

THE COMPLIANCE OF LITHUANIAN VOCATIONAL AND HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEMS WITH THE NEEDS OF UNIFORMED (STATUTORY AND MILITARY) SERVICE

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Abstract

Purpose – to examine how should the human resource policies in uniformed services interact with vocational training and higher education policy. Also, it's important to analyze, whether the vocational training / higher education of prospective officers is sufficient and effective. Uniformed services perform vital functions to the state and society, and they need personnel, which is both highly trained and educated, but also loyal.

Design/methodology/approach. There had been used scientific literature deduction (drawing conclusions from the available information), analysis (obtained data analyzed separately), analogy (comparison of data with each other), generalization (the main features complex generalization), induction (from individual elements went to a general conclusion), comparison methods. Theoretical analysis was used in order to see if multiple strategies of higher and vocational education for the needs of uniformed services improve the quality of education, from perspectives of (i) vocational training or higher education institutions and (ii) students and cadets. 12 experts - police or military officers - were interviewed for the purposes of this study.

Finding. In Lithuania, each statutory institution has separate educational institution and provides for their duration and content. There is no institution that coordinates and evaluates the process of qualification improvement of the officers at the state level. Education system between statutory and military officers is fundamentally different. In Lithuania, the police officers pay tuition for higher education themselves. Vocational training in statutory service is too short and not sufficient, the necessary training base is not provided.

Research limitations/implications. Only two uniformed services (police and professional army) were investigated in the survey. Only a small percentage of officers were interviewed, whose answers cannot be considered as a whole, deeper and more comprehensive studies are needed. Due to economic situation changes, political decisions and on other external factors, officers' assessments may change. However, the data obtained are useful in view of certain general trends and weaknesses in providing further guidance to the study.

Practical implications. It should be emphasized that there is no institution of education in Lithuania, e.g. college, that prepares B level officers (higher non-university education), although they hold a large part of the officers. This shows that more attention is needed to pay for vocational education, the length of vocational training should be extended. Those insights reflects the practical implication of the study.

Originality/Value. There is the lack of studies that analyze the quality of vocational training and higher education of the uniformed officers in general. This study shows that requirements (state of health, physical fitness, etc.) between two regimes are similar, but there are radical differences in multiple strategies of higher and vocational education.

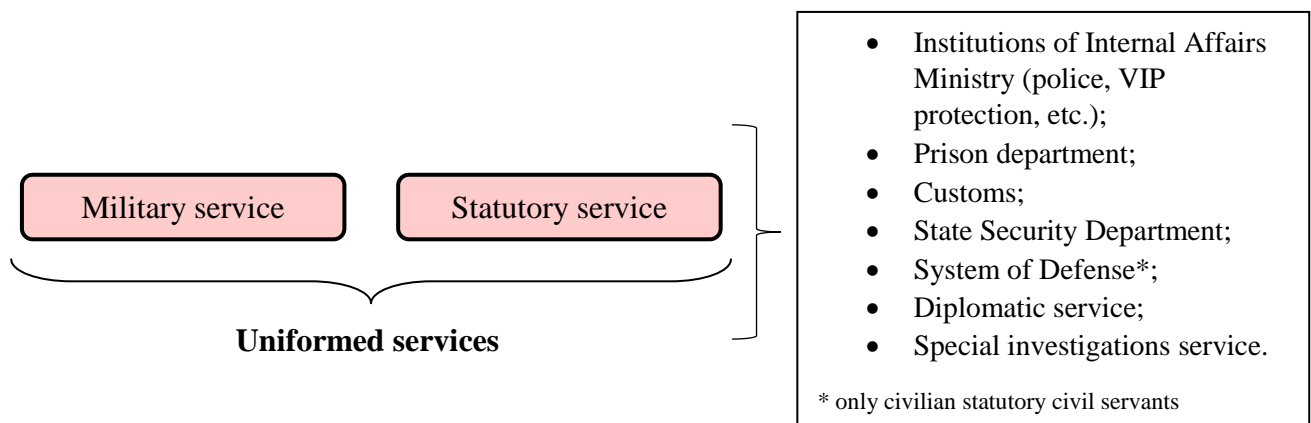
Keywords: uniformed services, higher education, vocational training.

Research type: research paper.

Introduction

In Lithuania there are two categories of uniformed services: statutory and military. The military service regulation is completely separated from other public service regulation, while the statutory services regulation (e.g. police, penitentiary, border guard) does overlap with the general civil service regulation and also the diplomatic service, despite not being a uniformed service in the academic sense is considered to be a statutory service. Constitutional purpose (article no. 141) of the statutory or in otherwise - paramilitary service is to protect and control the state border, to ensure public order, investigation of crimes, protection of state secrets and etc. Statutory agencies in our country monitor and supervise the implementation of laws that prevent or disclose crimes (Laurinavičius, 2002). In Lithuania, there are seven statutory public services (see Figure 1). The national defense system is responsible for the defense of the state against aggression and the implementation of international obligations is no less important in the management of the country. Voluminous military exercises are constantly being organized in Lithuania, the reserve of the army is constantly increasing, in 2015 conscripts army was returned.

Due to special regulation (Statutes), strict hierarchical subordination, special requirements, specific powers and special social and other guarantees, threats to health and another aspects the statutory service is often mistakenly identified with military service. Although many features are equally characteristic to the services, the main criterion separating them is the different constitutional purpose. In 2004 (case no. 51/01-26/02-19/03-22/03-26/03-27/03) Constitutional Court of Lithuania declared that statutory or otherwise - paramilitary service cannot be identified with the military institutions of the national defense system and their officers cannot be identified with the national defense forces officers. The Court explains that the constitutional purpose of the paramilitary services is related not with defense of the state against aggression and the implementation of international obligations but with other areas which are important to the security of the state and society. On the other hand, such paramilitary services may, besides their main functions, be instructed to defend the state during the war, to help the army implement other tasks related to state defense and its international obligations, and their purpose determines the necessity to organize their activities on the basis of statutory relations.



Source: developed by author

Figure 1. Uniformed services in Lithuania

Such separation of the uniformed services makes it possible to compare them with each other, especially in aspects of human resources management (hereinafter - HRM). One of the most important processes in HRM is training of the prospective officers. In order to more efficient work of statutory services and transforming the structure of the national defense system, it is very important to have and be able to maintain skilled and motivated staff which is capable of meeting the objectives and helps to achieve strategic organizations' goals. Although the process is complex and requires considerable resources, officers' training is an integral part of the statutory and military HRM. It should be noted that in Lithuania, the preparation of prospective officers is the responsibility of individual ministries and their educational institutions, which means that educational system is liberalized. This study examines the training policies of police (one of the statutory services) and military officers. According to the association of Lithuanian Higher Education for the General Reception (hereinafter - LAMABPO) data, there were more than 200 people who wanted to study at the Lithuanian Police School (hereinafter - LPM) and 131 applicants were selected in 2017. During the last year, 39 persons wished to upgrade their qualification at the Faculty of Public Security of Mykolas Romeris University (hereinafter - MRU). Although past year was unprofitable to many universities in Lithuania, even a little more students than in 2016 were adopted by the General Jonas Žemaitis Military Academy of Lithuania (hereinafter - LKA). According to LAMABPO, in 2017 LKA had 61 cadet.

Analyzing the international literature about the education and recent works of foreign researchers, the tendency to associate preparation in general with the New Public Management (hereinafter – NPM) theory can be noticed. According to S. Tolofari, as with every other sector, the education sector was also reformed together with the coming of this concept. Performativity, focused on outcome measurement appeared to be the key concern of school leaders (Tolofari, 2005). In 2010 J. J. W. Powell and H. Solga revealed that given ongoing economic, political and social transformation, skill formation systems were under pressure to change. This is acknowledged in European declarations – Bologna for higher education and Copenhagen for vocational training – and various national reform processes (Powell, Solga, 2010). According D. Herron and J. Harford (2016), the reforms were promoted politically by a series of reform-minded politicians and officials in tune with the need for education changes to accompany and contribute to economic development. The field of planning for human-capital development was the underlying policy priority and was based on a market oriented understanding of education and training policy to complement this change in direction (Herron, Harford, 2016). It is interesting, that in 2017, A. Hiedemann, G. Nasi and R.Saporito stated that NPM (product-dominant logic) paradigm loses popularity and New Public Governance (service-dominant logic) now is on top. According to the authors, this contrasts with the currently dominating practice in the business sector whereby executive education is approached more as a product rather than a service. The basic benefit of this approach is that public sector managers are asked to manage services, not products (Hiedemann, Nasi, Saporito, 2017). It is also important to notice, that in 2016 a study where the extent to which the characteristics of public administration degree programs are related to public service motivation using a higher education socialization framework was explored. According to foreign researchers, these programs are designed to provide students

with the knowledge they need to be competent public servants and to help shape their commitment to their chosen profession (Bright, 2016).

Although not abundantly, but some researches on the policy of prospective police officers training in Lithuania can be detected. In 2002 Č. Mančinskas analyzed the development of police science in Lithuania from the first steps to the occupation of Lithuania. The author stated that during the interwar period the Lithuanian police science system was generally in line with that age of society, the education of police officers was not lower than the general level of society and the Lithuanian police had the necessary authority (Mančinskas, 2002). In 2002 R. Tidikis published his study in this area also. According to the scholar, the training of future officers should cover both theory and practice, as the interaction of it is particularly significant. In the author's view, higher education is an important aspect for effective police work (Tidikis, 2002). In 2011 K. Vitkauskas analyzed the policy of training Lithuanian police officers in the context of the European Union (hereinafter – EU). When analyzing the police training systems of individual EU countries, K. Vikauskas says that the preparation of modern police officers does not just mean vocational training, which develops special skills, it is necessary to provide them with a general higher education level. The issue of insufficient police training for police officers in 2012 was examined by V. Toločka. According to the author, the physical preparedness of the officers is insufficient and does not meet the set standards. There is also a lack of scientific researches analyzing military officers' preparation. In the article, which was published in 2012 G. Gražytė-Miliukienė and D. Prakapienė stated that the main purpose of the training of prospective military officers is to prepare soldiers who will be able to properly master their knowledge and skills and to use personal qualities at work. Military education, training and development must be in line with The North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (hereinafter – NATO) strategy, doctrines, procedures and standards (Gražytė-Miliukienė, Prakapienė, 2012). In 2013 R. Kazlauskaitė-Markelienė and A. Petrauskaitė sought to reveal the peculiarities of the organizational identity of the Lithuanian Military Academy as a new type of academic community. According to the mentioned authors, the establishment of the LKA and its strategy was a forward step and the result of the interaction between the military and academic identity of this educational establishment has become the basis of all the values of the Lithuanian armed forces.

This study analyzes and compares the training policies of two uniformed services (police and professional army): the length of training, tuition fees, general and special requirements for students, career prospects, etc. The subject is analyzed in two aspects: the educational institutions preparing statutory and military officers for the service (i) and students and cadets (ii). Qualitative research method was chosen as a pilot research. The opinion of 12 respondents (police commissariat and battalion) was collected using a questionnaire and applying the method of an interview of experts.

Preparation for statutory and military services: comparative analysis

Analyzing two separate services from the first perspective, it should be noted that the preparation of police officers is regulated by the Internal Service Statute of the Republic of Lithuania (hereinafter – Statute) and the Police Activity law of the Republic of Lithuania (Hereinafter – Police activity law). Primary vocational training

for officials takes place at the vocational training institutions in accordance with formal vocational training programs (Statute art. 14). Second basic training institution is the MRU Public Security Faculty in Kaunas. Here the future A-level university education officers are trained for the police and the border. There is no B-level education organization in Lithuania. The majority of prospective police officers preparation is based on initial vocational training.

Table 1. Educational organizations: comparative analysis

		Statutory service	Military service
Educational organizations	<i>Vocational training</i>	Lithuanian Police School	-
	<i>Higher education</i>	Mykolas Romeris University (Faculty of Public Security)	General Jonas Žemaitis Military Academy of Lithuania
Duration of training (academic years)	<i>Vocational training</i>	1	-
	<i>Higher education</i>	3,5	4
Theoretical and practical studies	<i>Vocational training</i>	Both	-
	<i>Higher education</i>	Only theoretical	Both
Study cost	<i>Vocational training</i>	Free	-
	<i>Higher education</i>	Paid by themselves	Free

Source: developed by author

The training of the military officers is regulated by Organizing of the National Defense and Military Service law of the Republic of Lithuania (hereinafter – KASOKTĮ). LKA is a state university where military and national security specialists are being trained in various programs. The procedure for the establishment, reorganization and liquidation, management and financing of higher education institutions established by laws and other legal acts of the Republic of Lithuania is not applicable to the Academy. The Statute of the Academy is approved by the Government on the proposal of the Minister of National Defense. It should be noted that persons who do not have completed a special educational establishment may be admitted to professional military service as well. Persons who have completed the compulsory initial military service or otherwise obtained the necessary basic military preparedness are admitted to professional military service (KASOKTĮ art. 28). In this case, a probationary period is foreseen. In the table below (Table 1) structured information is provided.

As can be seen in the table (Table 1), preparation for statutory and military service in Lithuania is carried out by special educational institutions. Prospective police officers are prepared by primary vocational training and higher education programs, while military officers are only trained at a higher education institution. Upon successful completion of the training, the students obtain a police qualification

and may be recruited into the police. As a general rule, police officers that perform so-called „street-level“ tasks do not require in their training a higher education degree. Equally, these services are all the features of career-type public service where hierarchy and ascension through the ranks is all important. At some point of an officer’s career street-level training does not suffice and additional training is needed. Border guards, and police have a mixed system with some student completing higher education in a faculty of Mykolas Romeris University, where their status is similar to cadets in the military academy or these services recruit heavily from the broader population. Training in primary vocational education institution lasts for 1 year, at the universities 3.5-4 academic years.

From another perspective – students and cadets, the requirements for them should be analyzed and compared. Prospective police officers acquire curated or student, military officers - cadet status during the studies. In the table below (Table 2) structured information is provided. Information is taken from Rules of the Selection to LPM (no. 5-V-129) and Rules for Acceptance of the Long Term Bachelor Studies in LKA 2018.

Table 2. Students and cadets: comparative analysis

		Statutory service	Military service
Learner status		Curated / Student	Cadet
Graduated status		Police officer	Military officer
Requirements	Age	18-60 year	18-25 year
	Secondary education (exam results)	Lithuanian and foreign languages, mathematics and history	
	Health status and psychological preparation	+	+
	Physical preparation	+	+
	Tests	General knowledge	Professional suitability
	Motivational conversation	+	-
	Driver license	9 months driving experience	-
	Clean sheet	+	+
	Permission to work with classified information	-	+
	Competitive score	4	3,6
Duration of the selection process		8-10 weeks	~6 weeks

Source: developed by author

Selection of prospective police officers process in LPM takes longer than joining other schools – about 8-10 weeks. In particular, young people have to submit necessary documents. Subsequently, individuals are sent to the Central Medical Examination Commission, which checks the health status and psychological fitness of a person. The Territorial Police Institutions check the biographies of the candidates, explain whether the person was prosecuted. After this stage, young people also have to undergo physical fitness tests and general knowledge tests. Exams results (or annual grades) of Lithuanian, mathematic, history and foreign languages are evaluated.

Prospective officers have to do logic thinking, text comprehension and literacy tasks, participate in motivational conversation. From 2016 a new requirement for candidates has been introduced - to have 9 months driving experience.

What about studies in LKA, applicants must take part in the selection process - to pass the professional suitability test. After completing the professional suitability test, person is sent to the Military Medical Examination Commission, where the admission of the health will be checked and a decision is made. Persons who have passed the professional suitability test are subject to verification of the right to work or access to classified information.

So as it can be seen in the Table 2, there are many similarities between selection process in statutory and military services. The most striking differences are these: age limitation, special tests, motivational conversation, driver license, permission to work with classified information and the duration of the process. It can be argued that there are even more demands on selection to police service than requirements for military officers.

Experts' opinion: between not sufficient and too high

To find our experts' opinions, qualitative research method was chosen for the research. In order for the research to reveal statutory and military officers' opinions, assessments and reasoning as well as to enable finding out more about the object analyzed and having analyzed the topologies of the interview the questionnaire was used. During an interview open-ended questions were asked, respondents were free to answer it. This kind of interview is valued for two reasons: it helps to discover the responses that individuals give spontaneously; the other is to avoid the bias that may result from suggesting responses to individuals (Reja et al, 2003) Before the beginning of the interview the questionnaire was presented, it was mentioned as well, that information collected during the investigation will be presented only in summary form, and the data form will not be publicly announced. Agreements of heads of police commissariat and battalion were get before the interview.

12 experts were interviewed during this research. Methodological assumptions formulated in the classic theory of tests were used to determine an acceptable number of experts (Podvezko, 2005). Theory states that reliability of aggregated decisions and the number of persons making the decisions (in this case, experts) is related by a quickly fading linear relationship. It has been proven that accuracy of the decisions and assessments made by a small group of experts' equals' accuracy of the decisions and assessments made by a large group of experts in modules of aggregated experts' assessments with the same weights (Libby, Blashfield, 1978). Accuracy of decisions and assessments is high enough when the number of experts reaches at least 12. It means that the number of the experts in this study is sufficient in order to obtain accurate information. Experts were selected with different experience in statutory and military services - up to 1 year, 1-5 years, 5-10 years and 10 years. In general, research ethics covers aspects such as research originality, clear analysis of the research, appropriate research publication, the voluntary submission of survey participants, confidentiality (Baserer, 2016). Two comparative aspects were distinguished: vocational training or higher education institutions, demands on prospective students and cadets as well.

The experts were asked to name the weaknesses of the preparatory for the statutory and military services. All answers are given in the table below (Table 3). From the provided information, it is possible to clearly see what problems were encountered in the statutory service. Majority of the experts think that the duration of the training is too short and not sufficient, students are not able to absorb all the information. What is more too large groups of the learners are made, during the practical training the necessary equipment is missing. It should be mentioned that according to the experts' opinion, too high demands on level of health exists. On the other hand, respondents regret that required level of knowledge is too low.

Table 3. Problems of the vocational training / higher education in statutory and military services

	Statutory service	Military service
Educational organization (duration, quality)	<p>Lack of time, sometimes lack of information; Too short preparatory phase; Incompletely clarified tasks and plans; Too large groups; Insufficient training base, lack of equipment; No problems; I do not know; No problems.</p>	<p>More practical skills and psychological preparation are needed; There are no big problems; There are no problems, the biggest problem is the human unwillingness to improve. No problems; No problems at this stage; Had not to face; No problems.</p>
Students and cadets perspective (requirements)	<p>Too high requirements for the health; Strong competition, self-doubt; Low educational requirements; People not aware of the specifics of the service and work; I think too high requirements; Higher requirements for the education could be.</p>	<p>Too high requirements for the level of health; There are no problems unless there is a need for higher education requirements.</p>

Source: developed by author

Some similarities could be seen while analyzing professional military service officers' answers. Military officers' regrets that too high requirements for the level of the health exists. For example conscripted soldier who has completed the service often does not match the health group for engagement in professional military service. It is important to emphasize that no more problems there named at this stage. Military officers' think that human resources policy in higher education is well organized.

Such an analysis makes it possible to compare two different services, highlighting the problems of each of them. As can be seen, analysis of the study data from the first – vocational and higher educational organizations perspective – the issue of short-term and insufficient training was revealed in the statutory service, which is not named by any military service soldier. From another - students and cadets perspective – too low requirements for the education and too high for the health status were identified.

Conclusions

In Lithuania, each separate uniformed service has separate educational institution, provides for the duration and content of the training itself. However higher and vocational preparation in Lithuanian system has been developing without a single trend across the uniformed services. Moreover most organizations, and skillsets needed for uniformed services to operate effectively overlap significantly with civilian and private companies. There is the lack of studies that analyze the quality of vocational training and higher education of the uniformed officers in general. Especially in the military service. This study reveals surprisingly large differences between comparable services – police and professional army. Although these services are often identified, they are separated not only for their constitutional purposes, but also for the different types of human resource polices in the field of training.

As the military embraced NATO standards, officers' training can only be delivered to persons seeking higher education as cadets in the military academy, or those that have already received a higher education elsewhere. Based on the information gathered in this study and the experts' opinion, the preparation of the military officers is sufficient, carried out efficiently. Lithuanian Armed Forces which seeks to take over the NATO strategy and doctrines, has set up a solid foundation for training officers, ensuring a proper preparation for the service.

Police officers' career opportunities are only made available for officials who attain higher education on their own accord. In Lithuania, the police officers pay tuition for higher education themselves. In this way, Lithuania has become the only EU state in which such a procedure prevails. In all other countries, the needs of future officers are shaped and paid by the state. There is no institution that coordinates and evaluates the process of qualification improvement at the state level. What is more, there is no institution of education in Lithuania, e.g. college, that prepares B level officers (higher non-university education), although they hold more than 50% of the officers. So a large part of the official is being set up on the basis of vocational training.

The average duration of training programs offered by vocational training centers in Lithuania is from 1 to 2 academic years. According to the currently established procedure, the modular vocational training program for a police officer is 1 year (average theoretical training is 11 weeks, the average duration of practical training, including the final practice, 29 weeks). According to the experts' opinion, the problem of insufficient initial vocational training (too short training duration, lack of knowledge, lack of information, low educational standards) for the police officers was identified. Based on the information structured in the study, it can be argued that the duration of the basic education / initial vocational training of statutory officers should be extended (additional time for preparation in proportion to the distribution of theoretical and practical parts). Having regard to the importance of the functions performed by statutory officers and in order to ensure their qualified performance, special attention should be paid to their proper preparation and continuous training.

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