

## REVIEW

### CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF SLOVENIAN SOCIETY AND ITS ATTITUDE TOWARDS SECURITY AND THE MILITARY

In June 2021, a scientific monograph by Dr Janja Vuga Beršnak was published, titled **Kulturne značilnosti slovenske družbe in njen odnos do varnosti: vojska na stičišču zahtev države, pričakovanj družbe in lastne pohlepnosti**<sup>1</sup>. It has been reviewed by Dr Rudi Rizman, Professor Emeritus, from the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana; Dr Majda Hrženjak, senior research fellow at the Peace Institute in Ljubljana, and Dr Ljubica Jelušič from the Faculty of Social Sciences in Ljubljana.

The monograph has 180 pages and forms a part of the Varnostne študije (Security Studies) collection (ed. Dr Anton Grizold, Prof) published by the Faculty of Social Sciences publishing house.

Methodologically, the monograph is divided into three content sets: macro-, mezzo- and micro level, and individual level. At the macro level, the author first describes Slovenian culture. This is followed by the description of Slovenian society and security culture in the context of acceptable “risk”, which she calls “the security bubble”, and finally, by a chapter on Slovenian society and its armed forces.

The mezzo- and micro levels are first devoted to the future of military organizations: their culture and identity, followed by a chapter on the gender representativeness of the military organization. The author concludes this set with a chapter on the motivation for the military profession. In the last set, she focuses on the psychosocial framework of the functioning of members of a military organization, and on the risk and protection factors affecting them and their families. The presented topics indicate a step forward in the study of military sociology-related contents in Slovenia, specifically in the field of health and well-being.

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<sup>1</sup> *Cultural characteristics of Slovenian society and its attitude towards security: the military at the crossroads of national requirements, society's expectations and its own greediness.*

Dr Janja Vuga Beršnak is Associate Professor and Senior Research Fellow at the Faculty of Social Sciences. She has discoursed the cultural aspects of the activities of members of the armed forces in international operations and missions as early as in her dissertation. In this scientific monograph, she explores the rarely presented dimensions of security culture, i.e. the relationship between the military and security from a cultural perspective.

Her work is based on the research by probably one of the most famous authors in the field of research of interactions between national and organizational cultures, Geert Hofstede from the Netherlands, who died last year at the age of 91. Hofstede included Slovenia in one of his researches in 1991, when he researched the culture of business corporations (IBM). As early as in that period, he discovered, what was later confirmed in 2021 by Dr Andreja Terpotec in her doctoral dissertation on national culture in Slovenia in connection with corruption, and by Dr Janja Vuga Beršnak on the case of Slovenian society and its attitude towards the military. Slovenian culture is predominantly female-oriented, which means that it is determined by female qualities such as modesty, helping others and the weak, caring and nurturing good interpersonal relationships, compared to male-determined cultures, which are characterized by self-confidence, strength, determination, competition and success. The military organization and its mission are both based on a male-determined culture. Its members must demonstrate strength, self-confidence, determination and success. Only with such a culture is it possible to defend the homeland and deter various forms of threats. We could make a rough estimate that, considering the attitude of the state and the society towards its military, Slovenia is experiencing a harmonious relationship between two partners. In more depth, however, the author of the monograph notes that these two different cultural determinants have certain characteristics that should be understood, researched and taken into account in many processes and public policies; all with one single purpose – to ensure the safety and successful performance of each individual in the military and families of these individuals, and the security of the country as a whole.

The monograph brings valuable findings and a completely different, fresh, very welcome, new perspective of the understanding of certain phenomena and characteristics in the broader international environment, but especially in Slovenia. Ever since the last global financial crisis, when the funds for the Slovenian Armed Forces were steadily being cut, there has been an impression that the armed forces were experiencing long-lasting cramp twinges that were by no means easing away. There was an impression that the attitude of the Slovenian state and the society towards the national armed forces resembled a relationship between a stepmother and a stepchild, whereby the former only demands and never gives. Gradually and after a long time, the cramp twinges subsided. This new monograph will facilitate the understanding of Slovenian culture, our society, the Slovenian Armed Forces and its families, and our diverse relations. An important role in the understanding of all of the above is certainly played by the monograph's author Dr Janja Vuga Beršnak. She has consistently followed the scientific methodology, laws, views and various

pieces of literature and sources throughout her research, and at the same time has personal experience of what a military family is, what are its benefits, and what it requires, being a greedy institution.