

Precarious Work in Lithuania: Integration Challenges into the Labour Market for Foreign Born Citizens

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Abstract

Based on the works of Lithuanian and foreign scientists, this article analyses the problems of precarious employment or synonymous compliance—insecure work. The distinguished dimensions of the theoretical analysis of the insecure employment form the supporting field of the article, and the empirical part consists of the data of the statistical data (Eurostat, Migration Department, EU Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS), Lithuanian Public Employment Service, Lithuanian Department of Statistics, review of the legal acts (legal basis of the Republic of Lithuania and the European Union) and the data obtained during the qualitative survey. The conducted analysis made it possible to highlight the conditions of insecure employment of foreigners working in Lithuania as non-EU citizens, including insecurity due to loss of income, poor career opportunities, abuse by employers, or uncertainty about job retention. The integration of migrant workers into the Lithuanian labour market is particularly problematic from a legal point of view—the possibility of changing the employer's temporary residence permit (TRP) during the issuing period has been made more difficult. In the latter case, the employee is, so to speak, tied to a specific job, and the employer has the possibility to dispose of the amount of remuneration, the loss of work and, of course, the lack of safe working conditions. Insecurity is exacerbated by the limitations of the legal framework as well as strict regulations/migration procedures. The problems are exacerbated in times of crisis, when there is a risk of losing one's job, delays in processing migration documents, reduced wages, and insufficient social protection.

Keywords

Precarious Employment, Labor Migration, Temporary Residence Permits, Immigrant Integration, Employment of Foreigners

1. Introduction

There are unstoppable migration processes in the world, subject to various socio-economic factors. Changes in the labour market have altered the balance of power between capital and labour, leading to the spread of insecure employment (Porthé et al., 2010). With the migration of people, the research dimension of the labour market and employment becomes more relevant when the destination country is identified with the object of socioeconomic welfare. In turn, the changes in employment are associated with international migration and the liberalisation of the labour market, restructuring and relocation of enterprises. International migration has long been equated with an “instrument of labour market regulation,” but academic discourse denies the concept of a liberal labour market because migration and access to national labour markets are limited by legislation (Bauder, 2006; Basok, 2002).

According to the data of the Migration Department of Lithuania (2022), the number of foreign citizens living in the Republic of Lithuania exceeded 100,000 on January 1, 2022, while on January 1, 2021 there were 87,269 foreign citizens. The share of foreigners living in the Republic of Lithuania in the total population of the Republic of Lithuania was 3.12 percent. As of January 1, 2020, there were 73,751 foreign citizens living in Lithuania, representing 2.64 percent of the country’s total population. Most of the foreigners living in Lithuania are third-country nationals. Most of them (72,539 persons) were staying in Lithuania with a temporary residence permit (TRP) at the beginning of 2022, slightly more than 18 thousand. (18,337) foreigners were permanent residents. Given the increasing migration flows, labour market research related to immigrants and the related problems in achieving prosperity for people from third countries are becoming increasingly important. Pointing to the fact that people from third countries are most often employed in low-skilled sectors such as transport and logistics, as well as construction, it highlights a particularly sensitive problem for the integration of immigrants into the labour market: insecure employment as insecurity and the aspects that need to be analysed in more detail: ensuring favourable working conditions, social security, wages and other issues.

Employment in the labour market can be defined by its structural forms, which differ across borders. The literature points out that the forms of work are changing, and traditional work is being marginalized (Vosko, MacDonald, & Campbell, 2009; Kallenberg, 2009). Here in Lithuania, there are various forms of employment, ranging from individual activities to the establishment of companies or corporations, characterized by flexibility depending on the specifics of the work/activity. For persons from third countries, referred to in this article as nationals of Member States of the non-European Union (hereinafter eu), legal forms of employment are limited due to the involvement of the Migration Board and the Lithuanian Public Employment Service in the recruitment process. In a particularly important moment of labour migration, compliance with the needs of the Lithuanian labour market remains (Kirelienė, 2020), however, it is alarm-

ing that in the second half of 2021, 6562 foreigners were allowed to change their employer—58.2 percent more than in the second half of 2020 (Migration Department, 2022).

It is noted that one of the groups of Lithuanian labour market participants distinguished by the Lithuanian Public Employment Service are Azerbaijani citizens, who most often come to work in occupations requiring medium skills. The main countries of origin of immigrants are still Ukraine (40.3 thousand arrivals) and Belarus (32.3 thousand arrivals). Significantly less—Russians (3.9 thousand), Kyrgyz (2.6 thousand), Uzbeks (1.8 thousand), as well as citizens of Azerbaijan (1.3 thousand), Kazakhstan (1.2 thousand), Tajikistan (1.2 thousand), Georgia (1.1 thousand), Moldova (1 thousand). About 0.7 thousand Indian nationals work, 0.5 thousand from Türkiye, etc.

The empirical curiosity of this study was aroused by the extremely poorly studied problems of foreign citizens in the Lithuanian labour market, because it turns out that people are determined to migrate to Lithuania to work. The question naturally arises: why? Considering the increasing influx of citizens from countries outside the European Union, it is concluded that the conditions on the Lithuanian labour market are generally satisfactory. However, it is more effective to look at this study through the critical field of this problem, and how can we improve the working conditions of Lithuanian workers/immigrants and labour market policies? The results of this study, which will make at least a small contribution to the improvement of the Lithuanian labour market and scientific knowledge, are sufficient for the authors of the article.

As for the study of the problem, more research is being done abroad on issues of insecure employment. These issues have been raised by Masdonati, Fedrigo, and Zufferey (2020), Fudge and Owens (2006), Holtman and Thériault (2017), here Maury (2017) analyzes the situation of precarious employment in the case of non-EU citizens, which analyzes the issue of insecure employment in Finland, Muoka and Lhussier (2020) analyze the situation of insecure work in the case of the United Kingdom. Lithuanian researchers Blažienė and Gruževskis (2016), Gruževskis and Brazienė (2017), Meškienė and Tamošiūnas (2019) analyzed the issue of insecure employment and the development trends, addressing both theoretical and empirical aspects of the problem. Platačiūtė (2015) examined the models of labor migration regulation, and Žibas and Petrušauskaitė (2015) highlighted the problems of immigrants' working conditions. However, in the case of third-country nationals, there is a lack of research and scientific articles on the issue of insecure employment in the scientific discourse in Lithuania, and the problem has not been sufficiently studied. A particularly new area is the exclusion of foreigners as one of the main groups of immigrants and perhaps the first qualitative research on the labor market in Lithuanian scientific discourse. Based on these statements, the relevance and novelty of the topic is justified. The aim of the article is to analyze the theoretical assumptions about insecure employment and legal barriers to labor market integration in Lithua-

nia.

The theoretical field of precarious employment is revealed in the article, followed by an overview of employment and potential precarious employment indicators in Lithuania. The study's findings expose the difficulties in integrating foreign workers into the Lithuanian labor market, forming conclusions that resolve the study's problematic question.

2. Theoretical Access to Precarious Employment

Globalization, advances in information and communication technologies, the transition from manufacturing to services, significant demographic changes, and the changing needs of workers and employers are leading to a transition from traditional work to more diverse forms of work. The differences in work forms potentially lead to uncertainties about the working population, so a brief overview of theoretical representations is provided. Since the concepts on this scientific topic are complex and multidimensional, this article often uses synonymous terms for insecure employment, such as "insecure work," "work with poor guarantees," etc.

In a general sense, the term "insecure employment" has been used to describe the main characteristics of the current labor market, but in the sociological literature, as mentioned earlier, there is still no consensus on a specific definition (Cranford & Vosko, 2006). In general, it is a multi-faceted job that does not provide adequate protection in various respects, depending on the social, economic, and political context, as well as the regulation of labor market needs in each country.

The emergence of the problem of insecure employment in Lithuania is due to the economic changes that began in the last decade of the 20th century, when the restructuring of enterprises took place in the Lithuanian labour market and the formation of the shadow labour market became a problematic issue (Gruževskis & Brazienė, 2017). With the beginning of the formation of the shadow labour market in Lithuania, the interest of employers in tax avoidance, informal payment of wages, i.e. without accounting for them, and avoidance of official employment grew, not only to avoid the tax burden, but also to avoid possible liability for non-compliant working conditions. All of this reinforced the development of insecure employment, but with the strengthening of unions, modernization of state institutions, and growth in competencies, the situation improved. A particular breakthrough in reducing insecure employment occurred when Lithuania became a member of the European Union and was once again short of cash during the global economic crisis, when people began to lose their jobs, "cutbacks" were made, and lower wages were paid. When assessing hiring and firing practices in Lithuania, it was found that the country does not have flexible labour market policies (Blažienė & Gruževskis, 2016).

However, insecure employment (or insecure work) is mainly associated with working conditions for workers, especially the lack of certain opportunities.

These may include unstable, insecure working hours or temporary, low social security or short-term/seasonal work and fluctuating incomes. Insecure employment from the worker's perspective is expressed in terms of uncertainty about the lack of social protection, the duration of employment, low wages, the absence of trade unions (ILO, 2012), more specifically in different categories of insecure employment, social vulnerability and lack of rights (Broughton et al., 2016). In terms of income, this can often also mean that remuneration is paid in "envelopes" (under the table), that is, informally and without accounting in the company's accounts. The phenomenon of insecurity in these workplaces is associated with the risk of job loss and the resulting consequences. The 3D model found in the literature to define the dangers of insecure employment is interpreted in English as "dirty", "dangerous" and "difficult".

Sticking with the fact that we agree with legal clarifications on the topic of unsafe work, perhaps the most common mentions are the limited duration of the employment contract (fixed-term, short-term, temporary, seasonal, one-day, and casual), the type of employment relationship (triangular and disguised employment relationships, bogus self-employment, subcontracting and agency contracts), potentially hazardous working conditions, which include low wages, low protection against termination of the employment contract, lack of access to social protection and benefits, low awareness of or limited access to workers' rights at work, from knowledge of legal acts to language barriers (ILO, 2012).

Dimensions of precarious employment. Insecure employment is presented as the antithesis of stable employment, with various dimensions, from the classification of the employment contract to issues of wage levels, conditions, schedules, and working hours. The European Union have developed guidelines for a better understanding of precarious work. These guidelines categorize insecure work into three broad dimensions related to security, income, and opportunity. Insecurity transcends several dimensions: a person may receive a low salary, have no paid sick days, or have no opportunities to climb the career ladder. It is argued that any of the above clauses do not necessarily lead to insecure work, as a highly skilled computer programmer may prefer flexibility in a temporary contract but receive a salary sufficient for him or her. Also, an employee may draw a lower salary at the beginning of his or her career but have the opportunity to study and advance or work part-time to study or adapt to family needs. This underscores the importance of insecure employment surveys in enabling policymakers to intervene effectively.

Rodgers (1989) divided insecure employment into four dimensions of an insecure labour market, from job security to its pay. Vosko (2006, 2010) integrated social context and social location into the above dimensions, thus incorporating broader social processes that influence the emergence of insecure employment. Researchers also distinguish a spatial dimension, which is complemented by the aspect of mobility. An example is moving between different jobs in different places, where geographic mobility becomes one of the aspects that increase the risk of insecure employment (Premji & Shakya, 2017; MacDonald, 2009; Bohle et

al., 2004). As a result, the relationship between insecure employment and mobility is inextricably linked to an individual's social status, gender, and even migration formalities and ethnicity (Adey, 2010). Not only mobility between jobs, but also the geographic importance of residence in travelling to work are cited as constraints. Opportunities to participate in educational programs or job training or to use the services of employment agencies (Wilson et al., 2011) are limited. Studies conducted in Canada have shown that mobility is a key factor in precarious employment (Access Alliance Multicultural Health, 2011), i.e., the duration and distance of commuting lead to the occurrence of precarious employment.

In terms of precarious employment among immigrants who do not have proper immigration documents, poor labour guarantees are directly related to migration status. There is a risk of greater discrimination against immigrants, leaving them more vulnerable than those who have completed the bureaucratic procedures properly and in accordance with the law. Proper immigration to the destination country avoids the above problems and motivates to seek better jobs (Porthé et al., 2010). As for the "imposed" influence of legislation on the issue of unsafe work, it is argued that states try to regulate entry into their territory, but at the same time, Dauvergne (2007) refers to the differentiation of individuals due to citizenship as "dirty work". Immigration law provides for "who benefits and who is left behind"; thus, the initial assumptions of insecurity for immigrants emerge (Macklin, 2010).

It is important to note that one of the main drivers of insecure employment is low wages in the country. On closer examination, they also include the limitation of social guarantees, the standard of living, the lack of savings, not to mention internal factors such as low self-esteem or undignified well-being in terms of economic security. The author of the article, in the synthesis of the scientific literature and based on the theoretical representations of the insecure employment of the above-mentioned authors, concretizes the theoretical dimensions of the phenomenon characteristic of the insecure employment of third-country nationals (based on ILO (2012), Broughton et al. (2016), Landolt & Goldring, (2009), Rodgers (1989), Vosko (2006, 2010), Premji & Shakya (2017), MacDonald (2009); Bohle et al. (2004), Adey (2010), Wilson et al. (2011), Dauvergne (2007), Macklin (2010)):

- Security/institution (access to permanent employment, institutional control and security in the workplace, guarantee of social guarantees, adequate remuneration).
- Social/community (existence of trade unions, possibility of participation in social life, community activities or collective activities).
- Individual (internal disposition and attitude toward safety or insecurity at work, a person's sense of well-being in a job that does not conform to standards, the ability to feel dignified while performing a particular job, satisfaction with the job performed and its remuneration)
- The spatial dimension (the distance to the workplace, i.e., whether unsafe work is not chosen in a less densely populated area; the importance of loca-

tion in the choice of work or street work);

- The equity dimension (the importance of migration status, the factors of legality/illegality of immigration).

Insecure employment is synonymous with the terms insecure work or poor social security. The synonymous terms refer to the main characteristics of today's labor market, which is characterized by multidimensionality and a constant change of occupations, jobs, and work duration. In a general sense, job insecurity is understood as inadequate protection in various aspects of work, depending on social, economic and political contexts. It also depends on the needs of the labor market and regulation in each country. There are a number of dimensions of insecure employment, depending on the context in which researchers tend to study, which may include individual attitudes and well-being to determine job security or insecurity, and aspects worthy of analysis of social, spatial or institutional contexts.

The article then relies on a structure based on the dimensions of insecure employment for the analysis of the results of empirical research.

Legal basis. When analysing the basic principle of labour law, the Community principle of free movement of workers (in the EU) is implemented in different ways (Petrylaitė, Davulis, & Petrylaitė, 2008: p. 53). The content of the free movement of workers manifests itself in practise as the right to take up employment.

Any citizen of a Member State of the European Union who may be subject to labour law has the right to travel to and seek employment in another Member State of the European Union (Article 1(1) of Regulation 492/2011). However, strict immigration and labour restrictions apply to third-country nationals or nationals of non-European Union member states. The principle of free movement of workers no longer applies to immigrants, but there are other means of entry for work that are subject to stricter requirements for entry, employment and residence in the territory of the Member States of the European Union.

Residence of persons from third countries in Lithuania is defined by the Law of the Republic of Lithuania "Legal Status of Foreigners" (latest consolidated version dated 01.04.2022). In the case of labour migration, subgroups of low-skilled and highly-skilled workers are distinguished, and their inclusion in the labour market in Lithuania differs in procedural terms. The Blue Card Directive (2009/50/EC "On the Conditions of Entry and Residence of Third-Country Nationals for the Purpose of Highly Qualified Employment") and the Law of the Republic of Lithuania "Legal Status of Foreigners" provide exemptions for highly qualified persons from third countries to enter Lithuania. The exemption includes easier and faster access to the Lithuanian labour market with the possibility to bring family members and there are no more bureaucratic procedures to meet the requirements of the Lithuanian labour market. It also provides for the possibility of continuing their professional activity within the EU, in other Member States. A foreigner may work only with the employer who undertakes to employ him/her and may perform only the activity for which he/she was hired by that employer, except for the exceptions specified in the Law of the Re-

public of Lithuania on the Legal Status of Foreigners. Thus, the immigration of highly qualified persons for work purposes to Lithuania is facilitated on the basis of the legal foundations of the Republic of Lithuania and the European Union. So, in this case, it is a matter of discussing both low-skilled and high-skilled representatives of the labor sector who face the manifestations of insecure employment in Lithuania. If you intend to stay in Lithuania for no longer than one year, you can obtain a national visa; if you intend to stay longer, you can obtain a temporary residence permit (TRP) (issued for two or three years, depending on the worker's qualifications). However, in the absence of a valid residence permit, health insurance is lost.

In order to be able to work and live in Lithuania, a foreign citizen must have appropriate qualifications for the position sought and documents proving his/her professional experience. After meeting the above conditions, the foreign national should be granted a temporary residence permit in Lithuania or a decision of the Lithuanian Public Employment Service on the compatibility of the foreign national's work with the needs of the labor market. If the foreigner is a professional with high professional qualifications and his/her salary in Lithuania is at least 1.5 of the last average gross monthly salary of employees in the national economy published by the Lithuanian Statistical Office, the most important document for justification is a college diploma recognized in Lithuania, i.e. apostilled. If a foreigner is a highly qualified professional, of which there is a shortage in Lithuania, or if his/her salary in Lithuania is at least 3 of the last average gross monthly salaries of employees in the national economy published by the Lithuanian Statistical Office, the foreigner can obtain the "Blue Card" (BLUE CARD) in a simplified way (he/she does not have to apply to the Labor Office).

A foreign employee may work only with the employer for whose invitation he has obtained a national visa or a temporary residence permit (TRP) in Lithuania and may perform only the job function for which he has been hired by that employer. Only a foreigner who holds a temporary residence permit issued on the basis of an employment and who works for an employer under an employment contract may change his employer or his work function with the same employer, except for a foreigner who works under an employment contract at a higher education institution. A foreigner working for an employer on a national visa cannot change employers. To start working for another employer, such a foreigner must apply for a new national visa.

Changing employers or jobs is not an uncommon procedure. A foreigner who wishes to change his employer or place of work must submit an application for permission to change employer or job function, which will be considered no later than one month after the application is submitted. If the Migration Board has approved the change of employer, the foreigner may find a job with a new employer within two months from the date of the decision.

In case of termination of the contract with a foreigner or if it is established that no employment contract has been concluded with a foreigner, that a foreigner with a national visa issued on the basis of work has changed his employ-

er, or that a foreigner with a temporary residence permit issued on the basis of work in Lithuania has changed his employer or place of work, without a decision of the Migration Department to allow a change of employer or place of work, or that the foreigner has terminated the employment relationship with the first employer and has not taken up employment with the new employer within two months of the Migration Department's decision to permit a change of employer, the national visa or temporary residence permit issued to the foreigner on the basis of work must be revoked (Data from [The Migration Department of the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Lithuania, 2021](#)).

The latter gap between the conclusion of a contract and the termination of employment is extremely uncertain for a foreigner. According to [ILO \(2012\)](#), one of the dangers of insecure employment is health and working conditions. Individuals who have immigrated to Lithuania may also face stressful working conditions, especially when expectations fade before the actual situation experienced. The problems encountered relate to workload, working environment that is unfavourable in many respects (language barriers, lack of communication, etc.), exceeding permissible norms, unpaid overtime, hazardous working conditions without ensuring necessary occupational health and safety, long distances between the workplace and the place of residence, health problems, and the risk of leaving the labour market for a longer period of time and getting into debt.

In general, the Labour Code adopted in 2004 included a number of restrictions aimed at ensuring a higher level of social security and employment security for workers. These changes generated debate among employers, and it was found that the higher requirements (e.g., social guarantees) did not provide an incentive to hire new employees. Later studies showed that employers did not feel any significant changes after the renewal of the Labour Laws, but it became clear that as the legal framework became stricter, the number of cases of its "circumvention" (unofficial agreements on dismissal conditions) also increased ([Blažienė & Gruževskis, 2016](#)).

According to [Blažienė and Gruževskis \(2016\)](#), employees who do not work under typical employment contracts can feel extremely insecure in times of crisis, as they can be easily dismissed by their employer. In response to the researchers' statement, it is worth noting the times of global pandemic (as in the case of the global pandemic COVID-19), when insecure employment becomes a sensitive problem for workers due to uncertainty about their future and the possibility of losing their jobs. Those who have migrated to Lithuania may have to deal with the quarrels of free movement between states, which deepens and complicates internal disposition and social contacts.

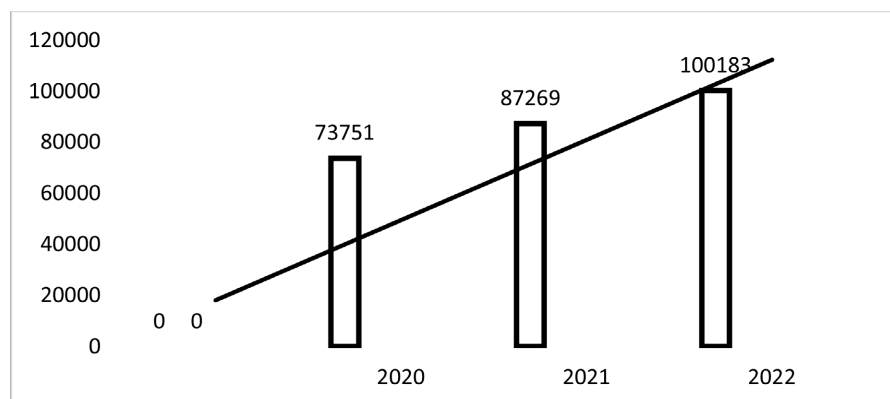
3. Overview of Employment and Potential Insecure Employment Indicators in Lithuania

According to the data of the [Migration Department \(2022\)](#), the number of foreigners living in the Republic of Lithuania exceeded 100,000 on January 1, 2022,

while on January 1, 2021, there were 87,269 foreign citizens (see **Figure 1**). The share of foreigners living in the Republic of Lithuania in the total population of the Republic of Lithuania was 3.12 percent, as of January 1, 2020, there were 73,751 foreign nationals living in Lithuania, representing 2.64 percent of the country's total population (Migration Department, 2022). Given the increasing migration flows, labour market research related to immigrants and the related issue of achieving prosperity for people from third countries are becoming increasingly important. Pointing to the fact that people from third countries are most often employed in low-skilled sectors such as transport and logistics, as well as construction, a particularly sensitive problem for the integration of immigrants into the labour market is highlighted: insecure employment as insecurity and the aspects that need to be studied in more detail: ensuring favourable working conditions, social security, wages and other issues.

The Lithuanian Labour Market. To concretize the situation in Lithuania related to employment and insecure employment, it can be mentioned that the unemployment rate for all groups of people in general was 6.3 percent in I quarter 2022 and decreased by a few percentage points compared to 2021. The unemployment rate for men and women combined was over 6 percent in I quarter 2022, while the unemployment rate for youth (15 - 24 years old) was 12.7 percent in I quarter 2022 and increased by 1.5 percentage points over the quarter and by 0.2 percentage points over a year. In the first quarter of 2022, the long-term unemployment rate was 2.6 percent, remaining almost identical to the period of 2021 (Department of Statistics of Lithuania, 2022).

According to the Lithuanian Public Employment Service (2022), the number of registered unemployed in Lithuania decreased by 3.6 percent within one year (01.05.2021 - 01.05.2022). Since the beginning of 2022, the number of unemployed has decreased by 10.6 thousand, which is due not only to better employment rates and a higher number of people who have chosen to work with a trade licence, but also to a greater participation of unemployed people in the measures administered by the Lithuanian Public Employment Service that facilitate their integration into the labour market.



Source: Migration Department (2022).

Figure 1. Number of people (non-EU nationals) living in Lithuania (2020-2022).

In April 2022, 40.9 thousand vacancies were published at the Lithuanian Public Employment Service, most of them in manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade, administration and services, construction, transport, and storage companies. Accordingly, the vacancies were distributed between skilled workers and operators of machinery and equipment (41.1 percent) and unskilled jobs (27.4 percent). Most noticeable was the need for drivers of heavy trucks and cargo vehicles, shop clerks, cooks, bus and trolley bus drivers, unskilled workers in the manufacturing industry, construction workers, seamstresses, cleaners in offices, hotels and other establishments, maids and helpers, boatmen, advertising, and marketing specialists in Lithuania.

The situation of persons born outside Lithuania in the labour market. According to Statistics Lithuania (2022), the employment rate of 20 - 64-year-olds born outside Lithuania was 71.1% in 2021, slightly lower than the general employment rate of 20 - 64-year-olds (77.5%). About 90.2 thousand people are employed in the Lithuanian labour market, 80 thousand of whom are third-country nationals. Of these, they work in occupations requiring medium qualifications (drivers, welders, concrete workers, plasterers, installers of metal structures, construction workers, cooks, bricklayers, electricians, butchers, and fishmongers, etc.). Among those who came to work, the majority were Ukrainians (40.3 thousand) and Belarusians (32.3 thousand). Significantly less—Russians (3.9 thousand), Kyrgyz (2.6 thousand), Uzbeks (1.8 thousand), as well as citizens of Azerbaijan (1.3 thousand), Kazakhstan (1.2 thousand), Tajikistan (1.2 thousand), Georgia (1.1 thousand), Moldova (1 thousand). About 0.7 thousand Indian nationals work, Türkiye—0.5 thousand, Nigeria—0.2 thousand, and so on.

26.6 per cent of the population aged 15 - 74 who were born outside Lithuania worked and had gained work experience before coming to Lithuania, and the vast majority said that the working requirements both in Lithuania and in another country where they worked were practically the same (Statistics Lithuania, 2022). 75.1 per cent of those aged 15 - 74 years were looking for their first job in Lithuania for less than 3 months, 9.1 per cent had found a job before coming to Lithuania. 94.6 per cent of the population aged 15 - 74 who were born outside Lithuania and had a formal education indicated that they had no problems in Lithuania looking for a job that would correspond to their education. 36.3 per cent of respondents said that they did not have Lithuanian language skills before coming to Lithuania.

4. Challenges for the Integration of Foreigners into the Lithuanian Labour Market

Research Methodology. The study used the semi-structured in-depth interview method, communicating via the Internet using the chat app WhatsApp. From January 9 to 21, 2022, 7 informants who met several criteria were interviewed interactively:

- Non-EU citizenship.

- Official work in Lithuania.

The search for informants was conducted in the Foreigners group on the Facebook platform. In accordance with the ethical principles of the research, confidentiality and anonymity were ensured without considering aspects of possible identification. Informants were labelled and coded with letters and numbers according to the chronological order of the survey (N. 1; N. 2, etc.). The general characteristics of the informants are listed in **Table 1** below.

For the analysis of the article's results, the dimensions of insecure employment distinguished in the previous sections of the article are selected.

Security through institutional activities. The questions asked during the survey were related to the immigrants' possibilities to work in a permanent employment relationship, to receive a comprehensive institutional support package, to turn to the competent institutions in charge of labor control and security in case of need and questions, to be sure of social guarantees and to receive the agreed salary, as well as the desire to be able to trust in the correctness of the legal system of the Republic of Lithuania.

The collected data show that due to the arbitrariness of the workplace, tax evasion, absence from work, non-payment of wages, inconsistencies in the contract upon arrival, etc., the displaced workers experience frustration:

"We came to Lithuania with several colleagues to work as drivers. It turns out that there is no work, if you want to work, work in construction. Paid in cash, officially there are no salaries. It's just good that he provided us with an apartment." N3

"The construction company did not pay a salary for 3 months, we only had an apartment and a company car, and in reality you can survive however you want, and the prices here are tragic. Companies that invite us to come to work are fraudulent. Promises say 1000 EUR, appears only on paper" N4.

"Yes, the dishonesty of some employers who try to hide taxes, who do not want to work for the promised wages" N6

Whistleblowers working in non-multinational companies felt insecure about the constant, uninterrupted provision of work and discrimination in pay:

Table 1. Characteristics of informants.

Code	Gender	Age	Education	Specialty in Lithuania
N1	Man	34	Master	Engineer of metal structures
N2	Man	49	Primary	Construction worker
N3	Man	50	Secondary	Statybų darbininkas
N4	Man	48	Bachelor	Electrical engineer
N5	Man	49	Bachelor	Welder
N6	Man	37	Secondary	Painter - sandblaster
N7	Man	35	Bachelor	Project Manager

“It’s really scary when you do not get paid for months. You feel helpless, your family keeps asking when the money is coming, the kids are growing up, and you still have to live off your savings. Even before the holidays, we did not even get advances for the new year. That was scary” N3

“It took a month and a half to transfer a salary because there was some kind of changeover in banks and limits, the company somehow did not receive the funds, maybe because of the pandemic” N1

Those working in international companies felt more secure and did not face any interruptions, only the aspect of the duration of the employment contract was mentioned:

“I work in shipping, usually I am sent here in Norway by a company from Lithuania, it was not stressful, we know until when our work contract is valid, usually for a year, we work for three weeks, two at home if you want to return, if not here in Klaipeda we stay” N4

“I can not say there is anything unsafe. Maybe the mood is sadder towards the end of the contract, but in reality, if you have a good qualification category, there are no problems, it is important to work well, not to be dragged if necessary, not only in Lithuania, but also elsewhere, where you want to take the work on ships, especially without bad habits” N6

The question about the integration of highly qualified/educated people into the Lithuanian labour market and the resulting obstacles was raised in two directions:

- Highly qualified informants stressed that with lower qualifications, with easier jobs, it would have been easier to find a job

“If I had not had international experience in the world and allowed myself to do simple, unprofessional work for a low wage, it would have been much easier for me. But I did not want it, and the salary would not have been enough for my family” N1;

“you can always work for a minimum wage somewhere in the food sector or in loading jobs, but when you have an education, you don’t want to, you want to find a normal job” N6

- low-skilled individuals stated that their access to the labour market was hindered by migration documents, and that it would have been much easier to have a university degree:

“You can wait for a better salary, if you have more diplomas, then you are invited to work as a specialist and if I am not mistaken, it is somehow easier for them there” N5;

One informant, after consulting with other Lithuanians, turned to the Labor Disputes Commission for falsification of unpaid promised salary and employment contract. He claims that many foreigners are unaware of such opportunities, and thanks to local Lithuanians, he was able to write complaints to Sodra

(*The State Social Insurance Fund Board under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour*), State Tax Inspectorate under the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Lithuania and is now waiting for a decision from the Labor Disputes Commission after the mediation process. The whistleblower claims to have gathered information on legislation regulating employers' arbitrariness and the legality of actions and says that he will definitely seek advice and will not refuse to help other compatriots.

"We are currently in a case before the Labor Disputes Commission, trying to negotiate with the company that cheated me out of full wages that were not paid. They thought that immigrants would not do anything. I worked for three months, it worked out, now it's another conversation for the commission through my lawyer. I definitely went through a lot and I will help my colleagues, of which I have quite a few here in all cities and abroad, as much as I can" N1.

Legitimization by migration status manifested itself in the form of deadlines for the issuance of documents for informants, visas, and residence permits, and dissatisfaction with extremely long procedures in which the individual felt trapped and in complete limbo. The very fact that a person who has immigrated has to go through bureaucratic channels is burdensome, and the uncertainty of what decision the state institutions will make is emotionally disturbing.

"My contract expired, a week before its end I did not know what to do, because after the procedure I have to return, and as long as I was still working in this company, I did not dare to look for another employer" N2.

"I was afraid of the expiration of my temporary residence permit, which seems to be just a document here, but one employer was not able to pay the promised salary, I wanted to move to another Lithuanian company, but they told me I would wait three weeks. How should I wait, where should I live, after all even food here is very expensive? What about the hotel? I took out a loan for my daughter for the wedding, I would have to send money, and I can not because I do not know how much will be left" N3

Changing employers is a particularly complicated issue, as Lithuanian companies that have invited workers to come to Lithuania often do not take on the promised tasks, and individuals take on other work that is assigned to them due to a lack of information. In order to change the temporary residence permit in Lithuania, even after finding a new employer, they have to wait for about 2 - 3 weeks until the decision of the migration authority is published. If they had a simple national D visa, but no TRP, the procedure is prolonged even further, and the cost of the procedure increases to 240 - 360 EUR per person. So there is a sense of helplessness and inequality when comparing newcomers and locals in terms of simplifying procedures and preparing documents.

"When I went to a new company, they tested me and offered me a higher

hourly rate, but when they saw that I was officially working for another company, they told me to come in three weeks when I would apply for migration” N3

“It is totally absurd that already after arriving in Lithuania we have to pay again to change the visa because it was issued only for a certain company. So if they cheat me, I have to keep quiet because I will not get it either or maybe even deported” N7

“It’s definitely much easier for Lithuanians to do it themselves, because if you want to change to a better company here, you have to donate your money, wait for the migration news and then pay again, it’s sad” N6

Social networks and communities. The importance of diaspora community in solving problems of insecurity among foreigners has come to the fore. It turns out that a collective that communicates in various forms (both live and virtual) occupies an extremely important place in the lives of immigrants. Not only does palliative communication fulfill this function, but issues of counseling or even financial support are much easier to resolve when one belongs to a community.

When asked if the informants communicate with people of their nationality who are in Lithuania (“*Do you have close compatriots and friends in Lithuania?*”), almost all the answers were positive, so it can be said that diasporic communication or collective - communal moment is preserved and important upon arrival in Lithuania:

“Three of us came, they are friends and we are friends because we spend all our free time together, we go shopping together, everything” N2;

“You can say, no, I have acquaintances, not even close, and I moved away from the capital, it’s just the workers who come here, but in contact with only one support, although he went to Germany to work, here he did not pay the salary” N1.

“We call all the time, even if we work in different facilities, in different cities” N7.

“Really constant help at any time, here is also my friend, found me another better job, where they pay the wage on time, and also we have WhatsApp groups, those in Lithuania or Poland, we consult, we ask everything, we get offers” N6

“When I had problems with the company, I called an acquaintance of an acquaintance from another city, he found me and the room for a few days and explained everything to me, where to go, how much it costs, where it is cheaper, then we already exchanged with other”N3

Spatial or mobility factors. A particularly positive moment is the ability of the employer to take care of the issues of housing and transportation of immigrants. In all cases, the accommodation of foreigners who came for work purposes was provided by the companies that invited them to work, without them having to pay extra. However, one informant did not come to Lithuania for work

purposes because he faced professional obstacles to employment commensurate with his qualifications due to his family's place of residence, and he emphasized that although the distance to the workplace is extremely safe, it also causes insecurity and uncertainty.

"When we arrived, we got a couple of rooms with two others, at a woman's house, she rents cheaply, we did not have to pay anything ourselves, just work" N4;

"We shared a room in the dormitory with others who came to Lithuania to work, the conditions are bad, but we came here just to work and not to look for amenities" N6;

"You can not complain, we have an apartment for three people, it is clean, everything is thought out. To rest after work, everything fits, in the city itself." N8

"We have a car to drive at five, it makes it easier to do the same shopping" N3

"Since I was looking for a job in Kaunas and the work was mainly only in Klaipeda, depending on the field, that alone posed a problem. I can not just leave my family in Kaunas and work in Klaipeda for weeks. The distance and the overwork would make them immediately" N1

Individual factors included inner disposition and attitude toward job security or insecurity, well-being, and observations of the person himself. When asked about self-assessment (in terms of not working) in Lithuania, there was an abundance of positive responses. The inhabitants of Lithuania were rated exceptionally positively, being described as helpful, sincere and warm.

"The adjustment is so good only because my wife is there and all the paperwork from migration to employment contract was done by her, we were together everywhere. I was very lucky because I did not feel any pressure and I did not experience any failures, the collective accepted me as a Lithuanian because I already had a residence permit before working to live here on the basis of marriage" N1

"Was simple" N7;

"Constantly in the company of my own people, I did not really feel bad" N3;

It was noted that the informants who came for work purposes had practically no language problems, as they communicate in Russian or English. The companies/intermediaries who prepare the documents prepare the documents without burdening the arriving employees:

"There were no problems, the collective speaks Russian completely, where we also live with the people. All the older people speak Russian, like after the Soviet Union, it's normal." N1;

"All documents for entry were prepared by the company's intermediary, through which we arrive when we pay, later it is necessary to issue a tem-

porary residence permit here, but basically I speak Russian everywhere saying a few words in the store and in English” N5;

Future prospects. Assessing the desire of people from third countries to stay in Lithuania and asking “*What are your professional goals for the future? Are they associated with Lithuania?*” The most common response was the prospect of living in the short term, when it is not yet known how long individuals will stay in Lithuania, or when they simply have no concrete plans and are open to possibilities:

“I would not recommend it, it is better to go to, for example, Germany or somewhere else where salaries are better, the standard of living is higher and prices are lower” N3;

“I had the goal to find a job in Kaunas, it took me a while because I do not speak Lithuanian, but I finally found it. I plan to build a business and bring a team of workers that I can rely on to do construction work” N1;

“Only as long as there is work, I will stay here, the family here would not feel very free in Lithuania, everything stays with us” N4

To the question “What would encourage you to stay and work in Lithuania?” the answers were quite similar, as the issue of salary increase, and tax incentives were emphasized:

“I wanted to bring some people to work, but when I saw what taxes guaranteed their admission here, I ruled out the possibility because I don’t have so much money to start with, which is still risky” N1;

“Immigration conditions are very difficult because to come here you’ve to go through a lot of hassle, and you also have to be able to support yourself. Food prices are high and wages are disproportionate, and employers drive arbitrarily, inviting them to come and not paying their salary at all as agreed. Maybe they try to hide taxes, but it’s not surprising because taxes make up half of the salary.” N4

5. Conclusion

There is a tendency for labour immigration to Lithuania to increase. Even during the global pandemic COVID-19 immigration processes did not change significantly, and with the restriction of cross-border mobility, immigration flows to Lithuania remained more or less constant.

The study found that obtaining work in the Republic of Lithuania is associated with significant structural constraints, ranging from migration authority documentation, legalization/posting of qualification certificates, and unclear procedures for changing employers. The experience of foreigners in the Lithuanian labour market varies:

1) Lithuanian companies involved in international projects are evaluated more positively and reliably (e.g., timely payment of wages, clearer standards for labour qualification, additional “bonuses” for accommodation, etc.);

2) Employees working in local Lithuanian objects/small companies feel insecure, have no certainty about their future, do not have enough means to live due to insolvency of companies, tax evasion/non-declaration, etc.

The factors that condition and promote easier integration of foreigners migrating to Lithuania into the labour market are distinguished as follows: access to tax benefits; optimization of the services of the Migration Department, Lithuanian Public Employment Service, by providing consultations on the granting of remuneration for work, availability of the use of electronic systems, verification of the amount of declared remuneration for work to a natural person; issues of raising the remuneration for work in accordance with the existing education/qualification; stronger control of Lithuanian state institutions for Lithuanian economic entities working for foreigners; information on a possible complaint to institutions or services for inappropriate behavior of the employer, change of the employment contract without the knowledge of the employee, etc.

Foreigners working in Lithuania pointed out the following conditions of insecure employment: impermanence of employment contracts; poorly functioning employer control mechanisms; inaccessibility of legal/counselling services for immigrants; ignorance of issues of changing migration procedures in order to change employers; lack of contacts in case of need for assistance in the framework of state and non-state institutions; lack of community relations in Lithuania, starting with locals and non-state institutions; lack of community relations in Lithuania, starting with locals and compatriots.

A particularly important factor in the suppression of insecure employment is the provision of a community dimension/mutual support. Individuals facing manifestations of insecure employment in this study receive support from compatriots who have come together or work/live here. Individuals who come to Lithuania and live in small collectives share information and even households (food production, transportation), and here the financial burden is also shared when the employer does not pay wages.

However, the research did not show that informants are sufficiently informed about possible solutions to problems in case of discrepancies in employment contracts, inadequate working conditions of the employer, insolvency of the employer, desire to change the employer, etc. Most often, there is confusion about the limitations of immigrants' rights as non-natives.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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