. As we can see, if in 2012 the general age group was 40-44, in 2022 grew to 50-54 in both genders.

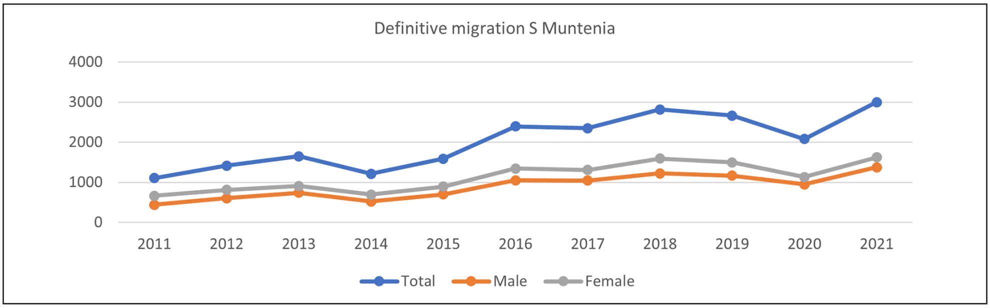


Figure 18. Definite migration S Muntenia. Source: TEMPO, INS.

Migration has a positive trend here as well and this factor can be a determinant on the administrative capacity (or lack of it) to create new opportunities for people, especially young adults to remain in the region.

This factor can also be a determinant in the educational levels which are quite low in the region, with **a general tendency of school dropout** in all levels of education, low levels of education in rural areas, low levels of involvement in long-life learning programs, which can lead, and it's currently leading to a low employment rate (ADRSMuntenia, 2022, p. 376), an increase in the poverty rate (as seen in Table 24 below), which cumulated with the low quality of services and the inability of authorities to value the natural resources and their competitive advantages, lead to a poor quality of life.

Table 24. Relative poverty rate S Muntenia %. Source: TEMPO, INS.

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total	22.30	22.90	23	25.10	25.40	25.30	23.60	23.50	23.80	23.40	22.60
South	21.10	22.10	22.70	25.50	30.60	24.80	24.90	25.70	26	23.40	23

"The standard of living represents the set of economic and non-economic, social, cultural and political that society creates for its members, but also the capacity, the ability of individuals to have their needs met as best as possible with their income" (ADRSMuntenia, 2022, p. 125).

We can see that the poverty rate reached its peak in 2015 with a worrying percentage of 30.60%, being constantly on the fourth place in the level of poverty at the national level (the region with the highest poverty rate is the Northeast, and on a semi-equal but fluctuating position are the Southeast and Southwest).

In 2018, South-East and South Muntenia regions had the highest percentage (17%) in the extreme poverty rate, and in the case of the latter, the most affected counties were Călărași, Giurgiu, Ialomița and Teleorman (in the southern part of the region) due to their low level of economic innovation and lack of proper resources to develop the infrastructure surrounding the Danube.

This factor, relative and extreme poverty could be exponentially reduced if education and educational programs were injected in the community, to reduce school dropout and to offer opportunities for adults to learn new skills and find better jobs or even become entrepreneurs.

Another aspect that needs to be mentioned is the fact that mostly the elderly generation (but not exclusively) is on the brink of poverty and social exclusion due to insufficient resources for social services and for the protection of vulnerable groups, henceforth work must be done on the social aspect in all areas of interest (health, education, workforce, social services, integration of vulnerable groups, repopulation of the rural area, restarting the industry, etc.).

Table 25. Social Progress Index South Muntenia region.
Source: European Commission, 2016; 2020

Social Progress Index 2016 & 2020	S-2016	S-2020	Differences (2020-2016)
Opportunity	38.36	32	-6.36
Personal Rights	46.82	29.9	-16.92
Personal Freedom and Choice	44.21	56.9	12.69
Tolerance Inclusion	40.84	34.8	-6.04
Advanced Education	23.92	13.9	-10.02
Foundation of wellbeing	43.31	43.8	0.49
Access to basic knowledge	62.56	49.8	-12.76
Access to information and communication	34.89	47.3	12.41
Health and wellness	47.27	42.1	-5.17
Environmental Quality	31.72	36.5	4.78
Basic human needs	43.91	57	13.09
Nutrition and medical care	47.47	57.2	9.73
Water and sanitation	24.22	32.9	8.68
Shelter	43.39	70.8	27.41
Personal security	65.75	71.9	6.15

Compared to the other two regions that were previously analyzed, here we can see a rather positive image, in terms of improving in some areas, but not significantly enough taking into account that the scoring is from 0 to 100. Again, the same issue with the lack of trust in the political system, in public institutions and in the general competency and effectiveness of public authorities (personal rights dropped by 16.92 points from 2016 to 2020). The other very concerning aspect is related to the access to basic knowledge (-12.76) and advanced education (-10.02), meaning to secondary and tertiary school, thus confirming unfortunately the high rate in dropouts in the region.

To try and tackle the aforementioned and briefly presented issues, the development strategy (2021-2027) has the mission to support "the transformation of the region into an equitable and inclusive one, with a modern economy, dynamic and efficient in terms of resource usage, with a focus on green and clean energy sources" (ADRSMuntenia, 2022, p. 388). To do so, they have set up seven key strategic regional objectives, focused on sustainable development through mobility and accessibility, to reduce the intra and extra regional development differences, to increase economic growth through innovation, R&D and to enhance SMEs competitiveness, ease and increase access to education and to educational programs, include the rural areas in agricultural programs and the final objective is to have a greater attention and intervention in environment protection and preservation (ADRSMuntenia, 2022, p. 388).

All these aspects are in a grave need to be taken care of and to be tacked in an integrated approach, at a regional level, to avoid creating more damage than good. But at the same time, there is no clear mention nor presentation of the local administration and their performance levels, nor the intention of proposing measures or tools to increase efficiency or to improve the collaboration between citizens and public institutions, between public and private entities nor just to improve the collaboration and data exchange between public institutions and this is raising some questions in this regard.

Finally, in terms of public managers in the region, here we had a great surprise, in the sense that there are quite a lot of individuals occupying this position, as follows: Argeș has two public managers (in Budeasa and Rucăr communes), Dâmbovița has four (in Târgoviște, Titu and in the communes Vulcana-Pandele and Vulcana Băi), Giurgiu also has four (two in Giurgiu, one in Băneasa commune and one in Colibași commune), Prahova has five (Ploiești, Mizil and in the communes Măgurele, Drajna and Lipănești) and Teleorman has a surprising number of 23 public managers (in Videle city, Turnu Măgurele municipality, Alexandria municipality, Alexandria County and in the communes Balaci, Botoroaga, Bujoru, Buzescu, Călinești, Ciolănești, Conteşti, Drăgănești de Vede, Izvoarele, Mavrodin, Măgura, Mosteni, Olteni, Poroschia, Radoiesti, Scutu Mare, Talpa,Tătărăști de Jos and Vartoape) and Călărași and Ialomița are the only counties in the region without public managers. This doesn't mean that they are more inefficient or are underperforming in terms of administrative capacity, but it is worth mentioning.

A peculiar and also crucial aspect in this matter is the fact that not all public managers mentioned here or in the context of other regions have their activity report or contributions on the official website of the City Hall. This raises the question of the extent to which these positions are really open to improve and increase the efficiency and performance of the institutional and general way of working, or just to keep the position occupied. Because, as speculated in the legislation, the position is optional and the person hired is on contractual basis (not a civil servant position), arguable to introduce and implement the principles of public management.

In conclusion, the argument for insisting on and promoting as much transparency as possible and the need to implement (in the right way) public management principles based on clear, measurable performance indicators, on efficiency and feedback, on innovation, strategic thinking and organizational design.

South-West Region

Southwest Oltenia is bordered only by Bulgaria in the southern part of the region, by Serbia on the border with Drobeta Turnu Severin County and, like the previously presented region, by the Danube (in the southern part) and the Olt River (in the eastern part) as natural borders. The region is also composed out of five counties: Dolj, Gorj, Olt, Mehedinți and Vâlcea, with Craiova as a growth poll in the region, which has an important role in enhancing regional development through economic innovation (especially in the effort to change the status of "modest innovator" that the region received in the Regional Innovation Scoreboard).

Table 26. Demographic data S-W. Source: TEMPO, INS.

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Total	2067357	2048702	2033784	2015792	1993482	1972940	1949813	1927215	1911414	1892078	1869563
Male	1012375	1005235	999798	990871	979511	970658	960017	949281	941504	930814	912640
Female	1054982	1043467	1033986	1024921	1013971	1002282	989796	977934	969910	961264	956923

In terms of demographic trends, we can see in the table above that in 2021, the total population of the county was of 2.067.357, out of which 1.012.375 were male and 1.054.982 were female, and it decreased in the last ten years with a total of 197.794 individuals, due to the negative natural growth trend, the ageing of the population and migration.

In 2021, according to the data from ADRSV (2022), 32.10% of the total population of the region resided in Dolj county (representing the highest density of individuals), 19.98% resided in Olt County, being immediately followed by Vâlcea (18.47%). The lowest density of population registered in 2021 according to the regional development plan was in Mehedinți (12.89%). In the same year it is important to note that the entire population of the region made up only 10% out of the entire population of Romania (ADRSV, 2022, p. 64).

Table 27. Life expectancy South-West region. Source: TEMPO, INS.

South-West Oltenia		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total	**Urban**	75.35	75.76	76.21	76.46	76.46	76.78	77.03	77.33	77.53	77.57	76.69
Male	**Urban**	72.45	72.96	73.54	73.57	73.4	73.79	73.9	74.36	74.55	74.34	73.43
Female	**Urban**	78.23	78.51	78.82	79.3	79.45	79.68	80.06	80.17	80.39	80.72	79.88
Total	**Rural**	72.1	72.92	73.61	73.79	73.42	73.89	74.27	74.44	74.75	74.96	74.39
Male	**Rural**	68.36	69.27	70.19	70.4	69.85	70.39	70.84	70.83	71.14	71.41	70.76
Female	**Rural**	76.36	77.02	77.4	77.55	77.45	77.85	78.13	78.55	78.92	79.03	78.6

The average age at a regional level was 44.1 years old (registered in 2021, based on the data gathered by INS), with an average age of 42.4 years old in males and 45.7 years old in females. Both the average age and life expectancy increased in the last 10 years, with around 0.98-2.29 years in total. This time, the most obvious lifespan growth was observed in the rural area, which increased (in the last 10 years used in this particular analysis) with 2.29 years old and in the urban area with only 1.34 years old.

With a rate of -7.1% of natural growth, registered in 2020 alone, the Southwestern region placed itself on the second place regarding the negative natural growth (the first place being taken by South Muntenia with a percentage of -8.3 in the same year), this being another strong indicator of the aging of the population and of the average age being over 40 years old. In the same year (2020) analyzed in the Southwestern development plan, Olt County had the highest negative natural growth percentage (9.7), with a birth rate of only 6.8% and a death rate of 16.5%, Vâlcea registering the lowest negative score (-4,4%), having a birth rate of 6,3% and a death rate of only 10,7% (ADRSV, 2022, pp. 69-70).

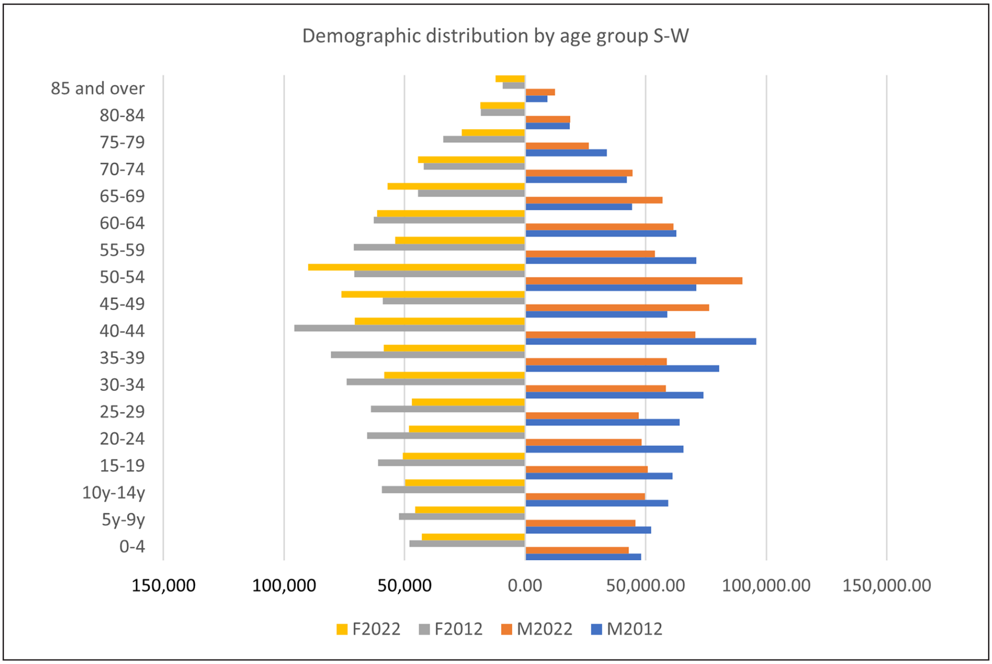


Figure 19. Demographic distribution by age and gender South-West region 2012 and 2022. Source: TEMPO, INS.

All these aspects and with an increase of demoghraphic age, can have and is already having effects (better said pressures) on the medical system and on the workforce ability of the region. This can only add insult to injury especially if the healthcare system is not well developed enough and doesn't have the proper capacity (beds, doctors, equipment and technology, a well developed framework, etc.), which in this case, **the region is situated on the last place at a national level in terms of beds per patients and the involuntary social exclusion** (meaning that people woth low incomes don't really afford to go to hospitals or to benefit from the medical services, especially in rural areas).

Table 28. Definite migration S-W. Source: TEMPO, INS.

South-West	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total	759	791	797	681	833	1363	1234	1470	1497	1114	1948
Male	335	356	339	275	332	599	535	641	669	517	900
Female	424	435	458	406	501	764	699	829	828	597	1048

In 2021 the number of people that definitively migrated increased by 1189 individuals, more than double than in 2011, ergo, a mass depopulation that has strong negative effects on the local industry and the local administrative capacity to develop and flourish. This, alongside the poverty and exclusion rate, are active contributors to increase the relative and extreme poverty rate in the region, leading to school abandonment, unemployment and a general low quality of life.

Table 29. Relative poverty rate S-W %. Source: TEMPO, INS.

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
National lvl	22.30	22.90	23	25.10	25.40	25.30	23.60	23.50	23.80	23.40	22.60
South-West	28.10	31.20	28.20	28.30	32.10	34.20	33.40	34.30	31.60	32.70	30.50

The relative poverty rate (presented in the table above) is directly linked to the fact that **in the period 2014-2020 the Southwestern region had the highest unemployment rate in the country** (8.2-8.3% in the period 2014-2016 and 5.9%-5.5% in 2018-2020). Thus, the current job opportunities don't respond to the actual economic needs and trends, and the aging of the population will only become a larger impediment in developing an innovative and competitive economy (ADRSV, 2022, p. 58). Moreover, the lack of proper training of the current workforce because of a lack of education is another contributor in reducing the opportunities to get out of poverty and to increase the general wellbeing of the population, alongside with the lack of collaboration between schools and economic agents (high schools and university) and the lack of youths in the rural area (ADRSV, 2022, p. 478) or/and the lack of proper strategies and action plans to attract younger people in those areas.

Table 30. Social Progress Index South-West region.
Source: European Commission, 2016; 2020.

Social Progress Index 2016 & 2020	S-W-2016	S-W-2020	Differences (2020-2016)
Opportunity	45.24	34.9	-10.34
Personal Rights	51.37	27.3	-24.07
Personal Freedom and Choice	52.95	59.1	6.15
Tolerance Inclusion	47.65	36.6	-11.05
Advanced Education	30.88	21.7	-9.18
Foundation of wellbeing	45.87	46.6	0.73
Access to basic knowledge	60.55	55.9	-4.65

Social Progress Index 2016 & 2020	S-W-2016	S-W-2020	Differences (2020-2016)
Access to information and communication	38.89	52.6	13.71
Health and wellness	50.88	43.8	-7.08
Environmental Quality	35.31	35.4	0.09
Basic human needs	47.88	60.7	12.82
Nutrition and medical care	56.72	60.2	3.48
Water and sanitation	24.49	44.8	20.31
Shelter	49.53	71.1	21.57
Personal security	66.57	68.4	1.83

In the Social Progress Index developed by the European Commission, we can already see a negative trend in terms of *opportunity* and especially in the personal rights indicator (which, as a reminder, is composed out of trust in the political system, police, the legal system and the general activity of public institutions), alongside the concerning decrease in the level of tolerance and inclusion of vulnerable groups or minorities.

Henceforth, there are still a lot of issues that can be linked with a low level of institutional resilience and a lack of long-term vision that is visible and is currently affecting a high percentage of the population (unemployment, lack of social support, school dropout and lack of life-long learning programs or strategies) due to a lack of strategic-thinking, transparency and openness to collaboration and discussion between public and private entities.

To try and tackle the briefly presented issues (of course, there are more elements but these sections have only the purpose of giving a little context in terms of the development capacity)., the Southwestern development plan has the following strategic priorities: increase economic competitiveness, develop the regional infrastructure, to sustainably develop the urban and rural area, alongside sustainably develop the human resource through education, life-long learning and through social inclusion and lastly, tourism development and the exploration of natural resources to enhance the potential of their competitive advantages.

The strategic directions indeed have in focus the main issues that are inhibiting the region to develop in a sustainable way and to truly make good use of the resources (natural or artificial) that are at its disposal, but what the strategy is lacking is aspects regarding administrative capacity and performance. Regardless, these aspects will be analyzed first-hand through the survey that was distributed in the region and we can have a glimpse at the perception of the respondents with respect to these aspects, in the data analysis section.

Finally, in terms of public managers, we have seven in Dolj (Craiova County, and in the communes Celaru, Ghercești, Leu, Murgasi, Ostroveni and Sadova), two in Gorj (in the cities Turceni and Rinovari), Olt has eleven public managers (in Slatina County, Potcoava town and in the communes Balteni, Leleasca, Colonesti, Maruntei, Samburesti, Sirbii Magura, Studina, Tatulesti and Valeni), Mehedinți has one public manager in Drobeta Turnu Severin County, and Vâlcea has eight public managers (Băile Olănești town and in the communes Diculești, Haloșu, Mateești, Prundeni, Stoenești, Stroești and Vlădești). To preface again, not all those aforementioned have activity reports on their websites, thus in some cases their activity (or lack of it) is unclear.

West Region

The Western region is formed out of two important economic engines: Timiș (being also the growth pole of the region) and Arad, alongside of Hunedoara and Casaș-Severin, being bordered in the West with Serbia and Hungary, being considered a region with a moderate (modest) level of economic innovation and entrepreneurship (according to the Regional Innovation Scoreboard and ADRV).

Table 31. Demographic data W. Source: TEMPO, INS.

West	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Total	1828087	1824598	1818363	1812183	1802212	1792550	1784296	1777732	1772820	1758582	1669479
Male	884780	885329	884258	881591	876436	872996	869890	867385	865576	857529	806737
Female	943307	939269	934105	930592	925776	919554	914406	910347	907244	901053	862742

In 2022, according to the TEMPO database by INS, there were a total of 1.669.479 residents, with 158.608 less citizens registered than in 2012, supporting the trend in decline, regardless of the presence of Timișoara, a university city with openness to the West, and regardless of its extensive development opportunities that it has. And, as stated in the Western regional development plan, the involution of the population continues to create pressures and challenges to the distribution of public services, especially in the healthcare and social services system (ADRV, 2020), alongside tourism and education (including life-long education programs).

With a modest age average of 42.8 years old (41.1 in male and 44.5 years old in female), the adaptation to the new European and global trends can be delayed especially because there is not a clear presence of a culture oriented towards innovation, research and development, and with the constant ageing of the population, this can create impediments in the future if strategies to attract young adults back into their communities (especially in the rural area) are not put in place.

Table 32. Life expectancy West region. Source: TEMPO, INS.

West		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total	**Urban**	74.59	75.09	75.66	75.87	75.58	75.75	76.03	76.18	76.39	76.32	75.33
Male	**Urban**	71.33	71.8	72.52	72.86	72.78	72.83	72.98	73.31	73.34	73.08	71.99
Female	**Urban**	77.78	78.28	78.66	78.74	78.26	78.55	78.94	78.93	79.28	79.44	78.61
Total	**Rural**	72.99	73.46	74.03	74.41	74.13	74.25	74.51	74.61	74.91	75.28	74.55
Male	**Rural**	69.55	70.27	70.78	71.06	70.84	70.95	71.19	71.31	71.58	72.05	71.49
Female	**Rural**	76.66	76.81	77.44	77.96	77.67	77.78	78.07	78.15	78.5	78.76	77.85

What is important to note in terms of life expectancy is the decrease in lifespan with approximately 1.09 years, in the period 2020-2021 and this might be linked to some extend to the COVID-19 pandemic to a certain extent but there is no clear data to fully confirm it; nonetheless is a factor that should be taken into consideration taken into account the sanitary crisis and the low vaccination rate through which Romania went through.

Other than that, we can only see a very modest increase in lifespan in the 2011-2021 period, meaning that only 0.74 years in the urban area (0.66 years in men and 0.83 years old in women) and in the rural area an increase of 1.56 years old (1.94 in men and 1.19 years old in women).

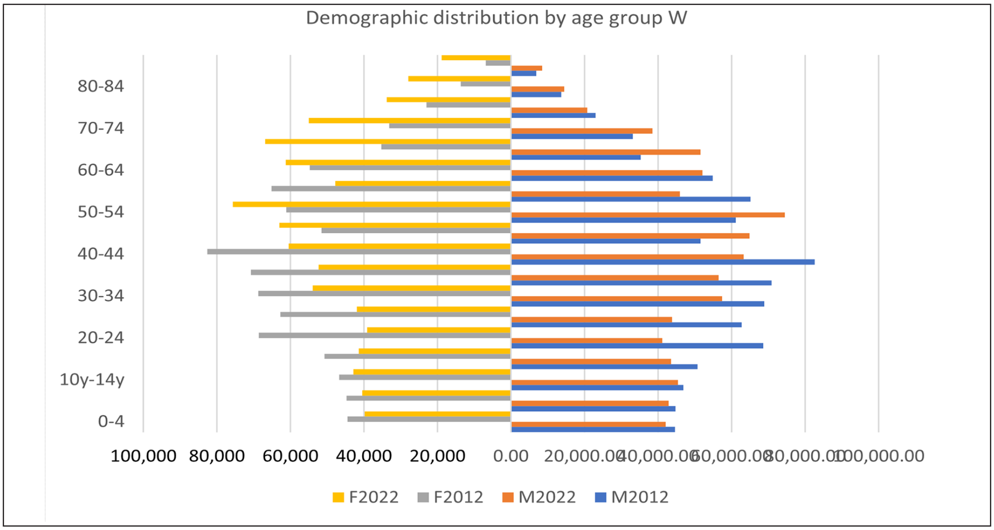


Figure 20. Demographic distribution by age and gender West region 2012 and 2022. Source: TEMPO, INS.

As a modest innovator, lacking an innovative culture with a long-term vision, and with an aging population due to a negative natural growth rate, efforts to straighten the curve must be redoubled in some areas, especially in the economic, educational, social and cultural fields, because of their high potential for success (if the approaches are well thought out).

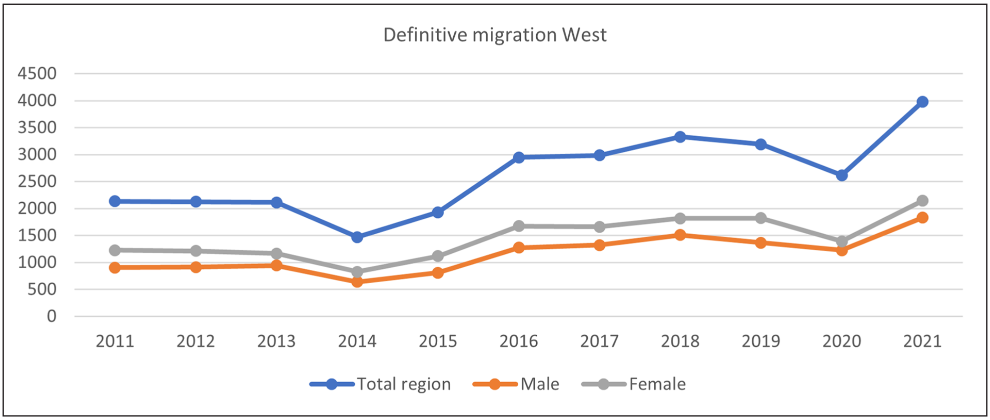


Figure 21. Definite migration W. Source: TEMPO, INS.

The level, or better said the migration frequency did not increase significantly in the period 2011-2021, compared to the other regions. Meaning that, comparing 2011 with 2021 we can see a slight increase of 1.842 people that completely moved their residency nationally or internationally (out of which 926 men and 916 women– a balanced distribution).

Table 33. Relative poverty rate W %. Source: TEMPO, INS.

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
National lvl	22.30	22.90	23	25.10	25.40	25.30	23.60	23.50	23.80	23.40	22.60
West	20.50	25.80	22.70	27.50	19.80	25.10	21.40	14.90	14.70	20	20.70

On a more positive note, compared to the other regions that were previously presented, in the case of the Western region we can note that **since 2015 the relative poverty rate is constant under the national rate**. But what shouldn't be overlooked is the inability of the region to keep talented workforce and to promote collaboration between public authorities and the academic environment to further reduce the poverty and definitive migration rate and to revitalize affected areas. Henceforth, efforts must be made to maintain a low poverty rate and to prepare the future workforce through educational and training programs aimed at fostering innovation, resilience and sustainable development.

Table 34. Social Progress Index West region. Source: European Commission, 2016; 2020.

Social Progress Index 2016 & 2020	W-2016	W-2020	Differences (2020-2016)
Opportunity	48.91	36.9	-12.01
Personal Rights	46.89	27.4	-19.49
Personal Freedom and Choice	53.16	60.2	7.04
Tolerance Inclusion	48.04	39.3	-8.74
Advanced Education	47.69	25.2	-22.49
Foundation of wellbeing	49.39	50.1	0.71
Access to basic knowledge	70.35	60.8	-9.55
Access to information and communication	42.23	56.6	14.37
Health and wellness	47.62	44.4	-3.22
Environmental Quality	40	40.1	0.1
Basic human needs	51.94	68.8	16.86
Nutrition and medical care	53.65	66	12.35
Water and sanitation	45.24	65.2	19.96
Shelter	43.49	71.7	28.21
Personal security	66.93	72.4	5.47

The results are once again unfortunate but unsurprising in terms of low levels of institutional and governance resilience (*opportunity* and personal rights), but what is more surprising is the decline in advanced education, which means that there are a reduced number of lifelong learning opportunities but also an increase in school dropout, which can cumulatively among other factors such as poverty and social exclusion contribute to the illiteracy rate, ergo lack of skills for the jobs of today and tomorrow, ergo a low quality of life and general wellbeing. This score can also reflect what was stated above with regards to the lack of communication between public institutions and universities, pointing towards an approach at an administrative level that doesn't integrate the sole core of strategic planning – the involvement of key strategic actors in the decision-making process.

In their approach to try and answer to the needs identified in the preliminary analysis of the development plan, the vision of the region for 2030 is focused on: an economic, inclusive and digitalized development, based in innovation, to reduce inter and extra regional discrepancies and to ensure equal access to everyone to public services, education and further opportunities (ADRV, 2020, p. 7). Thus, **the seven areas of intervention to ensure the achievement of said vision**, are: "(1) a competitive and innovative economy, (2) green energy, (3) accessibility, (4) education, healthcare and performant social services, (5) sustainability through tourism and culture, (6) urban sustainable development and (7) tradition and diversification in the rural area" (ADRV, 2020, p. 9).

While the first strategic direction wants to encourage the development of innovation hubs alongside an SME culture that can fire up the economic engine and nurture economic growth through the diversification of services, it can be linked to the fourth area of intervention in the sense of offering more opportunities for students to remain in the university city, create new jobs, new families and revitalize the affected areas of the region. On the other hand, there is no mention regarding administrative capacity, improvement of public services or other aspects regarding administrative performance or efficiency.

In terms of public managers, there are seven in Arad (Arad County, Pecica and Lipova towns, and in the communes Seitin, Seleus, Siria and Zerind), six public managers in Hunedoara (two in Deva, Lupeni municipality, in the cities of Petrila and Simeria and in Branisca commune), one in Caraș-Severin (in Caransebeș) and four public managers in Timiș (in the commune V.V. Delamarina, Sanandrei, Mosnita Nouă and Biled). And again, with the mention that there are no activity reports available to follow their activity or role in the city halls.

North-West Region

The North-West region is bordered by Ukraine in the Northeastern part of the region and with Hungary in the Western part, being formed out of the following counties: Bihor, Bistrița-Năsăud, Cluj (which is also the growth poll of the region and an important actor in the social-economic development asptect of the region), Maramureș, Satu Mare and Sălaj.

Going along the natural trend of mobility and migration, we can see some slight changes in the residential population of the region from the period 2012 to 2022, but the differences (compared to ther regions) are not that high (75.328).

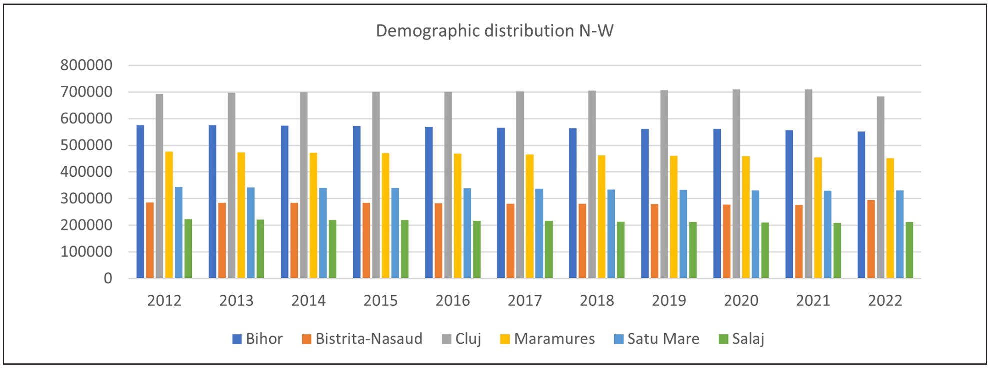


Figure 22. Demographic data N-W. Source: TEMPO, INS.

According to the data gathered by INS, in 2022 there were approximately 2.523.549 residents in the Northwestern region of Romania, out of which 1.227.794 were men and 1.295.755 were female, a somewhat balanced distribution of genders. Besides the frequency of the negative natural growth trend, we can see that Cluj, immediately followed by Bihor (in Figure 22) has the highest density in population, thus showing a trend of an increased level of urbanization, Whereas Sălaj and Bistrița-Năsăud have the lowest density in terms of residents.

Table 35. Life expectancy North-West region. Source: TEMPO, INS.

North-West		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total	**Urban**	75.02	75.58	75.89	76.16	76.24	76.35	76.64	76.81	76.84	77.07	76.25
Male	**Urban**	71.64	72.31	72.67	73.03	73.13	73.16	73.51	73.82	73.71	73.82	72.96
Female	**Urban**	78.34	78.74	78.99	79.16	79.21	79.4	79.63	79.64	79.81	80.16	79.42
Total	**Rural**	72.66	73.07	73.37	73.71	73.75	73.91	74.08	74.28	74.53	74.62	73.76
Male	**Rural**	69.07	69.59	69.83	70.22	70.23	70.32	70.64	70.91	71.07	71.13	70.34
Female	**Rural**	76.58	76.84	77.22	77.49	77.59	77.86	77.85	78.01	78.35	78.47	77.58

The higher access to medical facilities and healthcare services in the urban area compared to the rural one is again, visible in the life expectancy of the residents in the North-West region, being a difference of 2.49 years between the two, which is a quite significant one. As mentioned in the regional development plan, "**a special situation was reported in rural isolated areas, where the access of elderly and disabled people to quality medical services is greater difficult**. In the region, there are significant intra-regional discrepancies in terms of access to medical services" (ADRNV, 2021, p. 36).

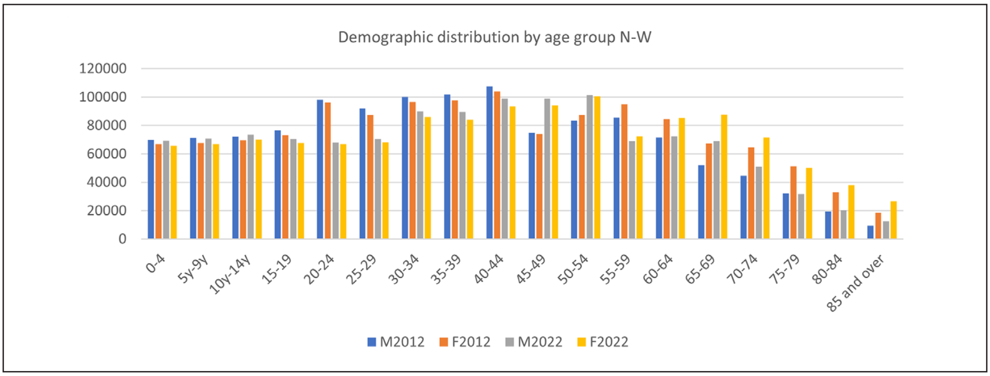


Figure 23. Demographic distribution by age and gender N-W region 2012 and 2022. Source: TEMPO, INS.

With an average age of 40-41 years old, here we can see a slightest younger population compared to the other regions that were analyzed in this section; if we look at the comparison between 2012 and 2020 in the figure above we can see that in the latter year the aging of the population was not as drastic as it was in other places but rather, a more incremental shift (40-40 years old still being one of the dominant age group).

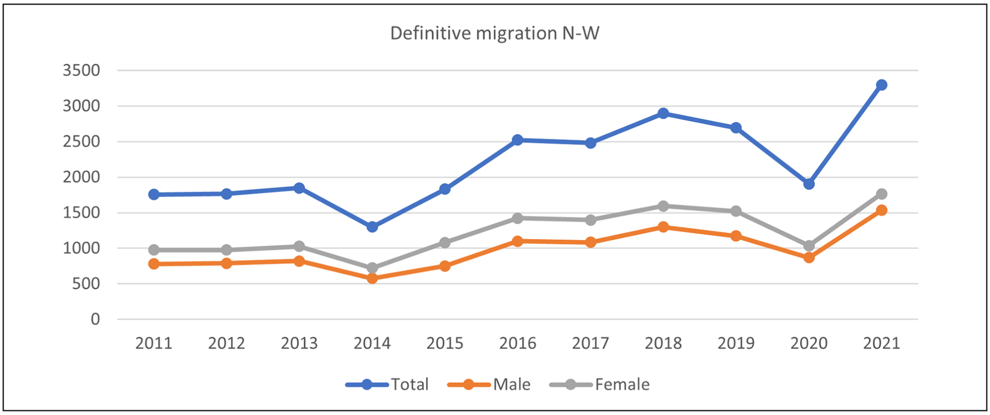


Figure 24. Definite migration N-W. Source: TEMPO, INS.

The definitive migration trend emphasizes on the mobility and movement of the population (nationally and internationally), with an increase of 1.544 in 2021, compared to 2011. In Figure 23 above we can also see in 2019, in the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic the migration trend slowed down, but as soon as the restrictions were lifted, we can see a boost in migration, once again.

In 2018 there was also an increase by 5% of the children with parents leaving abroad for work, mostly in Maramureș and Bistrița-Năsăud (ADRNV, 2021, pp. 51-52). This trend can support the increase of relatively and extremely poverty rate, especially in children and elderly people, that can't fully integrate in society.

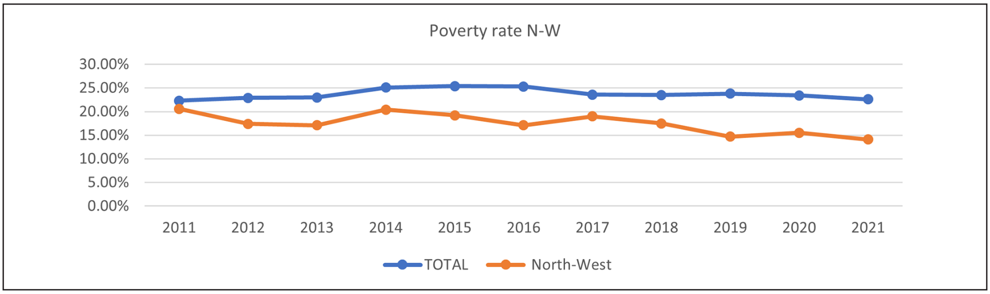


Figure 25. Relative poverty rate N-W %. Source: TEMPO, INS.

According to ADRNV's analysis, the Northwestern region has a relatively low poverty rate (as seen in Figure 25), being below the national level, but here we must take into account the vas discrepancies between the "very rich and very poor", which can increase the financial gap between citizens, indirectly promoting social exclusion, if these aspects are not taking into consideration. In this case we can bring into discussion Cluj-Napoca, with its advanced economic growth in IT and creative industries and the income that those in these fields have, compared to those that don't activate in them.

Table 36. Social Progress Index North-West region.
Source: European Commission, 2016; 2020.

Social Progress Index 2016 & 2020	**N-W-2016**	**N-W-2020**	**Differences (2020-2016)**
Opportunity	48.98	36.9	-12.08
Personal Rights	46.35	27.4	-18.95
Personal Freedom and Choice	54.44	60.2	5.76
Tolerance Inclusion	51.47	39.3	-12.17
Advanced Education	43.99	25.2	-18.79
Foundation of wellbeing	47.91	50.1	2.19
Access to basic knowledge	63.06	60.8	-2.26
Access to information and communication	42.23	56.6	14.37

Social Progress Index 2016 & 2020	N-W-2016	N-W-2020	Differences (2020-2016)
Health and wellness	45.61	44.4	-1.21
Environmental Quality	42.16	40.1	-2.06
Basic human needs	49.12	68.8	19.68
Nutrition and medical care	49.29	66	16.71
Water and sanitation	36.99	65.2	28.21
Shelter	42.82	71.7	28.88
Personal security	70.34	72.4	2.06

The recurring trend in terms of lack of trust in the political and legal system, together with the overall activity of public institutions is also present in this region, but what is worth mentioning is that in 2020 at least (excluding the comparison with 2016), the Western and Northwestern region had the highest score in *opportunity* but the issue in this case and in all those presented thus far is the pandemic that fragmented the citizen's trust in the competency of public institutions, and this was fueled by the way the restrictions, distribution of vaccines, the vaccination campaigns were handled, alongside the poor managing of fake news, led to a mistrust in the competency of public representatives.

In this regard, we can see that this aspect, administrative capacity, is a subject of interest in the development of an action plan. In other words, the first thing that should be noted with reference to the North-West regional development plan is the fact that there is a separate analysis about administrative capacity and performance, section that was not present in the other plans that were analyzed in this section. This proves a level of awareness in terms of evaluating the abilities, strong and weak points of public institutions, regarding their resources and competence in implementing the projects, programs and objectives that are set to achieve the vision of the region.

Henceforth, this analysis acknowledges the fact that a lack of competency in implementing public policies is a crucial factor in the success rate of said policy, ergo "all these competencies in the elaboration and implementation of policies should enhance their abilities to develop and manage project at a local and county level" (ADRNV, 2021, p. 182). Thus, in this analysis there were some major points that were made and some areas of action were established, meaning that: there is a lack of vision and competence regarding development and a lack of collaboration-oriented culture between the public, private, NGO and academic sector, which can create shortcomings in future development plans, because key strategic factors can be disregarded due to lack of know-how (ADRNV, 2021, pp. 182-183).

Lastly, in terms of public managers, we have three in Bihor (in the communes Boianu Mare, Madaras, Rieni), one in Bistrița Năsăud (in Bistrița County), four in Cluj (Cluj-Napoca County, Turda municipality, and in the communes Florești and Băișoara), one in Maramure; (Cicarlău commune), seven public managers in Satu Mare (in the communes Trislot, Bixad, Camarzana, Gherta Mică, Vama, Satu Mare County and in the municipality of Carei).

Center Region

The region is strategically situated in the center of the country, being well connected with the other regions of development, thus giving it an advantage in connectivity and mobility. The region is formed out of the following counties: Alba, Brașov (a well-connected growth poll in terms of infrastructure but also with a high touristic potential), Covasna, Harghita, Mureș and Sibiu.

Table 37. Demographic data Center. Source: TEMPO, INS.

Center	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Total	2360578	2359405	2355746	2350539	2341964	2332791	2325371	2318459	2315816	2302833	2273344
Male	1154534	1156376	1156797	1153725	1148520	1144814	1141687	1138208	1136946	1128990	1107952
Female	1206044	1203029	1198949	1196814	1193444	1187977	1183684	1180251	1178870	1173843	1165392

In 2012, the total population of the region was of 2.360.578 (1.154.534 men and 1.206.044 women), with 87.234 more individuals than in 2022 (where, acording to INS there were registered a total of 2.273.344 residents). The trend of negative natural growth is also present in this region as well, affecting its sustainable and incremental development, especially in rural, isolated areas which are usually the most affected and where the negative consequences are felt the harshest (abandoned villages, no interest for investments, lack of workforce).

Silimar to the North-West region, the urbanization rate is quite high, hence, another contributor to the rapid depopularization of villages and communes, which can also affect negatively the agriculture industry (here we can also mention the limited support that young farmers receive in working the land).

Table 38. Life expectancy Center region. Source: TEMPO, INS.

Center Region		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total	**Urban**	75.74	76.25	76.59	76.84	76.93	77.11	77.29	77.43	77.6	77.66	76.8
Male	**Urban**	72.41	72.87	73.28	73.72	73.65	73.85	74.11	74.03	74.3	74.53	73.45
Female	**Urban**	79.01	79.57	79.83	79.82	80.08	80.26	80.34	80.72	80.76	80.63	80.03
Total	**Rural**	73.19	73.56	74.2	74.61	74.46	74.46	74.62	74.64	74.67	74.88	74.1
Male	**Rural**	69.41	69.89	70.71	71.37	71.13	71.08	71.25	71.1	71.21	71.37	70.65
Female	**Rural**	77.45	77.64	78.04	78.16	78.13	78.23	78.41	78.68	78.6	78.89	78.08

The average age registered in 2021 was 41.9 years old (40.3 in men and 43.5 years old in women) and as we can see from the table above, there was also a slight increasement in lifespan (from 2012 to 2021) of 1.06 years old in the urban area and only 0.91 years old in the rural area. This is also explainable because of the little to non-existent healthcare facilities that are available in the rural areas, especially in those that the depopularization process was highly accelerated or in isolated and very isolated areas where is difficult for emergency services to get to (this can be also reasoned by the poorly developed infrastructure that doesn't allow the area to develop).

The ageing of the population is also backed-up by „the rapid decline of birth rate" (ADRC, 2020, p. 24), and as we can see in the figure below, when comparing 2012 to 2022, there is a shift in the average age group, determining a rapid process of demographic ageing.

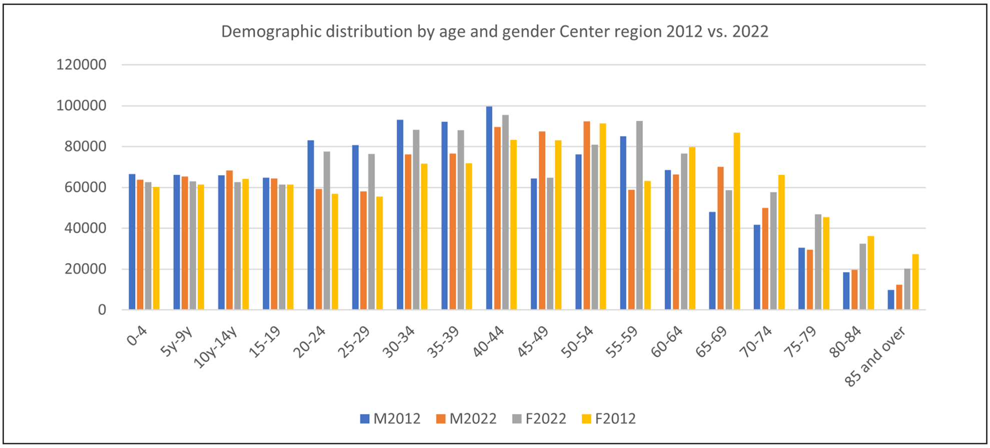


Figure 26. Demographic distribution by age and gender Center region 2012 vs. 2022. Source: TEMPO, INS.

Acording to ADRC, migration represents one of the first causes of demographic decline, stating that most of those that decidec to definitively migrate are part of the age group of 20-44, thus being also an indicator of the constant ageing population, enhancing demographics unbalances (ADRC, 2020, p. 24) and actively contributing at a lack in qualified workforce and in economic development overall.

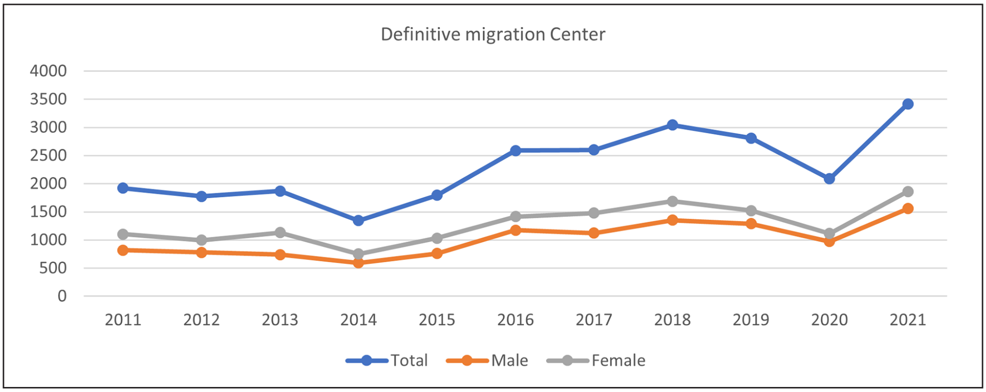


Figure 27. Definite migration Center. Source: TEMPO, INS.

Henceforth, in 2018 according to the preliminary analysis developed by ADRC, in 2018, the active population was represented in proportion of 46.6% out of the total residential population and 53.4% of the population was deemed as inactive, meaning students, elderly, retired people and children. In that said period, only 30.9 thousand people were unemployed (which is quite low). Furthermore, out of the total of the active population (in 2018), 24.3% were in Brașov, 21.7% in Mureș and Covasna had the lowest percentage of only 7.9%. (ADRC, 2020, pp. 46-48).

Table 39. Relative poverty rate Center %. Source: TEMPO, INS.

Center	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
National lvl.	22.30	22.90	23	25.10	25.40	25.30	23.60	23.50	23.80	23.40	22.60
Center	18.70	18	18.20	20.40	17.80	20.80	17.30	19.40	21.20	21.90	20.20

Notably, similar to the Northwestern region, the Center one has the relative poverty rate under the national rate which represents a positive aspect but as we can see, in 2018-2019 it started to increase with a few percentages but this can be tribute (among other aspects) to the sudden lay-offs and technical unemployment that was caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 40. Social Progress Index Center region.
Source: European Commission, 2016; 2020.

Social Progress Index 2016 & 2020	C-2016	C-2020	Differences (2020-2016)
Opportunity	47.17	35.4	-11.77
Personal Rights	52.65	28.5	-24.15
Personal Freedom and Choice	44.9	57	12.1
Tolerance Inclusion	50.85	37.4	-13.45
Advanced Education	40.75	23.1	-17.65
Foundation of wellbeing	50.06	48.3	-1.76
Access to basic knowledge	58.36	49.9	-8.46
Access to information and communication	35.89	54.6	18.71
Health and wellness	51.37	47.7	-3.67
Environmental Quality	56.3	41.3	-15
Basic human needs	51.21	67.2	15.99
Nutrition and medical care	55.07	66.4	11.33
Water and sanitation	45.21	62.7	17.49
Shelter	39.46	67.7	28.24
Personal security	67.18	72.4	5.22

The table above presents an image with which we are already used to and the explanations are linked to the shift of trust in public institutions due to corruption scandals, the improper handle of the pandemic, the inadequate organization of online classes for students in primarily, secondary and tertiary level of education and a general unsettling feeling that were provoked by government instability and lack of transparency and open communication with the public.

Ergo, **the general objective of the Center regional development plan is to promote a knowledge-based economy that can nurture sustainable development through innovation, education, digitalization and tourism**. To do so, the following strategic areas of intervention were taken into account: sustainable urban development, R&D, innovation and economic competitiveness, Human resources, social inclusion, workforce and health, green and renewable energy, tourism and rural development.

Alba has three public managers (in the communes Ciugud, Rădești and Sibot), Brașov has five (Brașov and in the communes Apata, Crizbav, Racoș and Tarlungeni), Covasna has two public managers (in Sfântu Gheorghe County and municipality), Harghita has three (in Miercurea Ciuc County and in the communes Siculeni and Racu), Mureș has also three (Luduș city and in the communes Bichis and Panet) and Sibiu, also three (Sibiu County and in the cities Ocna Sibiului and Copșa Mică).

Bucharest-Ilfov

Bucharest-Ilfov region is in the southeastern part of Romania and it is formed out of Ilfov County and the capital of Romania, Bucharest. "Ilfov County consists of 40 administrative units, of which eight cities (Bragadiru, Buftea, Chitila, Măgurele, Otopeni, Pantelimon, Popești-Leordeni and Voluntari), 32 communes and 91 villages. The municipality of Bucharest is made up of six sectors, arranged radially around the center area of the city" (ADRBI, 2022, p. 9).

Table 41. Demographic data Bucharest-Ilfov. Source: TEMPO, INS.

B-IF	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Total	2279145	2282244	2283413	2284443	2288203	2287065	2302291	2318109	2327921	2327057	2268268
Male	1065362	1069503	1072151	1071830	1073168	1073050	1081404	1089474	1095894	1094322	1057352
Female	1213783	1212741	1211262	1212613	1215035	1214015	1220887	1228635	1232027	1232735	1210916

Taking into consideration the fact that the capital is an active, representative part in this region, the density of the population reflects this aspect, even though there was a decrease in population in the last decade (a total decrease of 10.877 residents). In 2022, acording to the analyzed data, there were 2.268.268 residents in the region, out of which 545.403 in Ilfov and 1.722.865 in the municipality of Bucharest. The North-East and South region remain the ones with the highest density in population, but Bucharest remains the one with the highest density by municipality (a lot of foot-traffick).

Table 42. Life expectancy Bucharest-Ilfov. Source: TEMPO, INS.

Bucharest-Ilfov		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total	**Urban**	76.88	77.11	77.42	77.7	77.69	77.6	77.74	78.04	78.19	78.29	77.25
Male	**Urban**	73.47	73.94	74.28	74.45	74.54	74.42	74.52	74.97	75.14	75.03	73.73
Female	**Urban**	80.01	79.98	80.27	80.64	80.51	80.47	80.61	80.75	80.9	81.19	80.46
Total	**Rural**	73.37	74.19	74.37	74.41	74.65	75.2	75.34	75.13	75.2	75.79	74.78
Male	**Rural**	69.68	70.94	71.07	70.91	71	71.74	71.97	71.71	71.76	71.95	70.89
Female	**Rural**	77.2	77.44	77.68	77.8	78.39	78.69	78.74	78.49	78.68	79.81	78.8

In 2021 the average age in men was registered to be 39.4 years old, while in women was 43.2 years old, highlighting the trend of negative natural growth but at the same time, being the capital (Bucharest) and having a high density, the population (residential one) might have a lower average in age due to new families that move to the capital or around the area to find better job or educational opportunities. In the last decade, the life expectancy did not increase as much as one would hope (only 0.37 years old in the urban area and 1.41 years old in the rural one), but what is noticeable (compared to the other regions analyzed) is the significant difference between the life expectancy of men and women (regadless of their area of residence). As we can see in the table above, there is a difference (in 2021) of 6.73 years between genders in the urban area and of 7.91 years between those in the rural area.

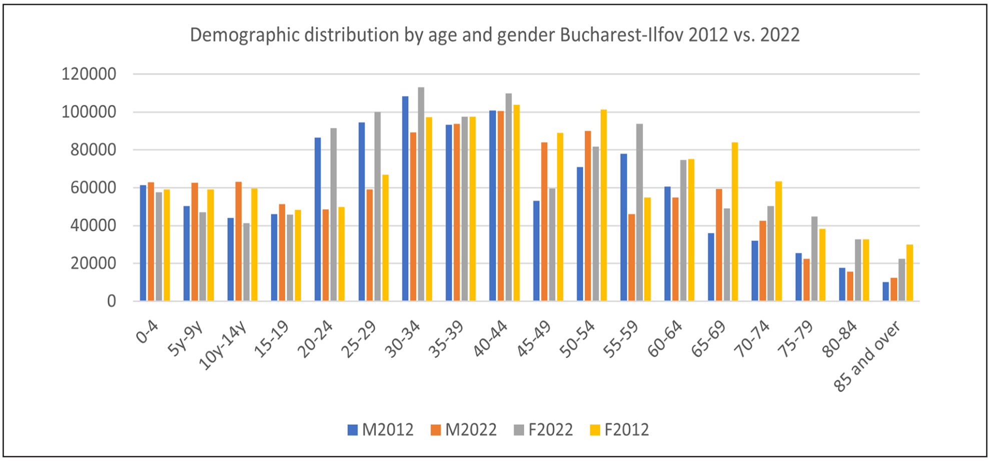


Figure 28. Demographic distribution by age and gender Bucharest-Ilfov 2012 vs. 2022. Source: TEMPO, INS.

In the comparison between 2012 and 2022 we can see an interesting trend in the sense that in 2012, men were predominantly in the age group of 20-34 years old, whilst women in the 30-44 age group. In 2022 on the other hand, we can see that women are predominantly in the age group 20-34 whilst men in the 30-44 age group. Another aspect that should also be included is the significant diference in gender distribution; for example, in 2022 alone, there were 1.210.916 women and 1.057.352 men, residents in the region, thus, there were with 153.564 more women than men.

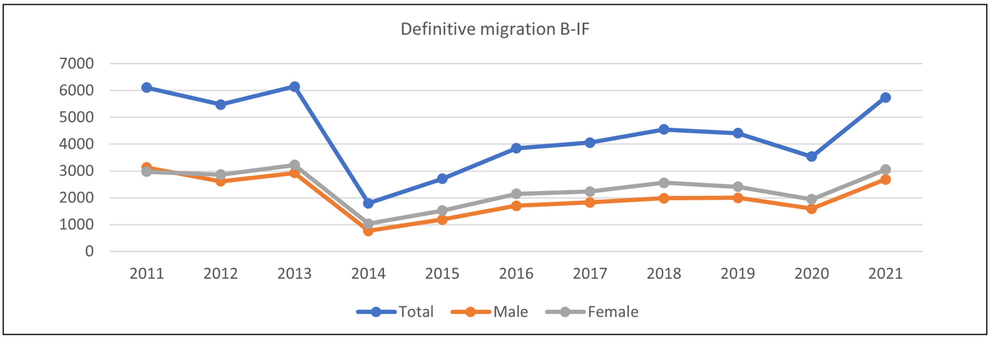


Figure 29. Definite migration Bucharest-Ilfov. Source: TEMPO, INS.

"The migration phenomenon is an important indicator of territorial competitiveness, since the attractiveness of a territory is given by the set of existing opportunities that best meet the needs of people (educational and employment opportunities, high quality of life and services, etc.). The Bucharest-Ilfov region registers important migratory flows, a phenomenon explained by its attractiveness, established by the Municipality of Bucharest" (ADRBI, 2022, p. 25).

Ergo, due to the constant mobility that the capital and the adjacent areas face, alongside a positive natural growth, the trend in population is an increasing one (compared to the other regions in the country).

Table 43. Relative poverty rate Bucharest-Ilfov %. Source: TEMPO, INS.

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
National lvl.	22.30	22.90	23	25.10	25.40	25.30	23.60	23.50	23.80	23.40	22.60
Bucharest-IF	3.50	2.60	4.10	4.80	5.90	10.20	6.10	4.10	2.90	2.40	2.90

Taking into account the high-density level of the population and the fact that the region registers one of the highest levels of population with higher education, it is not surprising why it has such low poverty rates, compared to the national level (it has the lowest levels in the country) and European level as well.

Table 44. Social Progress Index Bucharest-Ilfov.
Source: European Commission, 2016; 2020.

Social Progress Index 2016 & 2020	B-IF-2016	B-IF-2020	Differences (2020-2016)
Opportunity	53.17	43.7	-9.47
Personal Rights	42.53	23.8	-18.73
Personal Freedom and Choice	52.15	63.4	11.25

Social Progress Index 2016 & 2020	B-IF-2016	B-IF-2020	Differences (2020-2016)
Tolerance Inclusion	51.26	43.6	-7.66
Advanced Education	68.31	49.1	-19.21
Foundation of wellbeing	50.91	53.4	2.49
Access to basic knowledge	79.7	83.5	3.8
Access to information and communication	55.89	64.5	8.61
Health and wellness	44.21	51.5	7.29
Environmental Quality	30.13	23.8	-6.33
Basic human needs	52.03	66.7	14.67
Nutrition and medical care	57.99	66.7	8.71
Water and sanitation	46.68	62	15.32
Shelter	40.33	72.1	31.77
Personal security	64.87	66	1.13

What is concerning with regards to the scores obtained in the Social Progress Index is the fact that Bucharest-Ilfov received the lowest score on personal rights (in 2020) compared to the other regions. This could be explained that all the central government in concentrated in this region, and here we can remind the protests against corruption that took place, all the meetings, and influence of political power (to one side or the other), ripping in a way, the community in more pieces that are now left disoriented and don't know what ideology to trust.

And for that reason (and not only, one of the main strategic objectives in the 2021-2027 development plan is to develop a region closer and inclusive towards its citizens. Also, the strategy looks at methods to create a SMART region in terms of competitiveness and technology, to increase mobility and connectivity and also, to move its attention towards green and renewable energy (ADRBI, 2022, p. 140). The latter is crucial to the region, especially Bucharest where the levels of air pollution (at least) are almost always over the safe limit, being a main perpetrator in causing respiratory health issues in children and adults. Lastly, Bucharest has one public manager in sector six and Ilfov has two, in Buftea city and in the Ștefăneștii de Jos commune.

Concluding Remarks for This Section

Alas, as mentioned in another section, some of the public managers that are active in the city halls of each region, don't have a clear (or updated) job description or an activity report posted on their official websites or on the city hall's website. This doesn't show much transparency and this can be an issue in the long run, if they don't show more openness and real involvement in the community. Of course, this is not a general opinion or impression, but there were cases where we tried to find these activity reports, to further present the analysis on public managers and their activities, but the information in this regard was not available.

We wanted to present information on natural growth, migration, poverty, etc. because they reflect the capacity and commitment of public institutions to improve the general welfare of the population and provide quality services. They reflect the extent to which public institutions have adequate strategies to serve their citizens and ensure that all their needs are met. From the data presented in this section, we have seen that there are inconsistencies in this regard due to negative natural growth, permanent migration data, and the aging of the population. In addition to the poverty rate, the dropout rate is also worrying, especially in the northeast and southeast of the country (with 10% more than the national level in 2021). Lastly, the pressure on the medical system (lack of equipment, medical personnel, modern buildings, etc.), which is a serious problem at the national level, is also another aspect that shows the inability of public institutions to develop strategies, action plans that can focus on the most important aspect of a community: the people.

Now that we have a better understanding of how things are, in terms of demographics and strategies, that we have collected from the Regional Development Agencies, we can continue our research with the main data that has been collected, analyzed and interpreted with the purpose of creating a model that can show the relationship between New Public Management and Institutional Resilience.

9. PRIMARY DATA ANALYSIS

The survey used as a model in this exploratory research was inspired by the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey[11], and was adapted to firstly, shorten the survey, and secondly to build our model and our indicators, as presented in Table 11. Because the survey was so vast and generous with the variety of questions, it was considered a fitted starting point to try and develop our resilience system model and to help us improve it in further research.

The sample used was selected by convenience and the survey was sent by email through Google Forms and also face-to-face to 313 City Halls at the national level between July-November 2022 and of the total number of City Halls contacted, 11.18% of them were opened to respond, thus receiving a total of 260 responses. The northeast region was the most responsive (26.15%), immediately followed by Bucharest-Ilfov (20%), and the least responsive regions were the south (6.15%), southwest (5.36%) and west (7.69%), as seen in Figure 30 below.

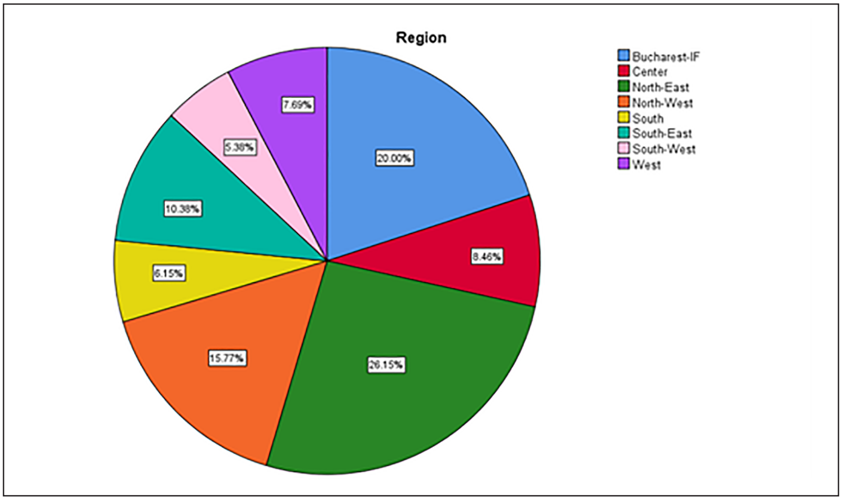


Figure 30. Response rate by region. Source: author's collected data.

[11] As seen here: https://www.opm.gov/fevs/reports/data-reports/ and here, in the 2022 report: https://www.opm.gov/fevs/reports/data-reports/data-reports/report-by-agency/2022/2022-agency-report.pdf.

In terms of general demographic aspects, out of the total 260 valid surveys (valid in terms of being fully completed), 61.9% of the respondents were female and 38.1% were male, already seeing a majority in terms of gender willingness to fulfill surveys from an external source, and from their total, 80% were in execution position and only 20% were in management.

Table 45. Age and education. Source: author's calculation.

Age	Frequency	Percent	Education	Frequency	Percent
18-25	3	1.2	Highschool	26	10.0
26-30	23	8.8	Post-high school	7	2.7
31-36	23	8.8	Undergraduate	89	34.2
46-50w	86	33.1	Masters	114	43.8
51-56	50	19.2	PhD.	4	1.5
57-65	51	19.6	Post-uni	20	7.7
over 65 years	24	9.2	Total	260	100.0

As we can see from the table above, the majority of the respondents have at least an undergrad (34.2%) or master's degree (43.8%), thus, we have rather educated people working in city halls, with an average age of 46-55.

9.1. Initial Results. General Impression

The questions and the affirmations in the instrument were scaled from 1 (negative effect, total disagreement) to 5 (positive effect, total agreement) and each of them were grouped to measure a certain indicator, which later in the analysis will be tested through EFA and CFA, to create the variables and to answer to the research questions of this research.

But first, we should look at some of the main results from the raw data, to have a general image and understanding of the perception of the respondents (at regional and national level) for the given indicators. To do so, we just did some basic means and frequencies for our incipient phase in the analysis.

Table 46. General impression. Source: author's calculation.

General impression	N-E	S-E	S	S-W	W	N-W	C	Buc-IF	National
Teamwork	3.54	3.81	3.71	4.45	3.48	3.93	3.92	4.08	3.97
Leadership	4.10	3.45	4.13	4.40	3.52	3.88	3.98	3.88	3.82
Work environment	3.73	3.70	4.13	4.34	3.55	3.83	3.79	4.03	3.80
Motivation	3.54	3.73	4.02	4.29	3.36	3.75	3.85	3.96	3.76
Work-life balance	3.27	3.21	3.83	3.91	3.30	3.35	3.45	3.53	3.43
Performance	3.49	3.42	3.81	4.36	3.30	3.70	3.51	3.73	3.62
Organizational learning	3.45	3.46	3.70	3.99	3.17	3.47	3.45	3.63	3.51
Innovation	3.44	3.35	4.00	4.30	3.53	3.74	3.43	3.93	3.66
Organizational Culture	3.55	3.41	4.00	4.24	3.41	3.70	3.77	3.77	3.68
Openness to change	3.62	3.45	3.79	3.91	3.38	3.62	3.58	3.53	3.59

Ergo, we can see in Table 46 above that we already have a certain understanding of the main lacks, issues or frustrations that some of the respondents has, alongside some promising values. From the general image, we can see that at a national level, the lowest value obtained is related to the *work-life balance* indicator (3.43) and the highest value was obtained in *teamwork* (3.97), indicating a strong relation between the employees from the city halls that answered to the survey. Another aspect that should be taken into consideration is the score obtained for *organizational learning* (3.51) which is quite average and maybe it needs improvement in the sense of adaptability, change and flexibility, but in terms of *leadership*, things look promising (3.82), meaning that we have leaders that are listening to their teams, that are seen as honest, have integrity and work hand in hand with their employees.

Moving forward, if we look at a regional level, we can see some discrepancies in terms of needs and in terms of what can be improved to increase performance, adaptability and the general functioning of the city halls. For the **North-East region**, we can see that the lowest means were obtained by *work-life balance* (3.27) and *innovation* (3.44), indicating a lack of progression and a lack of involvement of the staff to change the way things work, to be more efficient. On the other side of the coin, we have *leadership* with quite a high mean (4.10) and *work environment* (3.73). But who is to say that if we have a good leader, we can't have a poor productivity level? Because the general sense that we get from the scores obtained by this region is that there is a lot of room for improvement, and there are many shortcomings that need to be taken into consideration, especially if we look at the secondary data analysis that was presented in the sections above.

The **South-East region** got the lowest scores also for *work-life balance* (3.21) and *innovation* (3.35) and the highest score for *teamwork* (3.81). this trend is quite popular in the eastern side of the country (in terms of lack of initiative, resources and know-how to change the *status-quo*). In **the southern part**, the greatest issue is related to *organizational learning* (3.7), which can indicate a lack of tools, understanding or even willingness to adapt to current changes, but we have a very optimistic image in terms of *leadership* (4.13), *work environment* (4.13) and *motivation* (4.02).

The work-life balance indicator and its low scores is a recurring theme in this analysis because all the regions (thus being the lowest score obtained at a national level) got a low, if not the lowest value (out of all of their other values). And this can also be linked to an extend to the pandemic and to all the changes, sudden adaptations and implications that city halls and their employees had to face, to make sure that their activity will suffer lesser negative consequences.

The **South-West region** got the lowest score in *work-life balance* (3.91) and *openness to change* (3.91) and the highest ones in all other aspects, with a borderline mean (3.99) in *organizational learning*. The **West region** had a low mean in *work-life balance* (3.3), *performance* (3.3) and *organizational learning* (3.17) and decent scores in *leadership* (4.4), *work environment* (3.55) and *innovation* (3.53). The latter is quite curious taking into account that usually, innovation and organizational learning go hand in hand and not against each other. In the **North-West region**, we have the highest mean for *teamwork* (3.93) and *leadership* (3.88) and the lowest for *work-life balance* (3.35), *organizational learning* (3.47). For the **Center region** we have a good outlook on *teamwork* (3.92), *leadership* (3.98) and *motivation* (3.85) and a not such great outlook on *work-life balance* (3.45), *organizational learning* (3.45) and *innovation* (3.43). Lastly, for **the capital of Romania** we have high means for *teamwork* (4.08), *work environment* (4.03) and *motivation* (3.96) and again, for *work-life balance* (3.53) and *openness to change* (3.53) we have a less promising image. This is merely some raw data just to give us a general impression and understanding on how we position ourselves and how the respondents perceive these aspects. We are aware of potential biases, limitation and limited objectivity that might have affected their responses, but this is usually a general limitation that is faces in quantitative analyzes.

Table 47. Mean of the highest and lowest scores. Source: author's calculation.

Positive trends	Mean	Negative trends	Mean
I understand and know my job responsibilities	4.59	I have to work very intensively	2.65
I like the work I do	4.42	I have to work very fast	2.77
I am always on the lookout for better ways to do things	4.32	My workplace has a reward or incentive program that encourages me to innovate	2.77
My job allows me to use my skills and knowledge	4.13	Staff is consulted on workplace changes	3.07
I make suggestions to improve my way of working	4.08	When changes are made, I have a clear understanding of what the impact will be in practice	3.18
Colleagues share their work knowledge	4.07		
My supervisor exhibits honesty and integrity	4.05		

Another aspect that we should take into consideration is related to the positive and negative trend, as shown in the table above. The values represent the averages of the answers given by the respondents and we can see the highest (positive) averages and the lowest (negative) ones, which gives us another indication of the quality of their work environment and general aspects. Regarding the positive trends, we can see that the highest means were related to their job, colleagues and managers, while the negative trend is related to their job complexity and change (note that the affirmations with negative connotations were scaled 1-always and 5-never). What we can conclude from this is that, regardless of the comfort of their job and good relationships, the intensity, complexity and excessive demands of the tasks generate a general state of burnout among employees, which, if not addressed through better work strategies, can lead to poor performance and lack of motivation. These means confirm the ones presented above, where we saw that **work-life balance got a general low score**.

Table 48. General image on work-life balance. Source: author's calculation.

How satisfied are you with your work-life balance at your current job, given your work and life priorities?

	Frequency	Percent
Very unsatisfied	5	1.9
Unsatisfied	22	8.5
Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied	72	27.7
Satisfied	116	44.6
Very satisfied	45	17.3
Total	260	100.0

In Table 48, we can see the general question, which simply asks about the indicator mentioned earlier, and as we can see from the frequency test that was carried out. We can see that, at the national level, 44.6% are satisfied with their work-life balance, which is a positive thing, but if we look at the questions that follow (as shown in Table 47 on trends), there are some aspects that need to be improved. 10.4% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, while 61.9% were satisfied or very satisfied. 27.7% were more reserved and chose the middle of the scale, i.e., "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied".

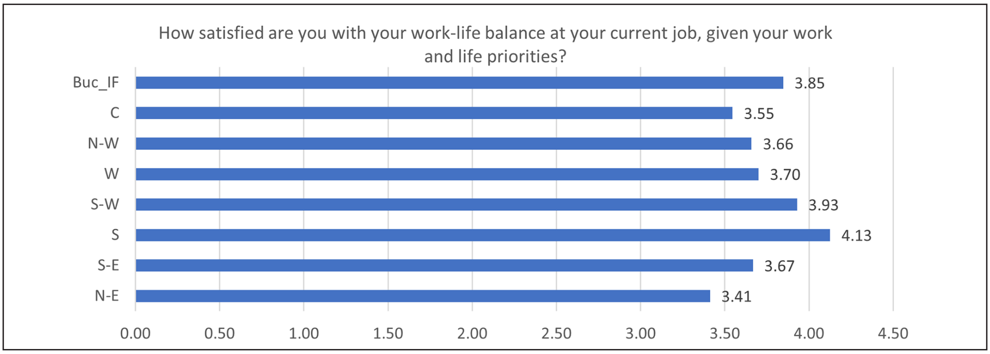


Figure 31. Work-life balance satisfaction by region. Source: author's calculation.

If we take a look at a regional level regarding work-life balance, we can see that the lowest score was obtained by the North-East region (3.41), immediately being followed by Center (3.55), the North-West (3.66) and South-East (3.67) and the highest satisfaction was registered by the Southern region (4.13), South-West region (3.93) and Western region (3.93).

Table 49. Barriers in innovation by region. Source: author's calculation.

Barriers on Innovation	N-E	S-E	S	S-W	W	N-W	C	Buc-IF
Managers' lack of willingness to take risks	3.63	3.07	3.38	2.14	2.55	2.54	2.55	2.73
Managers' resistance to change	3.66	3.04	3.00	2.43	2.45	2.68	2.23	2.90
Employees believe that their ideas will not be taken seriously by managers	3.50	3.07	3.13	2.64	2.90	2.71	2.55	2.88
Budget constraints	3.99	3.44	4.38	3.29	3.35	3.05	3.50	3.15
Political uncertainty	3.81	3.41	3.63	3.21	3.60	2.95	3.27	3.29
Lack of incentives	3.81	3.41	3.88	2.79	3.75	3.15	3.64	3.35
Technological barriers	3.78	2.96	3.63	3.00	3.25	3.00	2.86	2.88

In terms of barriers to innovation, we have some main aspects as presented in the table above, where the **budgetary constraints** represent the main problem for the Northeast (3.99), Southeast (3.44), South (4.38), Southwest (3.29) and Center (3.50) regions, **political uncertainty** is an issue for the Northeast (3.81), West (3.60) regions and for Bucharest (3.29). The other main barrier, besides those mentioned, is the **lack of incentives**, especially in the Northeast (3.81), South (3.88), West (3.75), Northwest (3.15), Center (3.64) and Bucharest (3.35) regions, which can lead to a lack of motivation and interest in efficient performance. And these means can be correlated with those presented in Table 46 of the general impression, especially if we look at performance, organizational learning or motivation in some cases.

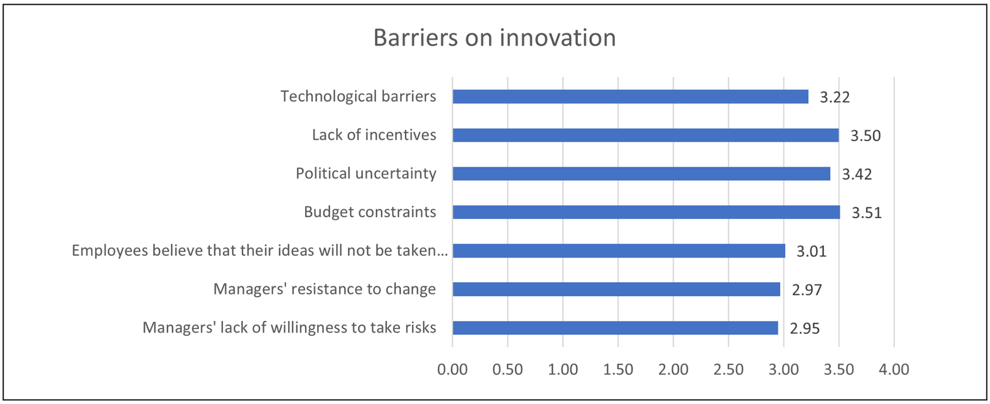


Figure 32. Barriers on innovation at national level. Source: author's calculation.

At the national level, budgetary constraints (3.51) are the main obstacle to innovation, closely followed by lack of incentives (3.50) and political uncertainty (3.42). *An optimistic perspective on leadership and openness of managers is given by the fact that the means for "resistance of managers to change" (2.97) and "lack of willingness of managers to take risks" (2.95) are low, showing that there is potential and interest in change, but there are other aspects that limit and postpone these changes.*

In conclusion, this section has given us a glimpse of some of the general aspects that can, in one way or another, influence the quality of work, performance and general quality of life at work. These values are not necessarily a clear determinant of the needs and desires of the respondents, but merely give us a first perspective on how things look and work. What we need to do is to test the validity of the model, to form variables from the indicators that we used to create the instrument, and to test the variables in order to answer the research questions.

9.2. Building and Testing the Model on Resilience and New Public Management

In order to determine the validity of the instrument and to answer the research question, first we have to realize an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) through SPSS, then, to confirm it (or not) through a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) through AMOS, to make sure that the correlations between the main indicators (as presented in the methodology section) are correct.

Henceforth, an initial Cronbach's Alpha test of reliability was performed in SPSS and confirmed a positive relation between the indicators, with a score of 0.962 (as seen in the table below).

Table 50. Reliability Statistics. Source: author's calculation.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.962	78

After confirming that there is a positive relation between the indicators of the instrument, we proceeded to perform an EFA analysis to determine the relationship between indicators, to determine which variables form specific factors.

Table 51. KMO and Bartlett's Test. Source: author's calculation.

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.941
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	6065.128
	df	325
	Sig.	0.000

The reliability test was also confirmed by the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, where we got a high score of 0.941, and a significance level of 0, meaning that the values are accurate, thus we can further proceed with identifying the valid factors.

Table 52. Rotated factor matrix. Source: author's calculation.

Rotated Factor Matrix

	Factor			
	1	2	3	4
My learning and development needs were adequately considered as part of the performance feedback discussion	0.796			
The quality of formal training and education (outside the workplace) in your institution	0.781			
Access to learning and development opportunities within your institution	0.759			
The quality of coaching or mentoring at your institution	0.709			
I get adequate feedback on my performance from my superiors	0.643			
I receive appropriate recognition for my contributions and achievements at work	0.630			
My latest personal performance review will help me improve	0.601			
Staff is consulted on workplace changes				
My workplace provides a good working relationship between managers and employees		0.722		
My job offers opportunities to increase knowledge and/or experience in the field		0.693		
My workplace provides realistic performance expectations		0.692		
Change is well-managed		0.653		
Promotion is based on merit		0.647		
Risk-assessment		0.640		
Opportunities to develop skills		0.609		
My institution operates with a high level of integrity		0.580		
My supervisor encourages me to develop my capabilities and/or skills needed for us			0.786	
My supervisor encourages me			0.718	
My supervisor exhibits honesty and integrity			0.688	
My supervisor deals with underperforming employees appropriately			0.662	
I can talk to my supervisor about something that has upset or annoyed me about work			0.662	
I get support from my manager when I propose new ideas			0.580	
Improved your job satisfaction				0.868
Customer or service user satisfaction was improved				0.790
Improved the quality of your work				0.775
The workplace (i.e., the place where the work is done) has been improved				0.765

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

Since we wanted to see to what extent our model is valid and what are the main factors extracted from it, we used the Principal Axis Factoring extraction method and extracted the following factors:

Factor 1 is formed from new public management indicators that refer to general characteristics related to the variable, in terms of feedback, outputs, opportunity, long-term vision and efforts to improve, develop or train new skills.

Factor 2 is made up of questions aimed at identifying the level of institutional resilience perceived by the respondents (it is difficult to have a precise view because this aspect is measured over time: before the adversity - during it - after it).

Factor 3 looks at the leadership style, the presence of it, the level of support employees receives from leaders, or the lack of it.

Factor 4 looks at the level of performance and the presence (or absence) of clear tools to evaluate, give feedback or increase its level. The questions that make up this factor are composed from the main idea of "Based on the last performance evaluation, which aspects have improved (or not)", in order to see the impact or usefulness of the evaluation.

From now on, we can see that we have four main factors that can be further used to test and validate the model. A mention should be made that other variables besides *new public management*, *institutional resilience*, *leadership* and *performance* were created to see if their influence is stronger or more relevant in this analysis, meaning: *teamwork*, *barriers to innovation*, *work-life balance*, *organizational culture*, *organizational learning*. The variables were created based on EFA and the data were normalized to be able to perform regressions later in the analysis and to see, based on importance, which are the most influential on new public management and institutional resilience.

After the initial validity test through exploratory factor analysis, we must also see if this model truly confirms and to test it, we will use the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), as mentioned earlier. This analysis is used to estimate the saturation of the items and to see to what extend our model is fitted and validated. Therefore, as we can see in the diagram below, we have some optimistic results in the confirmatory analysis. For the **new public management** variable, we have standardized regression weights between 0.74 (PM5) and 0.91 (PM1) and square loadings between 0.55 and 0.84, which were not very satisfactory. For **institutional resilience** we have the standardized regression weights between 0.72 (Resilience8) and 0.85 (Resilience1), which are less than the previous variable, with square loadings between 0.52 and 0.8. Same goes for **leadership**, where the regression weights are between 0.66 (Lead3) and 0.85

(Lead2), with square loadings between 0.44 and 0.72 and lastly, **performance** received the most satisfactory values so far, with the standardized regression weights between 0.83 (Perf4) and 0.92 (Perf1) and the same goes for the square loadings (between 0.70 and 0.85).

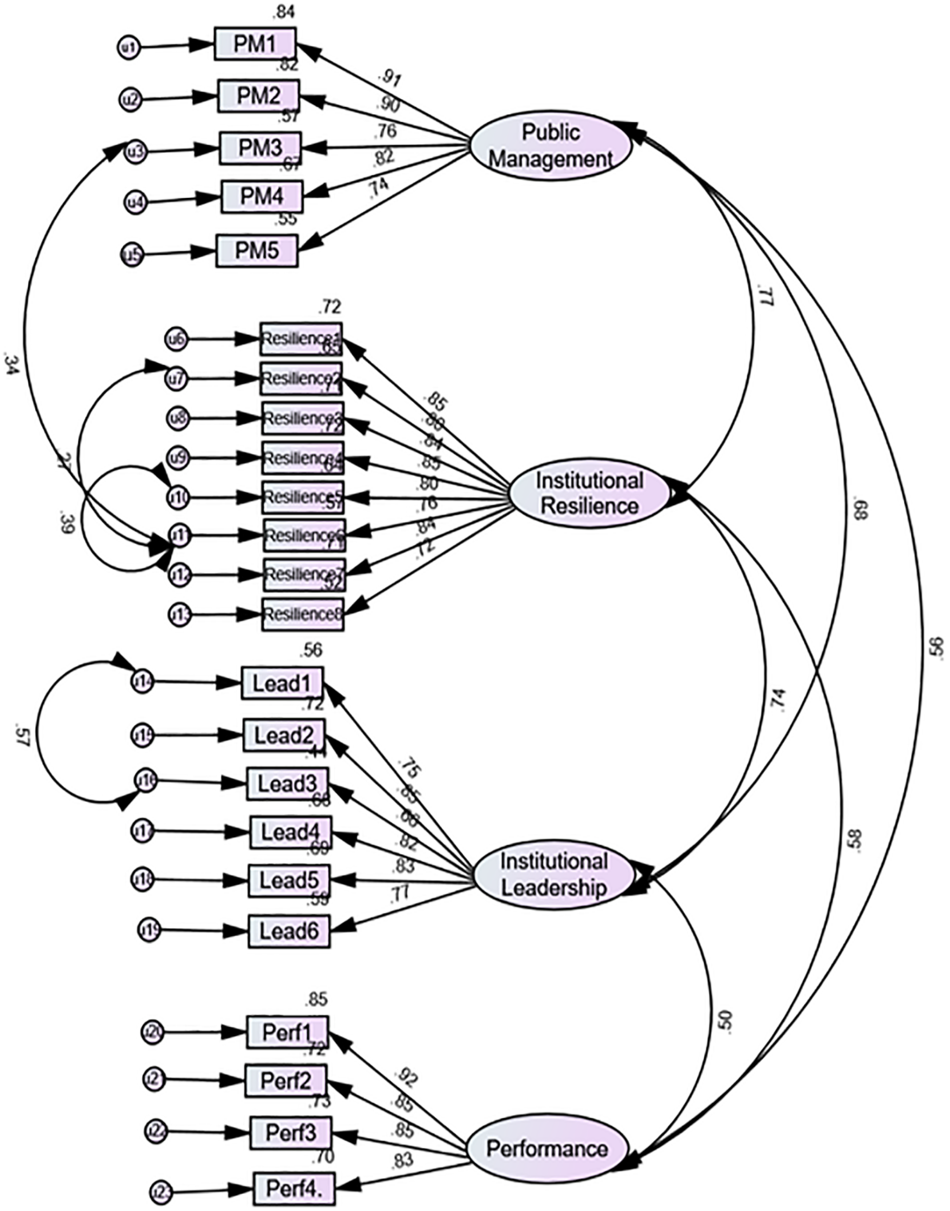


Diagram 1. CFA model. Source: author's calculation.

The correlation between the variables in the diagram can be better seen in the table below, and as we can see we have a satisfactory relation (with an estimate of 0.765) between Public Management and Resilience, which is a modest, but positive sign for our model testing and for our further analysis, and the same goes for Resilience and Leadership (0.744).

The weakest estimate is between Leadership and Performance (0.496), but it still considered acceptable. What we need to take into account is the fact that in this step, we are still testing the model, to see if it is a good fit, and only afterwards we can actually test the causality and relation of the variables.

Table 53. Correlations. Source: author's calculation.

Correlations			Estimate
Public Management	<-->	Resilience	0.765
Resilience	<-->	Leadership	0.744
Leadership	<-->	Performance	0.496
Public Management	<-->	Leadership	0.679
Resilience	<-->	Performance	0.579
Public Management	<-->	Performance	0.565

A better image of the percentage of influence can be seen in the table below, where we can look at the squared multiple correlations and pinpoint the level of influence or better said, with what percent each indicator explains the variable. For Public Management (PM) for example, PM1 explains 84% of the variable, whereas PM5 only 56%. Perf1 explains 86% of the Performance variable and Perf4 70%. For Leadership, we have 72% (Lead2) and 44% (Lead3) and for Resilience we have a range between 72% (Resilience1 and Resilience4) and 58% (Resilience6). These values are mainly to give you an idea of the communality estimates and how much the latent factors are accounted for.

Table 54. Squared Multiple Correlation. Source: author's calculation.

Squared Multiple Correlations	Estimate
My latest personal performance review will help me improve (PM5)	0.555
I receive appropriate recognition for my contributions and achievements at work (PM4)	0.672
Access to learning and development opportunities within your institution (PM3)	0.571

Squared Multiple Correlations	Estimate
I get adequate feedback on my performance from superiors (PM2)	0.817
My learning and development needs were adequately considered as part of the performance feedback discussion (PM1)	0.837
Improved the quality of your work (Perf4)	0.696
Customer or service user satisfaction was improved (Perf3)	0.73
The workplace (i.e., the place where the work is done) has been improved (Perf2)	0.718
Improved your job satisfaction (Perf1)	0.855
I get support from my manager when I propose new ideas (Lead6)	0.59
My supervisor deals with underperforming employees appropriately (Lead5)	0.686
My supervisor exhibits honesty and integrity (Lead4)	0.679
My supervisor deals with underperforming employees appropriately (Lead3)	0.439
My supervisor encourages me to develop my capabilities and/or skills needed for us (Lead2)	0.715
My supervisor encourages me (Lead1)	0.564
My institution operates with a high level of integrity (Resilience8)	0.519
My workplace provides realistic performance expectations (Resilience7)	0.709
Opportunities to develop skills (Resilience6)	0.574
Risk-assessment (Resilience5)	0.635
Change is well managed (Resilience4)	0.716
Promotion is based on merit (Resilience3)	0.714
My job offers opportunities to increase knowledge and/or experience in the field (Resilience2)	0.647
My workplace provides a good working relationship between manager and employees (Resilience1)	0.716

Moving on to the Model Fit results, the Chi-square value was of 628.179, with a degree of freedom (DF) of 220, which is promising because if the CMIN (Chi-square value) is significant, the model can't be considered valid to a certain degree. Furthermore, the P value (significance) is 0 (the accepted value or range is below 0.05), which again, gives us a good first impression.

Another indicator is the division of CMIN and DF (CMIN/DF), where values under 3 represent an acceptable fit (and values under 5 a reasonable fit), thus, our score of 2.855 indicates a well-constructed model.

Table 55. CMIN and DF values. Source: author's calculation.

CMIN (Chi-square value)

Model	NPAR	CMIN	DF	P	CMIN/DF
Default model	79	**628.179**	**220**	**0**	**2.855**
Saturated model	299	0	0		
Independence model	46	5460.992	253	0	21.585

Moving on with the initial analysis, we can see that in the Baseline Comparison table, we have the Normed Fit Index (NFI), Relative Fit Index (RFI), Incremental Fit Index (IFI), Tucker-Lewis's coefficient (TLI) and the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), all that should have values over 0.9.

In our case, we can see that NFI and RFI have pretty decent values (of 0.885 and 0.868), whereas the others have indeed obtained high values, especially CFI, based on which we can say that we have almost an excellent fit (usually values of 0.95 and above, but we are quite close).

Table 56. Baseline Comparison. Source: author's calculation.

Baseline Comparisons

Model	NFI	RFI	IFI	TLI	CFI
	Delta1	**rho1**	**Delta2**	**rho2**	
Default model	**0.885**	**0.868**	**0.922**	**0.91**	**0.922**
Saturated model	1		1		1
Independence model	0	0	0	0	0

An interesting result is related to the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), which, to a certain degree contradicts the abovementioned results, in the sense of having a value of 0.085, which means that is between acceptable and borderline.

Table 57. RMSEA values. Source: author's calculation.

RMSEA

Model	RMSEA	LO 90	HI 90	PCLOSE
Default model	**0.085**	0.077	0.092	0
Independence model	0.282	0.275	0.288	0

The RMSEA values are usually the main ones that should be looked at before making changes to the model or before including different changes, because it gives you an overview of the general fitting of the model.

In our case, we can consider the model decent and acceptable, thus the analysis can be continued, to create the variables and test them through linear regression and neuronal networks (multilayer perceptron) in SPSS after we normalized the data.

Table 58. Regression Weights and Standardized Regression Weights of indicators. Source: author's calculation.

Regression Weights	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Standardized Regression Weights	Estimate
Resilience1<---Res	1				Resilience1<---Res	0.846
Resilience2<---Res	1.047	0.066	15.956	***	Resilience2<---Res	0.805
Resilience3<---Res	1.1	0.064	17.289	***	Resilience3<---Res	0.845
Resilience4<---Res	0.989	0.057	17.34	***	Resilience4<---Res	0.846
Resilience5<---Res	0.896	0.057	15.718	***	Resilience5<---Res	0.797
Resilience6<---Res	0.886	0.06	14.676	***	Resilience6<---Res	0.758
Resilience7<---Res	1.006	0.058	17.192	***	Resilience7<---Res	0.842
Resilience8<---Res	0.766	0.057	13.504	***	Resilience8<---Res	0.721
Lead1<---Lead	1				Lead1<---Lead	0.751
Lead2<---Lead	0.909	0.065	13.955	***	Lead2<---Lead	0.846
Lead3<---Lead	0.839	0.053	15.968	***	Lead3<---Lead	**0.663**
Lead4<---Lead	0.801	0.059	13.561	***	Lead4<---Lead	0.824
Lead5<---Lead	0.94	0.069	13.633	***	Lead5<---Lead	0.828
Lead6<---Lead	0.785	0.063	12.542	***	Lead6<---Lead	0.768
Perf1<---Performance	1				Perf1<---Performance	0.925
Perf2<---Performance	0.906	0.046	19.826	***	Perf2<---Performance	0.847
Perf3<---Performance	0.839	0.042	20.194	***	Perf3<---Performance	0.854
Perf4<---Performance	0.874	0.046	19.175	***	Perf4<---Performance	0.834
PM1<---PublicManag	1				PM1<---PublicManag	0.915
PM2<---PublicManag	0.835	0.036	23.137	***	PM2<---PublicManag	0.904
PM3<---PublicManag	0.709	0.044	16.151	***	PM3<---PublicManag	0.756
PM4<---PublicManag	0.746	0.04	18.504	***	PM4<---PublicManag	0.819
PM5<---PublicManag	0.676	0.044	15.432	***	PM5<---PublicManag	0.745

In Table 58 above, we have the Regression Weights, with their estimates on standard error (S.E.) and critical ration (C.R.) and the Standardized Regression Weights with their estimates. To make it a valid model, the C.R. needs to be greater than 2, and the P value (the significance) less than 0.05. In our model, if we first look at the P value, we can see that all relations are significant, hence the "***" symbol (as given by AMOS). This is regarding the unstandardized regression weights, meaning that is important to look at those estimates alongside the standardized ones (as presented in the table above) to have a clearer image on the relation between the endogenous variable and its indicators. As we can see, we have positive and quite strong relations in our model, which again, gives an optimistic overview, overall because the indicators and the variables should have values of 0.7 and above, 1 representing a perfect fit. In our model we have these vales (of 1) for Resilience1<---Res, Lead1<---Lead, Perf1<---Performance and PM1<---PublicManag only because we set them as a controlling value. In our case, the lowest values, under the 0.7 threshold is 0.663 (in the Lead3<---Lead relationship) and the highest (excluding the values that were standardized at 1 as control points) is 0.904 (PM2<---PublicManag).

To conclude this section, we can confirm that our model is acceptable and we have a good, positive relation between our latent variables and our indicator variables. Usually, the number of respondents has a high impact on the validity and estimates of the variables and, in our case, we reached a decent number of respondents (260) to be able to have accurate results. Hence, the new created variables can be used in the analysis and in the following section where we answer the research questions of this research.

9.3. Answering the Research Questions

As mentioned in the beginning of the data analysis and results section, besides the main variables used to test the model, we created others that have a high importance and influence on both public management and institutional resilience, according to the literature review and based on the 5th chapter of this work. Henceforth, to answer the research questions, the following composed variables were used: resilience (Resilience), public management (PM), leadership (Lead), teamwork (Team), performance (Perform), organizational learning (OL), organizational culture (OC) and work-life balance (WLb).

Table 59. Correlation of the variables. Source: author's calculation.

Correlations

			Resilience	PM	Lead	Team	Perform	OL	WLb	OC
Spearman's rho	Resilience	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.148*	.126*	.058	.248**	.023	.095	.280**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.017	.042	.348	<.001	.710	.125	<.001
		N	260	260	260	260	260	260	260	260
	PM	Correlation Coefficient	.148*	1.000	.096	.050	.201**	.347**	-.046	.142*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.017	.	.123	.424	.001	<.001	.460	.022
		N	260	260	260	260	260	260	260	260
	Lead	Correlation Coefficient	.126*	.096	1.000	.056	.154*	.198**	.077	.121
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.042	.123	.	.365	.013	.001	.213	.051
		N	260	260	260	260	260	260	260	260
	Team	Correlation Coefficient	.058	.050	.056	1.000	-.044	.196**	.031	.104
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.348	.424	.365	.	.482	.001	.621	.094
		N	260	260	260	260	260	260	260	260
	Perform	Correlation Coefficient	.248**	.201**	.154*	-.044	1.000	.014	.102	.027
		Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	.001	.013	.482	.	.824	.101	.660
		N	260	260	260	260	260	260	260	260
	OL	Correlation Coefficient	.023	.347**	.198**	.196**	.014	1.000	-.030	.666**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.710	<.001	.001	.001	.824	.	.630	<.001
		N	260	260	260	260	260	260	260	260
	WLb	Correlation Coefficient	.095	-.046	.077	.031	.102	-.030	1.000	.023
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.125	.460	.213	.621	.101	.630	.	.711
		N	260	260	260	260	260	260	260	260
	OC	Correlation Coefficient	.280**	.142*	.121	.104	.027	.666**	.023	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	.022	.051	.094	.660	<.001	.711	.
		N	260	260	260	260	260	260	260	260

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

We will begin our data analysis by doing a correlation, to test an initial association and to see to what extend there is a positive, negative, strong or weak relation between the variables. Because the data was normalized, we used Spearman's test to have a better accuracy of the correlations. At first glance, we have quite optimistic results and we can see some relations forming already**. For resilience, we can see that the strongest correlation is with performance and organizational culture**, with a significance of 0.001 and a correlation coefficient positive, but medium (0.248 and 0.280 respectively). The correlation between resilience and public management is also significant (0.017) but nonetheless moderate as well (0.148) and the same goes for the relation with leadership (with a significance of 0.042 and a correlation coefficient of 0.126). The other correlations are not significant nor strong, but to have a better image, we will perform regressions as well.

For public management, we can see that besides resilience, there are also strong relations with performance, with a significance value of 0.001 and a correlation coefficient of 0.201 moderate but positive, **organizational learning** 0.001, with a better coefficient of 0.347 and lastly, with **organizational culture** (sig. of 0.022 and a coefficient of 0.142). Hence, from our initial data, we can say that there is a certain relation and influence between resilience and public management, alongside the fact that there are common elements that are present in both cases.

R.Q. 1: Which are the main elements that enhance New Public Management?

Table 60. Coefficients for the dependent variable: Public Management.
Source: author's calculation.

Coefficients[a]

Model B		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig. Tolerance	Collinearity Statistics	
		Std. Error	Beta				VIF	
1	(Constant)	.345	.071		4.881	<.001		
	Performance	.236	.057	.234	4.137	<.001	.977	1.023
	Leadership	-.046	.071	-.037	-.645	.519	.938	1.066
	Team	-.040	.067	-.034	-.592	.555	.942	1.062
	OC	-.245	.082	-.225	-3.001	.003	.559	1.790
	OL	.541	.084	.490	6.406	<.001	.535	1.868
	WLb	-.108	.058	-.105	-1.853	.065	.975	1.025

a. Dependent Variable: Public_Management

In order to answer R.Q. 1, we first need to do a regression to see which are the most influential variables. Firstly, we need to look at the collinearity statistics (Table 60) to make sure that the "tolerance" and "VIF" values are acceptable, which in our case they are, but the issue is related to OC and OL, are a little low (0.559 and 0.535) but still adequate for our analysis. Next, we should see the level of significance for each individual variable (Beta coefficient, t value and sig.). If we look at the Beta standardized coefficient, we can see that our values are moderate and the negative values can be justified because the data used to compose the variables was standardized. In terms of significance, we can see that all variables are influencing public management, with the exception of leadership (with a sig. of 0.519) and teamwork (sig. of 0.555), which are not statistically significant.

Table 61. ANOVA test for the dependent variable: Public Management.
Source: author's calculation.

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.353	6	.226	11.022	<.001b
	Residual	5.177	253	.020		
	Total	6.531	259			

a. Dependent Variable: Public_Management
b. Predictors: (Constant), WLb, OL, Performance, Team, Leadership, OC

After observing the significance of each individual variable, we can continue our analysis by looking at the ANOVA table and see the significance per total. In this case, we can see that indeed, **the independent variables used in the analysis, collectively are influencing the quality or the level of public management approaches used in the city halls analysed because we have a significance score of <.001, thus confirming our model once more.**

Table 62. Model summary for the dependent variable: Public Management.
Source: author's calculation.

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.455a	.207	.188	.14305

a. Predictors: (Constant), WLb, OL, Performance, Team, Leadership, OC
b. Dependent Variable: Public_Management

Lastly, we should also look at our R square values to see how much our dependent variable is explained by the independent ones and in our case, **new public management is explained by 18.8%-20% by the independent variables** used in our analysis, which again, confirms the validity of the model.

What we need to do next is to see which variables are the most influential and explain the best or enhance public management and its characteristics, from the abovementioned variables. To test this out and to complete answering the research question, we performed a neural network test using the multilayer perceptron function, as seen in the diagram below.

The Artificial Neural Network (ANN) is used to recognize and form patters, in relation to the variables and to process the information that was introduces and based on which it learned to form correlations through synapses (inputs) and their information flow, or weights, forming outputs (Gupta, 2013, p. 24). This model is used to identify and form patters in the model, based on the hidden layers and correlations that we feed the program with, because it is a technique based on machine-learning which tries to imitate human neurons and their connections through different data mining techniques. Hence, usually when trying to predict a model, we use 70% of our data for training the system and make it learn, and 30% in testing out model. In our case, we used 180 respondents for training, and 80 of them for testing (out of our total of 260 respondents).

As we can see in the diagram below, we have an input layer (variables that explain public management) and an output layer as well, alongside a hidden layer (the "Hs") or neurons, where mathematical equations were used to connect the input and output. If we look at the blue lines, we can see that those that are more evident, or bolded mean that we have a stronger connection between the variables.

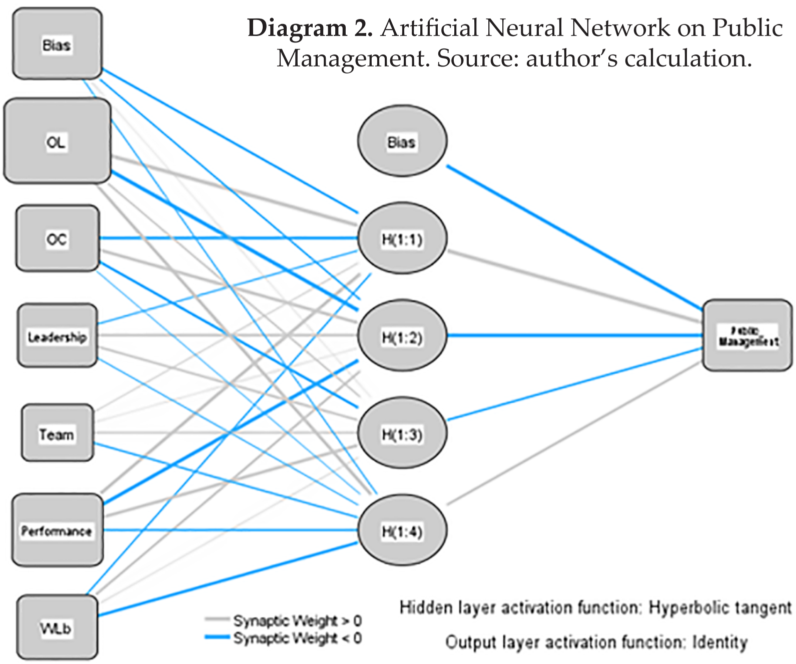


Diagram 2. Artificial Neural Network on Public Management. Source: author's calculation.

After multiple tests and training the program, we can see in the table below that we have the answer to our research question, with regards to enhancing public management. The values in the "Importance" column usually range from 0 to 1. The lower the value, the less importance the input variable has on the output one and the sum of importance should always be 1.

From the total of the variables tested, we can see that **organizational learning has the highest impact on new public management, with an importance score of 0.422**, immediately followed by performance (0.232) and organizational culture (0.140). Work-Life Balance (0.109) and leadership (0.094) got medium results of importance, whereas teamwork got the lowest score of 0.003 (having an importance of only 0.8% of the variable public management).

Table 63. Independent variable importance with the dependent: Public Management. Source: author's calculation.

Independent Variable Importance

	Importance	Normalized Importance
Organizational Learning	.422	100.0%
Organizational Culture	.140	33.2%
Leadership	.094	22.3%
Teamwork	.003	0.8%
Performance	.232	55.0%
Work-Life Balance	.109	25.8%
Total	1	

To conclude, we can say that organizational learning has the most impact on enhancing public management, based on the need of continuously adapting, being flexible and having a strategy that promotes the values, purpose and mission of the organization. This is why we need to be open to change and to find new tools to work more efficient and to increase our performance through adequate evaluation techniques, keeping our focus on results, rather than processes.

R.Q. 2: Which are the main elements that enhance institutional resilience?

Table 64. Coefficients for the dependent variable: Resilience.
Source: author's calculation.

Coefficients[a]

Model B		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig. Tolerance	Collinearity Statistics	
		Std. Error	Beta				VIF	
	(Constant)	.257	.073		3.518	<.001		
	Performance	.229	.059	.221	3.886	<.001	.977	1.023
	Leadership	.068	.074	.053	.920	.358	.938	1.066
1	Team	.108	.070	.090	1.554	.122	.942	1.062
	OC	.545	.084	.485	6.455	<.001	.559	1.790
	OL	-.436	.087	-.384	-5.000	<.001	.535	1.868
	WLb	.039	.060	.037	.645	.520	.975	1.025

a. Dependent Variable: Resilience

Same as we did earlier for R.Q. 1, we must perform a linear regression to see if indeed these elements also influence resilience, then to see to what extent they do so. Thus, as we can see in the table above, we have high and positive results with regard to the values of collinearity statistics, but again, organizational culture and learning got moderate scores. From the Beta coefficients and their significance, we can see that the variables: **performance, organizational culture and organizational learning are statistically significant, meaning that we indeed have a correlation between the dependent variable "resilience" and said independent variables**. On the other hand, as in the previous case, leadership and teamwork are not significant, alongside work-life balance which was added to the equation in this situation.

Table 65. ANOVA test for the dependent variable: Resilience.
Source: author's calculation.

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	1.392	6	.232	10.614	<.001b
1	Residual	5.531	253	.022		
	Total	6.923	259			

a. Dependent Variable: Resilience
b. Predictors: (Constant), WLb, OL, Performance, Team, Leadership, OC

As we can see from the ANOVA table, we have a significant relation between the dependent and independent variables, meaning that the indicators that we chose to test and analyze are valid and can tell us that there is a positive connection between them. Also, we can see that in the case of R square and the adjusted R square, the independent variables explain between 18%-20% of our dependent variable, hence our estimations are correct.

Table 66. Model summary for the dependent variable: Resilience. Source: author's calculation.

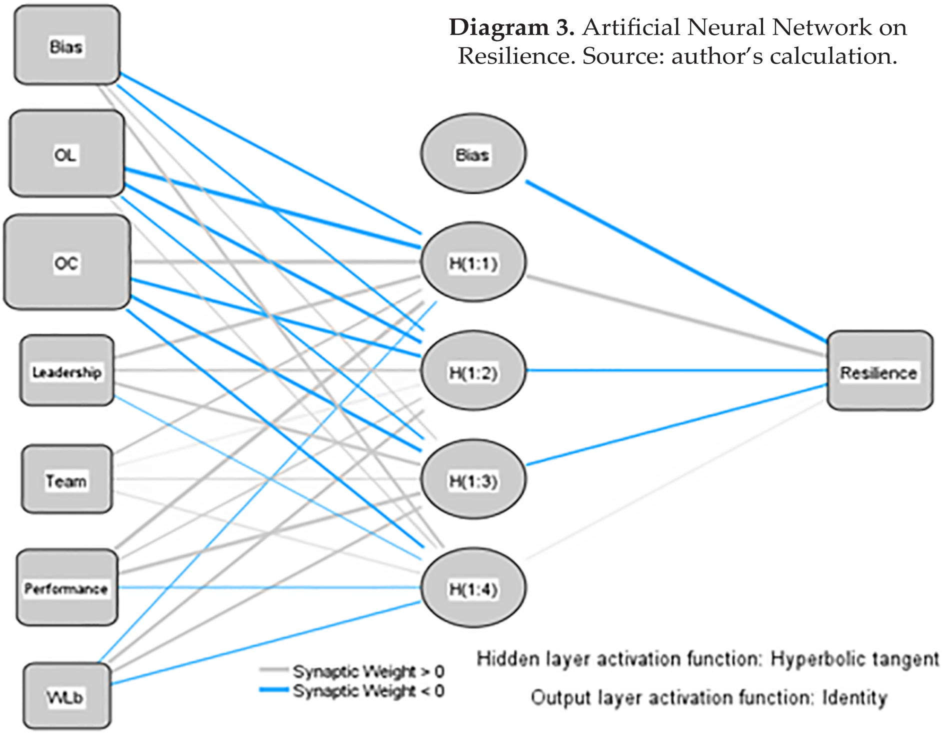
Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.448a	.201	.182	.14785

a. Predictors: (Constant), WLb, OL, Performance, Team, Leadership, OC
b. Dependent Variable: Resilience

To continue the analysis and to answer the research question, we also need to do an ANN test to see which variable has the highest importance and impact on enhancing institutional resilience. Therefore, we can see again the diagram for this test below and the inputs and output that were used. Already we can tell that organizational learning and culture are the most impactful out of all the variables (usually the size of the box increases when there are strong connections, alongside the blue line that becomes bolder when said connections are being made).

Diagram 3. Artificial Neural Network on Resilience. Source: author's calculation.



Based on the bolding of the lines in the diagram and based on the information provided in the table below, we can see that the **organizational culture (0.319) has the most impact on enhancing institutional resilience, alongside organizational learning (0.283) and performance (0.157)**. What we can take from this is the fact that these variables were also the most important and influential for public management as well, giving us an optimistic overview for this concluding section, but also for the general, main question regarding institutional resilience and managerial approaches in public institutions, mainly city halls and their importance.

Table 67. Independent variable importance with the dependent: Resilience. Source: author's calculation.

Independent Variable Importance

	Importance	Normalized Importance
Organizational Learning	.286	73.2%
Organizational Culture	.391	100.0%
Leadership	.085	21.6%
Teamwork	.055	14.0%
Performance	.157	40.1%
Work-Life Balance	.026	6.6%
Total	1	

As a concluding remark, we can say that the general work environment and the level of openness to change as a general value represent a crucial factor in promoting healthy ways to recover after shocks or adversity, helping the organizations not only to bounce back, but also forward. This is a very crucial aspect, especially because we talk about people and about people working with people, meaning what the public servants should be prepared for unexpected situations and specific needs that they might encounter.

Also, based on the general analysis performed in chapter 10 (Initial Results), we must enhance these characteristics if we want to create resilient city halls, especially because some of the scores were quite average, moderate and showed aspects that are not trained in this direction of development.

R.Q. 3: Is there a linkage between NPM and institutional resilience?

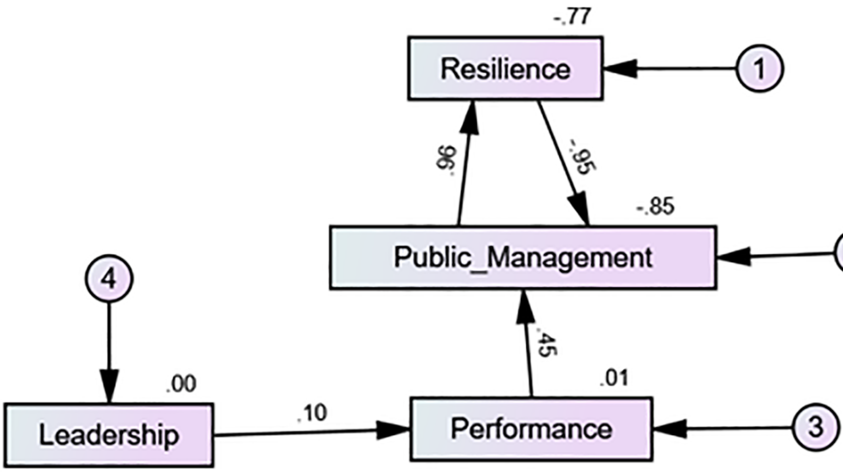


Diagram 4. Path-way model. Source: author's calculation.

After confirming the validity of the model, we can answer the R.Q. 3 by including the path-way model using the variables that we created. As we can see, we have positive relations between them, except the influence of Resilience over Public Management. **To some extent, we can say that public management has a positive influence on building institutional resilience (but a low one), but institutional resilience has a negative impact on building public management behaviours**. This can be motivated by the level of instability and sometimes exaggerated flexibility and constant change, which can delay, modify or even eliminate the possibility to build long-terms strategies and to also, implement, evaluate and make them sustainable. To fully confirm or infirm this, we need to further our analysis. The model also suggests that the relation (regardless if positive or negative) is quite weak, and an improvement of this model is recommended.

An explanation for the negative influence of resilience on public management, can reference the following: **when we talk about resilience we talk about dynamic environments, constant change** (but not for the sake of change) **and on the long run, this can have a negative effect on management because the vision or strategy must be changed, thus lacking linearity**, creating obstacles or delays in implementing said vision.

Table 68. ANOVA test of Resilience and Public Management.
Source: author's calculation.

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Mean Square	Sig.
1	Regression	0.044	0.044	.201b
	Residual	6.879	0.027	
	Total	6.923		

a. Dependent Variable: Resilience
b. Predictors: (Constant), Public Management

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Mean Square	Sig.
1	Regression	0.041	0.041	.201b
	Residual	6.489	0.025	
	Total	6.531		

a. Dependent Variable: Public Management
b. Predictors: (Constant), Resilience

To further test the correlation and linkage between resilience and public management, we performed a linear regression (table above) and an ANN test (table below) to see to what extend one is influenced by the other. What we can gather from the ANOVA test and the R square is the fact that **only 2% to 6% influence and correlate one variable to the other** (regardless of how we run the test), meaning that there are also other factors that actively contribute to enhancing and empowering each variable. This means that there is true potential to promote and further introduce both public management and institutional resilience, but what we can see here is that we lack training, know-how and proper tools to measure said indicators.

Table 69. ANN: Independent variable importance with the dependents: Resilience & Public Management. Source: author's calculation.

Independent Variable Importance

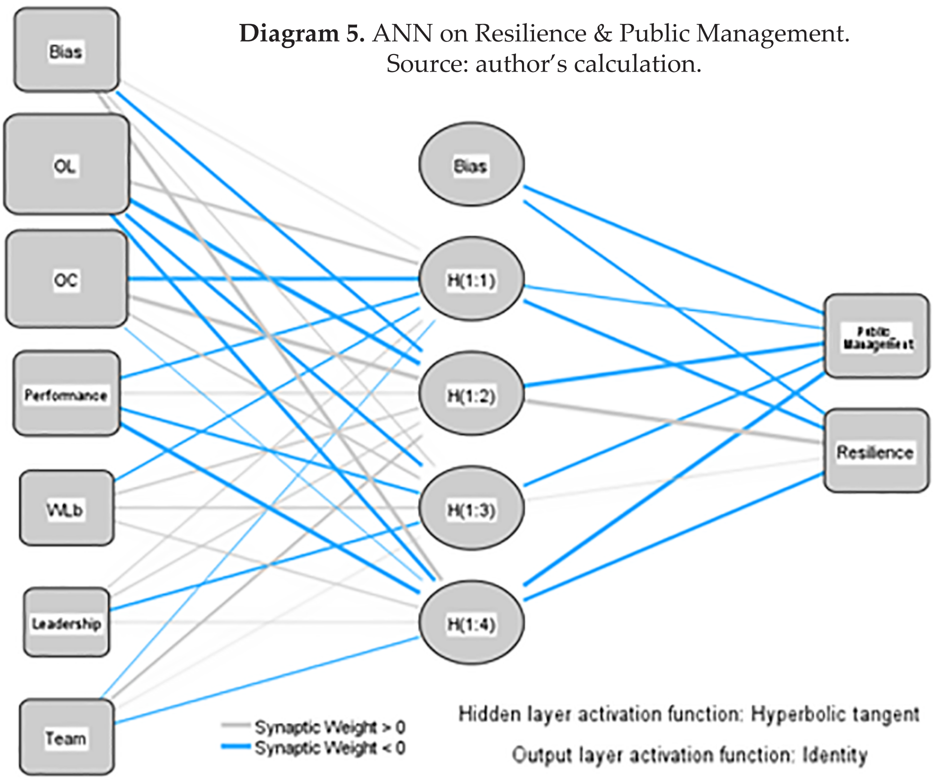
	Importance	Normalized Importance
Organizational Learning	0.356	80.4%
Organizational Culture	0.443	100.0%
Performance	0.112	25.3%
Public Management	0.088	19.9%

Independent Variable Importance

	Importance	Normalized Importance
Organizational Learning	0.470	100.0%
Organizational Culture	0.282	60.0%
Performance	0.143	30.4%
Resilience	0.106	22.5%

Lastly, we performed again an ANN analysis to see the level of importance of public management for institutional resilience and vice versa. As we can see from the table above, after training the system and including in the analysis only the most relevant and impactful variables, resilience has an impact of 0.106 on public management, whereas public management has a lessen impact, of only 0.088.

Diagram 5. ANN on Resilience & Public Management.
Source: author's calculation.



To confirm the trend that we have noticed, we ran the test again, using as outputs both variables that we want to test (institutional resilience and public management). From the level of importance, we concluded that organizational learning (0.334) and organizational culture (0.305) are the most impactful, alongside performance, with a moderate-low score (0.179).

Therefore, we can conclude that indeed there is a correlation and linkage between institutional resilience and public management, but this relation is influenced by external factors that have a direct effect on both elements. Meaning that there is real potential to correlate both elements and to enhance their positive effects, but to do so, other skills, mindsets and strategies need to be put in place, such as openness to change, introducing new methods or ways to perform daily activities, to educate, communicate and introduce a more innovative, performant and efficient approach of leaders. But the challenge here is related to the mentality of the individuals, their commodity and routine that is installed, alongside their resistance to change because those aspects will become obsolete.

Summary of general findings. Putting things into perspective

Table 70. Result summary and conclusion. Source: author's calculation.

Performance		
Lack of clear performance indicators; incoherent targets; unfair promotions or evaluations; lack of control from management; unrealistic standards; inadequate or inexistent feedback.	3.62	Evaluation is fair; I am aware of what my tasks are and what I need to respect them; the performance indicators are fair, achievable and realistic; we have periodic evaluations that are objective; clear feedback.
Leadership		
Lack of direction, unity, or clarity; my leader does not listen to me, I am not involved in the decision-making processes. I don't feel a connection.	3.97	My leader offers support, listens, and involves us in the decision-making process; if I have issues, I can openly talk to my superiors
Organizational Culture		
Lack of affiliation to the written and unwritten values of the organization; lack of diversity; lack of integrity and unity.	3.68	Affiliation to the written and unwritten values; diversity, acceptance, unity of the group; strong relations between staff, between staff and management.
Individual Resilience		
Fear of the unknown; inability to adapt; lack of support at the workplace; burnout; exhaustion; overworked.	3.74	Tools to overcome stress; adaptability and flexibility; capacity to understand, process and act under pressure.
Institutional Resilience		
Lack of coordination; change is frowned upon; low tolerance to uncertainty; inability to operate under stressful/uncertain situations.	3.71	Clear strategies to manage change or unknown situations; group reliability; risk-assessment tools; flexibility; adaptability.
Organizational Learning		
Rejection of change; unwilling to adapt, be flexible; low innovation levels and high barriers to innovation.	3.51	Interest in change, in discovering new things; moderate-high levels of innovation; environment that promotes learning.
Work-Life Balance		
Working long hours; lack of breaks; unrealistic deadlines; negative relations between staff, between staff and management.	3.41	Clear balance; realistic deadlines; good relations at the workplace.
Public Management		
Lack of long-term vision; lack of strategy; incoherent feedback or lack of it; unclear sense of direction; unclear meaning of success.	3.59	Having a vision and a strategy; clear ways to evaluate the staff and increase performance; common sense of direction and understanding of success.

In the table above, we have "concluding remarks" regarding our data and our analysis for this research, and as we can see, most of the scores are average, with **the highest score for leadership** (3.97), immediately being followed by **individual resilience** (3.74) and the **lowest for work-life balance** (3.41), similar to the data presented in the beginning of this section. As we saw at the beginning of the analysis, things look good in terms of human resources, but not so good in terms of performance, resources and resource allocation (value for money), which are crucial to have a good, clear coordination of attribution and a result-oriented approach to better respond to the needs of their communities.

As the argument was raised in the primary data analysis, we can have a great, united team, we can have an understanding and open leader (or leadership style), but all these are obsolete if we lack strategic-thinking, if we lack the proper tools to develop and to help us adapt. But not only to have the proper tools, but to also know how to use them and when to use them. This is why there is a need to learn and apply new skills, new knowledge in the current approach, because those used in the present are no longer valid and are insufficient, even delaying their development level.

Based on the literature review, the secondary and primary data analysis, we can state that new public management and public management elements are present and are influenced by other aspects, as we saw, but there is a lot of room for improvement and there are some necessary changes that need to be made, in order to enhance both public management and resilience at the same time. To answer to the general question "**Institutional resilience can be increased by implementing public management approaches?**", **yes, it can be enhanced, as we saw earlier public management has a positive correlation with resilience, but not the other way around.**

This can be argued by the fact that the latter is usually found (to a certain extent) in more "organic" environments, which are characterized by dynamism, constant change, constant alteration of the way things usually work to adapt to the external environment of the organization. Whereas "mechanical" systems are more focused on the structure, rules, processes, and overall "formality" of the organization. These aspects suggest that organizations with strong and clear public management approaches are in a way a hybrid of the two, because we have flexibility, adaptability, and openness to change, but at the same time we have a clear set of values, a clear direction, and a clear way to get there.

This means, in a way, that **organizations with a high level of resilience have a negative effect on the practices of public management because** the latter requires usually a long-term vision, clear performance measurements, clear tools to implement said strategy and clear evaluation tools for the results, alongside a sustainability plan. Ergo, in some scenarios these elements are contradicting themselves, but only to a certain degree. As we saw in the data analysis, both elements are present and there is a moderate correlation between the two, henceforth, they can also have a positive impact on organizations.

Lastly, what we saw here is the fact that not only public management approaches are valid (based also on the secondary data analysis), but also Weberian, neo-Weberian, new governance, eGovernance approaches at the same time. Because for a new reform to take place, it doesn't eliminate the old one, but merely builds on it, thus creating this hybridization effect, including different elements from different concepts, to fit the general idea.

The issue here is when there is not enough know-how on how to do it and if the context of the region, country or community is overlooked, then we can end up having a reform that doesn't fit our needs, interests or vision. And this is an issue that was observed in our case study on the city halls of Romania. Hence, **institutional resilience can be used to enhance public management, but to a certain degree, to protect a level of stability and direction, to make sure that we can develop strategies that are adapted to the needs of the regions, promoting at the same time sustainability and innovation**. Moreover, it seems that it is mostly the other way around, where public management approaches (if implemented correctly) can positively contribute to create resilient institutions, because they promote flexibility, adaptability and embrace change. And this can be an idea and a perspective that can be taken into consideration by public officials, theoreticians and future researches, an idea that can be used in future research, to be tested and to see if it is truly a valid argument; but for the time being, this is a general conclusion that can be brought up, based on the data and results analysis.

10. LIMITATIONS

As in most cases, especially when working with primary data, the response rate is the main limitation of the research, which limits the accuracy of the results and the relevance of the recommendations. For this reason, a comparative analysis between the regions in question was useless and irrelevant, and the approach of this research had to be modified in order to make the most of the data collected so far.

One observation that can be made here is the fact that in cases where respondents had to fill out the survey on paper, the response rate was higher compared to those who received it online, through Google Forms. Also, the Southern region had the lowest response rate to the invitation to fill out the form, while Bucharest-Ilfov had one of the highest response rates, even though the survey was sent online, and in the North-East and North-West regions, the survey was delivered and filled out on paper due to accessibility.

Furthermore, we took into account the potential bias of respondents due to social desirability, so the results are to some extent affected by this factor and an objective picture reflecting reality was hindered to some extent. Another limitation may be the instrument itself, which can be adapted in future research in order to better test the model and to have a better picture of how things work and what we can do to make them better, in terms of solutions, recommendations, and systems that can be developed to help Romanian town halls to be more flexible and responsive to the needs of their communities.

11. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

An interesting aspect that should be mentioned right from the beginning is the fact that for R.Q. 1 and R.Q. 2, *performance, organizational culture* and *organizational learning* were the most relevant indicators for both institutional resilience and NPM. This is supported by the fact that during the ANN tests, the latter indicators (OC and OL) were the most important in building and improving the points of interest of this research. This can be argued by the fact that in both cases we need an open environment that promotes change, constant learning, and clear performance indicators that can simultaneously support resilience and NPM.

Moving on, the things we should consider when trying to build a resilient institution using public management tools is to **integrate planning and budgeting systems that are correlated with current needs**. To achieve the above, we also need to have an integrated management style by establishing clear, focused and identifiable outputs. This action can be further developed by having improved incentives for performance standards that can, to some extent, resemble resilient and more comprehensive market-based management systems.

What we can say, based on what we have seen and analyzed in this research, is that there is an apparent lack of coordination, know-how and strategy in trying to adapt new reforms. This may be due to the fact that the remnants of previous reforms have started to accumulate, and instead of simplifying the system, they have only made it more complicated, burdensome, unwieldy, and with more obstacles when trying to implement changes. Furthermore, we can say that new public management approaches are more difficult to implement in unstable environments or institutions, especially when bureaucracy is the dominant common denominator and the focus is mainly on process and not necessarily on results. Ergo, the creation of a rigid and hostile environment that doesn't allow improvements or is intimidating in a way to transform the reform because of the way they overlap.

We have also seen a discrepancy between the regions in terms of development and resource allocation, which is also an obstacle to adapting a more modern reform that is able to respond to the needs of citizens, alongside the external pressures that come from investors, stakeholders or international organizations. To continue this argument, these external pressures are also the reason why, since the fall of communism, we haven't been able to have a reform adapted to our needs, because the change was radical, abrupt and we didn't have the right tools or knowledge to implement it adapted to our context, thus starting this avalanche of bad, bad decisions and inadequate implementation. So, the question is, should we go back to a classic Weberian reform to try to undo the damage? Because some of the literature says that a neo-Weberian approach to the state is more appropriate for developing countries or countries that are not developed enough to have a long-term vision and strategic thinking. At the same time, corruption is another key element that hinders a well-managed, logical and adapted reform, making it difficult to introduce objective and quantifiable performance evaluation tools, to increase the efficiency of institutions and to weed out the "bad apples". **But what to do when the system is rotten to the core? How do we change it and how do we manage it?** These are other aspects that need to be looked at and to try to find solutions, not behind closed doors, but with the involvement of other actors, stakeholders (i.e., citizens, NGOs and the private sector) who can bring real solutions to the table.

This quadruple helix approach is already working in some of the more developed cities and town halls, but the blueprint should be shared with the less developed ones in both rural and urban areas to reduce the discrepancies mentioned earlier. Because there is potential, as we have seen, there is a certain level of performance, it would be wrong to say that there is none, but there is also a lot of room for improvement. We have a good start because the relationship between employees is strong, there is a union, there is an organizational culture that has structure, longevity and strength; therefore, changes can be implemented, especially if participation, communication and interaction are embedded as core values, along with transparency.

We still have this "communist heritage", but that doesn't mean that performance can't be improved, but to do so it is necessary to develop a relationship between the evaluators and the evaluated, to improve the way ANFP or internal reviews are carried out, and not only that, but also to offer feasible solutions and to involve all interested parties in the decision-making process to reduce resistance to change.

As far as the work-life balance is concerned, the data collected show that there is a need for a better structure and a better alignment in terms of the distribution of responsibilities, since this issue, together with accountability, can reduce motivation, performance or interest. Innovation was another aspect that was lacking, especially in the eastern part of the country, which may be related to budgetary constraints, lack of incentives and political instability (see Table 11).

Considering that organizational culture and organizational learning were the most influential aspects (see Diagram 5) for public management and institutional resilience, this should be the aspect that should be trained and developed more. There should be better coordination between institutions, between institutions and stakeholders (including citizens). We should promote and embrace change, we should promote a culture that is open to new ways of doing things, to be more efficient, to get value for money, to have a holistic approach and to be open to discussion with citizens, investors and other relevant stakeholders, to develop multiple parts of the community, not just certain parts.

Because this is a constant problem, especially when it comes to important decisions, the fact that everyone keeps to themselves, ergo differences in development between regions, together with a lack of know-how on how to use resources, how to invest in projects and how to solve problems that affect their community. And this only leads to a bad image in front of the public and a lack of trust, which makes the institutions an indirect reason for the negative demographic growth.

As mentioned earlier, we don't have just "new public management", but a hybrid of traditional public administration, new public management, post-new public management, and all of the above. But regardless of the overlapping of reforms, we need to find out which aspects work better for us, for our context (both regional and national), and improve those elements while trying to eliminate as much as possible those that don't, without "sweeping them under the rug" as we sometimes tend to do.

In conclusion, **if we focus more on the elements or characteristics that apply to our specific needs or shortcomings, we can increase institutional resilience, contribute positively to strengthening strategic alignments, and promote knowledge-based management along with a holistic management style that improves accountability, performance, and organizational glue**. At the same time, we should continue to promote a market-based and competitive approach, to improve incentives based on results, and to have clear laws and regulations that work in favor of these values and don't end up being just another burden, as is happening in some cases right now.

But it will take a lot of work and a lot of coordination and a lot of resources to make sure that everybody is on the same page and that we can finally say that we have really efficient, competent, and innovative public institutions. And that change, if it ever happens, should be incremental, not radical. It will take a long time, and it will involve multiple aspects that need to be taken into account, otherwise it will just be another reform piled on top of the others.

Henceforth, there is capacity and potential, what we need is openness to change and real involvement of all concerned, not only in the more developed regions of the country. Knowledge is a powerful tool that must be shared in order to improve the quality of life, attract new investors, develop new projects and try to erase the "mistakes of the past". In this way, we can be more resilient, more prepared when adversity comes, so that we are not only able to bounce back, but also to bounce forward, to learn and implement new skills, making us more capable, more efficient, more flexible and more adaptable. **So yes, institutional resilience can be enhanced through public management approaches, but only if it's done right.**

11.1. Practical Implication

Taking all this into consideration, a good proposal for action would be to implement a balanced scorecard approach (Kaplan and Norton, 1995; FreeBalance, 2021) to help introduce change, correctly identify the vision, mission and goals of the institutions, and help them develop a strategy-based culture. Because, as we have seen, this is a problem in most places, the lack of vision, direction or knowledge of how to improve performance and be open to change.

Introduced in 1992 by Robert S. Kaplan, the *Balanced Scorecard* is designed to help the private sector improve its management and use of resources and increase its bottom line by providing a "comprehensive framework for translating an organization's strategic goals into a coherent set of performance indicators" (Kaplan and Norton, 1995, p. 66), and it was latter adapted and used by the public sector as well, to help governments organize better and develop a strategic way of doing things.

To develop a balanced scorecard, an organization must first set its vision and state its mission and its definition (What is the purpose of its existence and where does it see itself in the future?). Next, we develop our strategy based on four main aspects: a *financial perspective*, where we look at budgets (cash flows for the private sector), resource distribution, an *internal perspective* (team management, the products and services that we provide, efficiency levels, etc.), a *customer perspective* (sometimes a stakeholder or shareholder for private; satisfaction, the relationship between parts) and a *learning and growth perspective* where we try to find methods to improve the way we do things and to be open to change. In some cases, a fifth element is introduced, a *sustainable and development perspective*, where we set continuous objectives for the long term, on key aspects, crucial for our existence and well-being.

Going forward, we believe that by implementing this approach, we can help public institutions become more results-oriented, focused, open, and efficient, increasing their capacity and accountability, while at the same time meeting long-term projects or goals. To do this, we first need to identify some key issues or sectors that need to be addressed, such as digitalization, education, health, security, environmental issues, and administrative capacity. Next, using the model provided by Kaplan, we identify our most relevant and important goals that need to be addressed. In this way, the responsibilities of public officials are clear and straightforward, and performance, innovation, and the overall organizational design can be better measured because we can look at the outputs and results for each aspect directly or indirectly. An example of this is shown in the figure below:

Figure 33. Balanced scorecard example. Source: author's interpretation

The figure illustrates a potential approach to conducting brainstorming sessions among institutions to identify the most relevant aspects of their community, develop quantifiable objectives, and evaluate these objectives. It is important to note that this process is more complex than what is depicted in the figure. Therefore, the involvement of experts and consultants is recommended to ensure a comprehensive and effective outcome.

The figure depicts a three-step process: (1) establishing a foundation through the creation of a skeleton, (2) refining the skeleton through iterative adjustments, and (3) defining the specific actions and methods required to achieve the desired outcome. This can be utilized as a foundation to develop a "blueprint" that can be tailored to the specific needs and context of each community, thereby reducing development disparities between regions.

Lastly, we also need a **Sustainable Development** plan, to make sure that the change becomes the new *status quo* and the institutions have a clear sense of direction and an action plan for the future, meaning:

Economic growth (FreeBalance, 2021) – to make sure that the financial resources are equitable distributed in the community and that vulnerable groups have access to their basic needs; funding should be made based on importance and not necessarily based on urgency, to ensure that the most vital services from the community are provided with their essentials (schools, hospitals, social services, etc.).

Social equity (FreeBalance, 2021) – promote and protect inclusion of vulnerable or marginalized groups by providing them access to health, social, educational services, alongside support for employment where is the case; monitor their level of security and make sure that their human rights are protected.

Environmental protection (FreeBalance, 2021) – improve the systems that monitor pollution; promote and offer opportunities to increase the usage of green energy; conserve and protect vulnerable areas; promote and educate on recycling and ease the access for individuals to do so.

Digitalization – introduce new technologies that can positively support the relation between citizens and institutions and between institutions and stakeholders; facilitate services in a more efficient and simplified way, whilst enhancing data protection and security; reduce the red tape by digitizing and digitalizing essential and frequently used services.

This model can be a useful tool for City Halls to have a better image of their direction and to improve their performance levels through a market-oriented approach, as well as a support for change, adaptation and for their flexibility in decision making, especially in case of adversity. For this to work, the city halls in question should work with experts and consultants to help them identify real needs, shortcomings and realistic solutions, in a way that gives them guidelines on how to approach and work on improving their way of working and building resilience at the same time.

A drawback here is the fact that this is a long-term process, an aspect that can be a problem for some due to political (election) factors, causing certain delays in achieving the goals set in the Balanced Scorecard. But the main issue we face here is to what extent there is openness to test the model and to what extent there are sufficient resources to carry out this plan. An interesting idea would be to try it as a pilot, in a less developed region that lacks the aspects analyzed in the research, and see if this model really helps to increase the administrative capacity of the city hall, or if it needs to be improved.

11.2. Further Research

First of all, the model should be improved and the tool should be better adapted to our specific interest, based on the research done so far. This way, we can have a better understanding of the elements that influence (positively or negatively) public management and institutional resilience, and what are their effects on the overall development of city halls and how they can be improved, what strategies we can use in this regard. But we can say that the model was modest but satisfactory, considering that this was an exploratory research and approach.

Secondly, to insist and increase the response rate to the point where a comparative analysis can be done, to see exactly where each region stands and to develop case studies on the best scenario or practices and the worst scenario, ergo to learn more about how others can prosper and others can't. By doing so, we can actually offer tailored solutions and guidelines to the specific needs of each region, based on the data we collect and analyze, based on the context, level of development, allocation and use of resources.

Third, with extended research, and presumably with enough respondents, we can also see whether institutions that implement public management approaches and strategies are indeed more resilient than those that don't. This means that a sustained and long-term analysis should be conducted to analyze institutions before a shock, during a shock, and in the recovery period after the shock. In this case, the pandemic could serve as an appropriate point and we can look at aspects such as (before, during, after): response rate, administrative capacity, level of digitization, performance measurements, citizen satisfaction, cooperation and coordination between institutions.

Finally, the research can also be extended to see the level of involvement of citizens, private actors, NGOs, SMEs and other relevant stakeholders (in addition to their general satisfaction) and how city halls can respond to their needs and what strategies can be introduced or implemented to improve the relationship and cooperation between them, thus promoting a quadruple, maybe even a quintuple approach. If this is put into practice and clear results can be obtained, we can have a holistic development of the communities in question, because the majority of needs will be taken into account in the decision-making process.

We need to understand how interconnected things are, especially today. We need to develop adequate tools to try to see how we can create quadruple, even quintuple helix model approaches, how we can integrate the needs, ideas, resources of citizens, universities, NGOs and the private sector (hence the need for a holistic approach). Public institutions need to understand and take advantage of the added value that these interactions can bring, and let civil society help them model, change and adapt their reform in a way that benefits all parties. In order to do this, we should continue to deepen our analysis and try to identify the specific needs and the specific solutions that can lead us to a reform of public administration that can promote and foster institutional resilience.

Not all change is good, and not all change brings development, but that doesn't mean we should run away from it, it means we should embrace it, think strategically, and have a very clear idea of where we want to go and find the right tools to get there in a sustainable, innovative and resilient way.

REFERENCES

1. Aall, P., "Building Resilience and Social Cohesion in Conflict', 2019, *Global Policy*, vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 68-75.
2. Abdel-Maksoud, A., Elbanna, S., Mahama, H. and Pollanen, R., "The Use of Performance Information in Strategic Decision Making in Public Organizations', 2015, *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, vol. 28, no. 7, pp. 528-549.
3. Agenția Națională a Funcționarilor Publici (ANFP), "Rezultatul 5 – Sistemul de Management al Performanței. Livrabilul 5.1 Analiza sistemului de management al performanței', (Outcome 5 – Performance Management System. Deliverable 5.1 Analysis of the performance management system) August 2020, [Online] at https://www.anfp.gov.ro/R/Doc/2021/Proiecte/SIPOCA%20136/Output-uri/5.1%20Performance%20Management%20analysis_revizuit%20RO,%20November%2005,%202020.pdf, accessed on March 12, 2023.
4. Agenția pentru Dezvoltare Regională București-Ilfov (ADRBI), "Planul de dezvoltare regională București-Ilfov 2021-2027' (Bucharest-Ilfov Regional Development Plan 2021-2027), October 2022, [Online] at https://www.adrbi.ro/dezvoltare-regionala/planificare-regionala/pdr-bi-2021-2027/, accessed on March 9, 2023.
5. Agenția pentru Dezvoltare Regională Centru (ADRC), "Planul de dezvoltare regională Centru 2021-2027' (Center Regional Development Plan 2021-2027), April 2020, [Online] at http://www.adrcentru.ro/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/4.-Strategia-de-Dezvoltare-Regionala-2021-2027.pdf, accessed on March 9, 2023.
6. Agenția pentru Dezvoltare Regională Nord-Est (ADRNE), „Planul de dezvoltare regională Nord-Est 2021-2027' (North-East Regional Development Plan 2021-2027), January 2023, [Online] at https://www.adrnordest.ro/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/PDR-Nord-Est-2021-2027-ian-2023.pdf, accessed on March 8, 2023.
7. Agenția pentru Dezvoltare Regională Nord-Vest (ADRNV), "Planul de dezvoltare regională Nord-Vest 2021-2027' (North-West Regional Development Plan 2021-2027), February 2021, [Online] at

https://www.nord-vest.ro/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/PDR-NV-2021-2027-versiunea-feb-2021.pdf, accessed on March 8, 2023.

8. Agenția pentru Dezvoltare Regională Sud Muntenia (ADRMuntenia), "Planul de dezvoltare regională Sud Muntenia 2021-2027' (South Muntenia Regional Development Plan 2021-2027), September 2022, [Online] at https://www.adrmuntenia.ro/index.php/planul-de-dezvoltare-al-regiunii-sud--muntenia-20212027/static/1315, accessed on March 9, 2023.

9. Agenția pentru Dezvoltare Regională Sud-Est (ADRSE), 'Programul Operațional Regional pentru Regiunea Sud-Est 2021-2027', (The Southeast Regional Operational Program 2021-2027), June 2020, [Online] at https://www.adrse.ro/POR_2021/PR_ADRSE, accessed on March 9, 2023.

10. Agenția pentru Dezvoltare Regională Sud-Vest (ADRSV), "Planul de dezvoltare regională Sud-Vest 2021-2027' (South-West Regional Development Plan 2021-2027), August 2022, [Online] at https://www.adroltenia.ro/planul-de-dezvoltare-regionala-2021-2027/, accessed on March 9, 2023.

11. Agenția pentru Dezvoltare Regională Vest (ADRV), "Planul de dezvoltare regională Vest 2021-2027' (Western Regional Development Plan 2021-2027), November 2020, [Online] at https://adrvest.ro/strategia-pentru-dezvoltare-a-regiunii-vest-pentru-perioada-2021-2027-in-consultare-publica/, accessed on March 8, 2023.

12. Aldrich, D.P., "It's who You Know: Factors Driving Recovery from Japan's 11 March 2011 Disaster', 2016, Public Administration, vol. 94, no. 2, pp. 399-413.

13. Alvesson, M., "Organizational Culture; Meaning, Discourse, and Identity', in Ashkanasy, N.M., Wilderom, C.P.M. and Peterson, M.F. (eds.), The Handbook of Organizational Culture and Climate, 2nd edition, Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore, Washington D.C.: SAGE Publications, 2011, pp. 11-28.

14. Amirkhani, T., Aghaz, A. and Sheikh, A., "An Implementation Model of Performance-Based Budgeting', 2019, International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management, vol. 69, no. 2, pp. 382-404.

15. Amundsen, S. and Martinsen, O.L., "Empowering Leadership: Construct Clarification, Conceptualization, and Validation of a New Scale', 2014, Leadership Quarterly, vol. 25, no. 3, pp. 487-511.

16. Andrews, R. and van de Walle, S., "New Public Management and Citizens' Perception of Local Service Efficiency, Responsiveness,

Equity and Effectiveness', 2013, Public Management Review, vol. 15, no. 5, pp. 762-783.

17. Andrianu, B., Neamțu, B. and Țigănașu, R., "Institutions and Governance', in Bănică, A., Eva, M., Iațu, C., Nijkamp, P. and Pascariu G.C. (eds.), The European Atlas of Resilience, Iași: Universitatea „Alexandru Ioan Cuza", 2021, pp. 56-67.

18. Androniceanu, A., "New Public Management, a Key Paradigm for Reforming Public Management in Romanian Administration', 20017, Academy of Economic Studies, Bucharest, Administration and Public Management Review, no. 8, pp. 154-161.

19. Ansell, C. and Gash, A., "Collaborative Governance in Theory and Practice', 2007, Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory, vol. 18, pp. 543-571.

20. Arnold, J. and Drasgow, F., "The Empowering Leadership Questionnaire: The Construction and Validation of a New Scale for Measuring Leader Behaviors', 2000, Journal of Organizational Behavior, vol. 21, pp. 249-269.

21. Bănică, A., Eva, M., Iațu, C., Nijkamp, P. and Pascariu G.C., The European Atlas of Resilience, Iași: Universitatea „Alexandru Ioan Cuza", 2021.

22. Bell, M.A., "The Five Principles of Organizational Resilience', 2002, [Online] at https://www.gartner.com/resources/103600/103658/103658.pdf, accessed November 15th, 2020.

23. Bensman, J., "Mediterranean and Total Bureaucracies: Some Additions to the Weberian Theory of Bureaucracy', 1987, International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 62–108.

24. Beriv, M., Governance: A Very Short Introduction, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

25. Bouckaert, G., "From NPM to NWS in Europe', 2022, Transylvanian Review of Administrative Sciences, special issue, pp. 22-31.

26. Bourgon, J., "Responsive, Responsible and Respected Government: Towards a New Public Administration Theory', 2007, International Review of Administrative Sciences, vol. 73, no. 1, pp. 7-26.

27. Braşov Chamber of Commerce and Industry – Braşov in numbers, 2016, [Online] at http://www.ccibv.ro/despreBraşov/statistici, accessed on November 19th, 2019.

28. Braşov.2030 – Strategia de dezvoltare durabilă a municipiului Braşov 2030 (Braşov's 2030 Sustainable Development Strategy), [Online] at http://www.Braşovcity.ro/documente/public/constructii-urbanism/Strategia-dezvoltare/Strategia%20de%20dezvoltare%20a%20Municipiului%20Braşov.pdf, accessed on January 13, 2020.

29. Bresser-Pereira, L.C., "The Structural Public Governance Model and the Implementation of the Millennium Development Goals', in Bertucci, G. and Rosenbaum, A. (eds.), Implementing the Millennium Development Goals: Challenges and Responses for Public Administration, New York: United Nations, 2007, pp. 29-47.

30. Bryson, J.M., "A Strategic Planning Process for Public and Non-profit Organizations', 1988, Long Range Planning, vol. 21, no. 1, pp. 73-81.

31. Bryson, J.M., "Strategic Planning and Management', in Peters, B.G. and Pierre J. (eds.), The SAGE Book of Public Administration, 2nd edition, Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore, Washington DC: SAGE Publishing, 2012, pp. 50-64.

32. Burnside-Lawry, J. and Carvalho, L., "A Stakeholder Approach to Building Community Resilience: Awareness to Implementation', 2016, International Journal of Disaster Resilience in the Built Environment, vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 4-25.

33. Calogero, M., "The Introduction of New Public Management Principles in the Italian Sector', 2010, Transylvanian Review of Administrative Sciences, no. 30E, pp. 30-54.

34. Cameron, K.S. and Quinn, R.E., Diagnosis and Changing Organizational Culture Based on the Competing Values Framework, 3rd edition, San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2011.

35. Cepiku, D. and Meneguzzo, M., "Public Administration Reform in Italy: A Shopping-basket Approach to the New Public Management or the New Weberianism?', 2011, International Journal of Public Administration, vol. 34, pp. 19-25.

36. Cepiku, D. And Mititelu, C., "Public Administration Reforms in Transition Countries: Albania and Romania Between the Weberian Model and the New Public Management', in Matei, L. and Flogaitis, S. (eds.), Public Administration in the Balkans. From Weberian Bureaucracy to New Public Management, București: Editura Economică, 2011, pp. 299-322.

37. Cepiku, D. and Mititelu, C., "Public Administration Reforms in Transition Countries: Albania and Romania between the Weberian

Model and the New Public Management Model', 2010, Transylvanian Review of Administrative Sciences, no. 30E, pp. 55-76;

38. Chakrabarty, B. and Chand, P., Public Administration in a Globalizing World. Theories and Practice, India: SAGE Publishing, 2012.

39. Cheung, A.B., "The Politics of Administrative Reforms in Asia: Paradigms and Legacies, Paths and Diversities', 2005, Governance: An International Journal of Policy, Administration, and Institutions, vol. 18, no. 2, pp. 257-282.

40. Christensen, T. and Laegreid, P., "Administrative Reforms in Western Democracies', in Peters, B.G. and Pierre J. (eds.), The SAGE Book of Public Administration, 2nd edition, Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore, Washington DC: SAGE Publishing, 2012, pp. 511-523.

41. Christensen, T. and Lægreid, P., "Ethics and Administrative Reforms. A Study of Ethical Guidelines in the Central Civil Service', 2011, Public Management Review, vol. 13, no. 3, pp. 459-477.

42. Christensen, T. and Lægreid, P., "Symposium on Accountability, Publicity & Transparency New Public Management: Puzzles of Democracy and the Influence of Citizens', 2002, The Journal of Political Philosophy, vo. 10, no. 3, pp. 267-295.

43. Colak, C.D., "Why the New Public Management is Obsolete: An Analysis in the Context of the Post-New Public Management Trend' 2019, Administrative Theory – Upravna Teorija (HKJU-CCA), vol. 19, no. 4, pp. 517-536.

44. Collins, J.C., and Porras, J.I., "Building Your Company's Vision', 1996, Harvard Business Review, pp. 63-77.

45. Consiliul Județean Vrancea (CJ Vrancea), "Profilul socio-economic al Regiunii Sud-Est' (Socio-economic profile of the South-East Region), N/A, [Online] at https://cjvranceao/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Profilul-socio-economic-al-Regiunii-Sud-Est.pdf, accessed on March 9, 2023.

46. Dan, S. and Pollitt, C., "NPM can Work. An Optimistic Review of the Impact of New Public Management Reforms in Central and Eastern Europe', 2015, Public Management Review, vol. 17, no. 9, pp. 1305-1332.

47. Dascălu, Ș., Geambasu, O., Raiu, C.V., Azoicăi, D., Popovici, E.D. and Apetrei, C., "COVID-19 in Romania: What Went Wrong', 2021, Frontiers. Public Health, vol. 9, pp. 1-3, DOI: 10.3389/fpubh.2021.813941.

48. Daskon, C.D., "Cultural Resilience—The Roles of Cultural Traditions in Sustaining Rural Livelihoods: A Case Study from Rural Kandyan

Villages in Central Sri Lanka', 2010, Sustainability, vol. 2, no. 4, 1080-1100.

49. de Waal, A.A., "The Characteristics of a High-Performance Organization', 2007, Business Strategy Series, vol. 8., no. 3, pp. 179-185.

50. Dincă, D.V. and Mihaiu, M., 20 de ani de reformă a administrației publice, București: Economica, 2019.

51. Duit, A., "Resilient Thinking: Lessons for Public Administration', 2016, Public Administration, vol. 94, no. 2, pp. 364-380.

52. Dunleavy, P., Margetts, H., Bastow, S. and Tinkler, J., "New Public Management is Dead – Long Live Digital-Era Governance', 2005, Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory, vol. 16, pp. 467-494.

53. Egeberg, M., "How Bureaucratic Structure Matters: An Organizational Perspective', in Peters, B.G. and Pierre J. (eds.), The SAGE Book of Public Administration, 2nd edition, Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore, Washington DC: SAGE Publishing, 2012, pp. 143-154.

54. Ehrhart, M.G., Schneider, B. and Macey, W.H., Organizational Climate and Culture. An Introduction to Theory, Research and Practice, New York, London: Routledge, 2014.

55. European Commission, "Digital Economy and Society Index Report 2020-Digital Public Services', 2020b, [Online] at https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/digital-public-services-scoreboard, accessed on June 15th, 2020.

56. European Commission, "European Structural and Investment Funds, 2020a, [Online] at https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/programmes/2014RO05SFOP001, accessed on June 15th, 2020.

57. European Commission, "PSF review of the Romanian R&I System – Background report', November 2021, [Online] at https://ec.europa.eu/research-and-innovation/sites/default/files/rio/report/PSF_background_report_final_23Nov_2021.pdf, accessed on March 12, 2023.

58. European Commission, 'European Social Progress Index 2016', [Online] at https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/information-sources/maps/social-progress/2016_en, accessed on March 8, 2023.

59. European Commission, 'European Social Progress Index 2020', [Online] at https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/information-sources/maps/social-progress/2020_en, accessed on March 8, 2023.

60. European Commission, Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, Regional Innovation Scoreboard 2021, Publications Office, 2021, DOI: https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2873/674111.

61. Everly, G.S., Jr., "Building a Resilient Organizational Culture', 2011, [Online] at https://hbr.org/2011/06/building-a-resilient-organizat, accedes on June 20th, 2020.

62. Farrar, J.J., "Resilient leadership', 2017, International Journal of Emergency Services, vol. 6, no. 3, pp. 238-246.

63. Fernandez, S., Resh, W.G., Moldogaziev, T. and Oberfield, Z.W., "Assessing the Past and Promise of the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey for Public Management Research: A Research Synthesis', 2015, Public Administration Review, vol. 75, no. 3, pp. 382-394.

64. Fonduri Structurale.ro, «România, printre cele mai mici rate de absorbție la nivelul UE! La contactare suntem pe locul 10 în clasamentul statelor membre', 2019, [Online] at https://www.fonduri-structurale.ro/stiri/22476/romania-printre-cele-mai-mici-rate-de-absorbtie-la-nivelul-ue-la-contactare-suntem-pe-locul-10-in-clasamentul-statelor-membre, accessed on June 15th, 2020.

65. Förster, C. and Duchek, S., "What Makes Leaders Resilient? An Exploratory Interview Study', 2017, German Journal of Human Resource Management: Zeitschrift für Personalforschung, vol. 31, no. 4, pp. 281-306.

66. FreeBalance, How does the government domain change the nature of the balanced scorecard?, 2021, [Online] at https://freebalance.com/en/blog/pfm/how-to-apply-the-government-balanced-scorecard/, accessed on April 21, 2023.

67. George, B., Walker, R.M. and Monster, J., "Does Strategic Planning Improve Organizational Performance? A Meta-Analysis', 2019, Public Administration Review, vol. 79, no. 6, pp. 810-819.

68. Gheorghe, I., "Weberian Public Administration Versus New Public Management in Eastern Europe: The Case of Romania', 2012, International Journal of Public Administration, vol. 35, pp. 695–702.

69. Goldfinch, S. and Wallis, J., "Two Myths of Convergence in Public Management Reform, 2010, Public Administration, vol. 88, no. 4, pp. 1099-1115.

70. Goldfinch, S. and Yamamoto, K., "Citizen Perception of Public Management: Hybridization and Post-New-Public Management

in Japan and New Zeeland, 2019, Australian Journal of Public Administration, vol. 78, no. 1, pp. 79-94.

71. Gray, D. and Jones, K., “The Resilience Wellbeing of Public Sector Leaders’, 2018, International Journal of Public Leadership, vol. 14, no. 3, pp. 138-154.

72. Griffiths, D., “Resilience and Transparency in Social Systems’, 2018, Kybernetes, vol. 48, no. 4, pp. 715-726.

73. Gucciardi, D.F., Jackson, B., Coulter, T.J. and Mallett, C.J., “The Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC): Dimensionality and Age-Related Measurement Invariance with Australian Cricketers’, 2011, Psychology of Sport and Exercise, vol. 12., pp. 423-433.

74. Gulick, L., Urwick, L.F. (eds), Papers on the Science of Administration, Institute of Public Administration, New York, 1937.

75. Gunnestad, A. (2006), “Resilience in a Cross-Cultural Perspective: How resilience is generated in different cultures, Journal of Intercultural Communication’, 2006, [Online] at https://www.immi.se/intercultural/nr11/gunnestad.htm, accessed on June 20th, 2020.

76. Gupta, N., “Artificial Neural Network’, 2013, Network and Complex Systems, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 24-28.

77. Harrison, N.E., “Good Governance: Complexity, Institutions and Resilience’, 2003, Paper Presented at the Open Meeting of the Global Environmental Change Research Community. (Montreal, Canada,) [Online] available at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228832392_Good_Governance_Complexity_Institutions_and_Resilience accessed on November 4, 2022.

78. Heinrich, C.J., “Measuring Public Sector Performance and Effectiveness’, in Peters, B.G. and Pierre J. (eds.), The SAGE Book of Public Administration, 2nd edition, Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore, Washington DC: SAGE Publishing, 2012, pp. 32-49.

79. Hințea, C. (ed.), Case Studied in Strategic Planning, Cluj-Napoca: Accent, 2007.

80. Hințea, C., Hamlin, R., and Hudrea, A., Strategic Planning in Public Administration, 2012.

81. Hințea, C., Hudrea, A., and Rus, D., Public Management, Bucureşti: Tritonic, 2013.

82. Hințea, C., Sandor, S.D. and Junjan, V., “Administrative Reform in Romanian and the European Union’, 2002, Transylvanian Review of Administrative Sciences, no. 1, vol. 7, pp. 54-74.

83. Hințea, C.E. and Țiclău, T.C., "Public Administration Reform in Romania after 25 Years', in Kovac, P. and Bileisis, M. (eds.), Public Administration Reforms in Eastern European Union Member States. Post-Accession Convergence and Divergence, Ljubljana, Vilnius: University of Ljubljana, 2017, pp. 289-426.

84. Hințea, C.E., "Cum se construiește profilul strategic al unei comunități'(How to Build a Strategic Profile for a Local Community), 2015, Revista Transilvană de Științe Administrative, vol. 2, no. 37, pp. 101-119.

85. Hințea, C.E., "Four Elements of Successful Reform', 2020, Asia Pacific Journal of Public Administration, vol. 42, no. 1, pp. 9-11.

86. Hințea, C.E., Profiroiu, C.M. and Țiclău, T.C., 'Strategic Planning and Public Management Reform: The Case of Romania', 2015, Transylvanian Review of Administrative Sciences, SI, pp. 30-44.

87. Holtorf, C., "Embracing Chance: How Cultural Resilience is Increased through Cultural Heritage', 2018, World Archeology, vol. 50, no. 4, pp. 639-650, DOI: 10.1080/00438243.2018.1510340.

88. Howard, C.S. and Irving, J.A., "The Impact of Obstacles and Developmental Experiences on Resilience in Leadership Formation', 2013, ASBBS Annual Conference: Las Vegas, vol. 20, no. 1, pp. 679-687.

89. Huang, X., Li, H., Zhang, X. and Zhang, X., "Land Use Policy as an Instrument of Rural Resilience – The Case of Land Withdrawal Mechanism for Rural Homesteads in China", 2018, Ecological Indicators, vol. 87, pp. 47-55.

90. Hudrea, A. and Tripon, C., "Organizational Culture of the Public Sector. A Study of Romanian Public Organizations', 2016, Revista de cercetare şi intervenţie socială, vol. 53, pp. 97-113.

91. Hudrea, A., "Cultură organizaţională în România. O analiză a cercetărilor în domeniu' (Organizational Culture in Romania. An Analysis of Researches in the Field), 2015, Revista Transilvană de Ştiinţe Administrative, vol. 2, no. 37, pp. 120-131.

92. Hughes, O., "Public Management or Public Administration?', 1992, Australian Journal of Public Administration, vol. 51, no. 3, pp. 286-296.

93. Hughes, O.E., Public Management & Administration, 5th edition, London, New York, Oxford, New Delhi, Sydney: Bloomsbury, 2017.

94. Ilie, S.M., Olaru, M.P. and Militaru, C.C., "Strategic Planning Role in Organizations in Romania – Part of Management', 2021, "Ovidius" University Annals, Economic Sciences Series, vol. 21, no. 1, pp. 535-541.

95. Iordan, M., Chilian, M.N. and Grigorescu, A., "Regional Resilience in Romania – Between Realism and Aspiration', 2015, Procedia Economics and Finance, vol. 22, pp. 627-635.

96. Jann, W., "Public Administration Under Pressure – the Search for New Forms of Public Governance', in Bertucci, G. and Rosenbaum, A. (eds.), Implementing the Millennium Development Goals: Challenges and Responses for Public Administration, New York: United Nations, 2007, pp. 16-28.

97. Jin, M., Lee, J. and Lee, M., "Does Leadership Matter in Diversity Management? Assessing the Relative Impact of Diversity Policy and Inclusive Leadership in the Public Sector', 2017, Leadership & Organizational Development Journal, vol. 38, no. 2, pp. 303-319.

98. Jones, G.R., Organizational Theory, Design, and Change, 7th edition, England: Pearson, 2013.

99. Kaplan, R.S. and Norton, D.P., "Putting the Balanced Scorecard to Work', in Shaw, D.G., Schneier, C.E., Beatty, R.W. and Baird, L.S., (eds.), The Performance Measurement, Management, and Appraisal Sourcebook, Amherst, Massachusetts: Human Resource Development Press, 1995, pp. 66-79.

100. Keith, N. and Frese, M., "Enhancing Firm Performance and Innovativeness Through Error Management Culture', in Ashkanasy, N.M., Wilderom, C.P.M. and Peterson, M.F., The Handbook of Organizational Culture and Climate, 2nd edition, Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore, Washington D.C.: SAGE Publications, 2011, pp. 137-157.

101. Kennedy, S.S., "Thirty Years of Public Management Scholarship: Plenty of "How", not Enough "Why"", 2017, International Journal of Public Sector Management, vol. 30, no. 6/7, pp. 566-574.

102. Kettl, D.F., The Global Public Management Revolution, 2nd edition, Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2005.

103. Kopric, I., "Public Administration Reforms in Eastern Europe: Naive Cultural Following, Hesitant Europeanization, or Search for Genuine Changes?', in Kovac, P. and Bileisis, M. (eds.), Public Administration Reforms in Eastern European Union Member States. Post-Accession Convergence and Divergence, Ljubljana, Vilnius: University of Ljubljana, 2017, pp. 34-49.

104. Laegaard, J. and Bindslev, M., Organizational Theories, Ventus Publishing ApS, 2006, ISBN: 87-7681-769-7.

105. Ledesma, J., "Conceptual Frameworks and Research Models on Resilience in Leadership', 2014, Sage Open, vol. 4, no. 3, pp. 1-8, DOI: 10.1177/2158244014545464.

106. Ližbetinová, L., Lorincová, S. and Caha, Z., "The Application of the Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI) to Logistics Enterprises, Naše more', 2016, vol. 63, no. 3, pp. 170-176, [Online] at https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/The-Application-of-the-Organizational-Culture-to-Li %C5%BEbetinov %C3%A1-Lorincov%C3%A1/7e46580621fcd0a 3102c687f4ad6afd-9d359a577, accessed on March 29th, 2021.

107. Lynn, L.E. Jr., "Public Management', in Peters, B.G. and Pierre J. (eds.), *The SAGE Book of Public Administration*, 2nd edition, Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore, Washington DC: SAGE Publishing, 2012, pp. 17-31.

108. Lynn, L.E. Jr., *Public Management: Old and New*, New York, London: Routledge, 2006.

109. Mallak, L., "Putting Organizational Resilience to Work', 1998, *Industrial Management*, vol. 40, no. 6, pp. 8-13.

110. Margetts, H. and Dunleavy, P., "The Second Wave of Digital-Era Governance: A Quasi-Paradigm for Government on the Web', 2013, *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society. A Mathematical, Physical and Engineering Sciences*, vol. 371, no. 1987.

111. Marshall, N.A. and Marshall, P.A., "Conceptualizing and Operationalizing Social Resilience within Commercial Fisheries in Northern Australia', 2007, *Ecology and Society*, vol. 12, no. 1.

112. Matei, L., "Romanian Public Management Reform – Theoretical and Empirical Studies', 2009, *Civil Service*, vol. 2, pp. 7-280.

113. Matei, L., *Romanian Public Management Reform. Theoretical and Empirical Studies*, București: Editura Economică, 2009.

114. Mauri, A.G. and Muccio, S., "The Public Management Reform: from Theory to Practice. The Role of Cultural Factors', 2012, *International Journal of Advances in Management Science*, vol. 1, no. 3, pp. 47-56.

115. McAdam, R., Hazlett, S. and Casey, C., 'Performance Management in the UK Public Sector: Addressing Multiple Stakeholder Complexity', 2005, *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, vol. 18, no. 3, pp. 256-273.

116. McEwen, K. and Boyd, C.M., "A Measure of Team Resilience: Developing the Resilience at Work Team Scale', 2018, *Journal of*

Occupational and Environmental Medicine/American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, vol. 60, no. 3, pp. 258-272.

117. McGannon, Donald H., "Functional Leadership', in Adair, J. (ed.), *Leadership and Motivation. The Fifty-fifty Rule and the Eight Key Principles on Motivating Others*, London and Philadelphia: Kogan Page, 2006.

118. McGrath, R.G. and Kim, J., "Innovation, Strategy, and Hypercompetition', in Dodgson, M., Gann, D.M. and Philips, N. (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Innovation Management*, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2014, pp. 397-419.

119. Meier, K.J. and Hill, G.C., "Bureaucracy in the Twenty-First Century', in Ferlie, E., Lynn Jr., L.E. Lynn Jr., and Pollitt, C. (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Public Management*, Oxford University Press, 2007, pp. 50-70.

120. Nguyen, Q., Kuntz, J.R.C., Näswall, K. and Malinen, S., "Employee Resilience and Leadership Styles: The Moderating Role of Proactive Personality and Optimism', 2016, *New Zeeland Journal of Psychology*, vol. 45, no. 2, pp. 13-21.

121. Obolensky, N., *Complex Adaptive Leadership. Embracing Paradox and Uncertainty*, 2nd edition, USA: Gower Publishing Company, 2014.

122. OECD, "Strengthening the Innovative Capacity of the Government of Romania: Interim Assessment Report', 2022, [Online] at https://gov.ro/fisiere/pagini_fisiere/OCDE_-_Raportul_de_evaluare_a_capacitatii_de_inovare_a_administratiei_publice_din_Romania.pdf, accessed on March 12, 2023.

123. Omalaja, M.A., and Eruola, O.A., "Strategic Management Theory: Concepts, Analysis and Critiques in Relation to Corporate Competitive Advantage from the Resource-based Philosophy', 2011, *Economic Analysis Review*, vol. 44, no. 1-2, pp. 59-77.

124. Paul, K.B. and Fenlason K.J., "Transforming a Legacy Culture at 3M: Teaching an Elephant How to Dance', in Schneider, B. and Barbera, K.M. (*eds.*), *The Oxford Handbook of Organizational Climate and Culture*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2014, pp. 569-583.

125. Petre, O., D&D Research, "TOP Oraşe şi cartiere din Romania' (TOP cities and neighborhoods from Romania), March 26, 2018, [Online] available at: http://www.ddresearch.ro/top-orase-si-cartiere-din-romania/, accessed on March 15th, 2021.

126. Pollitt, C. and Bouckaert, G, *Public Management Reform. A Comparative Analysis – Into the Age of Austerity*, 4th edition, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2017.

127. Pollitt, C., *The Essential Public Manager*, Maidenhead, Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2003.

128. Polzer, T., Meyer, R.E., Höllerer, M.A. and Seiwald, J., 'Institutional Hybridity in Public Sector Reform: Replacement, Blending, or Layering of Administrative Paradigms', 2016, *How Institutions Matter!*, vol. 48B, pp. 69-99.

129. Popescu, L.G., "New Models of Regulatory Decision Making and the Public Administration Reforms. The Romanian Context', in Matei, L. and Flogaitis, S. (eds.), *Public Administration in the Balkans. From Weberian Bureaucracy to New Public Management*, București: Editura Economică, 2011, pp. 119-130.

130. Profiriu, M., Tudorel, A., Carp, R. and Dragoş, D., "Public Administration Reform in the Perspective of Romania's Accession to the European Union', European Institute of Romania – Pre-accession impact study no. 3, pp. 3-50.

131. Profiroiu, M.C., Țapardel, A.C. and Mihăescu, C., "Performance Analysis on the Romanian Public Administration', 2013, *Transylvanian Review of Administrative Sciences*, vol. 40, pp. 183-200.

132. Pulley, M.L., "Leading Resilient Organizations', 1997, *Leadership in Action*, vol. 17, no. 4.

133. Puscasu, R., "Local Administration in Romania', 2000, NISPAcee Conference, pp. 1-20;

134. Rabin J, Miller, G., and Hildreth, W.B., *Handbook of Strategic Management*, Marcel Dekker, 2000.

135. Radu, B., "Influence of Social Capital on Community Resilience in the Case of Emergency Situations in Romania', 2018, *Transylvanian Review of Administrative Sciences*, no. 54E, pp. 73-89.

136. Radu, B., "Influence of Social Capital on Community Resilience in the Case of Emergency Situations in Romania', 2018, *Transylvanian Review of Administrative Sciences*, vol. 54, pp. 73-89.

137. Rahman, Md.M., Liberman, L.S., Giedraitis, V.R. and Akhter, T., "The Paradigm from Traditional Public Administration to New Public Management System in Bangladesh: What Do Reform Initiatives Stand for?', 2013, *Advances in Economics and Business*, vol. 1, no. 3, pp. 297-303.

138. Reisyan, G.D., *Neuro-Organizational Culture: A New Approach to Understanding Human Behavior and Interaction in the Workplace*, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing, 2016.

139. Roşca, I.Gh. and Moldoveanu, G., "Tandemul cultură – birocraţie organizaţională în sectorul public' (Culture Tandem – Organizational Bureaucracy in the Public Sector), 2010, *Economie teoretică şi aplicată*, vol. 17, pp. 5-14.

140. Rus, M. and Rusu, D.O., "The Organizational Culture in Public and Private Institutions', 2015, *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, vol. 187, pp. 565-596.

141. Sackmann, S.J., "Culture and Performance', in Ashkanasy, N.M., Wilderom, C.P.M. and Peterson, M.F., *The Handbook of Organizational Culture and Climate*, 2nd edition, Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore, Washington D.C.: SAGE Publications, 2011, pp. 188-224.

142. Sacmaroska, N.M. and Shikova, N., "Leadership, Organizational Change and Change Management, Key Drivers for Improving Performance in the Public Administration', in Lazarević, M., Marović, J. and Kacarska, S. (eds.), *Improving Performance of Public Administration: Current Experiences and Future Perspectives*, Belgrade: La Mantini d.o.o., 2015, pp. 106-124.

143. Sanchez-Runde, C., Lee, S.M. and Steers, R.M., "Cultural Drivers of Work Behavior: Personal Values, Motivation, and Job Attitudes', in Bhagat, R.S. and Steers, R.M., *Cambridge Handbook of Culture, Organizations and Work*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009, pp. 305-333.

144. Schein, E.H., *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 4th edition, San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2010.

145. Sciulli, N., D'Onza, G. and Greco, G., "Building a Resilient Local Council: Evidence from Flood Disasters in Italy', 2015, *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, vol. 28, no. 6, pp. 430-448.

146. Steccolini, I., "Accounting and the Post-New Public Management', 2019, Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal, vol. 31, no. 1, pp. 255-279.

147. Stevenson, A., *The Public Sector. Managing the Unmanageable*, London, Philadelphia, New Delhi: KoganPage, 2013.

148. Suwaj, P.J., "Public Administration in Central and Eastern Europe', in Peters, B.G. and Pierre J. (eds.), *The SAGE Book of Public Administration*, 2nd edition, Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore, Washington DC: SAGE Publishing, 2012, pp. 579-592.

149. Tau, B., Du Plessis, E., Koen, D. and Ellis, S., "The Relationship Between Resilience and Empowering Leader Behaviour of Nurse Managers in the Mining Healthcare Sector', 2018, *Curationis*, vol. 41, no. 1, pp. 1-10.

150. Teeroovengadum, V., Nunkoo, R. and Dulloo, H., "Influence of Organisational Factors on the Effectiveness of Performance Management Systems in the Public Sector', 2019, *European Business Review*, vol. 31, no. 3, pp. 447-466.

151. The World Bank – Worldwide Governance Indicators [Online] available at https://databank.worldbank.org/source/worldwide-governance-indicators#, accessed on January-February 2023.

152. The World Bank, "Results of the World Bank RAS Program in Romania, 2012-2015: Changing Institutions to Achieve Development Goals', July 17, 2017.

153. Thesari, S.S., Trojan, F. and Batistus, D.R., "A Decision Model for Municipal Resources Management', 2019, *Management Decision*, DOI: 10.1108/MD-05-2017-0500.

154. Toonen, T.A.J., "Administrative Reforms: Analytics', in Peters, B.G. and Pierre J. (eds.), *The SAGE Book of Public Administration*, 2nd edition, Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore, Washington DC: SAGE Publishing, 2012, pp. 499-510.

155. Transparency International – Corruption Perception Index, [Online] available at https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2012, accessed on February 14, 2023.

156. Tudzarovska-Gjorgjevska, E., "Improving Performance of Public Administration: Current Experiences and Future Perspectives', in Lazarević, M., Marović, J. and Kacarska, S. (eds.), *Improving Performance of Public Administration: Current Experiences and Future Perspectives*, Belgrade: La Mantini d.o.o., 2015, pp. 125-128.

157. University of Würzburg, "The Democracy Matrix', [Online] available at https://www.democracymatrix.com/online-analysis/matrix#/chart1/Romania/2021/core, accessed on February, 14, 2023.

158. Uwizeyimana, D.E. and Maphunye, K.J., "The Changing Global Public Administration and its Theoretical and Practical Implications for Africa', 2014, *Journal of Public Administration and Policy Research*, vol. 6, no. 4, pp. 90-101.

159. Văduva, S., *From Corruption to Modernity – The Evolution of Romania's Entrepreneurship Culture*, SpringerBriefs in Economics, 2016, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-26997-9.

160. Valero, J.N., Jung, K. and Andrew, S.A., "Does Transformational Leadership build Resilient Public and Nonprofit Organizations?', 2015, *Disaster Prevention and Management*, vol. 24, no. 1, pp. 4-20.

161. van de Walle, S., "Building Resilience in Public Organizations: The Role of Waste and Bricolage', 2014, *The Innovation Journal: The Public Sector Innovation Journal*, vol. 19, no. 2, pp. 1-18.

162. van Helden, J. and Reichard, C., "Management Control and Public Sector Performance Management', 2019, *Baltic Journal of Management*, vol. 14, no. 1, pp. 158-176.

163. Verheijen, T.J.G., "Comprehensive Reform and Public Administration in Post-Communistic States', in Peters, B.G. and Pierre J. (eds.), *The SAGE Book of Public Administration*, 2nd edition, Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore, Washington DC: SAGE Publishing, 2012, pp. 524-536.

164. Vigoda, E., "New Public Management', 2003, *Encyclopaedia of Public Administration and Public Policy*, DOI: 10.1081/E-EPAP 120011081.

165. Vintan, A.D., Cira, D.A. and Heroiu, M.I., "Romania Systematic Country Diagnostic: Regional Development', The World Bank Group, 2018.

166. Vishwas Puttaswamy, "Is NPM Approaches Appropriate or Not to the Needs of Developing Countries?', [Online] at https://www.academia.edu/3401723/IS_NPM_APPROACHES_APPROPRIATE_OR_NOT_TO_THE_NEEDS_OF_DEVELOPING_COUNTRIES_, accessed October 16th, 2020.

167. Wang, H.L., "Theories for Competitive Advantage', 2014, University of Wollongong, Australia, *THEORI Research Group*, pp. 33-43.

168. Wenzler, I., Shimshon, G. and Leigh, E., "Drivers of Resilience and Sustainability – Lessons from Long-Living Organizations and Institutions', 2009, [Online] available at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/259571923_Drivers_Of_Resilience_And_Sustainability_-_Lessons_From_Long-Living_Organizations_And_Institutions, accessed on November 4, 2022.

169. Wiesel, F. and Modell, S., "From New Public Management to New Public Governance? Hybridization and Implications for Public Sector Consumerism', 2014, *Financial Accountability & Management*, vol. 30, no. 2, pp. 175-205.

170. Wynen, J., Verhoest, K., Ongaro, E. and van Thiel, S., "Innovation-Oriented Culture in the Public Sector: Do Managerial Autonomy and Result

Control Lead to Innovation?', 2014, *Public Management Review*, vol. 16, no. 1, pp. 45-66.

171. Zulean, M., Andreescu, L., Gheorghiu, R., Roescu, A.M. and Curaj, A., "Romanian Public Administration Reform 2.0: Using Innovative Foresight Methodologies to Engage Stakeholders and the Public', 2017, DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/FS-09-2016-0047.

ISBN: 978-606-37-2267-7