EVOLUTION OF RESILIENCE AND HYBRIDITY IN THE PSYCHO-SOCIAL FIELD AND THEIR USE IN CERTAIN ASPECTS OF ARMED SERVICE PRACTICE

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Abstract: *This article aims to analyze how the concepts of resilience, the "strength of a subject to resist traumatic events" (Casula and Don Short, 2006, p.12), and hybridity, the "complexities and dilemmas related to changing globality" (Pawlak, 2015, p.1), are employed in Western military practice for an understanding of the reasons behind increased military training regarding both technical and soft skills, and the wider use of the armed services for non-military purposes such as, peacekeeping and distribution of aid to those afflicted by natural disaster. The first chapter will be a brief excursus on the main models relative to resilience and the second chapter will be a short introduction of the concept of hybridity. The third chapter will take into consideration a body of research carried out by military psychologists in the fields of organization, management, motivation, resilience and hybridity. The article will draw attention to a particularly interesting aspect of recent studies in the sphere of military psychology, that is, an increased valorization of human resources which is no longer solely focused on the individual armed service member but also on the well-being of their family. In other words, the article will show a shift within military organizations; a move from a behaviourist vision to one which is both multi-dimensional and dynamic.*

Keywords: armed service practice; hybridity; resilience; psychology; stress

1. A BRIEF EXCURSUS ON THE MAIN MODELS RELATIVE TO RESILIENCE

In technical sciences, *resilience* is defined as the ability of a material to resist flexural fracture due to impact. The opposite of *resilience* is *fragility,* and this formula can be expressed through the following proportion: the greater the value of the resilience of a given material, the lower the value of its fragility (Bruneau, 2003). Literature often cites the example of bamboo canes, which have a high value of resilience and can resist elevated levels of stress through mechanical compression and traction.

Since the mid-seventies, the term resilience has been introduced progressively into various disciplines related to the well-being of individuals and organizations. In 2014, Banahene *et al.* conducted a review of academic studies which investigated how frequently the term *resilience* was mentioned. Their analysis revealed that between 1991 and 2002, there was a 10% increase in its use, while between 2002 and 2013, an increase of 60%. Essentially, this rise can be put down to the fact that, in academic papers, the word *resilience* was no longer the exclusive prerogative of the technical area but was also in common use in the spheres of psychology and sociology.

Currently, *resilience* is used in psychological studies which have three types of attentional focus: individuals, groups and organizations. One example of an individual approach study, which generally has a clinical psychology approach to *resilience*, is one written by Rutter (1985). Rutter analyzed a sample-group of children born to schizophrenic mothers and demonstrated how 35% of these children did not present any psychiatric disorder, and managed, owing to their resilience, to live healthily, and develop a broad network of relationships. One can find exemplary studies on groups in the psychosocial perspective in Kurt Lewin's *Field theory*:

> Field theory is the term Lewin used for his psychological theory, which examines patterns of interaction between individuals and the total field or the surrounding environments in which they move. The roots of field theory lie both in physics and psychology. According to this theory and following the principles of the Gestalt school of psychology, behavior needs to be evaluated in the right context, taking into account the forces that affect it. (Burnesa & Bargalb, 2017: 5)

In his psychosocial studies of 1995, Emiliani also highlighted that *resilience* develops within the relational dimension of comparison. It is through comparison with other people that an individual is able to evaluate positive and negative behaviour and identify the most appropriate actions to be taken to achieve personal goals.

Exemplary studies in the field of organizations can be those which begin from the concept that an organization is resilient when it has an effective supply chain.

Supply chain studies are based upon the hypothesis that an organization is resilient when its supply chain is flexible, agile and varied. That is, the organization is conceived as a modular design. (Christopher & Peck, 2004; Kleindorfer & Saad, 2005; Klibi *et al.,* 2010; Petty *et al*., 2010; Rice &Caniato, 2003; Sheffi &Rice, 2005).

In 2004, in the first part of their article, Christopher & Peck report a meta-analysis of literature on the subject and some case studies. Then, in the second part of their paper, they explain their starting hypothesis:

A fundamental pre-requisite for improved supply chain resilience is an understanding of the network that connects the business to its suppliers and their suppliers to its downstream customers. Mapping tools can help in the identification of 'pinch points' and 'critical paths'.
Pinch points will often be characterized, as bottlenecks, … critical paths can be long lead-times, a single source of supply with no short-term alternatives and linkages where 'visibility' is poor, i.e. little or no shared information between nodes. (Christopher and Peck, 2014:14)

2. A SHORT INTRODUCTION OF THE CONCEPT OF HYBRIDITY

In the 15th century, the term *hybridity* was used in biology and botany where it designated a crossbreeding of two species which then gave birth to a third *hybrid* spec. In the Victorian period, the racist concepts present in Gobinau's *L'Essai sur l'Inégalité des Races Humaines* were widely shared in Western society. Gobinau's legacy offered a moral justification for the acquisition of new colonies (Delatolla & Yao, 2018). In the 19th century, *hybridity* was also used to refer to people of mixed blood and was loaded with negative connotations. For instance, being of mixed blood was viewed as "subversive of the foundations of empire and race" (Nederveen, 1989:361).

In the last few decades of 20th century, for many people, the concept of human hybridity lost its a negative meaning. After the Second World War, numerous colonies obtained their freedom, and the United Kingdom lost a substantial proportion of its empire. In the 1950's, some intellectuals born in former European colonies, embarked upon lines of research known as *cultural study*. These studies lodged strong criticism at the racist Western management of ex-colonies. In 1978, Said published *Orientalism,* which is considered a milestone in the ambit of *cultural studies*. The title of the book refers to the 19th century figurative romantic artistic movement. Through their artworks, the artists of the Orientalist Movement depicted the daily life and landscapes of Far Eastern countries. (Balzano, 1993). According to Said, neither the concept of "Orient nor the concept of the West had any ontological stability; each was made up of human effort." (Said, 2003:xlc)

As Said explained during an interview in 1979, what he was aiming at was worldwide co-operation by means of movements "which oppose the capitalist production mode and try to break its hegemony". In 2011, Guignery wrote:

In the twentieth century, the term hybridity extended beyond the biological and racial framework to embrace linguistic and cultural areas. Mikhail Bakhtin developed a linguistic version of hybridity that was related to the concepts of polyphony, dialogism and heteroglossia. (Guignery, 2011:2)

The continuous attribution of meta-meanings to the concept of hybridity, by cultural studies, led Joung to observe that "Hybridity is […] itself a hybrid concept", namely, it is not fully applicable to a non-academic world.

Currently, in the press, *hybridity* is used to denote a situation in which two or more different groups must share a single place, even metaphorically speaking, or to refer to different typologies of ideas, technologies and animals, anything which has an influence, either positive or negative, upon something else (Hallin *et al.*, 2021).

3. THE IMPORTANCE OF HELPING THE FAMILY OF THE DEPLOYED ARMED SERVICE MEMBERS

In 2019, a fourth workshop on psychology and psychiatry was held in Rome with contributions from both civilian and military scholars. The theme of this workshop was "Stress, Operations and Resilience" and the topics discussed regarded work

and organizational psychology following the reorganization and reform of the Italian Armed Services and clinical psychology and psychiatry which analyzed potentially traumatic-stressful events and their impact upon armed service members, their families and the armed service organizations. There was also discussion regarding the introduction of figures who could help manage the stress of both the military and their families.

In 2010, Mansfield tested the hypothesis of whether military families who had a member operating in combat areas away from home for a long period suffered from distress or psychiatric phenomena. She compared two sample-groups of military wives: one whose husbands were deployed for lengthy periods, and a second group whose husbands were working in non-operational areas and returned home daily. Mansfield's conclusions were:

> women whose husbands were deployed for 1 to 11 months received more diagnoses of depressive disorders (27.4 excess cases per 1000 women; 95% confidence interval CI, 22.4 to 32.3), sleeping disorders (11.6 excess cases per 1000; 95% CI, 8.3 to 14.8), anxiety (15.7 excess cases per 1000; 95% CI, 11.8 to 19.6), and acute stress reaction and adjustment disorders (12.0 excess cases per 1000; 95% CI, 8.6 to 15.4). 27.6), 18.7 excess cases of anxiety (95% CI, 13.9 to 23.5), and 16.4 excess cases of acute stress reaction and adjustment disorders (95% CI, 12.2 to 20.6). (Mansfield, 2010:101)

In 2013 McGene published a detailed review on the factors which can trigger distress and the type of support appropriate for treating the onset of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and on the diagnosis of PTSP itself. McGene stated:

> We have identified social support as a central element of social fitness and have reviewed prior research on the key sources of social support and its influence on well-being… We have reviewed the factors that facilitate or obstruct positive social support and have made recommendations for promising interventions that can increase the facilitation of support. Our review has shown the importance of families, friends, co-workers, unit members, neighborhoods, and other communities for the provision of emotional, instrumental, and informational support… (McGene, 2003:29)

In 2022, Sylvia's study confirmed literature previously dealing with this topic. Under the heading "Combat Disorders/diagnosis", there are 448 articles in PubMed which regard stress and PTSD, and which are relevant to the years between 1968 and 2024. Starting from the mid-90's, the statistical data concerning stress and PTSD are similar and can, therefore, be considered highly predictive. In accordance with the data expressed by Mesfeld's research and in literature in general, the World Health Organization (WHO) Mental Health Action Plan 2013-2020 report highlighted that:

> Integrated and responsive care: Integrate and coordinate holistic prevention, promotion, rehabilitation, care and support that aims at meeting both mental and physical health care needs and facilitates the recovery of persons of all ages with mental disorders within and across general health and social services … through service user-driven treatment and recovery plans and, where appropriate, with the inputs of families and carers. (WHO, 2013:15)

The WHO indication suggests that in the event of the onset of mental disorders or pathologies, often associated with deployed soldiers and their families, an institutionalization of a support caregiver service can provide psychological relief. Should caregivers assist families, their help can facilitate the management of distress factors and provide relief. This will allow a military family to help a returning armed services member after a long period of deployment abroad. This would establish the best practices to be employed when offering *integrated and responsive care*.

Several studies have linked the resilient reintegration process with the process of emotion regulation and specifically with three components: coping, appraisal and positive emotions, considered responsible for the ability to adapt positively to stressful events (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Scherer *et al.*, 2005; Fredrickson, 2001). Since the homeostatic balance is constantly disturbed, individuals are called to carry out a series of evaluations in their daily lives and to find adequate, selective and finalized strategies and operational responses. For this reason, when faced with an adverse and/or destabilizing event, psychological mechanisms are activated: appraisal consists of the cognitive evaluation of the stressful event, coping refers to operational responses and includes a series of behavioural strategies which can be implemented to handle both the environmental demands and internal needs of the individual.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Following the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact in 1991,

European armed services in the 1990's underwent structural reorganization, that is, smaller armed service groups were made up of well-trained professionals with effective equipment, logistics, and shared intelligence. The fulfillment of the armed services' commitments changed; from a force of defence to protect national borders, attention shifted predominantly to joint commitments in international tasks both of war and peacekeeping as well as to aid for the population in the event of natural calamity.

All these elements allowed both civil and military psychology to enter military organization fully, and led to the creation, when possible, of adequate programs to provide help to armed service members and their families in times of difficulty. There are, however, possible issues which may hinder the introduction of *integrated and responsive care,* and these generally arise due to limited funding.

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