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REVIEW

ECOSYSTEM OF A MILITARY FAMILY AND THE SPECIFIC RISK FACTORS AFFECTING ITS HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

At the end of the summer, the publishing house of the Faculty of Social Sciences published a new monograph noting in the colophon that this is a revised and updated version of the monograph entitled Military families' health and well-being, published by Springer Nature Switzerland in English. The title of the Slovenian version of the book can be translated as socio-ecological models of health, male and female servicemembers and their families. It is authored by Janja Vuga Beršnak, Živa Humer, Jelena Juvan, Andreja Živoder, Ljubica Jelušič, Alenka Švab, Klemen Kocjančič and Bojana Lobe.

It was produced within a basic scientific project (J5-1786) funded by Slovenian Research Agency and led by Janja Vuga Beršnak.

The scientific monograph is 322 pages long and divided into 11 chapters. In addition to the introduction and conclusion, it includes sections that translate as the following: families in the whirlwind of social change in late modernism; social circumstances in Slovenia; the military institutional and legislative framework of family support, a theoretical model of military-specific risk or protective factors for health outcomes of military families; the health of military families in Slovenia; the health risk of military families compared to civilian families: a regression analysis; the impact of stress on the health of military families; growing up in a military family: an adult child's perspective, and socio-ecological models of the impact of military-specific and other risk factors on the health and well-being of service members and their families.

The monograph was reviewed by Branimir Furlan, Anton Grizold, Tanja Renner and Nataša Troha.

Furlan mentions that at the end of the monograph, the reader might conclude that military families, with all the obligations, dynamics and stress that accompany them, are a major problem for Slovenian society. He points out that the findings of the research carried out by the authors are quite the opposite. Military families are more flexible, often more cohesive and more resilient than civilian families.

Grizold points to the in-depth interviews with adult members of families who grew up in a military family as an important acquisition and innovation in the study of military organisation and military families. In their youth, they had to face the long-term absence of one (or even both) of their parents due to military assignments abroad, or they had to leave their social environment for several years and readjust to a new one.

Renner emphasises the authors' use of Bronfenbrenner's model of socio-ecological levels, focusing on military families and observing the factors influencing them, as important for the research. The authors identified the following health indicators: (dis)satisfaction with partner relationship, intimate partner violence, parenthood, child well-being, excessive use of psychoactive substances, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and general health and well-being.

In her review, Troha, like Furlan, pointed out the findings of the research that military families are more resilient compared to the families from civilian backgrounds, which cannot, however, be attributed entirely to the Slovenian Armed Forces, but rather to the partners employed in the Slovenian Armed Forces.

The monograph brings many new and useful information for the military and civilian environment, for scholars and professionals, for the many employees of the national security system, for individuals who want to better understand their profession and the particularities that make it more challenging than others, and above all for children and their experience of the military profession and the military family.

Its findings may also motivate non-military, or as the authors call them, civilian families, to cope with daily responsibilities and stress. Through this monograph, we can better understand what it is that defines the military profession as more demanding and what military families can do despite it all.