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POMEMBNOST VOJAŠKIH DRUŽIN ZA VOJAŠKE ORGANIZACIJE IN VOJAŠKO SOCIOLOGIJO

THE RELEVANCE OF MILITARY FAMILIES FOR MILITARY ORGANIZATIONS AND MILITARY SOCIOLOGY

Povzetek   Prispevek predstavlja zgodovinski pregled odnosa med vojaško družino in vojaško organizacijo, od prepovedi, zanikanja in nadzora do vključitve v vojaško skupnost. Prelomnica v obravnavanju družine je prehod na poklicno popolnjevanje, ko postane lojalnost družine do vojske bistvena za pridobivanje in zadrževanje vojaškega osebja. Hkrati je vojaška družina postala zanimiva vojaškosociološka tematika raziskovanja, tako v kontekstu sociološkega koncepta pohlepnih institucij kot v dihotomiji ravnotežja med delom in življenjem. Vojske, ki so nastajale na slovenskih tleh skozi zgodovino, so sledile svetovnim trendom glede obravnave družin, slovenski vojaški sociologi pa so prispevali pomemben delež spoznanj o slovenskih vojaških družinah h globalnim vojaškosociološkim dosežkom.

Ključne besede   *Vojaška družina, zgodovina odnosa med družino in vojsko, celostna skrb za pripadnike SV, raziskovanje vojaških družin v vojaški sociologiji.*

Abstract   This article presents the history of relations between the military family and the military organization, which have varied from forbiddance, to ignorance, regulation, and finally to inclusion in the military community. The turning point appeared at a time of introducing all volunteer force when the loyalty of families towards the military became important for recruitment and retention of service members. This was also the moment for military sociology to discover the military families as interesting to deploy the general sociological concepts of greedy institutions, work-life balance, negotiation between military and family, etc. The militaries in Slovenian territory followed these trends. Slovenian military sociologists contributed an important part of the knowledge of Slovenian military families to global social science achievements.

Key words   *Military family, history of relations between military and family, comprehensive care for service members of the SAF, the research of military families in military sociology.*

Introduction   In this article, we intend to explore two research questions. The first deals with the military family unit and its importance to the military establishment, while the second focuses more on when and how the military family unit becomes relevant to social sciences, especially to military sociology. Furthermore, we will present international and national, specifically Slovenian, trends with regard to the evolution of the perception of the military family.

Relations between the military and the families of soldiers varies over time and according to specific historical events. In some cases, the family and its needs can become a strong incentive to enlist and remain loyal to the military as it brings with it a specific lifestyle, as well as assisting in forming bonds with people who are living through similar experiences. In other cases, enlisted family members may choose to keep their families out of the institutional impact of the military. In either case, social sciences surveys indicate a high importance of family for military morale and efficiency.

1   WHEN DOES THE FAMILY UNIT BECOME RELEVANT TO THE MILITARY?

1.1   The military family from forbiddance to inclusion

The relationship between the armed forces and the families of their members has developed and changed over time. Families of military personnel were ignored and left behind for a long time; in some cases, it was even forbidden for military members to have a family (Malešič et al, 2015, p 58). Soldiers' conjugal families have usually been problematic in institutional terms. The soldier's first obligation was supposed to be to the military institution (Phang, 2002, p 352). Members of the armed forces were socialized according to a job-comes-first philosophy. The burden of responsibility for one's family can be in contradiction to the primary fidelity to the armed forces. Various armies in the past have taken different precautions in order to prevent their members from getting married and from establishing families, since family formation was regarded as incompatible with military service. It was also believed that a soldier with a family was less productive and efficient than one without. According to Phang (ibid.) these restrictions to marriage characterized 18th and 19th century European armies. The US armed forces in the 19th century did not prohibit their service members from getting married; however, married conscripts were not allowed to enlist. In 1847, the US Congress adopted an Act which prohibited married men from joining the armed forces (Albano, 1994, p 285).

1.2   Militaries in Slovenian territory and the families

In what is now Slovenian territory, there have been different empires whose attitudes with regard to military families were similar to other European countries in the same period. In the Austro-Hungarian Empire (1867-1918), the armed forces did not support the marriage of younger officers, because it was difficult for them to sustain the cost of having a family. The military was also not prepared to carry the

costs of military widows and orphans. In order to handle this problem, the authorities introduced the 'marriage bail' (Heiratkaution), a special fund to which all officers were supposed to pay a contribution or contribute a part of their salary during service before they were allowed to get married. Officers from combat units had to contribute double or more, because of the higher probability of them being killed during service. The yearly yield of the fund was distributed to the officers' widows and retired officers. There were no regulations of retirement and officers had to work until they were unable to serve[1]. The officers were forced to find a spouse among the higher social strata and better situated families, or delay their plans to build their family until later on in life. On average, officers entered marriage ten years after their civilian peers, they had fewer children, and many did not manage to marry at all (Stergar, 1998, p 380).

The military of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenians and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1918-1941) imposed similar regulations on officers' marriages as the Austro-Hungarian Empire. They had to pay a marriage bail. They were supposed to serve at least five years before asking for permission from higher officials to get married, and to have the rank of lieutenant or higher at the time of asking. There were some military apartments accessible only to married officers; unmarried (and younger) officers had to live in the barracks or officers' dormitories (Bjelajac, 1988, p 132).

During WW2, Slovenian territory was divided between four different occupying forces with the intention of carrying out ethnic cleansing of the Slovenian nation. The nation joined guerrilla national liberation units in huge numbers, and although the combatants (men and women) were advised not to have intimate relationships because there was a high probability of the loss of life, it sometimes happened that pregnant female combatants needed some care and protection. When the guerrilla forces liberated the area of Kočevski rog, they formed a field command base there (Baza 20, between April 1943 and December 1944). It included some logistical facilities, among them field hospitals for injured combatants. Aware that some children became orphans in battles and that some of the female combatants were pregnant, the leaders of the resistance movement founded a field hospital in Spodnji Hrastnik meant as a paediatric and maternity ward (Štangelj, 2015).

After WW2, European countries, among them former Yugoslavia (1945-1991), formed armies based on conscription, which has led to the emergence of 'mass armies'. That compulsory enlistment should be seen as an honour and not only as a duty to one's country was a belief that governments strictly enforced. The honour of serving was built off the specific role that the military organization had in the socialization of young men. It was believed that through their enlistment they would be guided to grow from boys into men, ready to accept their duties to their country (working, paying taxes), as well as to their families (care for spouse and children,

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[1] *Feldmarschall Josef Radetzky (1766-1858) commanded Austrian troops in Italy well into his nineties.*

taking care of their material needs). Military training as an integral part of civic duty would raise citizens/civilians who were ready and trained as a potential reserve force, an untapped resource should there be a sudden need for more trained soldiers in the event of military conflict. 'Draft dodging' or the evasion of conscription was harshly dealt with by the government and the military. Some countries may have allowed for conscientious objection on a religious or philosophical basis, offering alternative service outside of combat roles, although these often demanded that the person stay in training for significantly longer, which suggested that the position held less honour or was even intended as a sort of punishment. In other countries (most often socialist countries), these alternative services did not exist and draft evasion was a criminal offence, punishable by a prison sentence (Jelušič, 1997, p 151).

The family of the enlisted person was considered to have no significant positive influence on military training. In fact, the opposite was the case, as the military strove to teach discipline, perseverance, determination and respect, which was in many cases the opposite of the permissive upbringing in family units. Strict and uncompromising training was what would form the future soldiers/warriors. As such, it was imperative that the conscripted soldier be kept away from the family, often being sent to serve and train far from their hometown. This was based on the belief that the training would be more successful if they had as little contact with their families as possible. Any homesickness would be overcome by intense training, even though it was often bizarre and needlessly repetitive (repeated cleaning of weapons, shoes, beds, common areas and toilets, as well as repetition of ceremony drills). The conscripted soldier was often very young, just barely beyond the age of majority, and did not have strong intimate bonds back home, much less their own families (wife and children).

Conscription armies required a wide range of personnel to be employed along with the conscripted soldiers. This included non-commissioned officers, officers, and logistical staff, often civilians, filling in for certain specific roles (quartermasters, cooks, cleaners, etc). In contrast to the conscripted soldiers, these personnel often had families, which would most often live in close proximity to the barracks.

In the Yugoslav People's Army (YPA), it was common for families of officers to move with the officer to different parts of the country, in connection with the officer's promotion through the ranks. Spouses of officers often had to give up their own careers, because it would have been difficult to search for a job in new surroundings, not to mention that they were obliged to run the household and take care of the children, with their husbands frequently absent. To keep these migrations from taking too much of a toll on the families, a selection of military-owned housing was available. Military-owned apartments were grouped closely together in neighbourhoods. It was very often the case that children of military families, moving with their families, would only form bonds with children from other military families, because they rarely ventured outside their neighbourhood, which often included schools and gyms they could attend. Military-owned housing was a special reward given to officers

(Juvan, 2008, pp 207-212). The higher the rank of the officer, the bigger the apartment offered to him. However, in this case, the officer's family was an integral part of his social ranking. He could only apply for military-owned housing once he had a family (wife and children). An unattached officer fresh out of the military academy was expected to live in a sort of singles home, organized in military buildings[2].

The officer's family was seen as part of the military community, which we also know from Moskos (1988), who described it in his institutionalism/occupationalism model. Moskos used this model as a schematic foundation for research in military institutions, which are increasingly expected to adjust to their civilian environment. This means that they must move away from upholding their legitimacy through the military institution and through simple patriotism. They are expected to defer to the demands of the wider job market, especially in the case of recruitment and retention of military personnel. The change that led to this was the switch from conscription to voluntary recruitment. In the US, this happened after the end of the Vietnam War (after 1973), while in Europe this process began after the end of the Cold War in Belgium and the Netherlands (1992-1995), with the rest of the European countries following their lead, and with rare exceptions (Switzerland, Austria, Greece, Turkey, Finland, Lithuania[3], Estonia and Sweden[4]).

1.3 The Slovenian Armed Forces and military families

The Slovenian Armed Forces, established on the basis of a former territorial military component of the Yugoslav defence forces, and supplemented by individuals and units developed during the Slovenian War for Independence (1991), continued the conscription system of recruitment for a time.

The Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia, which was accepted on 23 December 1991, stated in Article 123 that "*Participation in the national defence is compulsory for citizens within the limits and in the manner provided by law*". Therefore, citizens have a duty to take part in national defence, and this matter is further elaborated in the Military Service Act (1991). In comparison to the former Yugoslav system of training, the duration of compulsory military service was reduced to seven months (in comparison to the twelve months that conscripts had to serve in the final years of the existence of the former YPA). Conscientious objection was legalized, introducing alternative civilian services, lasting the same seven months as military service (Jelušič, 1997, p 203). As Slovenia is geographically a small country, it was difficult to deploy conscripts far away from home (in order to avoid families' influence on

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[2] *For example, the building currently housing the Ministry of Defence in Ljubljana was known in the YPA as the military Hotel Triglav, mostly reserved for unmarried young officers.*

[3] *Lithuania abolished its conscription in 2008. In May 2015 the Lithuanian parliament voted to return to conscription, and the first conscripts began their training in August 2015.*

[4] *In Sweden, after having ended the universal male conscription system in 2010, as well as deactivating conscription in peacetime, the conscription system was re-activated in 2017. Since 2018 both women and men have been conscripted on equal terms. The motivation behind reactivating conscription was the need for personnel, as volunteer numbers had proven to be insufficient to maintain the armed forces.*

the conscripts). This helped the families of conscripts to have regular contact with their sons, who were allowed to visit home on a weekly basis (at weekends). It was hard at the time for NCOs and officers to maintain discipline, comradeship and loyalty to the military, although the close ties with families were not a major reason for de-activating conscription later on. A high-ranking officer of the SAF with personal experience of the military training of conscripts explained: „It is my belief that contact with families or the lack of it was the least of the issues that threatened discipline among conscripted soldiers in the SAF. There were several other reasons that were more important, chiefly among them: the confusion and disorganization of the system, with the rules too loosely defined and the officers in charge trained poorly" (Humar, 2020).

After 1995, more and more excuses to avoid military training were employed by the conscripts (health reasons, objection reasons), the number peaking in 2001, when more members of the appropriate age cohort were excused from military training than those who went through it. The legislative and executive power of Slovenian political leaders decided it was time to switch from compulsory to voluntary recruitment.

The Ministry of Defence introduced an AVF (All Volunteer Force) through a large scale project (with 16 sub-projects) under the acronym PROVOJ (*Prehod na poklicno vojsko, dopolnjeno s pogodbeno rezervo) (Transition to an professional army, complemented by a contracted reserve)*. It predicted all the possible setbacks to introducing an AVF, as well as steps to avoid them (Šteiner, 2015, p 96-97). Among other important issues brought up, PROVOJ mentioned military family support programmes. This was discussed as part of a sub-project on care for adequate working conditions and the welfare of service members (Juvan, 2008, p 213), giving the impression that these support programmes would be an important part of the proposed process of military professionalization.

The end of compulsory military service and introduction of the AVF had some (expected) implications for the family demography of the SAF. Military conscription produced a large proportion of the force composed of young unmarried men, with a high turnover. The proportion of the force that was likely to be married (officers, non-commissioned officers, and regular soldiers) was much smaller. After the conversion to the AVF, the personnel turnover would be reduced; the service members would remain in service longer (five to ten years with the possibility of repeating the term, up to age 45). As they aged they would be more likely to marry and have children, and the proportion of the force that was married and with children would increase (as was the case in the US military before and after 1973 (Segal and Segal, 2003, p 226)), although not immediately after the change of the manning system. The SAF expected that the military system still had some years to adjust to these changes.

The introduction of an AVF created new conditions for the members of the SAF and for their families. Despite the fact that the SAF had officers' and NCOs' families to

care about even during the conscription period, the care and support for families of SAF professional soldiers emerged as one of the necessary fields to be improved, and necessitated legal grounds (Juvan, 2008, p 214). Five years after introducing the AVF, the Slovenian parliament set a new legal framework for family support programmes in 2007, accepting the new Act on conditions of military service, called the *Service in the Slovenian Armed Forces Act* (SSAFA). Soldiers were optimistic with regard to support programmes, but the reality of introducing them remains insufficient.

An important part of the SSAFA considers comprehensive care for service members, also mentioning the possibility of extending this care to family members. For this purpose, the SSAFA defines family members as the "spouse, married and unmarried, spouse in a homosexual partnership (if registered according to the *Civil Partnership Registration Act*, adopted in 2005) and children, biological and adoptive until maturity" (SSAFA, Article 76).[5] The cited beneficiaries do not include extended family members, such as parents or grandparents. This may cause some problems for service members who are single, without children and still live at home with their parents. Their parents are their only family. A survey on the participation of the SAF in international peace operations (Jelušič et al, 2005) has shown that parents are an important source of stress and worry for service personnel during their missions abroad, especially when their parents at home are elderly or ill.

There was a similar statement in an internet post, where the author is posing the question of what we know and what we do not know about military families; "Unmarried and unpartnered service members are an understudied population, and it is not at all clear what family means to these individuals. Is it the family of origin (e.g. parents, siblings), a significant other, or even Fido or Fluffy?" (Meadows, 2012). Eran-Jona and Aviram (2019, p 69) identified a problem in most militaries, which tend to think of the family in the traditional heteronormative way: mother, father, and children living together under the same roof. The reality is different and changing. Divorced families, single-parent families, cohabitation, and same-sex partners are examples of new family forms that are constantly growing. The ignorance towards new family structures in the work-life balance influences the acceptance of family-friendly policies and the commitment of soldiers to the military organization.

The primary concern of the comprehensive care for service members in the SAF is to take care of potential distractions which might have an effect on the capacity of soldiers to do their job. The comprehensive care includes: healthcare, psychological care, social care, legal assistance and legal counselling, religious care, and sports and leisure activities (SSAFA). Family members are entitled to only a few parts of the care plan. Under healthcare, they are entitled to attend lectures on a healthy lifestyle. Family members may get professional psychological help and counselling prior to and during the absence of a serviceperson while on a mission abroad. Social

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[5] *More on the concept of the military family in the article Military families in Estonia, Slovenia and Sweden – similarities and differences, written by Kairi Kasearu, Ann-Margreth E. Olsson, Andres Siplane, and Janja Vuga Beršnak.*

care includes counselling, assistance in dealing with housing problems and moving to a new place, advice in the case of a spouse's employment, and counselling and assistance in childcare. Family members may have religious support from military chaplains if required. They are also entitled to use the SAF's sport and recreational facilities, and are given the right to use holiday capacities at a moderate price. The SSAFA made many promises in a very broad spectrum of support activities that service members could expect from the military. There were additional policies, coordinated between different governmental offices, which should have been implemented to put all types of care into practice. There were some attempts from the defence administration to propose these policies, but they have since been lost to bureaucracy. These plans demanded additional finances to cover activities for service members and their families, which was a difficult subject to raise while the defence budget was progressively decreasing (2009-2017). In some cases, officials from other governmental sectors disagreed with benefits that military service members and their families were promised. The argument was that they were all members of the public administration, and should have similar wages and benefits. Their personal disagreement with treating military personnel as something special transformed into excuses as to why it was not possible to put SSAFA into practice[6].

Although the SAF is aware of some of the problems that military families face, it is unable to provide enough help. Among other issues, there is not enough military housing for all service members. They usually decide to commute between their home and the barracks, which can be a taxing journey to make every day. It is more important for their families to remain settled in a space where they are near their extended family and their social network of friends, than to move somewhere without the support of the wider family unit and fewer social contacts. This is sometimes the reason why soldiers' families do not participate in the unit's social activities and support programmes. Some families are also unwilling to spend their free time at events that the military organizes, as they would prefer to keep their personal lives separate from their work lives.

2 WHEN DOES THE MILITARY FAMILY UNIT BECOME RELEVANT TO MILITARY SOCIOLOGY?

2.1 From the concept of greedy institutions to the concept of work-life balance

The first researchers to explore the relationship between the family unit and the military organization from a theoretical standpoint were American military sociologists. M. Segal introduced Coser's thesis on greedy institutions into the

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[6] *An example of this was the topic of childcare. The soldiers had suggested building special kindergartens near barracks or even within barracks, where they should have a guaranteed space for their children. The civil servants who were in charge of implementing these ideas instead protested. They said that Slovenia has a unique system of social care for children, and that introducing anything outside of this would be detrimental to the system already in place.*

military environment in the article *The Military and the Family as Greedy Institutions* (1986), which became one of the most frequently cited articles in all sociological surveys concerning military families.

M. Segal and Harries organized the first impactful empirical research on military families. On the basis of their observed results (based on the US military) they identified a model of interdependence and the impact of the family environment on the military, as well as the impact of the military on the family environment (Segal M. and Harris, 1993, pp 1-2). The researchers recognized two key factors over which military families have the biggest influence: the retention of personnel and the preparedness of the armed forces. The study itself came about due to the rising interest of the wider public in military families after the Gulf War in 1991 and the military operation Desert Storm. The soldiers who participated in these operations were faced with media attention because of several instances of insubordination, rejecting orders that would have moved them to the Persian Gulf due to family reasons, or fulfilling those orders and leaving behind children without parental care. The military began to become more aware of the issues of military families, and the rising need for more realistic military family support in the case of mass deployment. The study suggested that the spouse had an important say in whether the soldier stayed on the military career path or not (similar to Rosen and Durand 1995). The factor that seemed to be the most important to the preparedness and effectiveness of a unit was the soldier's perception of the officer's level of care towards the soldier's family.

Orthner and Pittman's (1988) research featured 375 married members of the American Air Force, and realized that the spouse's perception of the level of support they had been given from the military, as well as their opinions towards the organization, were key factors in the airmen's loyalty to their workplace.

Rohall and others (1999) studied the difficulties that military families of members of the PATRIOT battalion had had in adjusting to their deployment in South Korea in 1994. They found that families of higher ranked officers had an easier time adjusting to the deployment. They also realized that soldier morale was much higher when their families were well-adjusted (the higher the soldiers' morale, the more well-adjusted they thought their families were to the military lifestyle), and that the perception of the level of support given to the family was positively connected to its level of adjustment. The more the soldiers felt that their families at home were being given institutional support, the greater was their perception of how well-adjusted they were.

In 2001, Moelker and Van der Kloet carried out a study of the spouses of members of the Netherlands Armed Forces who had just come home from a nine-month deployment, participating in missions KFOR I, SFOR 8 and UNFICYP. They also identified the importance of the spouse's relationship with the military. They pointed

out that the military organization is "slow to take responsibility for military families" (Moelker and Van Der Kloet, 2003, p 203).

Dandeker et al. (2006, p 2) mentioned that the health and well-being of military personnel is key to effectiveness in military operations, and that the happiness of their family is part of that.

Bourg and M. Segal (1999) confirmed that the spouse's opinion of a military career influences the recruiting process, staff retention, and the morale and loyalty that the soldier displays towards the military. The issue of loyalty towards the organization was important for further study of military families. The level of support that the military organization gives to the families of their soldiers influences the acceptance of the family towards the military lifestyle and eases their adjustment in the event of deployment (Juvan, 2008).

All of these research studies were carried out in military organizations in countries that were faced with the problem of military family support due to manning as well as having soldiers deployed abroad earlier than other countries (the case of the US, Great Britain, and the Netherlands). After the end of the Cold War, these issues became important to almost all European armed forces, bringing along the importance of researching military families. As military organizations began sharing their experiences with military family support, the same was happening between military sociologists during international conferences, who shared their research and began comparing it with others. In this case, we should especially mention the beginnings of military family research in the European research environment (ERGOMAS) and in international sociology (ISA, RC01 Armed Forces and Conflict Resolution).

ERGOMAS (European Research Group on Military and Society) was formed in 1986. The founders decided to work in 'working groups' (WG), which are formed when there is a critical mass of scientists with similar research interests, such as the military profession; public opinion, media and the military; morale, cohesion and leadership; women in the military; and the democratic control of armed forces, just to name some of the most sustainable. The theme of military families received enough supporters to be identified as a subject of importance at a meeting of the ERGOMAS members, held during the VIIIth Biennial Conference in Portorož, Slovenia. The decision to establish a new working group was operationalized in 2004, at the IXth Biennial Conference in Paris, where the first parallel session of the WG was held, (www.ergomas.ch/images/stories/documents/ixbiennal.pdf, 9.12.2019), chaired by the Dutch researcher Rene Moelker. Three papers were presented: the first establishing the theme and content of the WG (Rene Moelker, Understanding Military Families); the second presenting the anthropological aspect of families affected by peacekeeping (Maren Tomforde, The Emotional Cycle of Deployment); and the third dealing with the problems that military families face during peacekeeping (Jelena Trifunović, Maja Garb and Ljubica Jelušič, Peacekeepers' Families in Slovenia: Challenges and

Trends). The Slovenian contribution at the first meeting of the military families' WG had shown that this topic was very relevant for Slovenian sociological surveys. The reason for this was the openness of the SAF to researchers' initiatives with regard to surveys of Slovenian peacekeepers. It correlated with the decision of the Slovenian government to extensively contribute to international operations and missions (IOMs), connected with the inclusion of Slovenia in the NATO Alliance in 2004. As the number of soldiers deployed to different IOMs increased, the need to prepare the soldiers and their families for long absences was identified as an important task for commanders and military psychologists. It was very urgent for them to have scientific and empirical feedback from the deployed units. These circumstances helped the sociological research team from Defence Research Centre to survey nearly all the rotations of SAF units to IOMs in 2004-2006[7]. Based on surveys of deployed personnel, Slovenian researchers have contributed several papers to the ERGOMAS WG on military families (Juvan 2009, Juvan 2011, Vuga 2019), and to many other international conferences and workshops.

The International Sociological Association (ISA) began to discuss military family issues at its XVth World Congress (Brisbane 2002, pp102-105), within the Research Committee RC01 Armed Forces and Conflict Resolution, dealing with core military sociology areas, such as the military profession, peacekeeping, military and masculinity, integration of women in the armed forces, armed forces and society, and multiculturality in the armed forces. The forum to debate the family issue (including the military family) was a joint session of RC01, RC06 (Family Research) and RC32 (Women in Society), chaired by Mady Segal and Ann Denis (ibid. p 105, p 359). During this session, Paul Higate presented a paper on the *Impact on the Military Family of Partner Discharge from the Armed Forces* (ibid. p 359). His paper was the first attempt to bring the military family into the focus of sociological debates at the highest scientific level (at a congress which convenes every fourth year).

The ISA world congresses that followed Brisbane 2002 devoted entire sessions to military family challenges (Durban, 2006; Yokohama, 2014; Toronto, 2018). The development of the theme has shown the implementation of the concept of work-life balance into research into military families. Complementary to the debates at the global level, we observe the broadening of issues, connected and surveyed in military sociology networks with regard to military families. De Angelis and others (2018, pp 341-357) examined the ongoing issues affecting the military as a conceptual model on the military life course and family well-being, the impact of changing missions on families, stressors of military family life, physical and psychological injures in families, and the long-term effects of service on families across the life course. The authors called for continued cross-national research into military families in all of

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their diverse forms, considering the changes in families and the changing nature of warfare (ibid. p 354).

The scientific relevance of the investigated topic should be observed through its visibility in the handbooks and compendia from the surveyed science (military sociology). The *Handbook of the Sociology of the Military,* edited by Giuseppe Caforio (2003), included two contributions dealing with military families: *Military Families and the Armed Forces: A Two-Sided Affair?* (Moelker and van der Kloet) and *Implications for Military Families of Changes in the Armed Forces of the United States* (Segal and Segal). The second edition of the *Handbook of the Sociology of the Military*, edited by Giuseppe Caforio and Marina Nuciari (2018), has brought one (already mentioned) comprehensive contribution: *Military Families: A Comparative Perspective* (De Angelis, Smith and M. Segal). A compendia which has tried to overcome the two distinct branches within military sociology (civil-military relations versus the military as an institution) that have overwhelmed studies of the military was entitled *New Directions in Military Sociology,* edited by Eric Ouellet (2005). The chapter devoted to military families dealt with *Divergences in Traditional and new Communication Media Use Among Army Families* (Ender, 2005). In 2019, military families were comprehensively investigated from the theoretical, conceptual, empirical and cross-country points of view in a study *The Politics of Military Families: State, Work Organizations, and the Rise of the Negotiation Household (*edited by Moelker, Andres, and Rones).

2.2 Slovenian military sociology surveys of military families

Slovenian surveys of military families in Slovenia date back to 2004, when the Defence Research Centre at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana (DRC), coordinated the comprehensive research into the *Human Factor in the Defence System 2004-2006)*[8], consisting of several sub-projects. One of them, named *Balancing of Family Demands and Work Demands in Military Occupation*, was carried out by a questionnaire with 200 members (and their families) of the civilian population and 189 service members (and their families) in the SAF. The main aim of the survey was to highlight the work-life balance in the Slovenian military in comparison to civil society. The leaders of the sub-project published an article on the initial results of the survey, where they also mentioned unpredicted difficulties in reaching the sample of 200 military families (out of 1400 addressees) because service members did not allow the researchers to carry out the survey with their family members (Černič-Istenič, Knežević-Hočevar, 2006).

In 2008, Juvan defended her doctoral thesis at the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Social Sciences, in the military sociology approach to military families. Her dissertation on *Military Families: balancing demands between family and the military organization* was the first comprehensive Slovenian study of military

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[8] *Project leader Professor Ljubica Jelušič; the project was commissioned by the Ministry of Defence (and with a very small subsidy from the Ministry of Science, Education, and Sport).*

families, analyzing work-life balance in the military, the family and the military as greedy institutions, comparing the status of military families, and family support programmes in the USA, the Netherlands, Germany, Austria, and Slovenia. She presented the history of military families in Slovenian territory at times of different empires and states, and concluded with her findings on institutional support, offered by the SAF to military families.

Among Slovenian scientific contributions in the field of military sociology dealing with military families, we should certainly highlight an article in Current Sociology "Work-family conflict between two greedy institutions: the family and the military", published in 2013. This article analyzes the relationship between two greedy institutions – the family and the military –considering the demands they both place on their members. The article strives to establish which one of them is greedier, and consequently responsible for a potential work-family conflict. The in-depth analysis is based on the findings of 10 years' research of service members in the SAF and a sample of their families. The results indicate that: (1) both the family and the military might be greedy institutions, although, especially during deployment, the greediness of the military outweighs that of the family; (2) the contemporary military organization does not only require service members' loyalty, but the whole family's support; (3) Slovenian military families remain highly supportive, regardless of military demands; (4) there are no significant differences in balancing work/family between genders (p=0.119), with women reporting less work-family conflict than men (p=0.041) and women feeling more support for their deployment from their family and friends than men (Vuga-Beršnak, Juvan, 2013).

The research endeavours to make a more comprehensive survey on military families in the SAF continued in 2019. The Slovenian Agency for Scientific Research decided to finance a project on "Military-specific risk and protective factors for military family health outcomes" under the leadership of Professor Janja Vuga-Beršnak from the Defence Research Centre (University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Social Sciences). The team of military sociologists, family sociologists and psychologists will measure what risk and protective factors may arise from different eco-social levels, as well as their impact on military family health outcomes (Vuga-Beršnak, 2019)[9].

Conclusion We may conclude that the relationship between the military and the military family has been complicated and subject to change throughout history, largely depending on their existence in times of war versus times of peace and prosperity. There was also a difference in treatment towards families of privates, NCOs and ranking officers, and differences according to rank and years of service. It was the case for ordinary soldiers and younger ranking officers that a family was considered a hindrance on their effectiveness. They were warned away from starting a family, sometimes even forbidden to do so, and there were restrictions on marrying. Older and higher ranking officers were allowed families, but they married later on in life and as such had fewer

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[9] *The research goals of the projet are presented in this volume by Janja Vuga Beršnak.*

children. Interestingly, it was also the case that those children of officers often became officers themselves, a subtle form of recruitment (so-called 'self-recruitment'). As we can see, often military families were forbidden, ignored or tossed aside by the military organization (Albano, 1994, p 283).

It was not until the formation of modern armies (1970s and onward), which were faced with laws that no longer guaranteed them a set number of fresh-faced recruits, that the military organization was forced to consider the benefits and problems of modern job markets. It became harder to recruit and retain new personnel. It did not take long to realize that the military family was one of the few tethers that tied a soldier permanently to the military organization, and the military had to accept the family as a necessary part of the soldier's effectiveness. Still, this did not bring much love into the relationship between military and family, competitive as they were over the soldier's time and loyalty. At their core, both the military and the family are greedy institutions (Coser, 1974) that demand almost full devotion. Driven by its need for effective and well-trained staff, the military needed to take a step further. Not just acceptance; it needed to offer military families its support. For a mutually supportive and fulfilling relationship, demands from both the military organization and the military family must be taken into consideration. It must be a mutually beneficial relationship, in which neither of the partners should feel ignored or pushed aside. The family of a soldier must not be forced to feel that they are only sacrificing for their loved one's chosen career path. In return for that sacrifice, the military family must be given special consideration and benefit. Spouses of military personnel are prepared to sacrifice up to a point, but they must feel that their sacrifice is being appropriately honoured (Moelker in Van Der Kloet, 2003 p 203).

Using a mathematical metaphor, the sum of benefits and obligations must be such that the benefits outweigh the risks. This is the only way that the soldier's family members are satisfied with the military way of life and the only way to retain well-trained staff on the military roster (Juvan, 2008). This conclusion is the cornerstone for any military family support, even though financial instability might prevent them from ever being realized.

With regard to the social welfare of the military, Segal and Segal (2003, p 232) identified an interesting phenomenon in modern societies – as governments become more concerned with social equality for its citizens, the military's bond over military family units lessens. If the government is providing affordable housing options, easing access to kindergarten and schools, and medical care for all, there is less call for the military to provide those things. It puts military families on the same standing as civilian families, although this does not mean that their specific issues are necessarily eliminated. Also, the problem of distance is increasingly bridged by the rapid advance of mobile phones and computers. As the training of soldiers becomes increasingly professionalized and specialized, it is less important that some of that training is shared with the military family unit, who are now becoming increasingly removed from the problems that the military family unit might have had in the past.

As such it exposes a unique problem for the militaries of the future – what incentives may they offer to a soldier, if they cannot secure their loyalty through their family? How will it keep its personnel, if an alternative profession might offer the same benefits, while presenting less potential for loss of life and personal safety?

Military sociology has shown interest in studying military families relatively late: at a time when families became a problem for the military. This happened at a time of deactivating conscription and introducing an all-volunteer force. All major sociological concepts on families were tested on military families, like greedy institutions, work-life balance, and so on. Slovenian sociologists successfully followed the findings in international surveys with their own in-depth analyses.

Acknowledgement

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