GENDER DIFFERENCES IN POLICE. QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF PUBLIC PERCEPTION

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Abstract. *In this paper I want to bring to the fore the perception of the general public on employees, more precisely women and men în the Romanian Police, through a quantitative research, wanting to answer the following research question: "What is the public perception of both women, as well as about the men who work în the Police? We highlighted the general objective: "Analyzing the public's perception of women and men în the Police" and the specific one: "Identifying the factors that influence the perception." In order to identify the data conducive to research, I used the method of sociological survey, having aș a tool for sociological research, the questionnaire (the platform I chose to substantiate the research îs "Google Forms"), containing nine questions. I distributed the respective questionnaire to a number of approximately 108 people, women and men who work in other professional frameworks besides those related to the Romanian Police. Following the information received, we identified types of answers highlighted by percentages highlighted by topics such as: the activity of the Romanian Police, the useful or not mixed partnership of police officers, the importance of uniform depending on gender, field or office work of women / men în the Police, the effectiveness of women police officers în dangerous situations. Therefore, I noticed how gender stereotypes and, implicitly, gender inequalities, mainly on women, are perceived differently by the people participating in my study, belonging to other professional levels.*

Key words: *Deviance; the kind that social institution; discrimination; stereotype; gender inequality.*

1. Introduction

The reason I chose this research topic is related to a personal affinity I have for the two careers; I am impressed because the Police includes employees in an environment based on the observance of strict rules, rules traditionally associated with masculinity but which, in recent decades, have gradually become open to female participants. In the current paper, I want to highlight the data I intend to find out from the public, people who are not part of these professional environments (through sociological survey, the tool being the questionnaire) in order to identify their perception of police employees. Also, people's answers want to be concretized based on the activity of heterogeneous teams from a gender point of view.

The question I want to find answered during the research is the following: What is the public's perception of both women and men working in the police?

General objective: Analyzing the public's perception of women and men in the Police.

Specific objective: Identifying the factors that influence perception.

2. Other studies on the same topic

The Police Institution determines an important impact on the normal course of society by implementing laws and observing rules that define fairness and rigor, most of the time. That is why, in this paper, I want to highlight the significance of the image of this professional level because trust is also distinguished by the perception of the civilian public.

As Ciabuca (2015) states "... the role of the Police tends to become versatile, so that the results of the work, or in other words, its efficiency, depend in the end on an

extremely wide range of factors, among them having a special role the image of the institution.

The importance of studying the organizational image is based on one side, on the potential consequences that its deterioration can have on both the organization and its members" (Ciabuca, 2015).

In order to strengthen the previous argument, I consider the following statement of Ciabuca (2017) to be interesting; "The public image plays a central role when we consider the role of the police in a democratic society and especially the way in which it carries out its tasks. If, on the contrary, the attitude of the public is a negative one, the citizens will be even less willing to support the actions of the police and will show a lower compliance with their requests. In the absence of public support, the capacity of police officers to solve, combat and prevent crime, to maintain peace and public order, to carry out their duties, in general, becomes extremely limited. One of the most stated hypotheses regarding the public image of the police deals with the relationship between the attitude towards the police and the interaction of the citizens with the representatives of the institution. When we talk about this interaction, however, we have in mind two situational levels: on the one hand, we aim at direct contact, personal experience, and on the other, indirect, mediated interaction.

Miroiu (2004) 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, financial, medical services, technology and information management, military law, military engineering, project and resource management, administration, public relations and military education. We can note that the occupational field is similar to the type of career for which girls are trained"(Miroiu, 2004). Following these elements, I can deduce the stereotype that the theoretician wantAed to emphasize: "the woman is educated and ordinary from childhood who must choose a job in a quiet environment and without exposing herself to dangers." The role of the police or military woman is aware, but she does not have either side developed on the practical side, but a side associated with office work.

A research that I find suitable to help me in the depth of understanding certain phenomena encountered in my quantitative research is that of Braga (2010). The author highlighted a research with which she wanted to address the issue of gender equality in the face of masculinized jobs (law enforcement). "The hypothesis from which we started in conducting this research is that the implementation of the integrative approach to gender equality in the structures of the main forces of public order leads to an improvement of the services offered in this field. Police and gendarmerie structures play an important role in society, being responsible for protecting public safety and must carry out their activities taking into account the diversity of members of the whole community. A more balanced representation of gender, in which women and men complement each other through different approaches to the problems encountered, will help increase efficiency in carrying out missions to maintain and restore law and order" (Braga, A., 2010).

Awareness of these issues is very important for prevention, and the role of women must be significant in order to be in a useful partnership with a man in this workplace. Teamwork is the key element in the efficiency of the work undertaken, and the stereotype "the woman must sit at the desk, not in the field" is still visible today. The Association of Police Women AFP 2018, which is a public, non-governmental organization, being created in order to promote equal opportunities and gender in the Police, welcomes the initiative of the General Inspectorate of Police to ensure

increasing the number of women in the Police and incorporate gender in activities including the elaboration of a concrete Action Plan in the field concerned. We believe that this plan includes the most important aspects that strengthen institutional capacity in promoting gender equality, such as: training, prevention of discrimination, sexual harassment, media coverage of the police profession, combating stereotypes, and improving working conditions and reconciling life. personal and professional. These activities are also very important for the support, professional development / personal development and maintenance in the police service of women who already work in the Police. In this sense, it is imperative to organize training activities for these employees, and great attention will be paid to women working in the territorial subdivisions of the Police.

3. Methodology

This research is quantitative and aims to answer the research question "What is the public's perception of both women and men working in the police?"; To achieve this, we conducted a sociological survey based on a questionnaire comprising nine questions in addition to the socio-demographic ones (a total of 11), an unrepresentative sample of 108 respondents, heterogeneous. The sampling method chosen is the simple random one (each individual of the desired population having the same chances to be in the sample), and the subjects were chosen through the social network Facebook, but also WhatsApp, being used in some cases the technique of the snowman , a non-probabilistic sampling method). The questionnaire was distributed online to the public, on the Google online platform, between 06.05.2019 - 11.05.2019. Also, the majority of respondents were female (71%) and the rest male (29%), and their ages ranged from 18 to 45 years. The respondents present as occupations: student, employee, pensioner, entrepreneur, freelancer, teacher, etc.

4.Results

Following the online distribution of the questionnaire to the general public, the responses of 108 respondents presented interesting perceptions of the Romanian Police. On the one hand, the people who participated in my research had to express their point of view on topics such as: the beneficial activity or not of the Police in Romania; partnership between women and men in the face of altercations and problems that may arise both on the ground and in the office; the importance of highlighting the clothing among the police officers, which may be similar from a gender point of view or different from the respondents' perspective; the problem induced by the number of women police officers that can manifest itself over the years in this job. Also, the results in this chapter helped me to answer and highlight what I initially wanted to know, namely the perception of the general public about women and men in the Romanian Police. The information presented by the respondents is framed according to the specifics of the questions, in types of answers highlighted by the percentages of the diagrams presented below.

Figure 1: What do you think about the activity of the Romanian Police? Please highlight the answer on a scale of 1 to 4, where 1 is "Very good" and 4 is "Very bad".
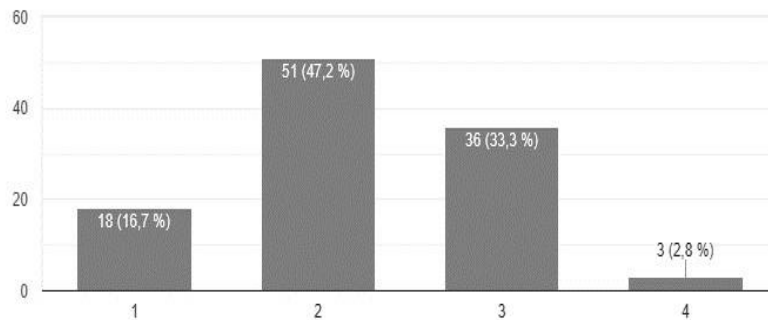
According to its data, out of the total respondents, 47.2% considered that the work of Romanian police officers is "Good", and 33.3% considered it to be "Bad", fact for which the first percentage prevails, the activity of police officers being perceived as useful to the current society; However, the percentage of those who believe that the activity of the Police is "bad" is not very far from the first category, that is why there are two types of pro-contra respondents regarding the activity of the Police and the usefulness of their activity in Romanian society.

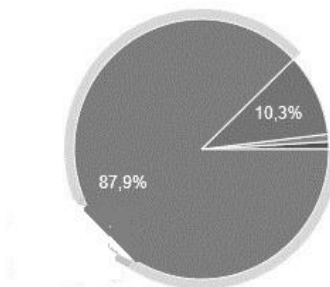**Figure 2: Do you consider a woman-man partnership useful in that job?**

Diagram no. two describes the answers to the question: "Do you consider a woman-man partnership useful in this job?". According to the data presented in this diagram, the relationship between women and men remains an interesting one in the discussions about the partnership of the two sexes within the Police, and the opinions of the people are surprising. Thus, 87.9% of the respondents who answered this question considered that a partnership is useful in the Police, which means that the opportunity to remove the height criterion, for example, offered to women, gives a positive image to the general public about the professional relationship between the two. equality. The mentioned opportunity refers to a higher chance, for women, to get employed in the Police. Thus, we had two more interesting answers, on the one hand, one respondent considered that men and women in the Police should work together, at

the same workplace, but not in the field; on the other hand, another respondent argues that we should not rely on a rule when two or more people work together because this should be natural, without looking at the sex of individuals.

Figure 3: Do you think that the police uniform highlights the masculine part of the Romanian Police? Please highlight the answer on a scale of 1 to 4, where 1 represents "total agreement" and 4 "total disagreement".
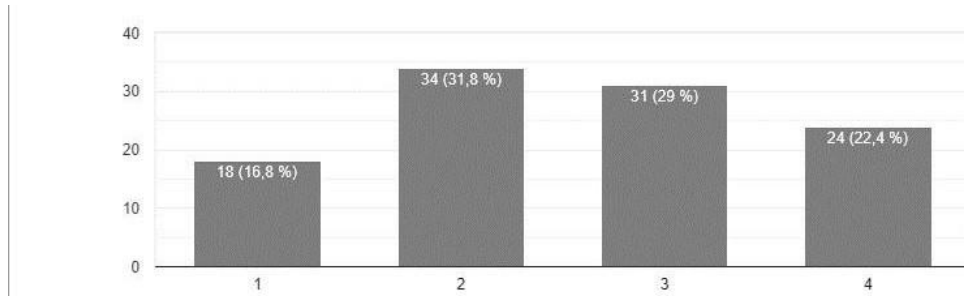
The answers I received to this question seemed very interesting to me, 31, 8% agreeing with the idea that the police uniform should be suitable for men, while 29% disagreed on this issue, which is why opinions are divided regarding clothing because for some people, clothing has been masculinized since ancient times, being a specific element of men in this workplace, while other people consider clothing as an element that can change, orient and depending on the preferences of women police officers.

Figure 4: Do you think that women police officers should wear a different uniform than men?
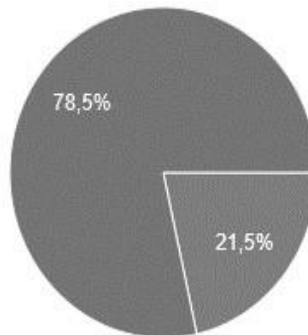
To the question "Do you think that women police officers should wear different uniforms than men?", Most respondents chose "Yes". On the one hand, according to the 78.5% percentage, women police officers should wear the same uniform as men, being a normal thing for some individuals who took part in my study; on the other hand, some individuals (21.5%) highlighted the idea that women in the Police should have a

different type of uniform. From here we can assume that the police uniform can be considered suitable for men, through the masculinity highlighted by this clothing.

Figure 5: If we take into account the work of the Romanian Police on the ground, do you consider it appropriate according to the place of the female police officer, on the street, at a late hour, in front of an altercation being with another colleague? Please highlight the answer according to a scale from 1 to 4, where 1 represents "total agreement" and 4 "total disagreement".
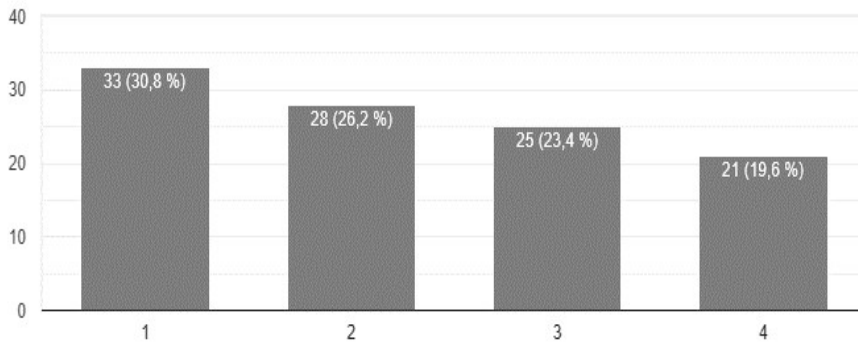
According to the diagram above regarding the respondents' answers, 30.8% agreed that a female police officer should be on the field, at a late hour, during an altercation with another colleague, her place being suitable in that context. In fact, 19.6% chose "total disagreement", which highlights discrimination against women, the fact that they should not participate in police field work. Also, the percentages 26.2% and 23.4% highlight an equality between pro-contra answers, being highlighted two categories of people with different opinions about this situation, these being divided.

Figure 6: Do you think field work would be suitable for women police officers?
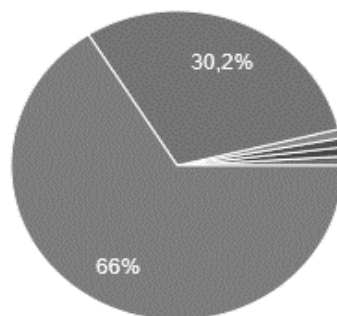
To the question "Do you think field work would be suitable for women police officers?" The diversity of the answers helped me to identify two categories of individuals according to their opinions about women in the Police: 66% answered with

"Yes", women having an important role in the field work of the Police. In fact, 30% of respondents answered "No"; we highlight an opinion based on a halved percentage, but significant because many individuals consider that women do not find their place in the field in the Police.

Figure 7: Do you think that field work would be suitable for police men?
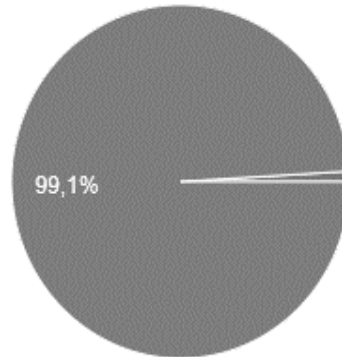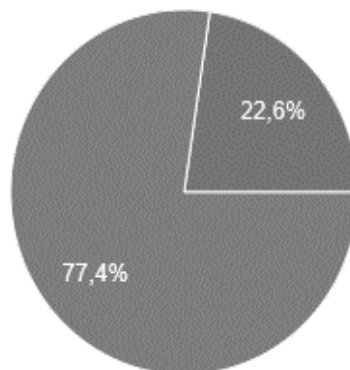
99,1%

Figure 8: Do you think that office work would suit police men?

22,6%

77,4%

Questions No. seven and No. eight highlight the activity of police men. Following the answers, we noticed the preponderance of the general public to express their opinion on the place of police officers in the field (99.1% of the people who participated in the research considered this aspect). Also, according to the respondents, men would be suitable on the office side in proportion of 22.6%, but with a percentage of 77.4% they support the idea that men are suitable in the field. The masculinity of this job emerges through the percentages shown in the diagrams, the actions of the Police in the field, according to the respondents of the current research, being almost 100% attributed to men.

Figure 9: Considering the activity in Romania, are you satisfied with the work of women police officers? Please highlight the answer on a scale of 1 to 4, where 1 is "Very satisfied" and 4 is "Very dissatisfied".
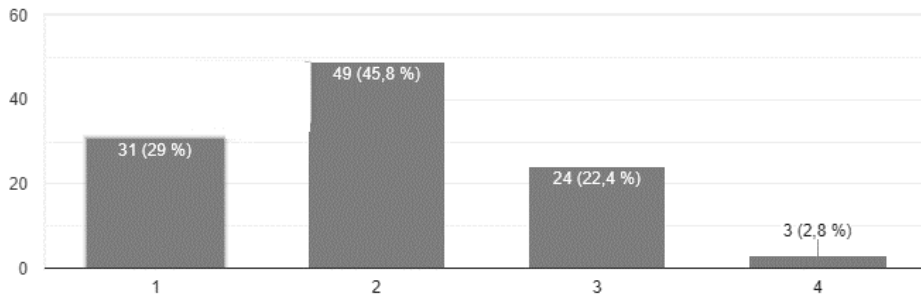
Question no. nine focuses on the activity of women police officers in Romania. What I notice is significant is the fact that 45% of those who participated in my research were satisfied with the work of women in Romania, 29% were very satisfied. Also, in a percentage of 22.4% the respondents felt dissatisfied with their work, while 2.8% felt very dissatisfied with the professional activity of women. Therefore, most of the responses highlighted a general satisfaction with the work of women police officers, as opposed to discrimination and stereotypes that have existed over time.

5. Discussion and conclusion

In my quantitative sociological research entitled "Gender differences in the Police. Quantitative analysis of the public's perception "I wanted to answer the research question" What is the public's perception of both women and men working in the Police?". The research resulted in the distribution of an online questionnaire (Google Forms Platform) to several people who are part of the general public, people who do not work in the Police. The questionnaire contains 9 questions that we distributed to a number of 108 respondents.

In the results I highlighted several types of answers given by the participants of my study belonging to the general public, which can be highlighted according to the main topics on which I wanted to build my research. The respective topics are of the following nature: the police activity is seen as an efficient and necessary one for our society, but it is perceived as being inefficient, the opinions being appreciated in two pro-contra levels. Another element conducive to my topic is the partnership between women and men in the Police, a rather interesting topic, based on the significance of gender in a predominantly male job, being approached from many perspectives by the respondents of this study. They considered this partnership useful, but the work undertaken by police officers in the field should be attributed, in particular, to men; women are seen as suitable for office work, and protection against them in the face of policing is fully supported. During the answers we identified the problem induced, both by the late hours of night shifts during which various disputes can take place, physical or verbal violence between people, and by the need to work with a colleague, a police officer, without being alone. on the field. Respondents believe that women should work within a time frame appropriate to their needs, assuming a normal eight-hour schedule. Also, the image of women police officers in the field can be debated based on the idea that they have to work with a male colleague to be safe on the street, they are devices from all points of view.

In the same way, another key point highlighted during the research in the chapter "Results" highlights the importance of clothing among police officers. This subject is distinguished by the respect that a police officer imposes when he appears at an event or during a police intervention. On the one hand, the respondents' opinion regarding the Police clothing is often a specific symbol of the men employed in this structure because the workplace is masculinized. On the other hand, respondents believed that the uniform should not be changed for women, but remain the same for both sexes. The clothing of the police officers can be considered masculine due to the idea that since ancient times, in these structures, most of the time men stood out, besides women because they had a different role in the society. At present, women are considered to be approximately equal to the men employed in this institution. And wearing a uniform is an element that expresses respect and fairness for men, but also for women.

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