

THE SUBJECTIVITY OF THE MILITARY: BETWEEN THE TANGIBLE AND THE INTANGIBLE

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ARTICLE: MENEZES, D. T. *Como pensam os militares: a construção social da subjetividade dos militares, (How do the military think? - the social construction of the subjectivity of the military)*, São Paulo: Baraúna, 2015.

Divided into eleven chapters, the book *Como pensam os militares (How do the Military think?)* was started from a statement that astonished the author: "The military people are all the same". From this thought, it tries, with a sociological vision, to demonstrate the peculiarities that differentiate each of the Armed Forces.

Combining his military profile with his vocation as a scholar, as pointed out in the preface to the work, the Brigadier Delano Menezes traces a characterization of Army, Navy and Aeronautics. From the description of military attitudes, aspirations and opinions, the Brigadier tries to expose the logic of the elements, that make up the bases on which the behaviors of individuals in this category would be built. Thus, the author argues, through examples and stories, the possible re-significances between the military and the armed institution to which they are attached.

The theoretical tangencies of the first chapter address, as the name itself reveals, the theoretical bases on which work is based. Without falling into the lure of simple memorialist narrative, the author observes the creation of stereotypes, when he proposes to show "how it is made the transition from individual forms to collective forms of military behavior and identity" (page 51). Perhaps it is at this point, the greatest weakness of the author's argumentative construction. Even if in his preface it is announced that the book presents an impressionist essay, in the method of approach and provisional in the conclusions, "the reader who seeks something beyond the "theoretical tangencies" that permeate the whole narrative of the book, he will come out somewhat frustrated; but he will have his breath restored, by the panoramic vision of the military of the three Brazilian

Armed Forces, explored by the accurate and insightful observations of the author.

Divided into "tangible" and "intangible" aspects of each force, the chapter 5 attempts to make an analysis of the characteristics of each weapon based in its behavior during the period of military training, called the "tangible universe", and because of "social and cultural determinisms" (page 52) - the "intangible." From descriptions about the daily life of soldiers, sailors and airmen, the author intends to establish to what extent the environment would influence the construction of the subjectivity of the military, which could possibly be solved if the concept of *habitus* (BOURDIEU, 1983) was more exploited. For him, the written rules of the three armed forces are similar, but the unwritten rules (the "culture", the "common sense" of the military) would be peculiar to each one. From this point of view, the author exposes his thesis, that the geophysical conditions of the environment in which one lives, decisively influences the people's behavior.

A tendency toward authoritarianism is pointed out by the author in Chapter 5, as a characteristic of the Forces. However, this aspect would tend to manifest itself differently in each one. An autocratic leadership for the Navy, authoritarian for the Army and with a more democratic bias in the Aeronautics. The author also draws on his thesis on the importance of ambience when he states that "the airplane and the ship are central objects for each type of operation and [...] they affect directly in the construction of the subjectivity, of the men who use them".

The Leadership, hierarchy, discipline, and doctrine, basic concepts for the Armed Forces, are dealt with in Chapters 5, 6, 7, and 8. Regarding leadership styles, he states that "military organizations are basically characterized by a rigidly stratified structure, hierarchical and authoritarian" (page 128). For the author, the hierarchy goes beyond simple obedience to your supervisor. It attributes power, strengthens rituals, and locates, even spatially, individuals. Linked to the hierarchy, with which it forms the pillars of the military institutions, the discipline would have its training-related synthesis,

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which adapts the individual to the mechanism of duress (BOURDIEU, 1983 apud MENEZES, 2015, page 71). With this perspective, the coercive character of the discipline would have an educational face, and would receive differentiated contours according to each Armed Force. Aligned with hierarchy, doctrine has a flexible character, which can be modified over time, as opposed to the regulation which sometimes remains static. At this point, it seems to us that the naturalization of the networks of power in which the hierarchy frames are constructed, they could be more problematized, since the "exercise of power" does not only operate linearly and on a descending scale.

Another point that draws attention is that the entrance into the Armed Forces is understood as a democratic movement and without constraints, without taking into account the imperatives that contemporary society is undergoing and what the entry to the military branch can reflect. And at this point, the vision and experience of a senior career officer appears preponderantly, clouding the existence of other elements of the military scenario as for example, the women, as well as the significant participation of other spheres of command as graduates and soldiers. The relativization of subjectivation in the face of the existence of these actors would make more complete, the panorama that is presented.

On the other hand, what could be a problem - the personalistic view - offers us a toast of pearls, like the three stories in chapter 10, collected from internal publications of the respective barracks, and which are impregnated with feelings and experiences of the military of each one of the Armed Forces. The author maintains that the narratives construct the collective imaginary of each institution and, through them, the

behaviors and values would be perpetuated, as well as re-signified. He invests, therefore, in the argument that the Institutions build the individuals.

Helpful for students and for all those who are interested in more information about life in the barracks or about the factors that govern the configuration of bodies, the book "Como pensam os militares" (How do the military think?) the social construction of the subjectivity of the military" brings an internal perspective that has the merit of broadening the understanding of those who are "outsiders" or even comrades in arms. The reading can serve as a motivation for future systematizations, regarding such an exciting subject.

The Director of the *campus in* Brasília of the War College (ESG), the Brigadier Delano Teixeira Menezes is a member of the Brazilian Association of Defense Studies (Abed) and he works in the area of Geopolitics and Strategy. Master in Sociology by Federal University of Ceará, Teacher Delano Menezes also published the book *O militar e o diplomata: órfãos da política* (*The military and the diplomat: orphans of politics*). He has several courses in the area, such as Specialization in Politics and Strategy by ESG (War College) and Aerospace Policy by the School of Command and General Staff of Aeronautics (Ecemar).

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