

**"BABES-BOLYAI" UNIVERSITY CLUJ-NAPOCA  
FACULTY OF SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL ASISTANCE**

**SUMMARY**

**SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS OF METHODS  
FOR SELECTING CANDIDATES FOR POLICE SCHOOLS  
IN EUROPEAN CONTEXT**

**PHD SUPERVISOR:**  
**Prof. dr. Petru Iluț**

**PHD CANDIDATE:**

**Curpaș (Bordeianu) Ioana Lucia**

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**KEYWORDS:** *integrative socio-psychology, postmodernism, career growth, flexible smoothing, flexicurity, EU border police; comparative selection, professional motivation, interviews with key persons; optimization of promotion.*

## SUMMARY

### **1. Work objectives and their implementation**

The overall aim of the approach was to refer, describe and explain the societal, communal and individual dimensions - but socio-psychological - of the selection process for police schools in the European space. We have to mention that this is particularly about the border police in three Member States of the European Union, namely Romania, Germany and Hungary. On these entities there was developed the specific research. In accordance with the basic principles of a scientific approach the general objective customized in the following major objectives: *1) Conceptual-theoretical analysis of the main concepts involved in the approach, 2) Comparative analysis of methods for the selection of candidates for police schools in different countries 3) The representations and attitudes of police personnel in Romania, Germany and Hungary against these methods and to police career.*

**Objective number 1** meant to clarify key concepts and related theories, which are: *socio-psychology, selection and police*. It should be noted that, of course, the rigor was needed and the definition of what constitutes a "candidate" or "European context", but as it does in speeches in the social sciences, many terms are taken as implied. On the other hand, we found that there are concepts and related issues deserve to be presented as one of postmodernism, career, professional training, human resources.

From all of these, however, the most extensive analysis, embodied in an entire chapter, with several pages (*Chapter 1*, totaling 40 pages), I dedicated to theories and positions of

the socio-psychological specialists. The two main reasons for doing that: i) socio-psychology accredited as a discipline (sub-discipline) is less both in the academic and teaching practice, at least in our country, ii) in the world area there is but a motion to that effect, visible in the training curricula for police officers. The first chapter also includes references to the latter issue, this being discussed in the broader context of educational requirements of postmodernism era.

To the concept and police issues we assigned Chapter 2, where are discussed, but not only theoretically, and are shown different levels of training systems in the police. Concepts of *selection and career*, focusing on their operational policies of police staff training and education are treated in **Chapter 3**.

**Objective number 2** is largely covered in Chapters 2 and 3.

In **Chapter 2**, although we didn't expressly state the selection methods in different countries, we highlighted *important concepts and policies* that have taken global models. It is primarily about public service reforms in the USA, where he launched the idea of "*flexible uniformity*". Here are also presented the mechanisms of international cooperation in training police career.

In **Chapter 3**, we presented and exemplified different methods of recruitment and selection, focusing on the design of Romanian Police recruitment and selection of staff, trying even here a comparative approach, but more involved.

The comparison between the three countries concerned was realized in **Chapter 4**, where we describe in detail *the methods and selection tools* (including the specific admission tests) of the three border police schools: "Avram Iancu" from Oradea, Basic and Further Training Centre of the German Federal Police, Eschwege, Public Order Medium School from Miskolc, Hungary. Along with proper selection models, we considered that for a better understanding of the selection process and career, it's good to make a general description of schools as a brief history.

Then, **Chapter 4** incorporates the *concrete research*, where is about *an archive analysis, a documentary one* on selection methods - to compare the three countries (schools), so goal number 2 of our approach - but also includes the *empirical research (based on questionnaires and interviews)*, which covers **Objective number 3**, namely the representations and attitudes toward police personnel selection and career where they have been and are decisive involved. In sequence entitled "Introduction: research strategy" (4.1.) and also in the "Methodology of empirical research based on questionnaire and interview" (4.3.), we exposed concrete objectives and interrogations of the investigational approach. We also summarized the essence, the advantages and disadvantages of the methods used.

Final specification I want to make is that although the paper has a thematic structure based on objectives, however, there is some recovery in different chapters and subchapters to the same terms and the same ideas. For example, to rational choice theory which is also mentioned both in Chapter 1 and in Chapter 2. Relevant aspects, however, are different. Similarly, we speak about career and selection in many places in the paper, but in different contexts.

## **2. General conclusions**

*Conceptual-theoretical analysis of the epistemic status of sociopsihology* revealed that this subject (sub-discipline) is strongly interfered with social psychology, social psychology, particularly of the sociologists. Moreover, conceptual extracts which are fundamental in giving arguments upon the specific of socio-psychology, were taken and processed just from a treaty expressly dedicated to social psychology of the sociologists (Delamater, 2006).

With so many similarities across socio-psychology psycho-sociology proves that, according to some authors (Chelcea, 2008) there is a synthesis of social psychology psychologists and sociologists, while having valences of postmodernism, and social criticism. Our analyses converge towards the idea that in many textual contexts, between

the social psychology of the sociologists, psycho-sociology and socio-psychology there is basically a logical and semantic equivalence (Iluț, 2009).

However, socio-psychology has its justification as a distinct academic status, in research and education by its inclusion in tackling deeper social sciences as a whole, having the particularity deciphering of the specific regularities and mechanisms of dialectical relationship between the person (personality) - proximate environment (community) and macro social (nation, state).

Without being driven by epistemological relativism of postmodernism promoted by some sub currents, assuming the objective nature of its gnoseologic products, socio-psychology also promotes contextualization, flexibility and openness in the process of knowledge. Connected with other research and training programs, it is a discipline with great potential, in the training of police officers, too. Also, by integrating vision of the relationship between personality - community - society, it contributes significantly to the organization of recruitment and selection of police candidates in schools.

In a society which is extraordinary dynamic at all levels, an information society (of knowledge), a world where, paradoxically, globalization highlights and promotes local communities (Baugman, 1999), ***police attributions, especially for border policemen, have changed considerably***. Their training standards bring to the fore the concept of inter-cooperation (exchange) and working in teams.

Therefore partnerships and exchange of teachers and students get the credibility which is necessary in analyzing the obtained results. Romania has fulfilled and fulfills successful in this branch, the specific responsibilities in accordance with the changes required by the European community. But this stuff can be pursued starting from the base of the system: selection of the personnel for police schools in European context.

Thus, we believe that on a long term the police education and training in the EU will adopt a license system, according to the research team within CEPOL (European Police

College) and master of all police officers. There will be dropped the accent on subjects and focus on police content issues will intensify. Disciplines will converge, and will cooperate one with each other, much more in the future. This is also a good chance of the acceptance of police science (policing) because it could be a factor for integration of police subjects. Bologna process insists on placing the focus on practical skills in the center of education system. But this will be done on a scientific basis in accordance with future research findings. These research results will provide research techniques in an area that will not be limited only to the law and legislative issues, forensic or social sciences. The need of an umbrella that covers various disciplines in the field seems to be obvious in the future and this may provide a broader acceptance of police term, as a science, from the side of police officers and trainers / teachers, but also from civil society.

To meet this goal performance is certainly a key element to be a performer selected by European standards which fail to meet the challenges of all kinds, but especially fluctuating multitude of responsibilities and major requirements in fulfilling their duties as future policemen.

Standardization at European level is very important, not only because common missions, but also because the police structures are cooperating and work together to achieve the interoperability concept. Joint missions need visibility at European level, thus nevertheless is leading to an assessment of the quality of teaching and thus to an integrated assessment applied results. Frontex CCC Curriculum meets standardization and harmonization, but not strict specifications upon quality or on transferability, precisely for this the pressing need to have a common evaluation model and applied practical results which are demonstrating the quality and willing to impose European market sector niche specific for policing. Sector niche currently takes in this moment of societal development marked by special major changes a special importance and that is why it must put a strong emphasis on selection criteria and conditions, both at national and European level.

In the police and the border police one the emphasis on sociology and behavior changed



curricular structures and imposed rules and regulations which highlight the need of societal networking and training of a large social capital, in terms of attributions and additional tasks that come to strengthen the role of police and border police in the community.

This system must act with fairness and impartiality in dealing with the public, treating everyone with kindness and respect, without discrimination and without victimizing anyone, must use a mimicry, gestures and language appropriate in the relationships with those around it.

European trends bring into the foreground of our attention the human rights skills and first aid skills (*European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union, 2011, Code of Conduct*).

Our analysis revealed, however, that in assessing the overall institutions which have as their object the recruitment, selection and training of police personnel, an important goal - becoming a reality in many cases - is to consider as many relevant criteria, including particularly important one which is assessing community perceptions about the condition and behavior of policemen and organizations where they are working in.

***Comparative study of the three schools that train border police personnel***, namely one in Romania, one from Hungary and one from Germany shows that although they have a specificity given by their tradition, especially because of the fact that the three EU countries, have a very similar core, in fact quite similar. In its center there are the values of human rights, the concern for social and cultural non discrimination (ethnic), the community mutual respect.

As concrete criteria of selection in all the three schools, the legal and moral one (resulted in lack of criminal record, behavior grade) the physical-constitutional skills and theoretical knowledge are listed.

When it comes to specific examinations, however, things are significantly different from one school to another: while at the Police School "Avram Iancu" from Oradea (Romania) the examination are only for Romanian language and foreign languages, at the school from Miskolc ( Hungary), they are not the same, instead they require knowledge of history and social sciences based on a certain bibliography. At all the three schools there given exams for physical exercise, but they differ in specific samples (different emphasis is on long jumping, running, throwing weights). Note that in all the three cases there is a concern that those enrolled on admission to know how to calculate their final mark, and which is the weight of each criterion.

Comparing the three schools documentaries, there is a clear result that the system most rigorous admission criteria and also valid, but certainly the most complex and expensive (in time and effort evaluation, and therefore financial) is the German one, comprising six samples: 1) German language dictation, 2) Tests of attention and intelligence, 3) General test of general knowledge, 4) Medical examination; 5) Sports examination; 6) A comprehensive interview which assesses the candidate's personality, including by creating extreme situations ( such as raising the voice of the interviewers).

Regarding the *representations and police attitudes towards the selection and basic training in police schools, and to the police profession generally* the most important conclusions are: i) When it comes to assess the admission system, results a decrease in evaluation at high levels at the level of the three countries. Thus, in Romania 8% of students consider that the system is very good, in Hungary 4.3%, while no student from Germany have a high opinion of the selection system. The situation is similar when it comes the attribute "unsatisfactory": only 4% of students in Romania, 8.5% in Hungary, 10.3% in Germany. The explanation is closely related to the difficulty of the exams, in Germany being the most difficult ones. This is confirmed by answers to the question concerning the functionality criteria, those in Romania and Hungary assessing almost 80% that they are functional, while the students in Germany only 47.2% think they are functional, ii) relevant is the finding that, with regard to the advantages and

disadvantages of the police profession - the perception that matters in choosing that profession - in all three countries the advantages ranked on the first place job's security, "good salary", "nice job (exciting )" and the disadvantages," danger and risk ", " stress", "lack of free time". Note that to the Romanians and Hungarians this does not appear to disadvantages, specifically, "little time for family " while to the Germans, this constraint is more pronounced iii) Following the unstructured interviews with significant personalities of the three schools emerged as dominant note and common also, the idea that for police schools there are important in the admission process three sets of factors: those related to perception and motivation of choosing the profession, the candidate's personality profile (especially the cognitive and empathic capacities) and selection criteria, which are in fact, decisive as they examine the first two. A distinctive mark on the countries is the one that for Germany is not mentioned the influence of families, friendships not even in choosing the profession, while in Romania and Hungary, yes, it is. This says something about the general cultural differences between Western and Central and Eastern Europe, said in fact in many empirical studies (for example, Iluț and Nistor, 2011).

One of the *major findings of the comparative analysis* between the three schools (countries) is that multi-level policy recruitment, selection, basic training and development of police personnel career, where there is the tension between standardization requirements given by globalization in general, particularly EU rules and local conditions. In the attempts to resolve this tension, we explored and exploited the concept of *flexible uniformity*, applying it to the presentation and understanding of the subjects focused by the thesis. The concept is naming the idea that in many areas of social life, both within countries and the wider region, such as the USA or EU or even at the global level, there is a need of standardization, uniformity, for which there should however exist a certain degree of variability.

A close concept, which we also had exploited in our approach was flexicurity. Here the emphasis is on combining security (eg. of a job) with flexibility. The status and the role

of policeman by excellence requires both the care for their own safety and that of the facing in a flexible way the different situations.

I am fully aware that the paper has a number of shortcomings and *limitations* and that could be developed. Thus, for a better representation and more advanced statistical processing, it requires more extensive replications. Also, although the organizational point of view is quite difficult, it would be worth applying at least one focus group.

### **3. Optimization proposals based on the study**

Based on the *analysis of documents on recruitment and selection in the three schools* and also on *the actual findings of the research*, we advanced some *proposals* set out in detail in Chapter 4 in the closing sequence, of which, in summary, we mention here:

- 1.** Editing by MAI printing house of some attractive advertising materials with a rich informative content that is to be distributed to territorial units which are executing the process of selecting candidates and advertising the materials on the website of the Ministry of Administration and Interior.
- 2.** Spreading the publicity materials by the county education inspectorates, and also by existing national minority organizations in the area of competence, to increase the number of candidates belonging to these social groups. In this respect, it would be useful to publish periodically in central newspapers of some advertising materials related to the education system within the Ministry of Administration and Interior.
- 3.** Explicit mention in the methodology of selecting and organizing the requirement for entrance examination of the obligation for the selection bodies from county police inspectorates from the counties that have no border police structures, to select candidates both for police and for the border police.
- 4.** Takeover, according to the German model, with some possible adaptation of the system to support sports events which allow, in our opinion, better physical capacity

evaluation of candidates, creating the possibility of repeating the physical exam and taking into account only the best results.

**5.** Adding next to the examination for Romanian language knowledge (grammar) of a general test of subjects studied in high school, one of a middle level and a dictation in Romanian language. In this way you can test the general knowledge of the future police officer and his ability to write a paper with calligraphic writing, and also correct spelling and grammar.

**6.** Extending in the educational institution of the border police for the candidates the possibility to choose the language test from one of the following foreign languages: English, French, German and Russian, but the evaluation to be done according to the Cambridge Assessment model, (and according to the Common European Framework of Foreign Languages) on skills , focusing on speaking and reading skills. Evaluation of this test should be done to all the points and in the presence of the candidates for greater transparency.

**7.** EU Core Curriculum for basic training of guards / border guards (CCC) is a successor of the first CVC for basic training of the border guards. Its development was launched on the Seville European Council Decision of June 2002. CCC was ready for implementation in EU member states and Schengen associated countries on 15 June 2004. Its implementation in the basic training systems was monitored and as a result it was recommended to be updated for the basic training of the border guards/policemen. CCC for basic training of border guards in the EU was designed in 2006-2007. This work should be continued.

**8.** Its implementation in national training systems as recommended in the Schengen Borders Code is supported by Frontex and the European Commission. Implementation of CCC was monitored and evaluated by Frontex, in cooperation with Member States and EU agencies and in cooperation with universities and educational experts. Cooperation with specialized NGOs and educational institutes should be enhanced for a better expertise.

9. According to the two documentaries, we appreciate the German model as a successful one, which fits into the social conditions and social norms to be followed in most societies in Europe.

10. Proposing new methods of selection of candidates, in accordance with European norms and standards required, especially given the major changes made not only in Europe, but worldwide in terms of police work and the way the policeman is working for society. Instead of quantity (eg. number of hours), the focus should be on quality, on interdisciplinary curriculum, in which socio-psychology, with its integrated valence would be justified to occupy an important place.

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