

TOUGH WOMEN AND SENSITIVE MEN. A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON THE REPRESENTATIONS OF FEMININITY AND MASCULINITY IN THE POLICE AND THE ARMY

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Abstract: *This paper brings to the fore the representations of femininity and masculinity in Romanian Police and Army, highlighting types of speech based on the opinions of people who work in those places who were interviewed and whose identity is confidential. The police and also the Army have a militarized environment based on strict rules. My objective is to find out if the stereotypes of women and men exist and if discrimination is perceived based on their experiences.*

Key words: *gender as a social institution, representations of femininity and masculinity, discrimination, stereotype, gender inequality.*

1. Introduction

The analysis of the opinions of some employees from the Police and the Army helps me to examine representations of femininity and masculinity, rendered through discussions with people employed in this field. I will answer the following research questions: What are the gender representations of the Police and Army employees? To what extent do they reflect gender inequality? What are the gender stereotypes on which they are based? Do respondents resort to general stereotypes of femininity and masculinity in order to describe and evaluate women in the Army and the Police. On the contrary, do they tune these stereotypes to take into account the specificity of these organizations? What are the experiences of the respondents regarding gender relations and gender discrimination?

2. Literature Specifies Gender Differences between Men and Women in Police and Armed Forces

In order to clarify both the role of femininity and the role of masculinity in these fields of activity, I will rely on the statements of Grünberg (2010, p. 207):

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"If you are born today in Romania, then the next day you have every chance to get your earrings, get pink (but also blue) clothes, dolls and makeup kits. You have a better chance of becoming a secretary, teacher, doctor (but not surgeon) than a tractor worker, country president or governor of the National Bank. If you are born a boy then pink will not be among the colors of your wardrobe. You will get a male name, cars, robots and Lego, you will be directed towards sports, you will have more freedom of movement than girls, but you will live on average less than them. You won't be seen if you cry". (Grünberg, 2010, p. 207).

Based on those ideas, we looked for the social differences in gender in our days, in Romania, which the company maintains today and implements, with particular reference to the Police and the Army. I want to clarify the role of women and men, respectively, in the careers of the Police and the Army, starting from a general pattern (how children are perceived from birth, according to biological sex, until they are offered a cultural label based on gender) and continuing by highlighting gender representations through general stereotypes that can describe gender inequalities.

Tickner (1992), in his book, *Gender in International Relations. Feminist Perspectives in Achieving Global Security*, applies a variety of feminist perspectives to the phenomena that occur in the relations between women and men, at international level, by offering the example of military / police careers. The author considers that the formulation of a common concept (in the "defending citizen"), for each gender category (femininity and masculinity), can generate more constructive relationships in both careers; so gender inequality would no longer exist.

When employees, regardless of gender, are treated in a similar way, even from the point of view of cultural language, they notice a balance that helps them to work together.

NATO (2017) observes that female and male occupations are stereotypically differentiated in the Army:

"the departments in which women work in the armed forces are: human resources, logistical and administrative positions, finance, medical services, technology and information management, military law, military engineering, project and management of resources, administration, public relations and military education." (NATO, 2017, p. 1.)

As a result of these elements I can also deduce the stereotype that the theorist wanted to highlight: *"the woman is trained and accustomed from childhood to choose a job in a quiet environment and without exposing themselves to the dangers"*. The role of police or military woman is active, but doesn't have a developed part on the practical side, but a side associated with office work.

Caprioli and Boyer (2001 apud Radoi, 2010) argue that a strong increase in gender equality in the present society and in the military/ police professions can generate a significant social balance. The latter can lead to efficiency in work, without noticing any kind of dangers. Thus, the two researchers offer the following observation on the Army/

Police: in the case of an interstate conflict, countries that have a high level of gender equality (both at the level of society in general and in both careers), will not use violence to solve existing problems. Another interesting argument through which I can support the position of the woman in a powerful way could be highlighted by the words of Lieutenant Olimpia Mirea, who started by giving up wearing heels and dresses to choose the military uniform. This added the idea that the military field designates "rigor", and in his career so far she had to to put her family and all loved ones on a secondary level countless times to serve her homeland and the work place that she choose. Also, Lieutenant Olimpia Mirea (2017) stated that *"Being a woman in the army is more important than being a woman in the medical system or in any other field. I think we work from peer to peer. What a man can do, a woman can do very well"*. Considering what this military woman said, women in the army can be noticed through the various activities that are in common with men. Women and men must have equal rights, and the two gender categories can work together to achieve work efficiency.

To the same extent, a military woman who works within the 9 Mechanized Brigades "Mărășești" witnessed the following words for the site Freedom: *"Being a woman in the army means being a military man. Do not detach yourself from the other responsibilities involved in women's status. There are prejudices, such as that women would have nothing to look for in the army"* (Croitoru, 2017). She talks about raising awareness that there are prejudices to the status of women in the army, given that the working environment (for example, Afghanistan) is quite dangerous and conducive to men. The military woman also brings up the idea that regardless of the obstacles in this militarized workplace, no woman can neglect her womanly duties. Being a woman doesn't mean just *"to stand alone"*, but there is also the option of neglecting the activities that highlight the status of a woman in our society (starting a family, giving birth to a child, the desire to care for a child, etc.).

3. Research Methodology in Gender Analysis

In carrying out the research I used, as a method of sociological research, the semi-structured interview having as a research instrument, the interview guide containing topics for 17 discussions. As Chelcea (2001) points out, it is interesting that the interview becomes semi-structured, *"in the sense that it addresses previously established topics and hypotheses - like structured interviews - but their questions and sequence are not predetermined - as in the case of unstructured interviews"* (Chelcea, 2001, p. 129).

During the interviews with the respondents I also had some stages of free discussions, besides the standard questions. I want to find out different types of men and women (from within these careers), the respondents having different types of gender representations due to the experiences of the military / police. This is why I chose free dialogue for this thesis. These representations designate the starting point on which a career must depend, where the popular saying *"Patience conquers all things"* represents a professional motto.

The sampling strategy was highlighted by the idea of choosing the interviewees according to their job because I wanted to find out opinions on both police and

military activity between women and men. Thus, I asked some people from these two fields of activity, 10 people in total to tell me their experiences in the field of work. Five of these people work in the Police and the other five in the Army.

I contacted the respondents through the Skype application and recorded the conversation with the mobile phone or I met in the field with some of them face to face, and the conversation was recorded on the mobile phone.

As significant sampling methods, we chose, on the one hand, the *"snowball technique which describes a non-probabilistic sampling method often used in field research in which each interviewee is asked to indicate who might be interviewed."* (Babbie, E. 2010, p. 261-265). Through this sampling technique I was able to get in touch with other people working in the police or the army, which facilitated some discussions with people from these environments. On the other hand, I used a probabilistic sampling based on a random selection of some respondents because in such militarized environments it is difficult to talk to the people who work there, and considering that I could not have a perfect representation of the population, I consider useful a random selection without age variable is highlighted, for example.

The gender of the people was chosen at random because we could not find an equal number of women and men to participate in the study. We also aimed to ensure that all 10 people graduated from a military or police institution. I also looked to find the following characteristics of women: how they do in sports since childhood, if they played a sport, if they watch action movies or if they read detective novels, but I also looked at the characteristics they may have men: to practice a sport, to watch various sports competitions with men's fights on TV or action movies, to want to become policemen since childhood, etc. I sought to identify such characteristics in the discussions that arose from the questions encountered in the interview guide.

4. The Results of the Gender Analysis

Taking into account the interviews, I identified several types of respondents according to their statements. These types are presented according to two sections representative of the theme and helped me answer the research questions.

In the first section, I want to bring to the fore, the idea of dressing (its significance for the social status of the policeman/ military), and secondly, the importance and care of the body (both women and men).

In the second section, we identified the types of speeches of the respondents according to the gender inequalities perceived in the two careers.

The types that I found interesting about this section and the topic itself are:

- The type of respondent proud of wearing the uniform. Uniform as a symbol.
A woman police officer stated to the question: "Is clothing important in this field in terms of the desire to choose work in the Police and Army, either for women or for men (social status) or not?", The following aspect: "To be honest, the stink of the uniform was a main reason why I chose to go to the Academy ... I can say that I like the uniform of the Police more than that of the Army ... "

According to the policewoman, the career she chose had as a starting point the wearing of a police uniform, which indicates its symbolic significance.

I asked the respondent (a soldier) the following questions: *"... did you also like this part related to wearing a uniform? Do you think that wearing a uniform also influenced you in choosing this job? "*

Narcissus replied, *"Yes ... as my mother said ... you wear the coat of the state... to respect you ... and I told you, I feel good especially when we have activities like we had this winter when we were taken out to the snow removal next to the unit in a big station in Bucharest and the world is just watching to me and appreciate me ... the people on the bus greeted me ... indeed the state uniform gives you respect in front of others."*

The soldier believes that the uniform gives him a social status based on respect and appreciation from others, which is why wearing the uniform was a first step towards a career in the Army.

- The type of respondents who do not consider uniform the main reason for choosing these careers. Uniform as a resource:

A woman police officer stated during the interview, after I asked her the question *"Do you consider wearing a uniform a way to impose respect or not?"*, The following idea: *"... also, what can I tell you? ... Yes! a state of well-being is given to us by the fact that in certain situations we are respected, not necessarily by the uniform, but we can also say this ... indeed the uniform..."*. The policewoman does not necessarily consider that wearing a uniform gives respect, in particular, but rather the situations she goes through every day.

To the question *"Do you consider in the field of Police, the important uniform or not?"*, Another female police officer who participated as a respondent in the research answered: *"... it is important for me, but when I made the decision to enter this system, I didn't take it because I would look good in the uniform or because the uniform would have meant something to me ... No! I didn't even think about it, instead during the years spent in the Academy I realized that yes, the uniform is very important and not the uniform itself, but the way each person wears it ... because you as a cop, from my point of view you have to be a role model too ... all the time people are watching us, whether we like it or not ... we are much more visible ... the uniform helps prevent certain activities illegal by imposing a respect..."*

This respondent does not consider uniform a main reason to choose these fields of activity. The uniform is seen as a way for a police officer to be a role model and suggest respect. I can also notice that the moral factors inspired by the wearing of the uniform are considered important (respect, authority, social model), and not necessarily its aesthetic dimension.

- Types of respondents who consider that besides the uniform, the physical aspect is important.

Following the question: *"How is the physical aspect perceived from the point of view of the rules, in the Police? From the perspective of women / men?"*, A woman

policeman answered: *"...I would grab my hair every day because that was the situation (...) we put on make-up, we put on lipstick ... well, not very strident!"*

"...all men must be shaved, not have a mustache, a beard ... because they are still wearing..." (laughs)

"...men really have to look flawless...from shirts, ironed pants, to shoes given with cream...day by day..."

Following the respondent's statements, I notice that the rules regarding both the day outfit daily, as well as facial and capillary hair care are maintained and respected by the students/ employees of these jobs, even in the current period. Women try to maintain the habit of arranging themselves, regardless of the fact that they are part of a male cadre, for the most part. Men must respect the rules imposed by the regulation, the physical aspect designating respect for the work done as a soldier or policeman and for the uniform that symbolizes the defence against our country.

- Types of respondents holding a differentiated and critical discourse.

When I asked the question: *"Have you ever encountered an act of superiority from a woman or...?"*, I got a variety of answers that I will try to summarize in several types.

A military man replied: *"Yes ... it was a situation, but I treated it superficially ... she was a little older there ... probably because of that she was superior, but it wasn't great thing, but that bothered me ... if he said it any other way it was no problem..."*

"Have you noticed any discrepancies between women and men in terms of admission?" A military woman responded as follows: *"This year no longer ... they are all the same ... someone made a report and asked why there is this discrepancy between girls and boys ... and they decided not to be there anymore, and when the places came out they didn't were arranged according to women and men, but only the scales of the tests were different..."*

Also, the female police officer emphasizes the idea that women and men in the Army do not show a difference in admission in the current period, in the past this was emphasized.

When asked *"How do you see women in this job on the fighting side, so to speak ... or on the office side?"*, A police officer noted the following: *"In a male environment, women they are privileged, they spend more time in the office to say: you are on the street on patrol ... with a woman you can't handcuff a person as easily as you would handcuff a man ... two men conclude more well ... that's my opinion! I worked in the street for a year and a half, I was in Public Order after I graduated Cămpina..."* The respondent also added: *"...I am fewer women, but there is also room for women in the Police because there are offices where they are good at the job they do ... where do I have to, I know?...do a lot of paperwork at the secretariat or I know where, but there are certain structures where only men could work ... my opinion, that's my opinion!"*

The respondent highlights the idea that women have a privileged place in the Police, they are not far from this field of activity, but he believes that it goes without saying that women do not have the skills of a man to cope with the dangers of the

street. He believes that office positions would be suitable for a female police officer, in which case there would be no danger, but a quiet job, for example, in a police secretariat.

- Types of respondents who have a homogeneous and satisfied discourse

I discussed the following issue: *"... from the experience so far ... the school you graduated from and so on, related to the Army ... you can tell me some gender inequalities that you have noticed over time ... I don't know ... for example, I don't know, insults to women by men?"*

A military man replied: *"No, no ... we didn't meet much, at least we didn't ... we didn't meet..."*

To the question *"Most of the time, in such a profession, can women or men work?"*, A policeman answered: *"... and men and women ... I worked for 2-3 years days with girls on the street, the mixed patrol ... in which their efficiency is also good in our activity because ... I give you an example: when we have to legitimize or search a woman, we can't as men, so we have to call a woman, a girl in the service called Public Order, to be able to search her. "*

To the question: *"Do you consider that there are certain differences between girls and boys at work, at school ... for example at the sports test?"* A female police officer added: *"... there are working women, I can't say no, but there are also women who avoid, as for example on the Road it depends from woman to woman ... since you have chosen, you have to be dedicated..."* The respondent considers that women in the Police should assume the chosen status because some of them are intimidated by certain obstacles appeared in the work of police (dangers generated by work done in the field, crimes or in the face of conditions).

To the question: *"Have you ever felt discriminated against ... I mean, from men?"*, A military woman answered: *"No...we were actually received, for example in school... especially because we were in a class where most men were and I don't think there is any discrimination between women and men today in the case of the Army or in the Police because things have evolved...and I'm glad I'm part of this field...I also liked it because I am one of the few women in the Army..."*

The respondent considered that he integrated in a men's environment for the simple fact that he likes and sees this job a pride for a woman. He also believes that in the present period the mentalities of men, mainly men, regarding the place of a woman in the Army have evolved.

- Types of respondents who have a homogeneous and critical discourse

"Do you consider that there are certain differences between girls and boys at work, at school ... for example at the sports test?" A female police officer considered that: *"... there are differences in admission, in the sporting event ... from my point of view I consider that they are justified because the boys have always been more athletic and physically stronger ... they would be an imbalance, you can't make girls scale boys because it would be very difficult ... and you can't make boys scale girls because too many people would enter the Academy..."* a female police officer observes certain

differences between girls and boys at the time of admission, but consider them normal in the context of a beneficial balance.

To the question: *"Most of the time, in such a profession, can women or men work?"*, A military woman answered as follows: *"...I believe that not only men are part of this field, but also women ... I say that they have their place there because we can be tough or cold-blooded ... we can be imposing too ... we have a strong character..."*

- Types of respondents who have a differentiated and satisfied discourse.

A female police officer answered the question: *"How do you see women at this job on the fighting side, so to speak ... or on the office side?"* in the following way: *"We have more office work for women, in the sense that we don't spend a lot of time on the field ... if a woman wants to go out on the field, she can go out, absolutely no one forbids her ... as you did those on the Road who sit and direct the traffic, you really see more men, but there are situations in which there are also women ... a woman stops you (laughs)."*

During the research, we used some interview analysis strategies. Specifically, each type of person identified was analyzed based on significant criteria, such as: analysis of jokes that police officers have towards their colleagues; the importance of the family in choosing these jobs (especially for women); how do women view the idea of promoting and changing careers in both careers; how the concept of glass ceiling is seen in terms of leadership positions; division of labour:

- formal rules: in police/ army, the ideal height of the staff; military health; the transition from the initial garrison to another, only after a year; observance of trade secrets (barracks location, training location, weapons items); respect for military / police clothing.
- informal rules: help given between colleagues by changing shifts.

Following my qualitative sociological research on the representations of femininity and masculinity in the Police and the Army, I found appropriate answers to the research questions highlighted in the first part of my bachelor's thesis. These answers are based on the interviews that were applied to 10 people (five policemen and five soldiers) who work in the two fields.

4.1. Data interpretation

In order to highlight the role of women in certain areas of society (referring to jobs in the Police or the Army) and wanting to highlight a comparison between my research and the literature, I will start from a study on the roles of women highlighted in video games, an environment also traditionally masculine. Analyzing three video games, Rughiniş, Rughiniş and Toma (2016) wanted to identify the way women are portrayed in these games. Regardless of the fact that the connection between my topic and what I reported above may seem different, I can say that there are quite similarities between the two studies because women hold different positions from men in absolutely any perspective of society: be it related to place work or leisure (video games).

Equally, I took some significant data from an interesting report based on the results of surveys. Jokes are one of the strategic criteria through which we analyzed the

interviews. That is why the preponderance of jokes by police or military men over their colleagues denotes gender discrimination that exists in these jobs and cannot be ignored. I believe that the jokes about women in these jobs, more precisely in the example given (in the Police), can bring with them, on the one hand, some frustrations and, on the other hand, the ambition to demonstrate a woman's potential. What is certain is that these jokes exist in most cases; Given this, I can rely on the percentages of the following conclusion that helped me to argue the research: *"The opinion that colleagues do not make jokes about them have 27.93% women police officers, so do 37.13% of colleagues and 27.66% women and 27.13% men in management positions. That this phenomenon is permanently present is considered by 4.46% women and 1.0% men at the executive level, and among those who hold management positions - 0.71% women and 0.47 men. To a lesser extent, compared to the previous question, but more frequently compared to other answers, all categories of respondents most frequently opted for the answer "sometimes".* (SEPCA, 2010, p.54).

Also, following the analysis of the interviews, we noticed that the people who participated in the research highlighted the idea that women have a significant place in the Police and the Army, but mainly in office positions. This last idea is consistent with the critical observation of Miroiu (2004), on the vision of women in these jobs, about their perceived emotion and fragility that embodies a woman's personality and how women are taught from childhood to develop places work with less physical effort, less danger, ie to work in the office and not in the field.

5. Conclusions

Given these discussions during interviews I identified two sections set out in the Results part of the study, named *Masculinity and Femininity in Terms of Clothing and Types of Discourses of Respondents* (homogeneous / differentiated and satisfied / critical). The sections are described on the basis of two significant aspects highlighted by the quotations of the interviewed persons: the aspect related to the uniform, to the physical aspect seen by these persons and the aspect related to the speeches that we have learned from the discussions. In the content of the sections I placed types of respondents, for example: in the first section I described "The type of respondent proud of wearing the uniform (women and men)" and "The type of respondent who does not consider uniform the main reason for choosing these careers". On the one hand, the first type emphasizes the importance and pride of the respondents regarding the uniform. They see the uniform as a source of prestige, of authority in terms of the respect that people show towards them. For these people (either men or women) the main reason for choosing this job is wearing the uniform and then, the prestige related to other aspects of the police or military career. On the other hand, the second type of the first section, indicates the idea that for some interviewees not wearing the uniform is the main reason for choosing this job. The motive being induced for both women and men from the perspective of other values (family, defence of the homeland, observance and application of laws).

In the second section, we placed types of discourses of the respondents being highlighted as follows: the people who had a differentiated and critical discourse argue that gender inequalities between men and women in the Police and the Army are noticed, but in the end they are solvable due to the common responsibilities within these jobs. When I asked both women and men the question: "How do you see women in these jobs?", I noticed that they highlighted the idea that they have a significant place in the Police and the Army, but mainly in office positions. So, I noticed how gender stereotypes and, implicitly, gender inequalities are perceived differently by the police and the military interviewed. Some of them have argued that they treat them with indifference, while others, mainly women, have stated that they are trying to remove those barriers through the desire and ambition to profess in these masculinized fields.

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Annex 1. Interview guide (the sociological instrument used):

1. What led you to a career in the Police or the Army?
2. Do you consider that the family played an important role in choosing this job, militarized?
3. What attracted you to this area, was it an individual decision?
4. Is clothing important in this area in terms of wanting to choose work in the Police and the Army, whether for women or men (social status) or not?
5. Do you consider wearing the uniform a way of enforcing respect or not?
6. If you want, tell me more about the beginning of your career in this area.
7. In your opinion, what might be the qualities that are conducive to these areas of work?
8. What do you think about women's experiences (discrimination) throughout history, in the Police or the Army?
9. What do you think about the stereotypes: "woman in the bathtub", "the man must provide for home", "the man must be strong", "the woman can have a career, but she has to take care of the house"?
10. How do you see (verbal / physical) violence in these areas? Is the verbal one preponderant? (started from some jokes).
11. How do you see a career in the Police or the Army for a woman, at present?
12. State some situations in which gender inequalities have been observed.
13. How do you think equality between women and men could materialize?
14. How do women and men communicate in both areas?
15. What would be the differences / similarities between the Police and the Army considering the present subject: representations of femininity and masculinity?
16. Do you think that women would be fit for a position, when they are classified as officers or not?
17. How do you think the collegiate relationships from the two working environments will look like in ten years' time? How will they evolve for the purpose of defending society?