

MODELS OF SELECTIVE MILITARY SERVICE IN MODERN CONDITIONS*

Nebojša Nikolić**

Достављен: 17. 01. 2021.

Језик рада: Енглески

Кориговано: 31. 05. и 21. 06. 2021.

Тип рада: Прегледни рад

Прихваћен: 22. 07. 2021.

DOI број: 10.5937/vojdela2104090N

New security challenges in the second decade of the twenty-first century and their materialization through various forms of hybrid warfare have had an impact on the emergence of ideas of strengthening state capacities for defence and security. One of these ideas is related to the manning of the armed forces. The paper presents models of selective military service that are successfully implemented in several European countries, which have similar demographic potential as Serbia. The main characteristic of these models of selective recruitment is the selection of only those persons who are interested in completing their military service voluntarily. Thus, the high motivation of future soldiers has been provided, and the consequences that would result from forcing those who do not want to do their military service have been forestalled. Models of manning in several neutral European countries and Israel have also been presented in order to gain a comparative insight. Foreign experiences have been summarised in the form of guidelines for a possible concept of a model of selective military service, which would meet the existing limitations and improve opportunities for a greater number of motivated persons, given the problematic possibility of mechanical reintroduction of the old model of conscription. The objective of this paper is to consider the possibilities of implementing foreign experiences in the process of creating an optimal solution, while respecting limiting factors in order to provide a highly motivated human factor for manning the armed forces.

Key words: military service, manning of the armed forces, selective military service, reserve, hybrid warfare, modeling, strategic management

* A part of the research results has been conducted through the interdisciplinary project of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia entitled: "Cost-effective choice of new technologies and concepts of defence through social changes and strategic orientations of Serbia in the 21st century", project number MPNTR: III-47029

** Strategic Research Institute, Defence University in Belgrade, Republic of Serbia
nebojsa.nikolic11@mod.gov.rs

Introduction

The issue of manning the armed forces is very complex and multidisciplinary, in addition to being relevant and important, both for the defence system and the society and state as a whole. In recent years, there has been a problem of sufficient and adequate manning¹ of the armed forces in several countries,² which contributes to the topicality³ and relevance⁴ of this problem for military-professional research,⁵ as well. There is an evident decrease in the interest in military service, even in developed and rich countries with a stable system. For example, a significant decline in the satisfaction of the armed forces members with their professional status from 60% in 2009 to 41% in 2018 was registered in Great Britain, while the level of the constantly undermanned armed forces was 5.7% in 2018.⁶ In Germany, the level of the undermanned armed forces is even higher than in Great Britain and it was around 15%, while at the same time the level of public support to the armed forces is as high as 80%.⁷ Even in Israel, there is an evident trend of increasing the number of persons exempt from conscription for various reasons.⁸

In addition, the following phenomenon has been noticed in Israel:⁹ in the population of all conscripts (2.1 million in 2014), even 75% of reservists have not been engaged or deployed at all, while in the previous three years only 6% were called on military exercises lasting 20 days, and in 2017, this small percentage additionally dropped to 5%. Thus, Israel has found itself in the situation shared by many countries that have suspended conscription and completely transferred to the principle of volunteering in the manning of the armed forces.¹⁰ As it can be seen, the level of

¹ Alexandrescu Nihai-Bogdan, (2018). „Specific Elements of Marketing in the Recruitment and Selection of Human Resources Process in Romanian Army”, *Scientific Bulletin*, Vol.XXIII, No.2(46), 67-73.

² Kosonen Jarkko, Puustinen Alisa, Teemu Tallbeg, (2019). „Saying no to military service – obligation, killing and inequality as experienced problems in conscription-based military in Finland”, *Journal of Military Studies*, 8(special issue), 46-57.

³ Braw Elisabeth (2019). „Competitive National Service – How the Scandinavian Model Can Be Adapted by the UK”, *RUSI Occasional Paper*, October 2019, Royal United Service Institute for Defence and Security Studies.

⁴ Combs Howard, (2019). „Enabling NATO for 21st Century Operations: Fielding Agile, Responsive and Innovative Reserve Forces”, *Policy paper*, Canadian Global Affairs Institute, Calgary, Canada.

⁵ Cohn P. Lindsay, Toronto W. Nathan, (2017). „Markets and Manpower: The Political Economy of Compulsory Military Service”, *Armed Forces & Society*, 43(3), 2017, 436-458.

⁶ Braw Elisabeth, (2019). „Competitive National Service – How the Scandinavian Model Can Be Adapted by the UK”, *RUSI Occasional Paper*, October 2019, Royal United Service Institute for Defence and Security Studies.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Cohen Amichai, Cohen A. Stuart, (2020). „Beyond the Conventional Civil-Military “Gap”: Cleavages and Convergences in Israel”, *Armed Forces & Society*, (in print), 1-21.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

utilization of personnel trained through conscription is very small, which further implies the question of the main purpose of general conscription.

The purpose of this paper is to help consider the issue of the manning of the armed forces, to open an argumentative discussion and initiate scientific research related to the whole issue or at least certain aspects. Having in mind the broader relevance of the topic and the problem of the manning of the armed forces, not only in our country, but also in several other European countries, it is useful to adequately approach this very complex phenomenon using all publicly available sources of information, appropriate scientific research methods and involving a wider range of researchers from various fields and institutions.

When considering the aspects of introducing conscription in general, especially in terms of drawing conclusions and proposing solutions, it is necessary, at the very beginning, to clearly structure the decision-making problem and its context, as well as to declare the goal(s) of such an endeavour. It is also necessary to describe the problem situation that is considered and gives a broader context of the problem, taking into account all the limitations and environmental factors. Without a clear course of action, defined limitations and information on available resources, it is difficult to talk about considering the optimal solution in the decision-making. When considering the problem, it is very important to achieve and maintain clarity of cause-and-effect assessment, so as not to stray into misunderstandings and a spiral of unproductive discussions. Thus, for example, during the summer of 2020, the idea was promoted in Germany to respond to the phenomenon of turning towards extremely negative attitudes of the right-wing politics, which were identified in certain incidents in some special units of the armed forces, by reintroducing conscription.¹¹ However, this idea was quickly abandoned by the reaction of not only the professional, but also the general public due to the obvious lack of cause-and-effect relations in the idea and logical reasoning. In other cases, the reintroduction of conscription is justified by some other reasons, such as, for example, education of youth, prevention of alcoholism and drug addiction, development of work habits, improvement of physical fitness of youth, economic development, etc. The media and political use of all these "reasons" obscures the main motives for considering conscription, and this is not the subject of this paper.

Similar inconsistencies and wrong logic in reasoning occur in the exclusive association of conscription with the categories such as: military neutrality; the concept of total defence; economic and social aspects of military service and equality of citizens; strengthening democracy and bonds between the society and the military; and other aspects, which is explained in the critical analysis in the broader literature.¹² In addition to neutral countries, non-neutral countries, such as Turkey, Greece, and Russia, also have conscription. On the other hand, the Republic of Ireland is a neu-

¹¹ Deuche Welle, „Should Germany bring back compulsory military service“, July 7, 2020.

¹² Poutvaara Panu, Wagener Andreas, (2007). „Conscription: economic costs and political allure“, *The Economics of Peace and Security Journal*, 2(1), 2007, 5-15.

tral country, but it has never had this type of military service. The Kingdom of Sweden has once suspended conscription, but it reintroduced it a few years ago, which was a reaction to the deteriorating security situation in Eastern Europe. Switzerland, Finland and Austria¹³ have a long and strong tradition of neutrality and conscription, and they maintain it continuously and independently of changes in the broader geo-strategic environment. The concept of total defence is also implemented by non-neutral countries, such as Norway and the Baltic states. The neutral European countries that are members of the European Union (EU) are actually not completely neutral because they are a part of this organisation. The greatest totalitarian regimes had general conscription (Germany, USSR), while some countries, which are considered to be the example of democratic order, stability and freedom, did not have compulsory military service, except in the case of world wars (Great Britain, US).¹⁴ In order to reduce the possibility of wrong or hasty actions, it is very important to analyse the experiences of others with the same or similar problem.¹⁵

The following chapter presents different models of conscription in several countries including neutral European states. On the basis of the summarised foreign experiences, the concluding chapter proposes several guidelines for the development of a possible model of military service in countries, which have, like Serbia, specific socio-economic and political surroundings.

Models of military service – foreign experiences

Several factors influence the selection of the model of manning the armed forces, and the decision itself is within the responsibility of the appropriate level of the state power. The most common relevant factors are: the level of perceived danger caused by external security threats and strengthening of civil-military relations, that is, the connection between the society and the armed forces as a preventive measure against self-isolation and alienation of the armed forces from the people – society. In modern conditions of the society development, as well as in conditions of modern conflicts, the traditional significance of both mentioned factors becomes questionable and relative, which can also be said for some earlier periods. Cohn and Toronto (2017) did extensive research on a sample of 99 states over a period of 40 years and came up with interesting results. They analysed a number of other factors, and in particular they emphasised the factors related to the economy and the organisational-normative structure of the state. According to their research, countries with less free labour market are more inclined to compulsory military service. They

¹³ Debski Slawomir, Sasnal Petrucya, Lorenz Wojciech, (2020). „Austria's Modus Operandi: Variable Neutrality in Action”, Policy paper No.8 (183), October 2020, The Polish Institute of International Affairs.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Asal Victor, Conrad Justin, Toronto Nathan, (2017). „I Want You! The Determinants of Military Conscription”, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 61(7), 1456-1481.

also found that countries with British heritage (mainly former colonies of the British Empire) are less inclined to introduce compulsory military service, as well as those countries that strive to organise the state and society according to British standards and experience.

Due to their essential specifics, the models of conscription in the Nordic countries - Sweden, Norway and Denmark, are referred to in the broader literature as selective military service. It means that the armed forces do not call up the entire conscript population to do military service, but only as many conscripts as the armed forces assess necessary, which enables narrowing down the selection only to those persons who are willing to do military service. Many years of practice of implementing selective military service in these countries has shown that it is a very efficient and rational method of manning the armed forces. In fact, as it is claimed, there is always a greater number of recruits who are interested in military service than the number of available vacancies. Military service is preceded by careful, detailed and multi-phase selection of candidates, with interviewing, medical, psychological and other examinations.

A recent comparative study on the motivation¹⁶ of young people in Sweden and Norway who have volunteered for military service shows that their motive is primarily individual development and training with the perception of choice as one of the phases in their life and work, and also the attractive opportunity to participate in international missions and other benefits of military service. The results of previous research in Switzerland¹⁷ coincide with this research, so it can be said that the conclusion about the general trend of weakening the concept of a citizen in a uniform and strengthening the factor of individualisation and preferential choice is valid.

For the purpose of a comparative insight, the experiences of Switzerland, Austria and Finland, as neutral European countries, as well as the experiences of Israel due to its specific position and overall experiences, are presented. All the mentioned countries are very different from Serbia, despite the similarities of certain aspects. All of them have their own specifics, such as different historical development, so it is logical that they cannot implement the same solutions. Although Switzerland, Austria, Sweden and Finland are neutral countries, they have completely different roots of their neutral status, but they all have in common that they are internationally recognised in that status. It is interesting to note that the Kingdom of Denmark and Norway had a long tradition of neutrality (Norway from 1814 and Denmark from 1864), but their neutral status was not respected in World War II, and both were occupied in 1940 by Nazi Germany. After that, both countries sought their security in the NATO and took part in its founding in 1949. Belgium (neutral since 1839, with the break -occupation in World War I and occupation in 1940), the Netherlands (neutral from 1839 until occupation in 1940) and Luxembourg (neutral since 1839 until 1940 with the break - occupation in World War I) acted in the same way. The neutral

¹⁶ Osterberg Johan, Nilsson Joel, Hellum Nina, (2020).

¹⁷ Szvircsev Tibor, (2011). „The Transformation of Switzerland's Militia Armed Forces and the Role of the Citizen in Uniform”, *Armed Forces and Society*, 37(2), 239-260.

status of the Baltic states (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania) did not save them from occupation at the beginning of the Second World War in 1939. The neutrality of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia since 1940 was also not respected, and it was occupied and dissolved as a state in 1941. The non-alignment of socialist Yugoslavia (1949-1991) could be interpreted to some extent as neutrality only in relation to the two military-political blocs (NATO and WP), which did not protect it from the dissolution in 1991. In this regard, it can be concluded that the neutral status of a country, in addition to its internal commitment, should be confirmed, in a certain way, by relevant international factors.

Table 1 – Overview of the length of military service in certain countries

	Conscription	State neutrality	Length of military service ¹⁸	Notes
Austria	Yes	Yes	6 months	9 months service without arms
Finland	Yes	Yes	5,5 months (165 days)	– 345 days service without arms – For more complex specialties and reserve officers 255 or 347 days, on a voluntary basis
Sweden	Yes	Yes	4 to 11 months	– Possible service without arms – Gender neutral (women also serve)
Switzerland	Yes	Yes	18 to 21 weeks	Police type of armed forces
Denmark	Yes	No, NATO member	4 months	– 9 months service without arms in Emergency Management Agency – 12 months in Royal Guard (on a voluntary basis)
Norway	Yes	No, NATO member	12 months	Gender neutral (women also serve)
Israel	Yes	No	32 months	Gender neutral (women also serve)

The Kingdom of Denmark is one of the few countries that retained conscription even after the end of the Cold War, which can be interpreted less as nurturing tradition (conscription in Denmark has existed since the nineteenth century), and more as a continuation of a well-organized manning system of the armed forces with appropriate adjustments. Namely, the Danish Armed Forces called up for conscription only as many carefully selected recruits as they needed in a certain period, and these conscripts most often wanted to do their military service. In the period 2013-2018 in

¹⁸ Military Balance 2021.

Denmark, an average of 4,200 conscripts per year were called up for military service in the Armed Forces¹⁹ and 420 conscripts per year for service in the Danish Emergency Management Agency (service in this Agency is counted as military service). Thereby, the average size of the recruiting population in Denmark on an annual level was about 71,000 people aged 19.²⁰ This means that only 6 to 7% of the potential recruits did compulsory military service on average. Those who are selected for compulsory military service are volunteers, with very few exceptions when the armed forces need a conscript due to specific skills, professional knowledge or capabilities. During the recruitment preparations and the selection process, the recruits choose the place where they will do their military service. Military training lasts about four months, while those who choose the Royal Guard serve for 12 months. Those who choose to serve in the Danish Emergency Management Agency serve for 9 months. Conscripts do not handle complex weapons or sophisticated combat equipment, but only basic infantry weapons and equipment. Women can do service if they wish. During their service, recruits are provided with food and hygienic-accommodation conditions (12 recruits in a dormitory) and receive 298 Danish kroner²¹ daily. After completing their military service, they are considered competent for the territorial guard and the execution of certain military, as well as other tasks that are performed in emergencies, evacuation, guard security, etc.

The Kingdom of Norway, similar to the Kingdom of Denmark, has a long tradition of conscription, dating back to the first decades of the nineteenth century, and there are also similarities in modern conditions of selective military service. Having in mind rather larger territory of the country and at the same time much less inhabitants than Denmark, in Norway, slightly less than one third of the recruits serve on average, which for the previous few years amounted to about 7,000 recruits per year.²² All conscripts receive a daily allowance of 180 Norwegian kroner and an additional lump sum of 35,000 Norwegian kroner.²³ They are accommodated in dormitories with six beds. After military service, they are considered competent for the territorial guard, which is a type of reserve military units commanded by active officers and consisting of reservists (those who have done military service). Bearing in mind that the armed forces need much fewer recruits in relation to the size of the recruiting population, the situation is similar to that in Denmark – there are always more interested candidates than vacancies, so only those persons who are psychophysically most capable and most motivated for conscription are selected. Furthermore, the atmo-

¹⁹ Braw Elisabeth, (2019). „Competitive National Service – How the Scandinavian Model Can Be Adapted by the UK”, RUSI Occasional Paper, October 2019, Royal United Service Institute for Defence and Security Studies.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Braw Elisabeth, (2019). „Competitive National Service – How the Scandinavian Model Can Be Adapted by the UK”, RUSI Occasional Paper, October 2019, Royal United Service Institute for Defence and Security Studies.

²³ Ibid.

here in Norwegian society is such that young people think that the fact they have done their military service will be a valuable note in their CV and future professional and career development. In terms of gender equality, in Norway and Sweden both genders (men and women) are completely equal, and both men and women have the obligation to do military service, which is a logical consequence of the fact that these Nordic countries are the world leaders in the promotion and implementation of gender equality in practice. However, empirical data show that the female population does not show special interest in conscription. For example, in 2018, there was only 25% of female recruits, which is significantly below²⁴ the expected 50% owing to the model of selective military service, according to which only those who are really motivated and willing do compulsory military service.

The Kingdom of Sweden has slightly different history than the Kingdom of Norway and Denmark, because it did not wage wars for long time, which means that its national security was not greatly endangered. However, Sweden also implements a similar model for military service like the two mentioned Scandinavian countries, i.e. nowadays it implements selective military service, after relatively short suspension of conscription in the previous decade. In the case of the Kingdom of Sweden, the main motives for reintroduction of military service through the implementation of the selective conscription model were two basic factors: the relatively low turnout for all types of military service and military vocation, leaving a number of job vacancies unoccupied and a very strong perception of potential possibilities to endanger national security due to growing tensions in their region, Europe, and also in the world. Sweden is not alone in worrying too much for its security, especially after the events and conflicts in Ukraine. The Government of the Kingdom of Sweden has decided to reintroduce military service through the implementation of the selective conscription model from 2017, with the main goal of being an addition to the existing model of recruitment. Depending on the response level for professional military service, the scope of calling up for conscription is planned according to a selective model. Thus, 2,750 young men and women who were previously selected from the broader recruiting population of those who were psychophysically ready and willing to join compulsory military service were engaged in the first period 2018-2019, as an addition to the contingent of about 1,000 newly applied persons for professional military service.²⁵ For the period 2019-2020 it was planned to call up 3,500 selected recruits (as an addition to the contingent of about 1,000 new professional soldiers), and for the period 2020-2021 a total of 5,000 persons.²⁶ There is clear awareness in the Swedish Armed Forces that military personnel of all categories should be motivated, even in the case of the need for greater contingents of soldiers on an annual level.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Braw Elisabeth, (2019). „Competitive National Service – How the Scandinavian Model Can Be Adapted by the UK”, RUSI Occasional Paper, October 2019, Royal United Service Institute for Defence and Security Studies.

²⁶ Ibid.

The implementation of the model of selective military service builds the image of a good employer and develops a sense and need to belong to a desirable organisation. Accordingly, Sweden, like the other two Nordic countries, has managed to improve manning of active military units and expand capacities to man reserve territorial units by implementing the model of selective military service. Conscripts in Sweden receive 553 Swedish kronor (SEK) for each day spent in a military organisation,²⁷ which is slightly more than in the case of Danish and Norwegian conscripts and is probably the consequence of less interest in the military service than in the mentioned two countries.

In the Swiss Confederation there is conscription only for adult male citizens lasting 245 days (262 days until 2018), and the alternative is civilian service in the state institutions outside the armed forces for 390 days. Military service consists of two main parts. The first part lasts 18 weeks and is served continuously. The second part is divided, in principle, into six periods of 19 days and is served up to 34 years of age²⁸ for soldiers, while for non-commissioned officers and officers the age limit is higher (up to the rank of captain 36 years of age, for captains up to 42, and for senior officers up to the age of 50), but the number of days of annual engagement is smaller (up to five days a year). These (reserve) officers can command units up to a brigade during the periods of their engagement, while in the meantime they are engaged in their civilian affairs. In less than 15% of cases, military service is approved for a complete period of extended duration. In case of refusal of the service (military or civilian), the alternative is to pay financial compensation or imprisonment (it is interesting that in Switzerland every year about 40 young men go to prison for refusing compulsory service²⁹). Out of all neutral countries, Switzerland has the strongest tradition dating back centuries ago. However, in the current millennium, there have been great sociological changes in the perception of the armed forces and military service, even in Switzerland. A prominent Swiss military sociologist³⁰ described these changes in detail in 2011, stating that the social role and place of a citizen-soldier has been greatly diminished and transformed compared to previous decades. According to his research, young people are much less interested in military service than before. Furthermore, the motivation of young people has changed and evolved from a traditional motive of serving the homeland into individual assessment of usefulness for their personal and professional development. The public and parliamentary political parties are divided over maintaining the militia concept of organising the armed forces, transforming it or transitioning to the professional armed forces as in other Western countries. There have been several reforms of the armed

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Mudry Marco, (2017). „Swiss armed forces organizational level leader development”, Master thesis, the US Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

²⁹ EBCO, 2021.

³⁰ Szvircsev Tibor, (2011). „The Transformation of Switzerland's Militia Armed Forces and the Role of the Citizen in Uniform”, *Armed Forces and Society*, 37(2), 239-260.

forces in the past decades (1961, 1995, 2004 and 2018), but there have been no radical changes except constant reduction in the military strength. The Swiss Armed Forces are very different from the others in that they maintain a long tradition according to the model of the militia armed forces, which is the closest to the concept of a citizen-soldier. As early as 1874, the Swiss Constitution defined this type of (militia) organisation of the armed forces, with an accompanying ban on the establishment of the entirely professional armed forces.³¹ The majority of the Swiss Armed Forces is made up of persons who are not professional military personnel, not taking into account the soldiers performing compulsory military service. The fact that in the professional service in the armed forces there is only a small percent (5³² to 10%) of the total number of members under arms can serve as an illustration. For example, in 2019, there were 11,909 full-time employees in the Department of Defence, and this is a total number including some other structures, because Switzerland has the unified Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport.³³ It can be concluded that the Swiss experiences are very specific and very different from other countries that implement similar concepts.

The Republic of Austria has not suspended conscription in previous decades, despite positive changes to its security after the end of the Cold War. However, there have been some changes: the interest of young people in doing military service under arms has decreased in favour of "civilian service", i.e. service without arms. Out of the total military strength, the professional personnel makes up almost 50%. Military service lasts six months (with arms), or alternatively nine months without arms (civil service), but with engagement and work in various public services (hospitals, emergency service, nursing homes, social welfare institutions, emergency response institutions, Red Cross, etc.). A relatively significant number of recruits (from 13,000 to 16,000 persons), who opt for civil service, give great support to work in social services, which was one of the most important reasons why citizens voted in a referendum on conscription, in 2013, with almost 60% of the vote, to retain this obligation. However, persons who opt for civil service as an alternative to military service under arms do not have the right to carry and possess weapons, nor to be employed in the police (there are similar solutions in other countries, as well).³⁴ Military salaries are twice smaller for those who choose service without arms, which additionally testifies to the low interest of young people in military service and the measures taken by the state to stimulate them to serve under arms. Basic combat training lasts about 10 weeks.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ www.admin.ch/gov/en/start/departments/departments-of-defence-civil-protection-sport-ddps.html/

³⁴ D' Abramo Michael, (2004). „Military Trends in Italy: Strengths and Weakness“, Center for Strategic and International Studies, study from Arleigh A. Burke Chair in Strategy Program, October 29, 2004.

Unlike the countries from the Scandinavian region - Sweden, Norway and Denmark, where selective military service has been implemented, Finland has general conscription according to which the greatest part of recruiting population does military service, with the exception of persons who are conscientious objectors for religious reasons. The obligation to serve is related to men, while women can do military service on a voluntary basis. After rigorous medical examinations and psychophysical tests, 70 to 80% of the entire recruiting population is called up for conscription, which in recent years amounts to about 21,000 male recruits per year in combat training.³⁵ In addition to the mentioned number of male recruits, the system of compulsory military training also accepts about 600 female recruits, who have volunteered for military training.³⁶ The length of military service in Finland can be triple: about 43% of recruits serve 165 days, about 14% of recruits serve 255 days, while the remaining 43% serves 347 days. Longer military service is done by recruits who are selected and would like to be trained for more complex military specialties, as well as those who would like to be reserve non-commissioned officers or reserve officers. Those who do longer military service have certain benefits including financial ones. Soldiers performing military service have about 5 euros per day for the first 165 days, almost 9 euros in the period from 166th to 255th day and 12 euros per day for a period from 256th to 347th day.³⁷ Of course, food, clothing (uniform), health care, certain social services and accommodation are free of charge during military service. Finland is one of the few European countries that did not suspend conscription in the decades after the Cold War, and relations in the field of civil-military cooperation have mainly remained unchanged and stable, which means that the armed forces are highly positively perceived in the society and that the existing system of manning the armed forces has the support. However, there are also significant deviations: the older population (over 50) supports conscription at the level of 84% of support, while this support in the case of the younger population (up to 25) is significantly lower and it varies greatly from year to year³⁸ (in 2017 the support was 77%, while in 2018 it dropped to 56%). However, in addition to this support to the traditional approach to military service, the Finnish society also supports the introduction of an alternative to military service, i.e. the option of serving without arms, which is supported by more than half of the citizens, whereby this support is more pronounced with the younger population (level of 58% with those younger than 25). Moreover, as a very advanced community in terms of gender equality, the citizens of Finland support the equalisation of both genders in terms of conscription.³⁹

³⁵ <https://intti.fi/en/in-service>, January 16, 2021.

³⁶ Braw Elisabeth, (2019). „Competitive National Service – How the Scandinavian Model Can Be Adapted by the UK”, RUSI Occasional Paper, October 2019, Royal United Service Institute for Defence and Security Studies.

³⁷ <https://intti.fi/en/daily-allowance-and-equipment-allowance1> January 16, 2021.

³⁸ Kosonen Jarkko, Puustinen Alisa, Teemu Tallbeg, (2019). „Saying no to military service – obligation, killing and inequality as experienced problems in conscription-based military in Finland”, *Journal of Military Studies*, 8 (special issue), 46-57.

³⁹ ABDI, (2020). „Finn's opinions on Foreign and Security Policy Defence, and Security issues”, The Advisory Board for Defence Information, Ministry of Defence, Finland.

As a country with pronounced security problems in its surroundings, Israel has strong armed forces, very sophisticated military technique and general gender neutral conscription (related to members of both genders). The stereotypical premise of strengthening civil-military relations through conscription is, to say the least, not the only, nor the key factor, at least when it comes to modern Israel. The other, much more significant factors are: the very tense situation with Iran over a long period of time, war situations in the countries in the immediate vicinity for a long period (Syria in the second decade of this century, Iraq in the first decade of this century, Lebanon in the last decades of the twentieth century), conflicts and wars with Arab countries in the distant past; Palestinian status, etc. Nevertheless, Israel has significantly regulated and improved its relations with the most important Arab countries in the region and is constantly expanding that circle of cooperation. In addition, a strong and long-term trend of engagement of former (retired) generals in its political life is evident. For example, as many as 13 out of 21 Chiefs of the General Staff, in the period from 1948 to 2019, became members of the Israeli parliament.⁴⁰ Military service in Israel is 32 months for men and 24 months for women. The percentage of exemption from conscription has a growing trend. For example, in 2004, 22.8% of male recruits and 39.8% of female recruits were exempted from conscription, while in 2016 these percentages increased to 28.4% for men and 41.9% for women. Furthermore, after the first three months of compulsory military service, a significant number of recruits are dismissed (in a specific case, another 17% of male recruits and 40% of female recruits were dismissed).⁴¹ In addition, a significant part of the population including members of the Arab population (about 17 to 20%⁴²), and also ultra-Orthodox Jews (about 12%), who invoke religious reasons and conscientious objection, is practically exempted from conscription. In the long run, this problem will be even more pronounced because the demographic growth rate of the mentioned religious and ethnic groups is even three times higher than the rest of the Israeli population,⁴³ and some estimates⁴⁴ indicate that in 2050 their share in the Israeli population will be up to 60%.

Although the Republic of Ireland is a neutral European country, it has never had conscription. Norway and Denmark are not neutral countries, but they are presented in the paper in order to present a model of selective military service. Israel is, in many aspects, a specific country, and it is particularly interesting when it comes to issues from the field

⁴⁰ Cohn P. Lindsay, Toronto W. Nathan, (2017). „Markets and Manpower: The Political Economy of Compulsory Military Service”, *Armed Forces & Society*, 43(3), 2017, 436-458.

⁴¹ Cohen Amichai, Cohen A. Stuart, „Beyond the Conventional Civil-Military “Gap”: Cleavages and Convergences in Israel”, *Armed Forces & Society*, (in print), 1-21.

⁴² The Law Library of Congress, (2019). „Israel: Military Draft Law and Enforcement”, Global Legal Research Directorate.

⁴³ Cohen Amichai, Cohen A. Stuart, „Beyond the Conventional Civil-Military “Gap”: Cleavages and Convergences in Israel”, *Armed Forces & Society*, (in print), 1-21.

⁴⁴ Ronge Joeri, Abrate Giulia, (2019). „Conscription in the European Union Armed Forces: National Trends, Benefits and EU Modernised Service”, FINABEL European Union Interoperability Center, report 07-2019, Brussels.

of defence and security. The common feature of all military neutral countries in Europe is that they have the very developed economy, very high gross domestic product per capita, great reputation and respect in the international community, a high level of social security, human rights and excellent performance of all other public services and administration. The economic wealth at their disposal allows them the stable sustainability of military neutrality, which is, by the way, a very expensive concept.⁴⁵ Their commitment to military neutrality has a long and stable history, and was originally created in the context of specific historical circumstances. It can be stated that the neutrality of Switzerland and Sweden was proven and respected during the First and Second World War, and the neutrality of Austria and Finland was respected during the Cold War, which means that their neutral orientations were confirmed in practice, as well.

Emphasising the specifics and comparative advantages of neutral countries is very important from the aspect of successful implementation and sustainability of the system of military service. However, in the case of corruption, each model of military service will be more difficult to implement. For example, in corrupt surroundings, trading in influence may occur in terms of avoiding⁴⁶ or postponing military service, as well as in terms of defining service garrison or choosing a military specialty. Each form of corruption is extremely destructive, primarily for healthy interpersonal relations in the military, and also for the command system, which completely loses credibility with various forms of corrupt practice. All potential negatives related to conscription can be later transferred to the domain of the reserve and broader population, and thus undermine trust⁴⁷ in institutions and motivation for military service in any form.

Guidelines for a possible concept of a model of selective military service

The objective of developing guidelines for a possible concept of a model of selective military service is to find the optimal solution for the possibility of providing a sufficient number of motivated persons for military service in accordance with the needs of the armed forces and long-term needs of the country's defence, while respecting the decision of those persons who are unwilling to do military service for their personal reasons and beliefs, as well as the development of mechanisms for ensuring the equality of citizens in accordance with their contribution to the common needs of the society. In this regard, the presented guidelines indicate a possible set

⁴⁵ Gordic Miodrag, Petrovic Ivan, (2019). „Model of Military Neutrality as Perspective of Development of the Republic of Serbia”, БАШТИНА, Приштина - Лепосавић, св.47, 117-134

⁴⁶ A good illustration of avoiding military service in the SFRY by falsifying the health status of recruits is also shown in the cult film "National Class" from 1978.

⁴⁷ Bove Vincenzo, Di Leo Riccardo, Giani Marco, (2020). „Military Culture and Institutional Trust: Evidence from Conscription Reforms in Europe”, Quantitative Political Economy Research Group, QPE Working Paper 2020-18, Department of Political Economy King's College London. (<http://sites.google.com/view/kingsqpe/working-papers>)

of benefits and incentives for persons who are motivated to do military service and, in the long run, be a part of the defence system as conscripts. The problem of developing an optimal model of military service is a current research and practical challenge, as evidenced by the latest research in Israel⁴⁸. Namely, it is considered that this country has good solutions on this issue, therefore the proposals presented in this paper should be viewed as a possible starting point for the development of a high-quality, sustainable, efficient, fair and socially accepted model.

The military service in the Republic of Serbia is currently conducted on the principle of volunteering.⁴⁹ Therefore, everyone who wishes can do voluntary military service including persons of both genders. Thus, by implementing the principle of volunteering, many potential problems related to military service of those persons who do not want to do it, and the law forces them to do so, have been avoided. The level of interest in voluntary military service can be easily checked from the existing data on the response to voluntary military service, and indirect interest on the basis of the response to military schools or service in the active reserve.⁵⁰ The views of its former members, i.e. the persons who have done military service in the past and are in the status of conscripts assigned to war units are of a particular interest to the military organisation.⁵¹ Conscripts, the so-called "reservists" are of crucial⁵² importance for the armed forces of each country because in war they form field forces, and in peace they can be engaged in emergencies through the mechanism of active reserve or within the planned training of reserve personnel. There are many untapped opportunities for improving relations with "reservists", and some ideas have been carried out in neighbouring Hungary.⁵³

If the interest in voluntary military service is less than the estimated needs of the armed forces, and if there is a wish that future members are motivated and determined as future reservists in the long run, then a model developed on the basis of foreign experience can be implemented. The main characteristics of such a model would be:

- Develop and establish a legal framework, which would regulate that every future employee in the state or public service, organisation or institution should have completed military service (and preferably war distribution). Thus, a wide base of interested and motivated persons for military service under arms is permanently pro-

⁴⁸ Ben-Ari Eyal, Rosman Elisheva, Shamir Eitan, (2021). „Neither a Conscript Army nor an All-Volunteer Force: Emerging recruitment models”, a working paper for publication in 2021, (https://scholar.google.com/citations?hl=sr&user=1n63yLAAAAAJ&view_op=list_works&sortby=pubdate)

⁴⁹ Министарство одбране РС, (2011). „Уредба о начину и поступку добровољног служења војног рока са оружјем”, Сл. гласник РС бр.7/2011.

⁵⁰ Николић Небојша, (2015). „Заинтересованост за службу у активної резерви”, *Војно дело*, број 5, 2015, 315-332.

⁵¹ Nikolic Nebojsa, “Former Soldiers Attitudes Towards Active Reserve Service”, XV International symposium „SymOrg 2016”, 10-13.06.2016, Zlatibor, Serbia, pp.708-712.

⁵² Griffith James, Ben-Ari Eyal, (2020). „Reserve Military Service: A Social Constructionist Perspective”, *Armed Forces & Society*, XX(X), 2020, 1-26 (in print)

⁵³ Ujhazy Laszlo, (2018). „The Role of Reservists and Reserve Associations Today”, *Security and Defence Quarterly*, 19(2), 2018, 3-12.

vided. For example, there were 576,798 employees in the state or public service in Serbia in 2020.⁵⁴ From such a large population, it is always possible to provide a sufficient number of people for the needs of the defence system. There are similar conditions in some countries. For example, in order to become a firefighter,⁵⁵ one should have completed military service (in Austria, Slovenia, Greece, Belgium, Poland). In Italy the Carabinieri⁵⁶ should have at least three years of experience as a professional soldier, while for a job in the police, customs and fire service,⁵⁷ they should have served in the Italian Armed Forces for at least a year. In Israel,⁵⁸ all members of the security services and the police should have previously completed their compulsory military service.

– It is also possible to motivate the student population to do military service in a way that the budget support for education at universities and colleges would be conditioned by military service (the number of budget places for enrollment in the first year at public universities in Serbia is about 23,000). In addition, budget support for the education of civilian students may be conditioned by a contractual obligation to serve as a professional soldier for the same duration as the length of education at the expense of the budget. There are similar solutions in some of the most developed countries.⁵⁹

– Compulsory military service can, quite justifiably, be related to all persons who have, or would like to have, any type of weapons (the precise data on the number of owners of all types of weapons is certainly available in the Ministry of Interior, and media estimates indicate that there are about several hundreds of thousands of people).

– Compulsory military service can be related to all persons whose job includes weapons handling (for example, security companies). There are several very successful and large companies in Serbia for providing physical and technical security services, and the state can be the exclusive provider of training and licences for basic training in weapons handling through compulsory military service under arms for all persons who would like to do this type of work.

– The increase of interest in professional military service can also be achieved by normative implementation of veteran preferences in employment in the state or public service, which some countries⁶⁰ implement (that is, in practice, giving preference in employment for persons who have been in professional military service).

⁵⁴ Републички завод за статистику, (2021). „Регистрована запосленост, годишњи просек 2020 – Претходни резултати”.

⁵⁵ www.f-e-u.org/career3.php, Унија ватрогасаца ЕУ.

⁵⁶ www.carabinieri.it

⁵⁷ D' Abramo Michael, „Military Trends in Italy: Strengths and Weakness”, Center for Strategic and International Studies, study from Arleigh A. Burke Chair in Strategy Program, 2004.

⁵⁸ Ben-Ari Eyal, Rosman Elisheva, Shamir Eitan, (2021).

⁵⁹ National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service, „Strengthen Emergency National Mobilization”, Recommendation Spotlight, the USA, 2020.

⁶⁰ National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service, „Veterans & Federal Hiring”, Recommendation Spotlight, the USA, 2020.

– In order to ensure the equality of citizens, it has to be considered how those persons who have not done military service in previous years, and are employed in any state or public service, organisation or institution, can perform or compensate conscription. Thus, this would contribute to the traditional and legal perception of compulsory military service from the aspect of mutual equality and equality of citizens.⁶¹

– As an alternative to military service under arms, a model and training system for various emergencies and civil protection should be developed. This model, besides the role of an alternative to military service, would be far more important as a complementary system for response in various emergencies such as floods, fires, technological disasters, major natural disasters, earthquakes, large-scale evacuations, humanitarian assistance, support to the regulation of migration flows, protection and improvement of the environment, various environmental activities, etc.

The presented guidelines are not an absolute novelty because they have been generated on the basis of the experiences of several foreign countries. In the context of the principle of volunteering, human rights and equality of citizens, it is completely justified and logical that without military service under arms it is not possible to be a police officer, member of the Ministry of Defence, member of intelligence and security agencies and the like, where the performance of work involves the use of weapons, force, or the business itself is a part of the defence and security system.

The presented guidelines provide a much greater base of motivated candidates for military service and a stronger long-term connection between citizens and the defence system. Furthermore, flexibility in the recruit population, better quality of reception, as well as gradual increase and provision of all necessary additional resources of the military organisation for the increased inflow of recruits for military training is guaranteed. In order to form an appropriate public perception of military service, as well as other issues of importance for security and defence, it is necessary to use a scientific approach and strategic communication based on the existing knowledge that is at our disposal.⁶²

Conclusion

The paper presents models of selective military service that are successfully implemented in several European countries, which have similar demographic potential as Serbia. On the basis of several foreign experiences, the guidelines have been proposed for the concept of a model of selective military service, which would meet the existing limitations and improve motivation for military service. The proposal is presented in the form of key assumptions that imply the need for a broader feasibility analysis in other domains, as well. The key potential for improving motivation is in

⁶¹ Петревски Љупка, (2019). „Традиција правног уређења војске у Србији”, *Војно дело*, број 8, 2019, 118-133.

⁶² Митровић Мирослав, (2019). „Стратешка комуникација у функцији националне безбедности”, *Војно дело*, број 1, 2019, 41-54.

stimulating the recruiting population and supplementing the normative regulation of employment in the public sector and services, as well as the system of budget support to higher education.

The potential number of candidates who would have to do compulsory military service if they would like to be employed in the state and public services is very large and amounts to several hundreds of thousands of people (in 2020, 576,798 people were employed). The experiences of the countries in which this model has been implemented are positive and sustainable in the long run. In addition, the mentioned number can be increased by several tens of thousands of people on the basis of the implementation of the other highlighted guidelines related to gun owners, professional gun users and budget students. Moreover, we should not forget the much better and fairer treatment of all categories of military veterans and, especially, participants in wars and combat actions, families of the fallen, as well as military and war invalids in the first place, which would be the best promotional image of care for human factor of the armed forces.

The reintroduction of the old model of conscription could not be successfully conducted in a short time, nor it would be sustainable in the long run, primarily due to the necessary capacities, as well as social, political and international implications. The problem of developing an optimal model of military service is a current research and practical challenge, as proven by the latest research and experience of other countries. Therefore, the proposals presented in this paper should be understood as a possible starting point, and not as a final model for the development of a high-quality, sustainable, efficient, fair and socially accepted model.

Literature

[1] ABDI, (2020). „Finn's opinions on Foreign and Security Policy Defence, and Security issues”, The Advisory Board for Defence Information, Ministry of Defence, Finland.

[2] Alexandrescu Nihai-Bogdan, (2018). „Specific Elements of Marketing in the Recruitment and Selection of Human Resources Process in Romanian Army”, *Scientific Bulletin*, Vol.XXIII, No.2(46), 67-73.

[3] Asal Victor, Conrad Justin, Toronto Nathan, (2017). „I Want You! The Determinants of Military Conscription”, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 61(7), 1456-1481.

[4] Ben-Ari Eyal, Rosman Elisheva, Shamir Eitan, (2021). „Neither a Conscript Army nor an All-Volunteer Force: Emerging recruitment models”, working paper, (https://scholar.google.com/citations?hl=sr&user=1n63yLAAAAAJ&view_op=list_works-&sortby=pubdate).

[5] Braw Elisabeth, (2019). „Competitive National Service – How the Scandinavian Model Can Be Adapted by the UK”, *RUSI Occasional Paper*, October 2019, Royal United Service Institute for Defence and Security Studies.

[6] Bove Vincenzo, Di Leo Riccardo, Giani Marco, (2020). „Military Culture and Institutional Trust: Evidence from Conscription Reforms in Europe”, Quantitative Political Economy Research Group, QPE Working Paper 2020-18, Department of Political Economy King's College London. (<http://sites.google.com/view/kingsqpe/working-papers>).

- [7] Cohen Amichai, Cohen A. Stuart, (2020). „Beyond the Conventional Civil-Military “Gap”: Cleavages and Convergences in Israel”, *Armed Forces & Society*, (in print), 1-21, (DOI: 10.1177/0095327X20903072)
- [8] Cohn P. Lindsay, Toronto W. Nathan, (2017). „Markets and Manpower: The Political Economy of Compulsory Military Service”, *Armed Forces & Society*, 43(3), 2017, 436-458.
- [9] Combs Howard, (2019). „Enabling NATO for 21st Century Operations: Fielding Agile, Responsive and Innovative Reserve Forces”, Policy paper, Canadian Global Affairs Institute, Calgary, Canada (www.cgai.ca).
- [10] D’Abramo Michael, (2004). „Military Trends in Italy: Strengths and Weakness”, Center for Strategic and International Studies, study from Arleigh A. Burke Chair in Strategy Program, October 29, 2004.
- [11] Debski Slawomir, Sasnal Petrucya, Lorenz Wojciech, (2020). „Austria’s Modus Operandi: Variable Neutrality in Action”, Policy paper No.8 (183), October 2020, The Polish Institute of International Affairs.
- [12] Deuche Welle, „Should Germany bring back compulsory military service”, July 7, 2020.
- [13] EBCO, European Bureau for Conscientious Objection, (2021). „Conscientious Objection to Military Service in Europe 2020”, Brussels, 15th February 2021, (<http://ebco-beoc.org/switzerland>)
- [14] Gordic Miodrag, Petrovic Ivan, (2019). „Model of Military Neutrality as Perspective of Development of the Republic of Serbia”, БАШТИНА, Приштина Лепосавић, св. 47, 117-134.
- [15] Griffith James, Ben-Ari Eyal, (2020). „Reserve Military Service: A Social Constructionist Perspective”, *Armed Forces & Society*, XX(X), 2020, 1-26 (in print).
- [16] Kosonen Jarkko, Puustinen Alisa, Teemu Tallbeg, (2019). „Saying no to military service – obligation, killing and inequality as experienced problems in conscription-based military in Finland”, *Journal of Military Studies*, 8(special issue), 46-57.
- [17] Министарство одбране РС, (2011). „Уредба о начину и поступку добровољног служења војног рока са оружјем”, Сл. Гласник РС бр. 7/2011.
- [18] Митровић Мирослав, (2019). „Стратешка комуникација у функцији националне безбедности”, *Војно дело*, број 1, 2019, 41-54.
- [19] Mudry Marco, (2017). „Swiss armed forces organizational level leader development”, Master thesis, the US Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.
- [20] National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service, (2020). „Critically Skilled Personnel for Military and Public Service”, Recommendation Spotlight, the USA.
- [21] National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service, (2020). „Strengthen Emergency National Mobilization”, Recommendation Spotlight, the USA.
- [22] National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service, (2020). „Veterans & Federal Hiring”, Recommendation Spotlight, the USA.
- [23] Николић Небојша, (2015). „Заинтересованост за службу у активној резерви”, *Војно дело*, број 5, 315-332.

[24] Nikolic Nebojsa, „Former Soldiers Attitudes Towards Active Reserve Service”, XV International symposium “SymOrg 2016”, 10-13.06.2016, Zlatibor, Serbia, 708-712.

[25] Osterberg Johan, Nilsson Joel, Hellum Nina, (2020). „The Motivation to Serve in the Military Among Swedish and Norwegian Soldiers. A Comparative Study”, *Journal of Defense Resources Management*, 11(1), 2020, 30-42.

[26] Петревски Љупка, (2019). „Традиција правног уређења војске у Србији”, *Војно дело*, број 8, 118-133.

[27] Poutvaara Panu, Wagener Andreas, (2007). „Conscription: economic costs and political allure”, *The Economics of Peace and Security Journal*, 2(1), 5-15.

[28] Републички завод за статистику, (2021). „Регистрована запосленост, годишњи просек 2020 – Претходни резултати”, Саопштење РЗС Републике Србије број 014, год. LXXI, 28.01.2021.

[29] Ronge Joeri, Abrate Giulia, (2019). „Conscription in the European Union Armed Forces: National Trends, Benefits and EU Modernised Service”, FINABEL European Union Interoperability Center, report 07-2019, Brussels.

[30] Szvircsev Tibor, (2011). „The Transformation of Switzerland’s Militia Armed Forces and the Role of the Citizen in Uniform”, *Armed Forces and Society*, 37(2), 239-260.

[31] The International Institute for Strategic Studies, (2021). „The Military Balance 2021”, London, UK.

[32] The Law Library of Congress, (2019). „Israel: Military Draft Law and Enforcement”, Global Legal Research Directorate, USA.

[33] Ujhazy Laszlo, (2018). „The Role of Reservists and Reserve Associations Today”, *Security and Defence Quarterly*, 19(2), 2018, 3-12.

Summary

New security challenges in the second decade of the 21st century and their materialization through various forms of hybrid warfare have had an impact on the emergence of ideas of strengthening state capacities for defence and security. One of these ideas is related to the manning of the armed forces. In some public discussions on this topic, the idea of the reintroduction of compulsory military service, which is also known as conscription, has appeared. Clearly, it seems as an easy and trivial solution because a lot of things have changed in many important aspects since the past times when conscription used to be the main model for massive manning of the armed forces in many countries. However, the conscription model used to have some modifications and specific characteristics in various countries. One of those conscription models was known as selective military service.

Selective military service assumes the following concept: state authorities have a legal right to call all citizens who are appropriately fitted for military service, but it is not used for all individuals in the recruitment cohort. As a matter of fact, military

authorities used to exploit just a small part of the available recruitment population. Additionally, military authorities together with other state services and the society as a whole, have succeeded in their long-term efforts to reach the attractiveness of military service, so that almost always there were more interested and motivated recruitment applicants than available places in the military.

This paper presents several models of selective military service, which have been successfully implemented in some European countries with similar demographic potential as Serbia. After the extensive data search and content analysis, we have used comparative analysis in order to identify similarities and differences, while having in mind local specific characteristics. On the basis of foreign experiences we propose the synthesized concept of the model of selective military service, which could be further developed and implemented in the case of small countries like Serbia instead of mechanic “copy/paste” implementation of the old model of general non-selective military service. The reintroduction of compulsory military service has many aspects which have to be considered by wider entities and stakeholders in an open discussion, but this paper is limited just to the military one due to limited space.

Key words: conscription, selective military service, military training, reserve, hybrid warfare, modeling, strategic management

© 2021 The Authors. Published by *Vojno delo* (<http://www.vojnodelo.mod.gov.rs>).

This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/rs/>).

