

DIMENSIONS AND INDICATORS OF INSTITUTIONAL ANALYSIS OF THE MILITARY

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Abstract: *This paper presents the dimensions and indicators of institutional analysis of the military, the confidence in the military institution, the sociological approaches of the military profession, the military professionalism and current aspects of vocational guidance in Romanian military organization.*

Keywords: *dimensions; indicators; institution; analysis; military.*

The operationalization of the *military institution* concept led to identifying the following dimensions and indicators for analysis, grouped into three categories, as follows:

1. At the social level:
 - a. confidence in the military establishment;
 - b. social prestige of the military profession;
 - c. values identified in the population on military ethos/legitimacy of these professional values of the military;
 - d. attractiveness of the military profession among young people;
 - e. the influence of social change on the military organization.
2. At the organizational level:
 - a. professional autonomy
 - b. mechanisms of decision making/compliance with military rules and regulations
 - c. human resources recruitment, selection and training processes

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d. perceptions and attitudes of military personnel to various developments of organizational change

3. At the individual level

a. commitment to the profession (professional development or abandonment);

b. satisfaction with employment and occupation / attractiveness of the military profession;

c. motivation for performance;

d. expectations and professional achievements;

e. the pride of being part of the military;

f. the trust of the military personnel in:

i. leaders / commanders;

ii. Subordinates;

iii. weapons and military equipment;

iv. political and military leadership of the Army;

g. inter-individual relations.

Confidence in the military institution

Why measure confidence in institutions? What does it mean to trust in institutions? Trust in institutions, in other people, in general, political and public figures have made the subject of numerous studies and research nationally and internationally.

Among the many definitions of trust we mention here only one: to say that we trust someone (individual or institution) means that one expects that person or institution to act in my benefit, although it would have enough incentive to not do it. In the context of democratization and strengthening of civil society, the study of trust in institutions is particularly important, as it can reveal the extent to which these institutions (especially the new ones such as the Parliament, political parties, free elections, etc.), took root in post-totalitarian societies. According to analysts, trust in institutions is part of the "social capital" along with generalized trust (in the ones around us) and associative networks in which individuals are involved. The binder called "trust" makes people become more involved in the public sphere; electoral analyses, confidence in a particular political party or candidate are often marked predictors of voting intentions.

Since 1973 the European Union monitors the evolution of public opinion in the Member States through the **Eurobarometer** - *Eurobarometer survey*.

This longitudinal research is carried out annually on a sample consisting of approximately 1,000 respondents in each European country. Questionnaires are applied face-to-face, and the results are representative of the study population. The public opinion in Romania shows a decreasing trend in the level of confidence in the army as the results obtained to the question *I want to ask you how much do you trust certain institutions. For each of the following institutions, please tell me whether you "tend to trust" or "tend not to trust?"* The recorded level for this indicator is in free fall, as shown in the following chart.

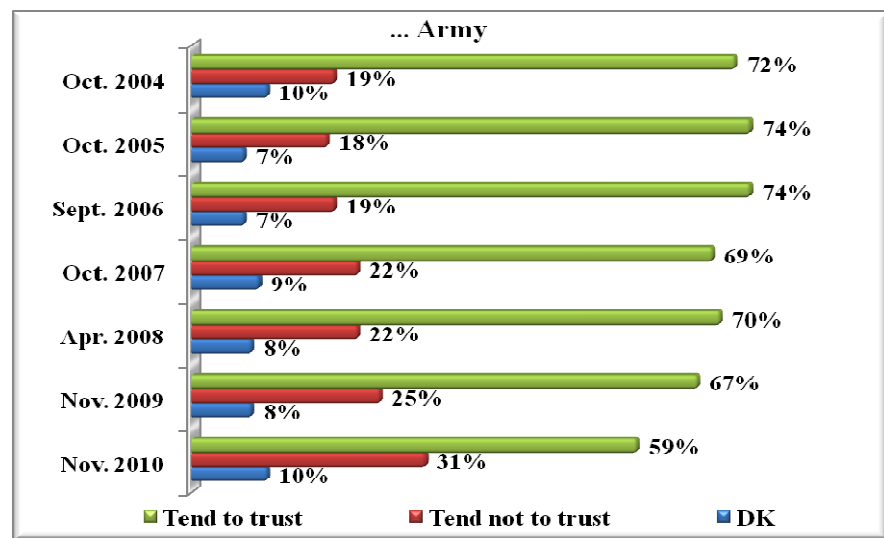


Fig. nr. 3. The level of confidence in the Romanian army¹

On the topic of **institutional trust** the following two hypotheses have resulted.

Hypothesis 1: The higher the level of confidence of military personnel in military-political elite, the greater the degree of involvement and acceptance of institutional change.

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/cf/index.cfm?lang=en

Hypothesis 2: As the relationships between members of the military (horizontal relationships) are perceived positively, the greater the degree of involvement and acceptance of institutional change

Sociological approaches of the military profession. Military Professionalism

The increased usage in the public discourse on the military organization of words such as "profession", "professional" and "professionalism" requires detailed analysis of the social meanings of these terms and detachment to clarify them conceptually. A brief overview of the history of these terms and defining notes of the two interpretations of classical sociological alternative and contrasting of professionalism – professionalism as a system of values and professionalism as an ideology – can provide theoretical benchmarks on the military profession, currently in a complex transformation process.

Professionalism as a system of values

The most famous attempt to clarify the special characteristics of professionalism and its values was Parsons², who showed how the capitalist economy, rational-legal social order (in the Weberian sense) and modern professions are interrelated and mutually balanced in maintaining social order and stability of a fragile normative demand. He demonstrated how both the authority professions hold and bureaucratic organizations are based on the same principles (e.g.: functional specificity, restricting the scope of power, applying universal standards, impersonal).

Unlike Parsons, Hughes³ considers that the professions not only afford to tell the rest of society what is right and what is wrong, but they also determine their understanding of the issues that are in their area of expertise. Professionalism implies the importance of trust in economic relations in modern societies with an advanced division of labour. In other words, lay people should trust professional workers (electricians and plumbers, as doctors and lawyers), and professionals, in turn, need to acquire expert knowledge. Professionalism requires professionals to deserve this trust, to maintain the confidentiality and use their knowledge responsibly and

² Parsons, Talcott, *The Social System*, Free Press, New York, 1951, *ibid*, p. 342.

³ Hughes, EC, *Men and Their Work*, Free Press, New York, 1958, *ibid*, p. 344.

without exploiting it for malicious purposes. In exchange for their professionalism in dealing with customers, professionals are rewarded with authority, special recompenses and high status.

Hughes' work is the starting point for micro ethnographic studies on professional socialization at work, developing and maintaining professional identities. This professional identity is associated with the meaning of experience, specialization agreements and joint referral on common ways to look at problems and at the possible solutions for those problems. This common identity is produced and reproduced through occupational and professional socialization through a common and shared educational background, training and experience of members of associations and professional societies where participants develop and maintain a common culture of work. In the 70's and 80's, the concept of professionalism as a system of values was rejected and replaced by a critical approach, embodied in a general scepticism about the professions that were seen instead as elite influential workers.

Professionalism as ideology

Critical attacks related to occupations generally regarded as powerful monopolies, privileged, self-centred, evidenced in Weberian literature resulted in a general scepticism regarding the whole idea of professionalism as a normative value. During this period, a concept that became predominant was the "professional project". The concept included a historical account of the processes and stages through which a distinct professional group is seeking domination in the service market, status and ascendance on the social scale. Professionally, the successful outcome of the project consisted of a "control of legitimate expertise and officially recognized competence" and a "monopoly of credibility with the public."⁴

In the 90's researchers began to appreciate again the meaning of professionalism and its positive contributions to social systems. This indicates the return of professionalism. Apart from protecting their own market positions by controlling licenses to practice, a distinct form of occupational control decentralized civil society. Also the public's interest and personal professional interest is not necessarily at opposite limits with

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 440.

the advancement of the public interest. Professionalism can thus lead to the creation and representation of distinct professional values and moral obligations that restrict excessive competition and encourage cooperation.

Therefore, in general, some recent analyses of Anglo-American professions have reinterpreted the concept of professionalism as a system of values involved in the socialization of new members of the professional group, the preservation of social order and predictability. This current interpretation has resulted in a more balanced and careful recognition of the power and interests of certain professional groups in an effort to preserve and promote the professionalism as a normative system.

Professions are deeply involved in the reproduction of legitimate power by using expert authority. Accepting the authority of professional experts works hand in hand with strengthening the authority of the states. Accepting the authority of governments and professionals was interrelated and was part of the state-citizen relationship normalization. The principles of organization of professions can be interpreted as modelling the normalization process: preparing professionals involves developing a balance between self-interest and community, which is supported by interaction with the occupational community. Such a model can explain the charm of professionalism.

Possible reflections on the profession and the military

Samuel Huntington⁵, one of the most cited researchers of the military profession, identifies three fundamental elements for any profession: expertise, responsibility and body spirit. Where the military profession is concerned, the specific expertise is given by the knowledge the military hold in the "management of violence", while their responsibility is the military security of the society. The body spirit is explained by the feeling of belonging to a social group with a unique responsibility. Huntington does not consider all military members as professionals, but only those officers involved in the "management of violence".

Charles Moskos⁶, from the perspective of two models for the analysis of the profession (occupational model and institutional model), identifies

⁵ Huntington, Samuel P, *The Soldier and the State: the Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1957.

⁶ Moskos, Charles, *Army, more than an occupation?*, Ziua Publishing, Bucharest, 2005.

work-related influences in the military profession, in which members of the profession are not attracted to the "vocation" ("calling"), but are rather concerned with obtaining material benefits (extrinsic motivation).

Framing analysis of the military profession in the context of the conceptual framework presented assumes that military sociology finds answers to a new series of **questions**. To what extent can we consider the military as a profession or just a certain occupation in the labour market? Under what version is mainly used the concept of professionalism within the public discourse regarding the armed forces as a system of norms and values of professional or occupational ideology, knowing that both approaches to professionalism, the normative and ideological, facilitate organizational change? Who intervenes mainly in the production of new organizational changes, "internal forces" or the "external" ones? In other words, changing the organizational field occurs through institutional forces, the professional elite in a self-regulating system or the military profession is dominated by outside forces? In the absence of the military code of conduct, can we really speak of a military occupation?

Regarding the related organizations symbolic approach, Robert K. Merton concludes: "In certain professions and certain types of organizations may arise a process of sanctification ... By creating sentimental affinities by emotional dependency status and symbols of bureaucratic and involving affective spheres of competence and authority, prerogatives develop involving moral legitimacy attitudes enshrined as values in themselves, they are no longer considered just practical means of solving a few administrative tasks."⁷

In this sense of symbolic interpretation of the military, one can claim that "any state army is a national symbol, as the flag, national anthem and all symbols without the feeling of belonging to a nation would be in vain, leading to the absence of national identity and thus removing the idea of nation".⁸

In the absence of systematic answers to the questions above, we cannot ignore, however, that the military profession is changing. Transforming the military profession produced under the spectre of "professionalism" brings multiple benefits for both the armed forces and the society.

⁷ Merton, Robert. K., *Social Theory and Social Structure*, Free Press, Glencoe, 1940, apud. Scott, W. Richard, *Institutions and Organizations*, Polirom, Iasi, 2004, p. 43.

⁸ Anton, Michael, *Army and Society*, Romanian Military Thinking Magazine, no.3/2006, the General Staff, Bucharest, 2006, p. 162.

Current aspects of vocational guidance in Romanian military organization

Under the imperative of military professionalization and increase of the effectiveness, the future lies in the competence framework, efficient adaptation to the specific requirements of the profession. However, the military is not only a "finished product" taken out of specific educational institutions, a product that condenses and explains the aims of education, but also a "product" whose value is added to the quality of its initial focus on skills and manifested during vocational orientation.

Starting from this consideration, the Ministry of Defence has acted consistently in the direction of expanding the selection of candidates and the election of motivated military professionals through field offices for information and recruitment, selection and orientation provided by regional centres; by educational psychologists in military units or within education and training institutions. The vocational guidance and training was conducted in the form of public information campaigns (in 2009 such campaigns were held in 4671 primary schools and 1,244 high schools). The military have participated in educational fairs and public campaigns which involved conferences to popularize the military profession amongst the target audience, marketing studies have been carried out in order to identify the target audience etc.

An effective national system of vocational guidance for young people to the military career with the objective of attracting a large number of potential candidates motivated, with the right skills and honourable conduct cannot be achieved only through this, but by including vocational guidance activities and involving the representatives of civil educational environment, teachers and school psychologists, an aim which we target in this project.

In conclusion, the efficiency will generate decisions so as to create conditions for individuals to be able to maximize the benefits of their actions.

The political processes not infrequently give rise to institutions that are good for some and bad for others, these effects being considered to be due primarily to asymmetries in the power of individual decision and less to rules and principles that they decide (otherwise legitimate if we refer to majority rule, representativeness etc.), though no doubt the role of the decision is not one to be neglected.

There is a gap between what the different models institutions offer as effective and efficient organizational forms and what institutions need in order to be satisfied by these models results.

The conditions of the possibility of harmonizing the two institutional requirements – effectiveness and efficiency – depend on a proper analysis that should guide the individual on how to decide and accept collective decisions and the consequences that follow. We have to assume though, that the logic used in these decision making processes is unique and multi-faceted.

The purpose of my research is to demonstrate that what democracy suggests in terms of mechanisms is not feasible, but to show what the military can reasonably hope for in the given conditions: lack of resources, continue need and considered largely epistemic uncertainty (human dignity, good individual personal happiness, social justice, etc.) which in all fairness require much consideration.



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