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**CHALLENGES AND PERSPECTIVES IN MILITARY  
EDUCATION: DEVELOPING STRATEGIC LEADERS AND  
STRENGTHENING NATIONAL RESILIENCE**

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**Abstract:**

*This paper examines the evolving role of military education as a driver of organizational culture, strategic leadership development, and national resilience. Drawing on NATO, EU, and Romanian defense policy documents, as well as academic literature on professional military education (PME), the study argues that modern military education must balance tradition with innovation while integrating digital capabilities, interdisciplinary curricula, and civil–military cooperation frameworks. The paper proposes policy recommendations and identifies structural challenges such as curricular rigidity, limited interinstitutional integration, and resistance to organizational change. Overall, it highlights the critical role of military education as a strategic enabler within contemporary security ecosystems.*

*Key words: military education, organizational culture, strategic leadership, national resilience, NATO, EU security, Romania*

## **1. Introduction**

In an increasingly unstable geopolitical context, characterized by hybrid conflicts, cyber threats, and recurring crises, military education should hold major strategic importance. While in the past the emphasis fell predominantly on the tactical and technical training of military personnel, the current paradigm has shifted significantly. Military education is now viewed as an essential vector in strengthening the organizational culture of defense structures, in developing strategic leadership, and in supporting national resilience. Thus, it is no longer merely a professional tool but an integrated component of national security, aligned with the requirements of international partnerships such as NATO and the EU [1] [2].

Military education has undergone profound transformation as modern security environments become increasingly complex, interconnected, and technology-driven. Contemporary military education systems must simultaneously preserve the traditions and ethos of the profession of arms while adapting to hybrid threats, cyber warfare, and geopolitical volatility [3]. In this context, Romania’s military education institutions—such as the “Nicolae Bălcescu” Land Forces Academy—play a dual role: safeguarding identity and building operational and strategic capability [4].

This article analyzes how military education contributes to strengthening organizational culture, forming strategic leaders, and developing national resilience in Romania, in the context of current security challenges. It also aims to identify weaknesses and challenges faced by the military



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education system and propose solutions for adaptation and reform. The premise is that a modernized military education system—adapted to new operational realities and integrated into a coherent interinstitutional framework—can transform this field into a pillar of national security and resilience.

To prepare this article, we conducted qualitative research that included analysis of strategic documents (doctrines, national and international policies), relevant academic studies, and examples of best practices from Romania and the Euro-Atlantic space. Secondary sources such as NATO and EU reports and fundamental works in the field of military leadership and organizational sociology were also considered [5], [6]. The article follows an analytical structure in which each dimension—organizational culture, strategic leadership, and national resilience—is treated separately but in correlation, ending with conclusions and recommendations.

Through this approach, the article aims not only to offer a radiography of the current military education system but also to highlight its emerging role in the broader architecture of Romania’s state security.

## **2. Military Education and Organizational Culture: Between Tradition and Modernity**

Military organizational culture is defined as a coherent system of values, symbols, and norms that influence the behavior and decisions of members of the institution. Military education is the main channel through which these values—such as honour, discipline, loyalty, or duty—are transmitted and strengthened from one generation to the next.

Organizational culture in the military shapes behavior, decision-making, cohesion, and professional identity. Through formal education, values such as honor, duty, discipline, and loyalty are transmitted across generations. Academic studies emphasize the decisive influence of PME (Professional Military Education) on shaping culture, especially as institutions adapt to new forms of warfare and technology [7].

In Romania, military academies play a central role in this process, as they shape military professional identity through institutional traditions and specific curricular content. At the same time, the educational process is challenged by generational changes, digitalization, and the diversification of threats [8]. The adaptability of organizational culture depends directly on the flexibility of the educational system.

### **2.1 Strategic Leadership and Its Formation through Military Education**

Strategic leadership involves the ability to formulate visions, coordinate security policies, and operate in complex, multinational, and politically influenced environments. The development of strategic leaders requires a gradual progression from the tactical to the strategic level, supported by specialized institutions such as the National Defense College or the NATO Defense College.

Strategic leadership is increasingly essential as officers must operate in multinational, complex, ambiguous environments. NATO’s educational doctrine stresses that PME must cultivate critical thinking, strategic foresight, and adaptive leadership [9].

Romania integrates these principles gradually through national and international programs, contributing to a cadre of leaders capable of linking national defense planning with broader interagency and alliance requirements.

Officers who complete these levels are exposed to advanced geopolitical perspectives, risk analysis, decision-making under uncertainty, and crisis management. In this sense, strategic military



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education must go beyond traditional training and include concepts such as strategic foresight, institutional communication, and adaptive leadership [10].

## **2.2 Challenges and Vulnerabilities in the Military Education System**

Despite progress, the military education system displays notable vulnerabilities. A first weakness is curricular rigidity, which leaves little room for developing critical thinking and adapting to new operational realities. Often, the emphasis remains on theoretical accumulation at the expense of practical applicability.

Another problematic aspect is the lack of constant updates to educational content in relation to the dynamics of contemporary threats: cyber warfare, disinformation, energy security, or attacks on critical infrastructure [1], [2].

Institutional resistance to reform—generated by a traditionalist organizational culture—is another major obstacle. Although value stability is a strength, it can become a barrier to educational modernization in the absence of a balance between tradition and innovation.

These findings are consistent with comparative studies on PME reform in NATO states) [11].

Likewise, the lack of real cooperation between defense institutions, the education sector, public administration, and the private sector reduces the capacity to build an educational ecosystem adapted to the interinstitutional reality of modern security. This affects not only the quality of strategic leadership but also the ability to develop genuine national resilience.

## **3. Military Education and National Resilience**

National resilience is a strategic concept that reflects a society’s ability to withstand, respond to, and recover from a major crisis. Military education contributes significantly to this objective by preparing leaders capable of addressing complex situations and by fostering a culture of proactive and integrated response.

National resilience requires cooperation across government, private sector, and civil society. EU strategies highlight the need for coordinated civil preparedness and cross-sector crisis planning (European Commission, 2020) [1].

Romania, as a NATO and EU member state, has begun to include modules on cyber defense, critical infrastructure protection, and civil-military cooperation in its military education system. In this regard, military personnel become essential actors in promoting social resilience through their professionalism and ability to intervene efficiently in crises—military or civilian.

Resilience is not merely a strategic objective but an indicator of institutional maturity, and military education plays a key role in developing this adaptive capacity both operationally and socially.

## **Conclusions**

Contemporary military education must be regarded as a strategic tool for strengthening national defense and resilience. It contributes to forming a stable organizational culture, developing strategic leadership, and enhancing the state's ability to manage crises effectively.

Military education should be treated as a strategic enabler for national defense and resilience.

Therefore:

- PME must adopt modular, flexible curricula updated annually according to threat assessments.
- Digital tools—simulators, cyber ranges, wargaming—should be fully integrated into assessment.



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- Partnerships with NATO Defense College and similar institutions must be formalized.
- Faculty development and pedagogical innovation should be incentivized.
- Interinstitutional exercises and civil–military modules must become mandatory.

At the same time, the military education system must actively address its own challenges: curricular rigidity, lack of content updates, generational gaps, and weak interinstitutional cooperation. A relevant and modern military education system is not only an institutional necessity but a vital component of national security.

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