***Status* and *power* in women’s discourses: the soldier’s rhetoric in the peacekeeping era.**

The main point of this paper concerns the heuristic power of narratives collected on the field (Formenti & West, 2014). Can stories help us to understand, in relation to the complex dimensions of *status* and *power* (Foucault, 1972, Goffman, 1961), the point of view of women embedded in a total institution as the military forces? Recognising social structure and cultural models as emplotted within the analysed narratives (Ewick and Silbey, 1995), we can interrogate the conceptual frameworks that bind the social dimension of institutions to individual actions through a gender perspective (Agodi & De Luca Picione 2016).

In a globalised world, as the recent international events can clearly show (terroristic attacks, refugees’ and migrants’ crisis management, warfare affairs), governments are more often asked to give concerted and coordinated answers to phenomena that might threat local national security but have to be faced on a global scale. In this new environment, Armed Forces were asked to expand and to diversify their interventions combining the traditional national defence to new tasks such as peacekeeping, humanitarian interventions and nation building tasks. In the process of adaptation to these new conditions, the conceptualization of a new idea of “soldiering” was accompanied by deep organizational changes such as women inclusion, professionalization of military and the introduction of new technologies for warfare and communications.

To understand what is changing in military discourses, we will present the case of study of the *Academy of Pozzuoli,* the military school of the Italian Airforce, which trains young people to become officers. The empirical research concerns the unpublished life histories of the female cadets of the Academy, which highlight how different experiences and the events narrated form their personal point of view can link individual starting biographical structural conditions (Griffin, 2007) to the idea of *power* taught in this military school. In particular, the purpose of the analysis will be the understanding of how the theme of “leadership” is officially transmitted and how this narration is translated into young womens’ strategies and career aspirations to attain a specific *status*.

The first results show various interesting elements about how the concept of “leadership” is very pervasive in the instructional path of the Academy, and how the young women are very interested in developing the skills required to be a good leader. It is precisely around this strong idea and its development that cadets build their formative path and somewhat, their subjective identity as a volunteer, professional military officer overcoming any gender difference.

The sociological conceptualization of a new idea of “soldiering” also showsthat these new narration is not only functional to manage the new organizational challenges the army has to face. In fact, the emphasis on this new rhetoric is also necessary to sustain the changes in military identity due to the professionalization of a crescent number of female soldiers and to the global vision of a new world policy referring more to the image of an peacekeeping era than war itself.

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