PhD student, Svajūnė Ungurytė-Ragauskienė, Dr. Vida Česnuitytė, General Jonas Žemaitis Military Academy of Lithuania, Recruitment to Professional Military Service in Lithuania: Motivating and Limiting Factors.

Following the Russian military invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Lithuania faced an increased external military threat, forcing the recruitment of new military personnel into the Armed Forces. As new recruits tend to be young, it is necessary to look for new motivational factors. The objective of this research is to investigate the compatibility and intersection between the subjective motives and limiting factors for becoming a military professional. Based on motivation theories, the subjective factors that motivate people to choose a career in the military may include a sense of patriotism, self-realisation, the need to belong, identity, etc. In late modernity, which is characterised by individualisation, the latter factors have become extremely important. Conversely, the extent to which individual motives are realised depends on numerous external factors. At the macro level, these include the country's geopolitical and economic situation and unemployment rates. At the meso level, these factors may include family commitments and dependence on particular social groups, e.g. religious groups. At the micro level, they may include individual attitudes towards the military and war and physical status. The research is based on the quantitative data collected in Lithuania, 2025, under the project ‘Factors of attracting staff to professional military service in Lithuania: incentives, motives, potential candidates and a value proposition’ (grant No.S-REP-25-5), funded from the Research Council of Lithuania. Preliminary research results reveal that young people from smaller settlements, where there are limited attractive job opportunities, often have no choice but to join the military, meaning their dreams about their future profession may be limited by macro-level factors. Meanwhile, young people from big cities and well-off families have more opportunities to choose from a variety of professions. For them, the motivating factors for choosing a career in the military may be patriotism, self-realisation, or even a desire for adventure.