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CITIZEN ATTITUDES TOWARDS MILITARY SERVICE AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE LABOUR MARKET

Abstract. Public attitudes toward military service vary widely across nations and contexts, shaped by cultural values, historical experiences, and contemporary global events. This comprehensive study examines the evolution and implications of Georgia's hybrid military service model, which combines professional military service with mandatory conscription under the new military code. By analyzing extensive survey data, government reports, and real-time recruitment statistics spanning 2008-2023, this research illuminates the multifaceted relationship between citizens' perceptions of military service and subsequent labor market outcomes across diverse demographic groups in Georgia and the broader Caucasus region.

The mixed military service system in Georgia represents a strategic approach to addressing defense workforce challenges by providing a stable pipeline of personnel through conscription while simultaneously maintaining professional positions that offer competitive salaries. This dual structure aims to ensure adequate staffing levels while creating opportunities for those seeking long-term military careers. Our analysis reveals significant variation in how military service experiences translate to civilian employment prospects, wage premiums, and sectoral mobility patterns based on factors including service type, duration, rank, and specialized training received.

Against the backdrop of regional instability and Georgia's unique geopolitical position, this study explores how recent conflicts – including Russia's 2008 invasion of Georgia, ongoing tensions in occupied territories, and broader regional security dynamics—have fundamentally reshaped popular perceptions of military service in the Georgian Defense Forces. The research methodology combines quantitative analysis of longitudinal survey data with qualitative insights from interviews with military personnel, defense policymakers, and labor economists to provide a holistic understanding of these complex relationships.

The study focuses on three interconnected objectives: (1) analyzing public opinion trends regarding military service across different demographic segments, socioeconomic backgrounds, and geographic regions within Georgia; (2) assessing the implications of these attitudes for recruitment strategies, retention rates, and overall military preparedness; and (3) evaluating how military service experiences influence subsequent civilian labor market trajectories, including employment rates, sector-specific placement patterns, wage differentials, and career advancement opportunities.

Our findings suggest that military service, particularly in professional capacities, continues to serve as an important pathway for social mobility and skills development for many Georgians, though perceptions vary significantly along urban-rural, educational, and gender lines. The research reveals complex trade-offs in Georgia's hybrid model, highlighting how mandatory service affects educational trajectories and early career development, while professional service offers specialized training that can translate to valuable civilian sector credentials. Policy recommendations address how defense planners might optimize recruitment messaging, service conditions, and transition support to maximize both national security objectives and positive labor market outcomes for service members.

This research contributes to the growing literature on military sociology, labor economics, and defense policy in post-Soviet states, offering insights relevant not only to Georgia but to other nations navigating similar security challenges and workforce development considerations in their defense sectors.

Keywords: *Military, Labour, Recruitment, Military Code, Human Capital, Service.*

JEL Classification: J2; J3; N3.

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Introduction. Military service has historically been viewed as a noble duty and an essential component of national security. However, the nature of warfare and the perception of the military's role in modern society are evolving. Today, most armed forces around the globe recruit soldiers on the open labour market (Krebs, Ralston, Balzacq, Blagden, Shenhav, & Steinbrecher, 2024). This article explores how recent conflicts have shaped public attitudes toward military service. It further delves into the influence of these conflicts on recruitment trends, national policies, and societal values. The return of large-scale war to Europe forced many countries to soberly reevaluate their security and defense sectors and become more aware of their vulnerability (Lebanidze, 2022).

Labour market institutions (Armania-Kepuladze, 2014, 2018) are essential for the efficient functioning of the labour market, as they establish the rules, norms, and structures that govern employment relationships, wage determination, and workforce mobility. Menard Claude and Shirley M. Mary (New Institutional Economics), Douglas C. North (The Role of Institutions in Economic Development), and Boselie Paul (Human Resource Management and Performance) highlight their significance in shaping economic behavior and labour outcomes.

These institutions – ranging from labour laws and collective bargaining systems to human resource management practices – help balance the interests of employers and employees, ensuring fair wages, job security, and productivity growth. They also reduce transaction costs, mitigate market failures, and promote economic stability by fostering trust and cooperation between labour market participants. Furthermore, they influence workforce development, skills training, and career progression, ultimately shaping employment opportunities and economic prosperity.

In the context of military service, labour market institutions affect opportunity costs and post-service career prospects, influencing citizens' decisions to enlist. A well-functioning labour market with strong institutional support ensures that veterans can reintegrate smoothly into civilian employment, making military service a more viable option.

Attitude reflects the complex interplay of historical tradition, geopolitical reality, and societal transformation. Since gaining independence in 1991, Georgian citizens' attitudes toward military service have been

profoundly shaped by territorial conflicts, international aspirations, and the ongoing process of military modernization. The country's unique position at the crossroads of Eastern Europe and Western Asia, combined with its experiences of regional tensions and warfare, has created a distinctive military culture that continues to evolve.

The Law of Georgia on Military Duty and Military Service interacts with labour market dynamics and common economic principles by influencing workforce availability, shaping career trajectories, and defining the opportunity costs of military service for citizens, which establishes both mandatory and contract-based military service since 2023. According to Article 2 of this law, military service is defined as a "special type of public service" and is considered both a duty and right of Georgian citizens. The Military Service Law stipulates that male citizens between 18 and 27 years of age are subject to mandatory military service, while also providing frameworks for professional military service and alternative non-military service options.

More and more often the Georgian Defense Forces encounter difficulties recruiting necessary number of new servicemen due to the changes in economic and demographic policies that decreased the ranks of potential recruits. This analysis examines these attitudes within the context of Georgia's recent history, including the impact of the 2008 Russo-Georgian War and ongoing territorial disputes. It considers how different demographic groups view military service, how recent regional conflicts have influenced these perspectives, and what these attitudes suggest about the future of Georgia's military development. Special attention is paid to the evolving balance between traditional concepts of mandatory service and modern trends toward military professionalization.

The aim of this research is to investigate the relationship between public attitudes toward military service in Georgia and their subsequent labor market outcomes, particularly in the context of Georgia's hybrid military system that combines professional service with mandatory conscription.

Research Tasks:

1. To analyze trends in public opinion toward military service across different demographic segments in Georgia from 2008-2023.
2. To assess how these attitudes influence recruitment, retention, and military preparedness in the Georgian Defense Forces.
3. To evaluate the impact of military service experiences on civilian labor market

trajectories, including employment rates, wage differentials, and career advancement.

4. To examine how recent regional conflicts have reshaped perceptions of military service and affected defense labor market dynamics.

5. To develop policy recommendations for optimizing Georgia's mixed military service system to benefit both national security objectives and positive labor market outcomes.

The subject of this research is the interrelationship between military service attitudes and labor market outcomes in Georgia from 2008-2023.

The object of this research is the Georgian Defense Forces' mixed military service system (professional and conscript) and its influence on the national labor market.

These elements would strengthen your research framework by clearly defining what you aim to accomplish, through which specific tasks, and precisely what aspects of reality you're examining. I recommend incorporating these formulations early in your paper to provide readers with a clear roadmap of your research.

Many economic arguments suggest that a professional army should be preferred because of structural inefficiencies and potential long-run costs that may arise in a draft system (Bauer, Bender, Paloyo, & Schmidt, 2012). The cost of maintaining armed forces under conscription often appears lower than with an all-volunteer system, which helps explain its continued use worldwide. Many countries across South America, Africa, and Asia still enforce conscription, whereas North America and Western Europe stood out as notable exceptions until 2014, when Russia began its annexation of Crimea.

To address workforce gaps during a crisis, governments face persistent challenges in identifying critical roles, upskilling workers rapidly, leveraging automation effectively, redistributing labour geographically, protecting essential personnel, mobilizing volunteers, offering adequate financial and psychological support, and ensuring clear coordination and flexible policies to maintain economic stability and operational resilience (Barry, Campello, Graham, & Ma, 2022).

Literature Review. The relationship between public attitudes toward military service and labour market outcomes has emerged as a significant area of study in both labour economics and military sociology. This review synthesizes existing research to examine how societal perspectives on military service influence employment patterns, wage structures, and career trajectories.

The problem of the Citizen Attitudes Towards Military Service and its Influence on the Labour Market were assessed and searched by such foreign and domestic scientists as: Druck Dotan's „The Rise, Fall and Rebirth of Territorial Defense“; Krebs's „Myths of the All-Volunteer Force“, Krebs R. Roland, Ralston Robert, Balzacq Thierry, Blagden David, Shenhav R. Shaul, and Steinbrecher Markus in the article „Citizenship Traditions and Cultures of Military Service: Patriotism and Paychecks in Five Democracies“, Jono Kupferberg's „Understanding Grassroots Movements: How to Initiate the Change“, Keshelava Ilia's „Russia – Ukrainian War Impacts On Social-Economic and Political Aspects“, Mikashavidze Maia's „Georgian Media and National Security Discourse“, Beth Bailey's „America's Army: Making the All-Volunteer Force“, and Bernard Rostker's „I Want You! The Evolution of the All-Volunteer Force“.

Militaries, as well as scholars seek to understand the reasons that people join the armed forces (Krebs, Ralston, Balzacq, Blagden, Shenhav, & Steinbrecher, 2024). Let us examine critical themes related to the transition from conscription to an all-volunteer military force. The literature review from Beth Bailey's „America's Army: Making the All-Volunteer Force“, and Bernard Rostker's „I Want You! The Evolution of the All-Volunteer Force“ explores the book's central arguments, methodologies, and its broader implications for understanding military recruitment and the concept of the citizen-soldier. The transition from conscription to an all-volunteer force (AVF) in the United States in 1973 marked a pivotal shift in military recruitment and civil-military relations. Several works, including provide historical insights into this transition. „Myths of the All-Volunteer Force“ builds upon these studies by challenging the assumption that the AVF created a more professional and equitable military.

Krebs R. Ronald in his research „Myths of the All-Volunteer Force“ critically address several myths surrounding the AVF:

a) Equity in Recruitment: Contrary to popular belief, the AVF has not eliminated socioeconomic disparities in military recruitment. Scholars like Charles Moskos and David Segal have highlighted how recruitment disproportionately targets lower-income and minority communities. This book expands on these findings, offering data-driven insights into contemporary recruitment practices.

b) Civic Engagement: The concept of the citizen-soldier is reevaluated, questioning

whether the AVF diminishes broader civic participation in defense. Historical analyses from John Whiteclay Chambers II and more recent critiques suggest that separating military service from broader society may weaken the democratic principle of shared responsibility.

c) Effectiveness and Professionalism: While proponents argue the AVF enhances military professionalism, this book examines unintended consequences such as increased reliance on private contractors and the challenges of sustaining an adequately sized force during prolonged conflicts.

In the course of the ages military conscription has known times of prosperity and times of decline (Duindam, 1999). Literature incorporates comparisons with different nations transitioning to volunteer forces, such as USA, the United Kingdom and France Netherlands.

Another article from Druck Dotan „The Rise, Fall and Rebirth of Territorial Defense“ (2023) delivers info about territorial defense and artificial intelligence usage recent period. Born from the lessons of resistance movements and the changing nature of warfare, territorial defense emerged as a revolutionary approach to national security. This is the story of its rise, its transformation, and its unexpected renaissance in the modern era. It was a doctrine born of necessity – a small nation’s answer to the challenge of defending against larger powers. Modern territorial defense has evolved far beyond its original conception. Today’s systems integrate cybersecurity, civilian infrastructure protection, and information warfare capabilities alongside traditional military elements. The rise of urban warfare has led to new thinking about how to defend densely populated areas, while advances in technology have created both new vulnerabilities and new opportunities for defensive operations.

Perhaps most significantly, territorial defense has proven remarkably adaptable to contemporary security challenges. Its emphasis on decentralized command, local knowledge, and civilian-military cooperation has found new relevance in an era of hybrid threats and asymmetric warfare. The doctrine has demonstrated that some fundamental principles of defense remain constant, even as the nature of conflict evolves.

Another work from Kupferberg “Understanding Grassroots Movements: How to Initiate the Change” (2023) offers a compelling examination of how community-level initiatives transform into powerful vehicles for social change. Drawing from an

impressive dataset of 50 case studies and spanning 15 years of research illuminates the essential elements that drive successful grassroots organizing.

At the heart of Kupferberg’s analysis lies the recognition that effective grassroots movements thrive on decentralized leadership structures. Rather than following traditional hierarchical models, successful movements emerge through networks of local leaders working in coordination. This distributed approach, Kupferberg argues, creates resilient organizations capable of adapting to local needs while maintaining broader momentum for change. The article’s findings resonate across various cultural contexts and movement types. Thus, works become essential reading for community organizers, social activists, and policy makers, offering both demand and supply solutions and its shortfalls, challenges and benefits to maintain labour market steady and economically relevant.

The present study utilizes this framework and methodology, extending it to Georgia, NATO member and partner countries, and ongoing conflicts (Ukraine, Israel, Syria), while also examining how labour market conditions shape public beliefs about service members’ reasons for joining the military, particularly in terms of economic opportunities, job security, and career prospects.

Research Methodology. Following the literature review, I employed a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methodologies to examine the labour shortages in military recruitment. The research focuses on identifying key socio-economic, cultural, and policy-related factors that impact recruitment, with a particular emphasis on Georgia. Utilizing surveys, interviews, and data analysis, this study seeks to develop actionable strategies to improve recruitment efforts and address workforce challenges in the military. Additionally, with the drafting of the new Military Code in Georgia, it will be valuable to assess how these legislative changes may help bridge the gap in military recruitment and workforce sustainability.

While working on the research several methods were developed to achieve the goals and objectives. These are:

1. Quantitative research:
 - Survey/questionnaires (employees of various specialties, ranks, and statuses working in the Defense Forces);
 - Data analysis using statistical methods (official websites, non-classified statistical data);
 - Questionnaire about attitude to serve in the army with the students in different universities and municipal workers.

2. Qualitative research:

- Interview – compulsory, contract, active and territorial reserve, military and civilian employees, students, and citizens randomly.
- Focus groups (individuals before enlisting in the Defense Forces and after leaving the Defense Forces, students, individuals from 18 to 27 years);

3. Systematic review: Systematic literature search, Analysis, Synthesis.

The research methodology focuses on objectives such as analyzing public opinion trends, examining their implications for recruitment strategies, and assessing the impact of recent conflicts.

Main Results. This study provides a comprehensive analysis of citizens' attitudes toward military service and assesses their broader implications for Georgia's labour market and national security strategies. By examining key trends, demographic variations, and the economic impact of the mixed military system, the research offers valuable insights into workforce mobilization challenges and opportunities for aligning military and labour policies.

This study reveals a nuanced relationship between citizens' attitudes toward military service and its broader implications for the labour market in Georgia. Key findings include:

1. **Public Attitudes and Recruitment Trends:** Survey data (2008–2023) indicates that societal perceptions of military service are deeply influenced by recent conflicts, such as the Russo-Georgian War (2008) and ongoing territorial disputes. Support for mandatory

conscription remains strong among older generations, whereas younger individuals show a preference for professional military careers, reflecting evolving societal values.

2. **Economic and Labour Market Impacts:** The mixed military system in Georgia has created a dual pipeline for staffing defense forces, balancing conscription with professional service. This system has shown potential to stabilize workforce demand, offering employment opportunities while alleviating long-term costs associated with an all-volunteer system.

3. **Demographic and Regional Variations:** Attitudes toward military service vary significantly across demographic groups. Younger, urban populations are more inclined toward professional military roles, while rural and less economically developed regions show stronger support for conscription.

4. **Career Development and Skill Acquisition:** Military service is increasingly viewed as a pathway for skill development, socioeconomic mobility, and career progression, especially under the professional track. Conscription, however, is perceived by some as a short-term obligation with limited long-term benefits.

5. **Challenges in Workforce Mobilization:** The study highlights persistent challenges in addressing workforce gaps during crises, including the need for rapid upskilling, geographic redistribution of labour, and the protection of essential civilian roles. These challenges underscore the importance of integrating military and labour policies to sustain economic resilience.

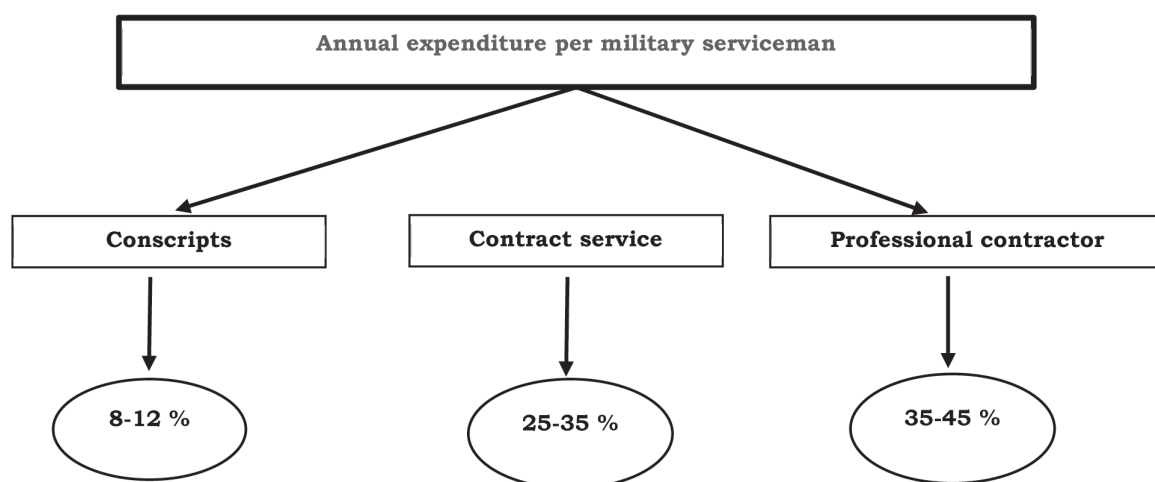


Fig. 1. Average annual costs per military serviceman

Source: Comparative analysis of defense systems of countries in the region by 2024¹

1 NATO Public Diplomacy Division, Defense Expenditure of NATO Countries (2014-2024), 2024. URL: https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2024/6/pdf/240617-def-exp-2024-en.pdf (дата звернення: 15.12.2024).

6. Impact of Recent Conflicts: The conflicts in the region have not only shaped public opinion but also emphasized the strategic importance of a well-staffed and versatile military. They have reinforced the need for a mixed system that can adapt to both immediate defense needs and long-term national security objectives.

Labour market institutions, such as public employment services, private recruitment agencies, and trade unions, play a critical role in facilitating recruitment by matching job seekers with employers, regulating hiring practices, and promoting fair employment standards (Gazier, 2013).

Georgia's labour market has recently shown signs of improvement with growing employment opportunities in the service sector, particularly in tourism and IT, though structural challenges like skills mismatches and high youth unemployment continue to persist alongside regional disparities between urban and rural areas. From these statistics the study highlights the substantial differences in annual spending per serviceman under various types of recruitment. Conscripts incur lower costs due to shorter service periods and basic training requirements. In contrast, professional soldiers require significantly higher spending, including competitive salaries, specialized training, and retention incentives.

The chart shows the average annual costs per military serviceman by category. These figures are based on the experience of countries in the region and include basic salary, food and uniform costs, basic training costs, medical costs, and other operational costs. As can be seen from the chart, the annual cost of compulsory military service is approximately 3 times less than that of contract service and 4 times less than that of a professional officer.

The hybrid system's complexity lies in managing these costs effectively – while conscription can reduce immediate expenses, the professional track incurs long-term costs due to the higher salary structure, benefits, and the need to maintain a high level of training and readiness (Eyal & Shamir, 2021). This difference in salary expenditures creates a budgetary challenge for maintaining a balanced force, especially during times of fiscal constraints or when recruitment fails to meet targets.

Economic and Labour Market Impacts: The hybrid recruitment system creates opportunities for the defense sector to tap into both short-term manpower (through conscription) and long-term career soldiers (through professional service). However, the fiscal burden of maintaining two parallel recruitment channels impacts

Georgia's labour market. While conscripts may temporarily fill gaps during a crisis, the long-term viability of a professional force necessitates significant investment in training, salaries, and retention strategies (Rostker, 2006). This duality affects broader labour market trends, particularly in sectors where military service competes with civilian career opportunities, such as technical and leadership positions.

In general, military service significantly impacts national economies and labour markets through various channels, including skills development, veterans' reintegration programs, and the allocation of human capital between civilian and military sectors. In Georgia's context, the military sector plays a notable role in the labour market by providing employment opportunities and professional training, while also influencing regional economic development through military infrastructure and associated civilian support services.

From a political economy perspective, when competition with civilian employers for qualified labour is intense, military recruiters have reason to emphasize the financial benefits of service, and extrinsic service narratives will therefore be more prominent (Krebs, Ralston, Balzacq, Blagden, Shenhav, & Steinbrecher, 2024).

Willingness to Serve and Work in the Army: The study finds a varying willingness to serve in the military based on socio-economic factors. Individuals from rural areas and lower-income backgrounds are more likely to support conscription, viewing military service as a stable source of income and career opportunities. On the other hand, individuals with higher education or those from urban areas are more inclined to seek professional military roles, valuing skill acquisition, career growth, and the associated benefits. However, the increasing costs associated with maintaining a professional force, including higher salaries, present challenges in retaining high-quality personnel and ensuring career satisfaction.

This study highlights the interplay between military service, public attitudes, and labour market dynamics, offering insights for policymakers on optimizing Georgia's military recruitment strategies while ensuring economic stability.

Objective 1: Analyzing Public Opinion Trends

Chapter 1. Historical Context and Evolution of Military Service Attitudes

Georgia's military service attitudes have been profoundly shaped by its complex

historical experience, geographical location at the crossroads of Eastern Europe and Western Asia, and ongoing regional conflicts¹. The evolution of these attitudes reflects both the nation's struggle for independence and its contemporary security challenges.

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 marked a crucial turning point in Georgian military culture. During the Soviet era, military service was mandatory, with Georgian citizens serving throughout the USSR's armed forces (Darchiashvili, 1997). This period created a complex legacy: while many Georgians gained valuable military experience, the Soviet system also generated skepticism towards centralized military authority. The immediate post-independence period saw a dramatic shift as Georgia struggled to establish its own military infrastructure amid civil unrest and separatist conflicts.

The conflicts in Abkhazia (1992-1993) and South Ossetia significantly influenced Georgian attitudes toward military service. These conflicts created a generation of veterans and displaced persons whose experiences continue to shape public perception of military service (Khylyko, & Shelest, 2022). The 2008 Russo-Georgian War particularly transformed citizen attitudes, reinforcing the perceived necessity of a strong national defense while highlighting the challenges faced by a small nation in maintaining military readiness.

The continued presence of Russian forces in Abkhazia and South Ossetia maintains a constant sense of security urgency among Georgian citizens. This situation has strengthened public support for military preparedness while also highlighting the complexities of asymmetric defense capabilities (Nilson, & Weissmann, 2024). Georgia's strategic location on the Black Sea shapes both military necessity and public attitudes. The region's increasing militarization, particularly following Russia's actions in Ukraine, has heightened awareness of Georgia's strategic vulnerability and the importance of military readiness.

The ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine has significantly impacted Georgian military service attitudes, reinforced the perceived importance of territorial defense capabilities while highlighted the challenges in demand and supply in military recruitment (Employment, Human Capital) such a small nation as Georgia faces in regional conflicts. Most countries that have maintained and adapted their conscription systems face a strong perceived threat: The

Nordic (as well as the Baltic) nations are all next-door neighbors of a militarily resurgent and revanchist Russia necessitating home defense (Ben-Ari, Rosman, & Eitan, 2021). This has led to increased public support for military modernization and defense spending, though economic constraints remain a significant factor.

Chapter 2: Public Opinion on Military Service

Public opinion on military service fluctuates based on prevailing geopolitical and domestic conditions. While a volunteer military has been a success on narrow military grounds, its critics have highlighted alleged negative social and political consequences (Krebs, 2024). Recent conflicts, particularly those with significant media coverage, often evoke strong emotional responses that influence public perception. For instance, studies have shown that countries directly involved in conflicts tend to see a surge in support for military service during and immediately after the hostilities. Conversely, prolonged or unpopular wars can lead to skepticism and reduced enthusiasm for enlistment (Smith, 2024). By examining survey data and historical records, we can better understand how these trends evolve over time.

Analyzing Public Opinion we can see comparison of Data Sources: Georgian Military Attitudes During and After 2008 War. Caucasus Research Resource Centers (CRRC), International Republican Institute (IRI), National Democratic Institute (NDI), and Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies

The increasing emphasis on education and professional development, linked with exposure to Western values and lifestyles, has led many young people to question traditional notions of mandatory military service.

The regional context provides additional layers of complexity. Armenia's recent conflict and Azerbaijan's military modernization have demonstrated the continued relevance of military preparedness in the South Caucasus. These developments have contributed to a pragmatic view of military service among many Georgians, who see it as an unfortunate necessity rather than a patriotic calling.

The transition toward a more professional military has introduced new dimensions to public debate. While the professional military enjoys relatively high public trust and respect, attitudes toward conscription remain mixed. The professional force is seen as more capable and better aligned with Georgia's NATO aspirations, while conscription is often viewed as a legacy system that serves more as a social institution than a military necessity. For maintaining professional army economic factors

1 Ministry Defense of Georgia. (2017). Strategic Defense Review 2017-2020. URL: <https://mod.gov.ge/uploads/2018/pdf/SDR-ENG.pdf> (дата звернення: 15.12.2024).

play a significant role in shaping these attitudes. For some young men from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, professional military service offers a stable career path with salary, social benefits and opportunities for advancement. This has created a situation where military service increasingly reflects socioeconomic divisions within Georgian society.

As Georgia continues its path toward Western integration and military modernization, public opinion on military service remains in flux. The country faces the challenge of balancing traditional values, modern military technology and requirements, in all maintaining sufficient defense capabilities in a complex security environment in and out the country.

The future of public opinion on military service in Georgia will likely continue to be

Forces illuminate the preferred service formats among personnel.

The following section presents the results of the three research questions addressed through quantitative analysis.

Key Observations:

1. Total survey participants: 293 people.
2. The most preferred form of service is National Conscript Service, with 155 people (53%) selecting this option.
3. Professional Service is the second most popular choice, with 104 people (35%) preferring this option.
4. 34 people (12%) found the question difficult to answer.

The survey suggests that among the participants in the National Guard of the Georgian Defense Forces, there is a clear preference for National Conscript Service. This

Table 1. Question N1. Results of a survey conducted in the National Guard of the Georgian Defense Forces: What is the most acceptable form of service in the Georgian Defense Forces?

Choice of answer	Amount of People	%
Profesional Service	104	35
National Conscript service	155	53
Difficult to say	34	12
Total	293	100

shaped by multiple factors: the country's security situation, economic development, social changes, and the success of military reforms. What remains clear is that the issue touches on fundamental questions of national identity, citizenship, and Georgia's place in an evolving regional and global context.

Before presenting the survey results, it's important to understand that public opinion research on military service preferences provides crucial insights into citizens' attitudes and motivations regarding their participation in national defense forces. The following findings from a survey conducted in the National Guard of the Georgian Defense

could indicate a cultural or systemic preference for a more traditional form of military service that involves mandatory service periods for citizens, rather than an entirely professional, volunteer-based military.

The Survey: Factors Making Army Uninteresting

Top Factors:

1. High discipline and rigor (39%, 110 people).
2. Falling behind in civilian life (17%, 55 people).
3. Strict Military Law (13%, 35 people).
4. High emotional and physical stress (14%, 44 people).

Table 2. Question N2. Results of a survey conducted in the National Guard of the Defense Forces: What factor makes the army uninteresting the most?

Choice of answer	Amount of People	%
Military Serviceman Provision	27	9
Strict Military Low	35	13
Health hazard	12	4
Falling behind in civilian life	55	17
The possibility of being drafted during crises or war	8	3
High emotional and physical stress	44	14
High discipline and rigor	110	39
Difficult to say	2	1
Total	293	100

The most significant deterrent is the perception of excessive discipline and regimentation, suggesting many find the military's strict structure unappealing.

The Survey: Factors Influencing Mobilization Decision

Key Motivations:

1. Threat to family members/relatives (61%, 176 people).

through widespread conscription, where citizens across diverse backgrounds serve in the military, fostering a shared sense of responsibility and identity (Peri, 2006).

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has mobilized widespread national support for military service, demonstrating how external threats can unify a nation. This conflict has sparked a surge in patriotism, with citizens

Table 3. Question N3. Results of a survey conducted in the National Guard of the Defense Forces: What factors could change your decision to mobilize for military service?

Choice of answer	Amount of People	%
A real threat to my family members and relatives	176	61
No one can influence to change my decision	48	16
Difficult to say	20	7
If evading the draft would restrict me or punish me by law	38	13
If someone convinces me, someone who is an authority for me	11	3
Total	293	100

2. No influencing factors (16%, 48 people).

3. Legal punishment for draft evasion (13%, 38 people).

The overwhelming majority (61%) would consider military service primarily to protect their family, indicating strong familial bonds and a sense of personal protection as the primary motivation.

Based on comprehensive survey analysis, citizens' willingness to serve in the military is significantly influenced by multiple factors including employment opportunities, professional development prospects, and compensation packages, while the survey data reveals that enhanced military recruitment success is closely tied to improved career advancement paths and better integration of military service with civilian career development. The findings demonstrate that military readiness and recruitment effectiveness could be strengthened through targeted policies addressing both economic incentives and professional growth opportunities within the armed forces.

Chapter 3: Patriotism and National Unity

Patriotism and national unity are cornerstone principles that embody the shared sense of identity, purpose, and solidarity within a nation. These concepts are deeply interwoven, forming the foundation upon which societies thrive, especially in times of challenge and change.

Patriotism and national unity in Georgia are deeply rooted in its rich cultural heritage and historical resilience, exemplified by collective efforts to preserve sovereignty and territorial integrity. It in Israel are exemplified

rallying around the shared goal of defending their country's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

A notable example of this patriotism is the civilian enlistment in territorial defense units. These units, composed of individuals from all walks of life, have become a critical component of Ukraine's defense strategy. The willingness of ordinary citizens to take up arms and protect their communities reflects a profound sense of national duty and solidarity (Kupferberg, 2023). This grassroots mobilization not only strengthens military efforts but also reinforces a collective national identity in the face of adversity.

The Ukrainian experience underscores the dynamic relationship between patriotism and national unity during times of conflict. By fostering a shared sense of purpose, nations can channel public sentiment into actionable support for military and civic initiatives, creating a more resilient and cohesive society.

Understanding citizen attitudes toward military service is vital for developing effective recruitment strategies. Recent conflicts can either bolster or hinder recruitment efforts, depending on public sentiment. For example, heightened patriotism during times of conflict can lead to increased enlistment, whereas negative perceptions of war's consequences may necessitate alternative approaches to recruitment, such as emphasizing career development and education benefits (Druck, 2023). Adapting recruitment campaigns to align with societal attitudes ensures a more sustainable and responsive military force.

In conclusion, patriotism and national unity are indispensable pillars of a strong and thriving nation. They instill a sense

of collective purpose, enabling societies to navigate challenges and seize opportunities with resilience and determination. By embracing these principles in their truest form, nations can foster harmony, progress, and enduring pride among their citizens.

Objective 2. Implications for Recruitment Strategies

Chapter 1: Evolution of the Modern Recruitment Landscape

The recruitment landscape has undergone a profound transformation over the past decade, fundamentally altering how organizations attract, evaluate, and secure talent. The speed of generational change is influenced by the development of artificial intelligence and the average life expectancy of people. It creates a complex ecosystem that demands strategic adaptation from organizations.

Digital transformation has emerged as the primary catalyst for change in modern recruitment practices. The integration of artificial intelligence and machine learning technologies has revolutionized candidate screening processes, enabling organizations to efficiently analyze vast pools of applicants while reducing human bias in initial selections (Zheng, 2022). Automated Tracking Systems (ATS) have become indispensable tools, managing everything from application processing to candidate communication, though their implementation has necessitated a careful balance between efficiency and maintaining the human element in recruitment.

Social media platforms and professional networks have redefined talent sourcing strategies, creating new channels for candidate engagement and employer brand promotion. Digital transformation has also facilitated the rise of passive candidate engagement, allowing recruiters to identify and connect with potential candidates who are not actively trying new opportunities.

Candidate expectations have evolved considerably, with job seekers now demanding greater transparency, improved communication, and a more engaging recruitment experience. Data analytics has emerged as a crucial tool in modern recruitment, enabling organizations to make more informed decisions based on predictive modeling and historical performance data.

In a volunteer force, the demand for service comes from below: even if motivated by patriotic stirrings, service in no way suggests the fulfillment of obligation (Krebs, 2004). As we move forward, the evolution of recruitment continues to accelerate,

with emerging technologies and changing workforce expectations driving further innovation. Organizations must remain agile and adaptive, embracing new tools and methodologies while maintaining the human connection that remains essential to effective recruitment.

Chapter 2. Existing Recruitment Methods

The following section outlines the findings from the qualitative analysis, highlighting key themes and insights derived from the data.

The landscape of military recruitment in Georgia and its surrounding region presents a complex interplay of traditional approaches and modern innovations, shaped by historical legacy, current security challenges, and ongoing defense reforms. Georgia's military recruitment system has undergone significant transformation since the country's independence, particularly following the 2008 Russo-Georgian War, which served as a catalyst for comprehensive military reforms.

Georgia currently maintains a hybrid recruitment system that combines professional military service with selective mandatory service. This dual approach reflects both the country's NATO aspirations and its regional security realities. The professional component has been steadily expanding, with the Georgian Defense Forces (GDF) placing increased emphasis on quality over quantity in its recruitment efforts. The reform of compulsory military service, which will be renamed to National Military Service of Conscripts, is one of the key parts of the proposed defense code in GDF.

Georgia's alignment with NATO standards has further enhanced the value of military service in the labour market. The adoption of modern training methods and international cooperation opportunities has created a workforce with cross-cultural competencies and experience with advanced technologies. This has proven particularly valuable as Georgia continues to integrate into global markets and attract international investment. The country's recruitment infrastructure operates through a network of regional military recruitment offices, supplemented by an increasingly sophisticated digital presence. The Ministry of Defense has embraced technological innovation, implementing online application systems and digital documentation processing to streamline the recruitment process. Regional context significantly influences Georgia's recruitment methods. Neighboring Armenia and Azerbaijan maintain more traditional conscription-based systems, largely due to the ongoing Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Armenia's 24-month mandatory service and Azerbaijan's 18-month requirement reflect the heightened security environment in the South Caucasus (Khylyko, 2022). Turkey, as a NATO member, offers a different model with its professional military structure, though it also retains elements of mandatory service.

The success of Georgia's military recruitment system in contributing to labour market development offers valuable lessons for other developing nations. The combination of professional development, technical training, and structured career pathways has created a model that serves both national defense needs and economic development goals. As Georgia continues to modernize its Defense forces and strengthen its position in the global economy, the synergy between military service and labour market development remains a crucial element of national progress.

The Georgian military has developed targeted recruitment strategies for different demographic groups. Urban recruitment efforts emphasize career development, technical training, and educational opportunities, while rural outreach focuses on tradition, stability, and community service. This differentiated approach reflects an understanding of varying motivations across Georgia's diverse population. Modern recruitment initiatives have introduced innovative approaches to candidate assessment and selection. Virtual reality technologies are being utilized for preliminary training demonstrations, giving potential recruits a realistic preview of military life.

At the forefront of these challenges lies a pressing demographic crisis. Georgia's aging population and increasing urban migration have created a shrinking pool of eligible candidates for military service.

Georgia's new Defense Code enhances military recruitment by modernizing the legal framework for military service, offering improved social guarantees, better defined career paths, and enhanced benefits packages for service members, while also introducing more flexible service options that align with contemporary defense needs and individual career aspirations.

Despite these challenges, Georgia's military recruitment system continues to evolve and adapt. The ongoing process of modernization and NATO integration provides opportunities to address these issues systematically, potentially creating a more resilient and effective system that better serves both military needs and labour market development. Success in overcoming these challenges will require sustained commitment, innovative solutions, and close cooperation between military, educational, and private sector stakeholders.

Objective 3. Impact of Recent Conflicts

Recent developments in the Black Sea region, particularly following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, have added new dimensions to Georgia's security challenges. The increased militarization of the Black Sea has direct implications for Georgia's maritime security and strategic positioning. This has led to enhanced cooperation with NATO partners and increased focus on maritime defense capabilities (Kakachia & Minesashvili, 2022).

Military effectiveness is a crucial component of military power, but it is primarily a function of economic development, not of political and social factors (Beckley, 2010). The impact on Georgia's military modernization has been significant. Learning from recent conflicts, Georgia has prioritized the development of territorial defense capabilities, including enhanced air defense systems, anti-tank capabilities, and improved command and control structures. The military has undergone substantial reforms, focusing on NATO interoperability and modern warfare requirements¹.

Regional conflicts have also affected Georgia's strategic partnerships. The country has strengthened its cooperation with NATO and Western partners, participating in international missions and military exercises. This alignment has influenced military training, doctrine, and equipment modernization. However, it has also complicated relations with Russia, requiring careful diplomatic balancing.

Economic implications of regional conflicts have been substantial. Georgia has had to balance military modernization needs with economic constraints, while also managing the economic impact of regional instability. The presence of conflicts has influenced foreign investment patterns and regional economic integration opportunities (Keshelava, 2023). In regard of recruitment, we have to highlight urban-rural divisions attitude which is significant. Urban populations often emphasize professional development aspects of military service, while rural communities maintain stronger traditional views about military service as a patriotic duty. Economic factors play a crucial role, with military service offering stable employment opportunities, particularly in countries such as Georgia with limited economic alternatives.

Objective 4. Influence on the Labour Market

One of the most significant future impacts of the military code is its potential

1 Ministry Defense of Georgia. (2017). Strategic Defense Review 2017-2020. URL: <https://mod.gov.ge/uploads/2018/pdf/SDR-ENG.pdf> (дата звернення: 15.12.2024).

to strengthen public trust in the Georgian Defense Forces. Through transparent policies and equitable standards, the code seeks to create an environment where service is viewed not only as a duty but as a respected and aspirational career path (Gouse, Valentin-Llopis, Perry, & Nyamwange, 2018).

The code's emphasis on skill development and modern training methods positions the military to address future security challenges effectively. With advancements in technology and the increasing complexity of warfare, recruits must be prepared to operate in domains such as cyber defense, artificial intelligence, and unmanned systems (Bailey, 2009). By integrating these elements into training programs, the new code ensures that the armed forces remain adaptable and capable in a rapidly changing security environment (Duindam, 1999).

The conflicts in Ukraine, Syria, and Israel have significantly influenced public attitudes toward military service. While direct threats and national unity bolster recruitment and support in Ukraine and Israel, prolonged engagements like Syria's conflict led to skepticism in other regions. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for shaping effective recruitment strategies and defense policies.

The recent conflicts in the Georgia region have cast a long shadow over public attitudes toward military recruitment. As tensions escalate and the reality of security threats becomes more apparent in the black sea region (Lebanidze, 2022), many citizens feel a growing sense of duty to protect their homeland. Stories of resilience and sacrifice often inspire younger generations, fostering a cultural shift that places a premium on readiness and defense. For some, joining the military becomes a way to contribute to national security while securing a stable career path in uncertain times. However, the dangers of active conflict weigh heavily on the minds of potential recruits. The fear of injury or loss, coupled with economic hardships often worsened by war, creates hesitation among others who might otherwise enlist.

In this environment, recruitment efforts face both opportunities and challenges. The call to serve resonates more deeply for many, yet the risks and realities of military life in a conflict zone require careful addressing. It is a narrative of hope and caution, where the desire to defend and the fear of loss intersect.

Conclusion. The new military code is likely to define roles, responsibilities, and benefits for

service members more explicitly. This clarity can attract recruits by providing them with a comprehensive understanding of what to expect in terms of duties, career progression, and support systems. A revamped code may introduce improved benefits, such as higher pay, better healthcare, housing allowances, or education opportunities. These enhancements could make military service more appealing, especially in regions with economic challenges.

Citizen attitudes toward military service significantly shape its perceived value and societal impact, influencing participation rates and the overall perception of civic duty. These attitudes also affect the labour market by altering workforce availability, skill development, and post-service employment opportunities (Giotis, 2024).

The new code might include updates to eligibility criteria, such as physical fitness, educational requirements, or age limits, ensuring the recruitment of individuals better suited to modern military demands. This could also include measures to make the military more inclusive, potentially attracting a more diverse pool of recruits. By emphasizing professional development, the new code could highlight training opportunities and career pathways within the military. This shift can appeal to recruits seeking long-term skill-building and career stability. It also prioritizes ethical behavior, human rights, and transparency can improve public perception of the armed forces. This positive image may encourage more individuals to consider enlistment.

A hybrid recruitment system, combining mandatory and voluntary military service, benefits small countries like Georgia by maintaining a steady pool of trained personnel while fostering a sense of national responsibility. This approach balances resource constraints with the need for a flexible and capable defense force adaptable to various security challenges.

A robust total defense strategy enhances national security while a hybrid recruitment system strengthens the labor market by combining traditional and digital hiring methods to attract diverse talent and build a resilient workforce.

However, changes in the code could also pose challenges. Stricter requirements or heightened expectations might discourage some potential recruits. Additionally, a focus on modernization may necessitate substantial investment in recruitment infrastructure and training programs.

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СТАВЛЕННЯ ГРОМАДЯН ДО ВІЙСЬКОВОЇ СЛУЖБИ ТА ЙОГО ВПЛИВ НА РИНОК ПРАЦІ

Ставлення громадськості до військової служби значно відрізняється в різних країнах і контекстах, формуючись під впливом культурних цінностей, історичного досвіду та сучасних глобальних подій. У цьому комплексному дослідженні розглядається еволюція та наслідки гібридної моделі військової служби в Грузії, яка поєднує професійну військову службу з обов'язковим призовом за новим військовим кодексом. Аналізуючи численні дані опитувань, урядові звіти та статистику набору в режимі реального часу за 2008-2023 роки, це дослідження висвітлює багатогранний зв'язок між сприйняттям громадянами військової служби та подальшими результатами на ринку праці серед різних демографічних груп Грузії та Кавказького регіону в цілому.

Змішана система військової служби в Грузії являє собою стратегічний підхід до вирішення проблем, пов'язаних з кадровим забезпеченням оборонного сектору, забезпечуючи стабільне поповнення особового складу за рахунок призову і водночас зберігаючи професійні посади з конкурентоспроможною заробітною платою. Ця подвійна структура має на меті забезпечити адекватний рівень укомплектованості особовим складом, водночас створюючи можливості для тих, хто прагне довгострокової військової кар'єри. Наш аналіз виявив значні відмінності в тому, як досвід військової служби впливає на перспективи працевлаштування в цивільному секторі, надбавки до заробітної плати та галузеву мобільність, залежно від таких факторів, як тип служби, тривалість, звання та отримана спеціальна підготовка.

На тлі регіональної нестабільності та унікального геополітичного становища Грузії це дослідження вивчає, як нещодавні конфлікти - включно з російським вторгненням до Грузії у 2008 році, триваючою напруженістю на окупованих територіях та ширшою динамікою регіональної безпеки - докорінно змінили громадське сприйняття військової служби в Збройних силах Грузії. Методологія дослідження поєднує кількісний аналіз даних лонгітюдних опитувань з якісним аналізом інтерв'ю з військовослужбовцями, особами, відповідальними за оборонну політику, та економістами з питань праці, щоб забезпечити цілісне розуміння цих складних взаємозв'язків.

Дослідження фокусується на трьох взаємопов'язаних завданнях: (1) аналіз тенденцій громадської думки щодо військової служби в різних демографічних сегментах, соціально-економічних умовах і географічних регіонах Грузії; (2) оцінка впливу цих настроїв на стратегії рекрутингу, рівень утримання і загальну військову готовність; і (3) оцінка того, як досвід військової служби впливає на подальші траєкторії на цивільному ринку праці, в тому числі на рівень зайнятості, специфічні моделі працевлаштування в конкретних секторах, різницю в оплаті праці і можливості кар'єрного просування.

Наші висновки свідчать, що військова служба, особливо в професійній якості, продовжує слугувати важливим шляхом до соціальної мобільності та розвитку навичок для багатьох грузинів, хоча сприйняття її суттєво різниться залежно від міста і села, освіти та статі. Дослідження розкриває складні компроміси в гібридній моделі Грузії, підкреслюючи, як обов'язкова служба впливає на освітні траєкторії і ранній розвиток кар'єри, в той час як професійна служба пропонує спеціалізовану підготовку, яка може перетворитися на цінну кваліфікацію в цивільному секторі. Політичні рекомендації стосуються того, як фахівці з оборонного планування можуть оптимізувати повідомлення про набір, умови служби і підтримку в перехідний період, щоб максимізувати як цілі національної безпеки, так і позитивні результати на ринку праці для військовослужбовців.

Це дослідження є внеском у зростаючу літературу з військової соціології, економіки праці та оборонної політики в пострадянських країнах, пропонує ідеї, актуальні не лише для Грузії, але й для інших країн, які стикаються з подібними викликами у сфері безпеки та розвитком робочої сили в своїх оборонних секторах.

Ключові слова: *армія, праця, рекрутинг, Військовий кодекс, людський капітал, служба.*

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