



08, 09, 10 e 11 de novembro de 2022
ISSN 2177-3866

"People See Us as Criminals, Not as Heroes": The Stigma and Identity Responses of Brazilian Female Prison Police

CARLOS EDUARDO DE LIMA

ESCOLA DE ADMINISTRAÇÃO DE EMPRESAS DE SÃO PAULO (FGV-EAESP)

ALICE DE FREITAS OLETO

ESCOLA DE ADMINISTRAÇÃO DE EMPRESAS DE SÃO PAULO (FGV-EAESP)

"People See Us as Criminals, Not as Heroes": The Stigma and Identity Responses of Brazilian Female Prison Police

Introdução

This paper discusses how professional women in the Brazilian prison police respond to the stigma assigned to them. The interest in this professional category lies in the fact that there are many taboos and misinterpretations of female work in prisons. In the case of Brazil, there is a characteristic of being in a stereotyped environment, with a male majority and with a historical legacy of corruption from the dictatorial period. Workers stigmatized as dirty are objects of prejudice from those who are not so "dirty" and such issues become more peculiar when of work is executed by women.

Problema de Pesquisa e Objetivo

Considering the peculiarities, the objective of this article is to analyze how professional women in the Brazilian criminal justice system respond to the stigma assigned to their profession. By conducting a study on the work of female prison police and how they attribute meaning and identify to their work, we seek to deepen our understanding of a profession with a clear need for further studies, as the number of prisoners and penal units tends to grow in Brazil.

Fundamentação Teórica

Dirty Work and Stigma At one time or another, many workers engage in tasks that are considered dirty, which detrimentally affect their sense of occupational identity or personal dignity (McMurray & Ward, 2014; Doldor & Atewologun, 2020). The concept of dirty work stems from studies conducted by American sociologist Everett Hughes at the Chicago School of Sociology between the years 1900 and 1960 as part of a sociological study of the role of urban space in the period (Simpson, Hughes & Slutskaya, 2016).

Metodologia

The methodological approach of the research is inductive, qualitative and based on grounded theory. Data were collected through interviews with 33 female prison officers who work in the five regions of the country, aged between 25 and 65 years. Data collection took place in 3 phases and interviews were conducted between November 2019 and December 2021. The results were structured into first and second-order categories.

Análise dos Resultados

The study provide evidence of the reasons why female prison officers chose the profession, the characteristics of the stigma and adversity of the work experienced by them, and the responses undertaken as ways of building a positive and more secure identity regarding their profession. It is also possible to understand how the gender issue reinforces the invisibility and stigmatization of women's work, about their bodies during pregnancy. Moreover, the prejudice against pregnancy, a notably feminine issue, is much more pronounced within the environment in which these prison officers are located.

Conclusão

Although several issues influence, stigmatize and threaten the experience of the work of prison officers, it is noted that they engage in various levels of construction of positive aspects about their occupation. In the prison context, some actions go beyond the deconstruction of professional stigma and are directed towards the creation of identities with a higher level of prestige and also refer to

the performativity of attributes that ensure higher levels of safety in the face of the violent dimension inherent to the profession.

Referências Bibliográficas

Ashforth, B. E., & Schinoff, B. S. (2016). Identity under construction: How individuals come to define themselves in organizations. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 3, 111 -137. Doldor, E. & Atewologun, D. (2021). "Why work it when you can dodge it? Identity responses to ethnic stigma among professionals". *Human Relations*, 74 (6), 892- 921. Haynes, K. (2013) Sexuality and Sexual Symbolism as Processes of Gendered Identity Formation: An Autoethnography of an Accounting Firm. *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, 26(3), 374-98.