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# Emigration after socialist regime in Lithuania: why the West is still the best?

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – The purpose of this paper is to review the emigration situation after the socialist regime and to reveal the main reasons for emigration in present-day Lithuania answering the question why “the West is still the best” remains important to modern Lithuania.

**Design/methodology/approach** – Statistical analysis of emigration during 1980-2015 in Lithuania was presented. Reasons for emigration were identified through a review of the scientific literature on emigration theories and push-pull factors. A questionnaire was prepared according to the proposed model to reveal the main reasons for Lithuanian emigration. In total, 1,586 migrants from Lithuania participated in the survey during October-November 2015.

**Findings** – The results revealed the main reasons for emigration according to push and pull factors related to economic issues, such as too low wages, differences between wages and income inequality, price policies and unemployment rates. However, non-economic reasons, particularly having relatives living abroad, influence the decision to migrate as well. A comparative analysis was made according to respondents' occupation in the home country, their age and gender. In addition, it was found that emigration has become a community value and norm in Lithuania.

**Research limitations/implications** – The study was conducted over the internet. Therefore, only people using the internet participated in this study. Moreover, it is noted that only 21 percent of the respondents were male.

**Practical implications** – Based on migration theories, a list of push and pull migration reasons were identified. The findings present the main reasons for migration, which are based not only on statistical data, but also on survey responses in the case of Lithuania. Differences among demographic groups of respondents according to their occupation, gender and age were highlighted and targeted solutions could be applied in practice. Potential measures for decreasing emigration could also be designed based on these findings.

**Social implications** – Migration was proposed as a community value and norm in Lithuania.

**Originality/value** – Based on the migration theories and a questionnaire survey, the paper discusses reasons for emigration after the end of the socialist regime in Lithuania concentrating on the main reasons for emigration in contemporary Lithuania. In addition, it offers insights into demographic differences in reasons for emigration in relation to occupation, age and gender.

**Keywords** Emigration, Values, Lithuania, Post communism, Push-pull factors

**Paper type** Research paper

## 1. Introduction

Lithuania experienced 50 years of occupation by the Soviet Union. During this period the main orientation of the country was to the East, to the 15 fraternal republics and especially Russia. Freedom as a possibility of free movement to other countries was not allowed under the Soviet rule. Therefore, as McLaughlin and Juceviciene (1997) noted, Lithuanians had a “double-life” syndrome, meaning that people had one life in their families, and another – in the public sphere. This fact demonstrates that several generations of Lithuanians maintained their national identity in the face of many threats and obstacles.

Lithuania became independent from the Soviet Union in 1990, and this introduced many changes to Lithuanian society. As Nodia (1996) noted, the path toward democracy in the countries ruled by communist regimes could be described as “painful.” In addition, Kaminski (2014), based on Durkheim’s theory, stated that when society goes through an economic, political, social and cultural transformation, the lives of its citizens are affected. For example, Pridemore *et al.* (2007) and Cao and Zhao (2010) found that during times of rapid social change, such as the transition from a communist to democratic system, the



inequality among citizens starts to increase. Moreover, all systems are moved from the East to the West, as the best models of democracy are found in the West (Nodia, 1996). Therefore, people living within closed borders for a long period of time begin to imagine the western countries as “the dream world” in political, cultural and economic spheres. However, social and economic changes in the post-communist countries differ from western concepts given the differences in philosophical, cultural, as well as political and economic contexts (Funk and Mueller, 1993). According to Hesli and Miller (1993), changes and the period of transition might make the future worse than the present situation. Therefore, people began to feel unsafe and did not readily see the possibilities of improving their conditions. In addition, market reforms initially created a substantial loss of jobs and rise in unemployment so that society suffered. Only when the new social system has been created and new methods are adopted does equilibrium return to the economy and society. Grigoriev *et al.* (2010) noted that economic reforms can influence health due to the macroeconomic instability, poverty, and decline of social security and health systems. In addition, those changes can cause stress and anxiety in citizens, which is followed by pessimistic behavior. According to Kaminski (2014), the failure of the economy influences the alienation and consequent emigration of citizens.

Speaking about the case of Lithuania, people believed in gaining a better way of life in an independent Lithuania. However, when the so long awaited freedom finally came, the expected economic wealth and prosperity did not arrive (Kuzmickaitė, 2003). The sudden change of economic system in Lithuania, from command to market economy, caused a considerable economic decline and growth in the rate of unemployment (Stankunas *et al.*, 2006). Woolfson (2010) observed that the outcome of the transition led to feelings of despair and disappointment throughout Lithuania. Therefore, “households viewed emigration as a way to decrease the risks associated with market failures, diversify income through remittances, and obtain capital to finance new production activity” (Thaut, 2009, p. 197), which helped people to survive the social degradation they had experienced (Kaczmarczyk and Okólski, 2005).

After the adoption of a new social system, it is predicted that society will return to a new equilibrium (Pridemore *et al.*, 2007). Therefore, in theory migration flows should have decreased. Nevertheless, as the statistics demonstrate, this is not true in the case of Lithuania. Therefore, the question arises whether during the 25 years of Independence Lithuania has not provided sufficient well-being for its citizens or whether the values and mentality of Lithuanians have changed to accommodate the attitude “the West is the best,” which leads them to emigrate. One often will see headlines in the newspapers such as: “Good life does not come easily in Lithuania” (Bolzanė, 2012) or “Lithuania: The Emigration Nation” (Jankaityte, 2016).

Therefore, the main purpose of this paper is to disclose the primary reasons for emigration to western countries from Lithuania answering the question why “the West is still the best” based on an evaluation of push-pull factors.

## 2. Lithuanians and their emigration flows

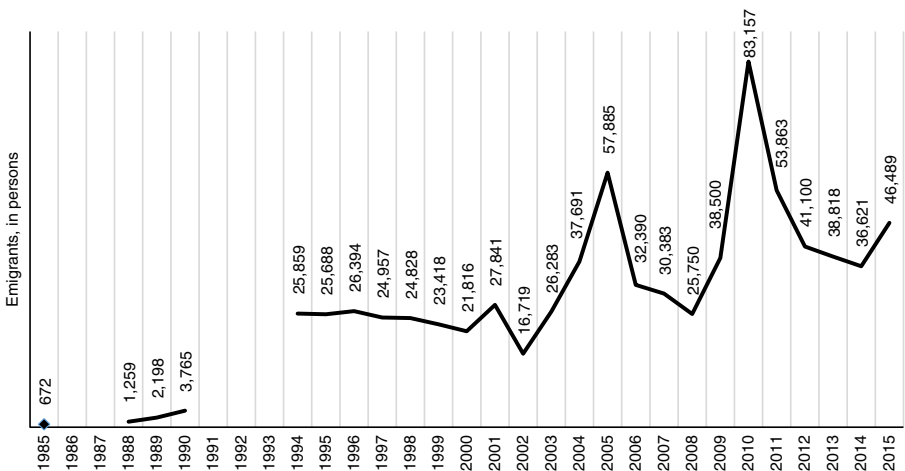
According to McLaughlin and Juceviciene (1997), Lithuanians could be described as having sensitivity to nature, which is connected with “spiritual harmony,” rich traditions of folk art, language, females as guardians of the family, shared sense of national historical memory and a corresponding feeling of solidarity. Even so, Lithuanians were seen as a nation of emigrants already from the nineteenth century onwards (Kuzmickaitė, 2003). However, when the Soviet Union reoccupied Lithuania after the Second World War, its borders were closed, thus eliminating the possibility of free movement to other countries. During this period (1945-1990) of Lithuania’s history the emigration phenomenon ceased. Even so, almost every family had relatives, who had escaped from Lithuania as refugees and

remained living abroad. Their family members in occupied Lithuania dreamed about freedom and life in “the West.”

As McLaughlin and Juceviciene (1997) noted, since 1990, like many other post-Soviet societies in Eastern Europe, Lithuania faced problems brought by the period of transition. Kuzmickaitė (2003) stated that political and economic changes as well as the lifestyle and values of Lithuanians influenced rapid growth of emigration following independence (see Figure 1). It should be mentioned that emigration from Lithuania has been continuing now for 25 years. Its flows decreased only a little in the brief period of economic boom in Lithuania (2006-2008). The most rapid phases of growth of emigration can be seen after Lithuania became independent in 1990, when Lithuania joined the European Union in 2004 and when economic crisis arrived in Lithuania in 2009.

In addition, the comparison of net migration in European countries during 1980-2015 can be seen in Table I. Looking at the year 1980, it demonstrates positive migration flows in Lithuania and other Baltic States (Estonia and Latvia). However, these flows change to a negative from 1990 onwards. Emigration of the Russian population, which was much higher in other Baltic States than in Lithuania, particularly from Estonia and Latvia made emigration rates higher than in Lithuania. However, starting from 1995 Lithuania gained one of the leading positions for emigration among all European countries and this situation continues.

Emigrants by the destination continent in 2015 (EMN) provides the following information about Lithuanians living in different continents: 40,958 live in Europe, 1,923 live in Asia and Oceania, 1,387 – in North America, 192 – in Africa and 68 – in South and Central America. The five main destination countries for Lithuanians in the EU over the last ten years are the UK (33 percent of emigrants, as compared to the total number of emigrants), Ireland (16 percent), Germany (8 percent), Spain (4 percent) and Denmark (3 percent) (Rakauskienė and Ranceva, 2013). In addition, Lithuanian residents emigrated also to the USA (11 percent of emigrants). Emigration statistics shows especially high emigration ratios, which aptly permit calling Lithuania the emigrants’ country and presents the West as seen to be the best for Lithuanians for the first 25 years since Independence. This situation provokes an exploration of the reasons in more detail.



**Figure 1.**  
International  
emigration ratios in  
Soviet and modern  
Lithuania

**Note:** Data are unavailable for 1986-1987 and 1991-1993, and provisional data of 2015 is provided  
**Source:** Designed by authors in accordance with Statistics Lithuania (2016)

Country	1980	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2014	2015 est.
Belgium	-0.2	2.0	0.2	1.3	4.9	7.9	3.0	5.87
Bulgaria	0.0	-10.9	0.0	-27.4	0.0	-2.4	-0.3	-0.29
Czech Republic	-4.0	-5.7	1.0	0.6	3.5	1.4	2.1	2.33
Denmark	0.1	1.7	5.5	1.9	1.2	3.0	6.5	6.06
Estonia	4.1	-3.6	-10.8	0.2	0.1	-2.8	-0.5	-0.22
Finland	-0.5	1.7	0.8	0.5	1.7	0.3	2.6	3.10
France	0.8	0.5	-0.3	2.2	-5.1	0.6	0.5	1.09
Ireland	-0.2	-2.2	1.6	8.4	15.9	-5.6	-3.6	4.09
Italy	0.1	0.4	0.5	0.9	5.5	3.4	1.8	4.10
Cyprus	-1.3	15.0	9.2	5.7	19.0	19.2	-17.6	9.48
Lithuania	0.6	-2.4	-6.5	-5.8	-2.6	-25.2	-4.2	-6.27
Latvia	1.0	-4.9	-5.5	-2.3	-0.2	-17.0	-4.3	-6.26
Luxembourg	3.7	10.3	10.6	7.9	6.0	15.1	19.9	17.16
Hungary	0.0	1.8	1.7	1.6	1.7	1.2	0.3	1.33
Malta	1.2	2.4	0.2	25.3	2.4	0.2	7.1	1.98
Germany <sup>a</sup>	3.9	8.3	4.9	2.0	1.0	1.6	7.2	1.24
The Netherlands	3.6	3.3	1.0	3.6	-1.4	2.0	2.1	1.95
Poland	-0.7	-0.3	-0.5	-10.7	-0.3	-0.3	0.4	-0.46
Portugal	4.3	-3.9	2.2	4.6	3.6	0.4	-2.9	2.67
Austria	1.2	7.6	0.3	2.2	6.8	2.6	8.7	5.56
Romania	-0.8	-3.7	-1.2	-0.5	-0.3	-2.4	-0.8	-0.24
Greece	5.8	6.3	7.3	2.7	3.6	-0.1	-8.5	2.32
Slovakia	-2.3	-0.4	0.5	-4.1	0.6	-0.9	0.3	0.04
Slovenia	2.9	-0.1	0.4	1.4	3.2	-0.3	-0.2	0.37
UK	-0.6	0.4	1.1	2.4	3.2	4.2	3.3	2.54
Spain	3.0	-0.5	1.8	9.7	14.8	1.6	-2.2	8.31
Sweden	1.2	4.1	1.3	2.7	3.0	5.3	7.9	5.42
Croatia <sup>b</sup>	-	-	-	-	-	-1.0	-2.4	1.39

**Notes:** <sup>a</sup>Including ex-GDR since 1991; <sup>b</sup>no data provided for 1980-2005

**Sources:** Eurostat (2007); Statistical Office of the European Union Eurostat (2015a, b, c)

**Table I.**  
Net migration, per  
1,000 population in  
European countries  
during 1980-2015

### 3. Theoretical background

Different decision-making theories analyzing migration can be found in the academic literature. Personal life conditions are a very important reason for migration. It could be associated with country's economic development, unemployment level, minimum or average wages and income inequality, general income, purchase power, tax system, wish and potentiality to effect, for example, house ownership and risk of poverty. In the widely analyzed neoclassical migration theories, such as economic equilibrium theory (Heckscher, 1949; Ohlin, 1933), Todaro (1969) and Harris-Todaro (1970) theory, early decision-making theory (Lee, 1966), dual labor market theory (Doeringer and Piore, 1971), the main determinants explaining the decision to emigrate could be listed as wages, income inequality and the level of the country's economic development. In addition, economic equilibrium theory asserts that differences in wages are the main reason for migration (cited by Bauer and Zimmermann, 1999). Employees emigrate from low-wage countries to countries where wages are higher. Moreover, when the prices of products are high, deprived households feel this more acutely and often make a decision to migrate (Liebig, 2003). Runciman (1966) writes about this problem in his relative deprivation theory. Borjas (1987) asserts that high skilled people leave the country when taxes are higher for them. Therefore, less qualified people can achieve better social conditions than in their country of origin. A decrease in the level of taxes basically has a positive impact on the country's development (Rakauskienė, 2006). Using regression analysis on economic statistical data, Kumpikaitė and

Žičkutė (2013) found that the unemployment rate, Gini coefficient and Tax Freedom Day all have significant impact on the rate of emigration in Lithuania. However, emigration can decrease the amount of unemployment because people who do not find jobs decide to migrate. A disproportion of labor between sectors according to early decision-making theory (Lee, 1966) or rational expectation theory (De Jong and Gardner, 1981) can be a reason for migration as well. Employees in low-demand or lower paid occupations go abroad where employment opportunities are better. In addition, migration networks might assist them in making their decision (Massey, 1993). Moreover, according to Myrdal's (1957) cumulative causation theory, which could be attributed to one of the theories explaining continuing or perpetual migration (Massey *et al.*, 1998), migration factors may be listed as the distribution of income and land, organization of agrarian production, and regional distribution of human capital.

Many authors (e.g. Bhandari, 2004; Haug, 2008) agree that not just economic but social conditions as well have a big impact on migration decisions. These conditions include health care system, allowance for families with children, unemployment guarantees for people, etc. Consumption theory (Wallace, 1997; cited by Liebig, 2003) focuses on migration value maximization, and this also includes immaterial values. People, if possible, seek to live in cleaner and more secure place, where the weather is fresh, warmer or the level of crime is lower. In addition, people are willing to go where their family members, friends or their nationals live. Liebig (2003) also points out that highly skilled migrants react to certain specific areas and recreation facilities such as going to the opera, theatres and museums, unlike the low-skilled migrants who are less influenced by these factors.

In their theory of motivation (Sell and de Jong, 1978) one of the factors influencing migration is education. According to human capital theory (Chorny *et al.*, 2007), migrants are young and qualified individuals. Therefore, the decision to migrate abroad is an investment because an individual increases his or her employment perspectives or uses the opportunities of studying abroad (Sjaastad, 1962). In addition, the desire to gain better opportunities for self-development and self-actualization such as better education, job and freedom to realize life and career dreams, can all influence people to leave (Borjas, 1987; Sell and de Jong, 1978; Lee, 1966).

Based on the analyzed migration theories, we see that different reasons for migration can be highlighted (see Table II). This allows us to formulate the question: what are the main migration reasons in Lithuania today and "why the West is still the best"?

In addition, (Lee's, 1966, cited by Maslauskaitė and Stankūnienė, 2007) early decision-making theory identifies four factors, explaining the decision to migrate. The first factor group could be described as push (positive and negative factors associated with the place of origin), and the second – as pull factors (positive and negative factors associated with the place of destination). The third factor explains migration law and is known as intervention obstacles and the last one consists of personal factors, such as family characteristics and personal sensitivity, intelligence and knowledge about conditions in other countries. This corresponds with Martin's (2003) grouping that lists three categories, which shed light on the determinants of migration. Economic or non-economic determinants can be attributed to a "demand-pull" in the destination country, "supply-push" in the homeland and the third category, linking the previous two, are the network factors. In addition, another theory, focused on the explanation of perpetual migration, is the network theory. According to it, connections between homeland and destination country lower migration costs and risks, the existing migrants' network helps with finding a job, place to live and to select a way of traveling (Massey *et al.*, 1993; Jennissen, 2004). In addition, according to institutional theory, a large inflow of international migrants encourages profit and non-profit organizations to provide transport, labor contracts, documents, dwellings or legal advice for migrants (Massey, 1993), which also encourages people to emigrate.

Factors	Theories
Wage differences and income inequality	Consumption theory (Wallace, 1997, cited by Liebig, 2003), cumulative causation theory (Myrdal, 1957), dual labor market theory (Doeringer and Piore, 1971), early decision-making theory (Lee, 1966), economic equilibrium theory (Smith, 1776; Ravenstein, 1889, cited by Bauer and Zimmermann, 1999), family migration theory (Kubursi, 2006; Borjas, 2008), Heckscher-Ohlin theory (Heckscher, 1949; Ohlin, 1933, cited by Kjeldsen-Kragh, 2002), motivation decisions theory (Sell and de Jong, 1978), network theory (Massey, 1993), rational expectation theory (De Jong and Gardner, 1981), relative deprivation theory (Runciman, 1966), self-selection theory (Borjas, 1987), systems theory (Mabogunje, 1970; Portes and Borocz, 1989), Todaro (1969) and Harris-Todaro (1970) theory
Level of country's economic development	Consumption theory (Wallace, 1997, cited by Liebig, 2003), cumulative causation theory (Myrdal, 1957), dual labor market theory (Doeringer and Piore, 1971), early decision-making theory (Lee, 1966), economic equilibrium theory (Smith, 1776; Ravenstein, 1889, cited by Bauer and Zimmermann, 1999), motivation decisions theory (Sell and de Jong, 1978), rational expectation theory (De Jong and Gardner, 1981), relative deprivation theory (Runciman, 1966), systems theory (Mabogunje, 1970; Portes and Borocz, 1989), Todaro (1969) and Harris-Todaro (1970) theory
Price politics of products	Early decision-making theory (Lee, 1966), motivation decisions theory (Sell and de Jong, 1978), relative deprivation theory (Runciman, 1966), Todaro (1969) and Harris-Todaro (1970) theory
Disproportion of labor between sectors	Early decision-making theory (Lee, 1966), network theory (Massey, 1993), rational expectation theory (De Jong and Gardner, 1981), Todaro (1969) and Harris-Todaro (1970) theory
Unemployment level	Early decision-making theory (Lee, 1966), dual labor market theory (Doeringer and Piore, 1971)
Tax system	Early decision-making theory (Lee, 1966), self-selection theory (Borjas, 1987), Todaro (1969) and Harris-Todaro (1970) theory
Science and education system	Consumption theory (Wallace, 1997, cited by Liebig, 2003), early decision-making theory (Lee, 1966), family migration theory (Kubursi, 2006; Borjas, 2008), human capital theory (Sjaastad, 1962), motivation decisions theory (Sell and de Jong, 1978), network theory (Massey, 1993), rational expectation theory (De Jong and Gardner, 1981), systems theory (Mabogunje, 1970; Portes and Borocz, 1989), Zelinsky (1971) theory
Possibilities of employment	Cumulative causation theory (Myrdal, 1957), early decision-making theory (Lee, 1966), family migration theory (Kubursi, 2006; Borjas, 2008), "migration hump" (Martin, 1993; Martin and Taylor, 1996), motivation decisions theory (Sell and de Jong, 1978), network theory (Massey, 1993), rational expectation theory (De Jong and Gardner, 1981)
Personal life conditions	Cumulative causation theory (Myrdal, 1957), human capital theory (Sjaastad, 1962), "migration hump" (Martin, 1993; Martin and Taylor, 1996), motivation decisions theory (Sell and de Jong, 1978), rational expectation theory (De Jong and Gardner, 1981)
Access to cultural centers and museums	Consumption theory (Wallace, 1997; cited by Liebig, 2003), cumulative causation theory (Myrdal, 1957), early decision-making theory (Lee, 1966), "migration hump" (Martin, 1993; Martin and Taylor, 1996), motivation decisions theory (Sell and de Jong, 1978), rational expectation theory (De Jong and Gardner, 1981)
Social conditions	Cumulative causation theory (Myrdal, 1957), consumption theory (Wallace, 1997, cited by Liebig, 2003), early decision-making theory (Lee, 1966), "migration hump" (Martin, 1993; Martin and Taylor, 1996), motivation decisions theory (Sell and de Jong, 1978), network theory (Massey, 1993), rational expectation theory (De Jong and Gardner, 1981), relative deprivation theory (Runciman, 1966), self-selection theory (Borjas, 1987), systems theory (Mabogunje, 1970), Zelinsky (1971) theory
Level of health care	Consumption theory (Wallace, 1997, cited by Liebig, 2003), motivation decisions theory (Sell and de Jong, 1978), rational expectation theory (De Jong and Gardner, 1981), systems theory (Mabogunje, 1970), Zelinsky (1971) theory
Environmental conditions	Consumption theory (Wallace, 1997, cited by Liebig, 2003)
Migration networks	Cumulative causation theory (Myrdal, 1957), "migration hump" (Martin, 1993; Martin and Taylor, 1996), network theory (Massey, 1993)
Cycles of economic	Systems theory (Mabogunje, 1970), Zelinsky (1971) theory

**Table II.**  
Highlighted migration  
factors from migration  
theories

Based on the review of the literature, the following research questions were formulated:

- RQ1. What are the main push factors for present-day Lithuanian emigrants?
- RQ2. What are the main pull factors for present-day Lithuanian emigrants?
- RQ3. What are the differences according to the occupation in home country evaluating migration factors for present-day Lithuanian emigrants?

In addition to all emigration reasons, Massey (1993) touches upon some factors such as culture of migration and social labeling, which are not explored in Lithuania in more depth. Moreover, Massey *et al.* (1998, p. 47) emphasize that “[...] values associated with migration become part of the community’s values.” Moreover, according to Inglehart (1995), age is the main factor in analyzing cultural changes in the society, and gender has influence on national identity feelings as well (Liubinienė, 1999). Therefore, this leads to the formulation of the following questions:

- RQ4. What country present-day Lithuanian emigrants consider as their home country?
- RQ5. What are the differences according to gender evaluating present-day Lithuanians’ migration factors?
- RQ6. What are the differences according to age evaluating present-day Lithuanians’ migration factors?

Analysis of responses to all these questions will contribute to answering the main research question:

- RQ7. Why the West is still the best for Lithuanians?

#### 4. Research design

##### *Research instrument*

Based on the push and pull theory and the factors highlighted from analyzed migration theories, the research model was constructed by the authors (see Figure 2). The push and pull theory developed by Ravenstein (1889), Lee (1966), Altbach (1995), Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) and many others (Wang, 2010) is most widely used to explain migration reasons. Highlighted factors were grouped into two groups: 19 push factors from home countries and 15 pull factors in host countries. Those factors were also divided into economic and non-economic factors. Moreover, previous occupation, gender, age and meaning of “home” were included in the model as well.

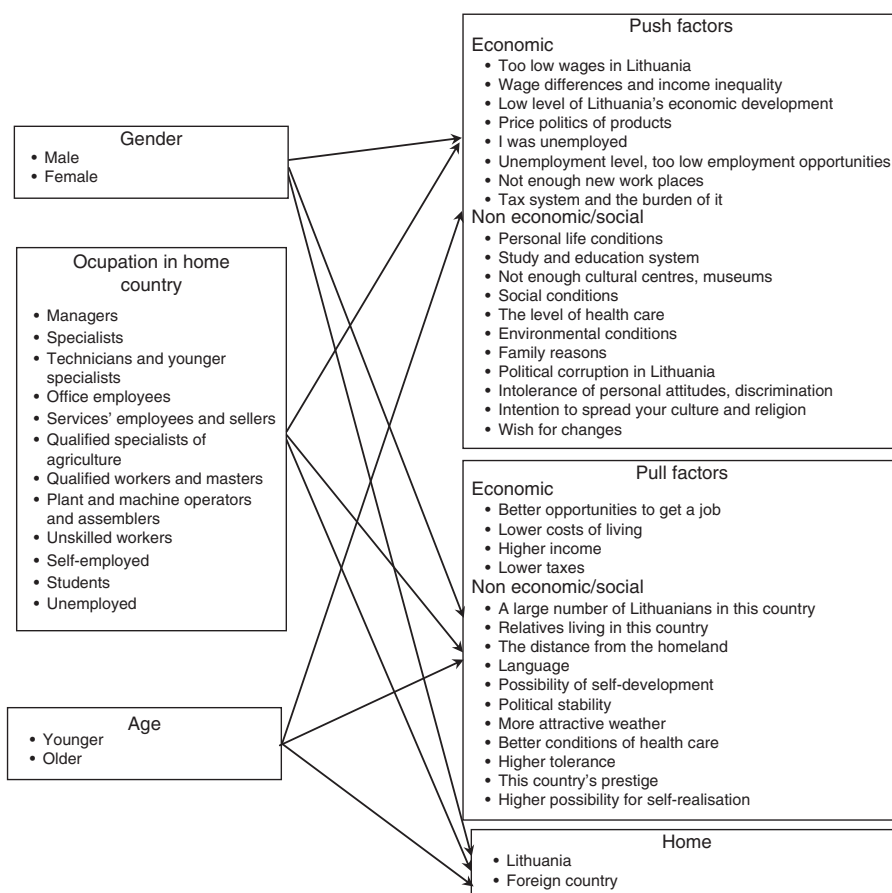
##### *Data collection and sample*

The target population was Lithuanians who emigrated from Lithuania after 2004 (after joining the EU). The questionnaire was distributed via internet through different portals used by emigrants. The participants were guaranteed the anonymity of their individual responses in the invitation to reply to the questionnaire.

Respondents were divided according to their previous occupation in Lithuania into 15 groups based on the ten groups in the Lithuanian classification of occupations and adding groups of self-employed, unemployed and retired people, students and housewives.

In total, 1,586 respondents from 37 different countries completed the questionnaire during the period of October-November in 2015. The average length of living abroad was 6.67 years. No statistical differences were found between factors and duration spent abroad. In total, 1,258 (79.3 percent) respondents were female, 326 males (20.6 percent) and two did not indicate their gender. The average age of respondents is approximately 32 years old. The youngest was 14 years old, and the oldest was 72. The biggest number of respondents varies from 25 to 29 (26.4 percent) and 30 to 34 (23.1 percent) years old. In total, 51.3 percent





**Sources:** Designed by the authors according to Table II and Martin (2003), (Lee, 1966, cited by Maslauskaitė and Stankūnienė, 2007), Massey *et al.* (1993) and Jennissen (2004)

**Figure 2.**  
Research model

of respondents consist of UK and Norway residents. Taking the five countries with the biggest proportion of answers, they represent 74.84 percent of respondents. There were almost 450 respondents from the UK, more than 360 from Norway, more than 100 from Germany and Denmark, and almost 100 from Sweden.

Analyzing respondents according to their previous occupation, the biggest sample and 24 percent of respondents were service employees, 21.8 percent – specialists, 10.6 percent – students, 10 percent –unemployed, 6.9 – office employees, 6.2 percent – technicians and younger specialists, 6.1 percent – qualified workers and masters, and 5.4 percent – unskilled workers and managers. Comparing changes in position at work after emigration, 33.9 percent of respondents gained a higher position, 37.3 percent held a lower position and 28.9 percent – the same level position.

### Data analysis

Statistical analysis was performed using IBM SPSS Statistics 23. Percentage and crosstabs analysis for push and pull factors chosen by respondents was used. First of all, the

relationship between the two variables was analyzed by identifying the association using  $\chi^2$  test. In all of the cells of the cases for tables with a  $2 \times 2$  format, the expected count was more than 5;  $\chi^2$  test with Yates' continuity correction was applied. Second, for statistically significant associations the strength of association was provided taking a  $\phi$  coefficient. For those tables that were larger than  $2 \times 2$ , the Cramer's V coefficient was calculated.

## 5. Empirical findings

### *Push factors*

After a review of the general results of push factors (see Table III) it can be seen that low wages in Lithuania are the main factor forcing people to migrate (57.9 percent of respondents). Personal life conditions were important for 37.6 percent and wage differences and income inequality for 35.9 percent of respondents. Price levels of products with 28 percent of positive answers were in the fourth place and the wish for a change in life circumstances with 25.9 percent – in the fifth place. Family reasons were the next factor gained 24.9 percent of positive answers. Tax system and the burden of it were considered too hard to remain in the country for 21.6 percent of the respondents.

Comparing results according to the previous occupation of respondents (see Table III), too low wages are the most important reason for all groups of respondents aside from the self-employed and housewives. With regard to those who were previously self-employed in Lithuania, the most important factor influencing their emigration was the tax system and the burden of it (52.6 percent). At the same time, housewives mentioned family reasons and wages (both 57.1 percent). It should be mentioned that as much as 84.4 percent of plant and machine operators and assemblers, 73.8 percent of qualified workers and masters and 70.7 percent of unskilled workers emigrated because of low wages. This factor is the least important for self-employed (47.4 percent) people and ex-managers (48 percent), but still influenced almost a half of them. It is interesting to highlight that the desire for life changes was important for 30.5 percent of office employees and 29.1 percent of technicians and young specialists in contrast to 9.4 percent of this factor being indicated as important for plant and machine operators and assemblers. However, the purpose to spread their culture and religion was the most important for that group (3.1 percent) in comparison with the others.

Statistical analysis of push and pull factors from the perspective of age groups is presented in Table IV. Analysis showed statistically significant differences with seven push factors. Relations were analyzed according to two age groups: 30 years old and older, and younger than 30. This division was made to take into account the fact that Lithuania gained its Independence 25 years ago. It means that people younger than 30 grew up under the new governmental system in modern Lithuania, taking into account that children up to five years old do not remember a lot about their very early years and do not care too much about the governmental system. The younger age group (29 years old and younger) dominates in such push factors as too low wages in Lithuania, unemployment level, too low employment opportunities, study and education system and the wish for changes. Social conditions, environmental conditions and political corruption in Lithuania are more appropriate for the 30 years and over age category.

$\chi^2$  test (see Table IV) with Yates' continuity correction observed an association between gender and the following push factors: too low wage in Lithuania, wage differences and income inequality, low level of Lithuania's economic development, price policies of products, the tax system and burden of it, not enough cultural centers, museums, social conditions, the level of health care, family reasons, political corruption in Lithuania and intolerance of different attitudes, and discrimination. In all cases, except in the case of family reasons, men are more likely to identify with the emigration reasons listed above.

	Army officers	Manager	Specialist	Technicians and younger specialist	Office employees	Services' employees and sellers	Qualified specialists of agriculture	Qualified workers and masters	Plant and machine operators and assemblers	Unskilled workers	Self-employed	Students	Unemployed	Housewives
<i>Crosstab of push factors according to occupation in Lithuania</i>														
Economic														
Too low wages in Lithuania	57.9	50.0	48.0	54.5	60.5	53.7	64.7	57.1	73.8	84.4	47.4	43.8	50.0	57.1
Wage differences and income inequality	35.9	25.0	38.7	34.6	30.2	29.5	41.1	28.6	51.2	53.1	52.6	24.0	29.0	28.6
Low Lithuania's economic development	19.7	50.0	12.0	16.3	23.3	13.7	23.6	42.9	32.1	34.4	26.3	11.6	18.8	14.3
Price politics I was unemployed	28.0	25.0	30.7	28.9	19.8	33.7	28.1	28.6	38.1	34.4	42.1	17.8	25.4	42.9
Unemployment level	8.0	25.0	4.0	7.0	8.1	6.3	11.2	14.3	9.5	0.0	5.3	5.5	8.7	0.0
Not enough new work places	20.2	25.0	12.0	14.3	22.1	22.1	22.1	14.3	28.6	21.9	5.3	19.2	27.5	28.6
Taxes system and the burden of it	12.1	25.0	6.7	9.0	11.6	12.6	13.6	0.0	14.3	3.1	5.3	10.3	15.9	14.3
Non-economic Personal life conditions	21.6	25.0	14.7	18.6	19.8	27.4	21.8	28.6	34.5	46.9	57.9	11.6	16.7	28.6
Study and education system	37.6	50.0	24.0	36.9	37.2	37.9	42.3	28.6	48.8	37.5	31.6	25.3	35.5	28.6
Not enough cultural centers, museums	17.7	0.0	4.0	11.3	14.0	12.6	19.0	0.0	20.2	21.9	26.3	28.8	29.0	0.0
	2.2	0.0	2.7	1.0	3.5	2.1	3.0	0.0	4.8	0.0	0.0	0.7	2.9	14.3

*(continued)*

Emigration after socialist regime in Lithuania

**Table III.**  
Crosstab of push and pull factors according to occupation in Lithuania

Table III.

	Total	Army officers	Manager	Specialist	Technicians and younger specialist	Office employees	Services' employees and sellers	Qualified specialists of agriculture	Qualified workers and masters	Plant and machine operators and assemblers	Unskilled workers	Self-employed	Students	Unemployed	Housewives
Social conditions	15.0	0.0	14.7	15.0	12.8	20.0	15.7	14.3	27.4	18.8	13.3	26.3	4.8	13.0	28.6
The level of health care	6.4	0.0	6.7	6.3	3.5	10.5	5.1	0.0	11.9	9.4	6.7	15.8	4.1	5.1	14.3
Environmental conditions	8.8	0.0	8.0	12.0	9.3	9.5	7.6	0.0	11.9	3.1	4.0	10.5	5.5	10.9	0.0
Family reasons	24.9	50.0	29.3	29.6	32.6	25.3	19.3	28.6	9.5	3.1	10.7	21.1	32.2	32.6	57.1
Political corruption in Lithuania	21.6	25.0	22.7	22.9	17.4	25.3	19.3	28.6	39.3	40.6	24.0	36.8	15.8	10.1	28.6
Intolerance of personal attitudes, discrimination	6.3	0.0	5.3	7.3	9.3	8.4	5.1	14.3	4.8	3.1	5.3	10.5	5.5	6.5	0.0
Intention to spread your culture and religion	1.1	0.0	0.0	1.0	2.3	1.1	1.8	0.0	0.0	3.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.2	0.0
Wish for changes	25.9	25.0	26.7	26.2	29.1	30.5	28.4	14.3	23.8	9.4	24.0	15.8	22.6	26.1	14.3
Cross-tabs of pull factors according to occupation in Lithuania															
Economic	In percentage of respondents														
Better opportunities to get a job	33.1	0.0	14.7	32.6	30.2	27.4	30.8	71.4	45.2	34.4	42.7	31.6	33.6	42.0	28.6
Lower costs of living	9.6	0.0	8.0	9.6	11.6	16.8	10.6	0.0	9.5	9.4	13.3	15.8	3.4	6.5	14.3
Higher incomes	52.9	50.0	49.3	52.8	51.2	49.5	54.7	57.1	69.0	68.8	69.3	47.4	44.5	40.6	57.1
Lower taxes	4.5	25.0	4.0	3.3	4.7	8.4	5.7	14.3	3.6	0.0	4.0	5.3	3.4	3.6	0.0

(continued)

	Army Total	officers	Manager	Specialist	Technicians and younger specialist	Office employees	Services' employees and sellers	Qualified specialists of agriculture	Qualified workers and masters	Plant and machine operators and assemblers	Unskilled workers	Self- employed	Students	Unemployed	Housewives
Non-economic	196	25.0	17.3	20.9	23.3	22.1	17.2	14.3	11.9	9.4	17.3	5.3	28.1	22.5	0.0
Language															
A large number															
of Lithuanians															
in this country	3.3	0.0	4.0	2.3	2.3	5.3	3.0	0.0	3.6	3.1	9.3	0.0	4.1	1.4	0.0
Relatives living															
in this country	41.6	50.0	41.3	41.2	46.5	38.9	45.0	42.9	23.8	43.8	32.0	47.4	47.3	40.6	71.4
Possibility															
to self-															
development	36.2	50.0	29.3	32.6	36.0	35.8	33.2	14.3	45.2	31.3	33.3	26.3	45.2	46.4	14.3
The distance															
from the															
homeland	7.8	0.0	12.0	10.0	9.3	7.4	6.3	0.0	2.4	0.0	5.3	10.5	8.9	9.4	0.0
Political															
stability	14.9	0.0	16.0	16.3	17.4	13.7	13.6	14.3	29.8	18.8	13.3	21.1	8.9	10.9	14.3
More attractive															
weather	9.9	0.0	10.7	15.6	7.0	11.6	8.5	0.0	10.7	0.0	5.3	10.5	7.5	8.7	0.0
Better															
conditions of															
health care	11.1	0.0	16.0	13.3	9.3	9.5	10.0	14.3	16.7	6.3	6.7	5.3	10.3	10.9	14.3
Higher															
tolerance	26.6	0.0	25.3	28.6	22.1	28.4	28.1	28.6	32.1	15.6	26.7	26.3	27.4	21.7	0.0
This country's															
prestige	11.2	0.0	16.0	11.0	10.5	18.9	8.5	0.0	16.7	18.8	8.0	5.3	11.6	9.4	0.0
Higher															
possibility for															
self-realization	31.6	50.0	22.7	32.9	23.3	29.5	29.3	14.3	36.9	28.1	30.7	36.8	34.9	40.6	28.6

The case Statements and statistics	By gender (men – <i>M</i> and women – <i>W</i> ), <i>n</i> = 1,584			By age groups of (1) 29 and younger (2) 30 and older, <i>n</i> = 1,529		
	$\chi^2$ test's value	$\varphi$ coefficient	Obs. > exp. count	$\chi^2$ test's value	$\varphi$ coefficient	Obs. > Exp. count
<i>Push factors</i>						
<i>Economic push factors</i>						
Too low wages in Lithuania	17.019*	0.105*	<i>M</i>	6.317**	0.066**	Younger
Wage differences and income inequality	15.414*	0.100*	<i>M</i>	1.304	n/a	n/a
Low level of Lithuania's economic development	20.264*	0.115*	<i>M</i>	0.451	n/a	n/a
Price politics of products	11.555*	0.087*	<i>M</i>	3.275	n/a	n/a
I was unemployed	1.956	n/a	n/a	2.208	n/a	n/a
Unemployment level, too low employment opportunities	0.058	n/a	n/a	8.461*	0.076*	Younger
Not enough new work places	0.918	n/a	n/a	0.034	n/a	n/a
Tax system and the burden of it	29.244*	0.138*	<i>M</i>	2.133	n/a	n/a
<i>Non-economic push factors</i>						
Personal life conditions	3.298	n/a	n/a	1.047	n/a	n/a
Study and education system	1.030	n/a	n/a	22.230*	0.122*	Younger
Not enough cultural centers, museums	5.132**	0.062**	<i>M</i>	1.483	n/a	n/a
Social conditions	21.679*	0.119*	<i>M</i>	4.775**	0.058**	Older
The level of health care	9.886*	0.082*	<i>M</i>	2.979	n/a	n/a
Environmental conditions	3.185	n/a	n/a	11.599*	0.089*	Older
Family reasons	57.512*	0.192*	<i>W</i>	0.354	n/a	n/a
Political corruption in Lithuania	59.003*	0.195*	<i>M</i>	8.401*	0.076*	Older
Intolerance of personal attitudes, discrimination	5.209**	0.060**	<i>M</i>	3.339	n/a	n/a
Intention to spread your culture and religion	0.000	n/a	n/a	2.202	n/a	n/a
Wish for changes	0.148	n/a	n/a	4.271**	0.054**	Younger
<i>Pull factors</i>						
<i>Economic pull factors</i>						
Better opportunities to get a job	6.785*	0.067*	<i>M</i>	4.227**	0.054**	Younger
Lower costs of living	5.648**	0.062**	<i>M</i>	3.653	n/a	n/a
Higher income	34.587*	0.149*	<i>M</i>	6.292**	0.065**	Younger
Lower taxes	0.875	n/a	n/a	0.048	n/a	n/a
<i>Non-economic pull factors</i>						
Language	0.000	n/a	n/a	12.198*	0.091*	Younger
A large number of Lithuanians in this country	0.125	n/a	n/a	1.799	n/a	n/a
Relatives living in this country	49.662*	0.179*	<i>W</i>	4.814**	0.057**	Younger
The distance from the homeland	0.316	n/a	n/a	0.439	n/a	n/a
Possibility of self-development	9.811*	0.080*	<i>M</i>	36.633*	0.156*	Younger
Political stability	22.887*	0.122*	<i>M</i>	0.047	n/a	n/a
More attractive weather	0.061	n/a	n/a	8.876*	0.078*	Older
Better conditions of health care	6.942*	0.069*	<i>M</i>	1.182	n/a	n/a
Higher tolerance	2.427	n/a	n/a	0.377	n/a	n/a
This country's prestige	12.730*	0.092*	<i>M</i>	0.433	n/a	n/a
Higher possibility for self-realization	7.585*	0.071*	<i>M</i>	3.184	n/a	n/a

**Table IV.**  
Analysis of push-pull factors and their links with gender and age

**Notes:** \*,\*\*Significant at the 0.01, 0.05 levels, respectively

### *Pull factors*

Looking at the five most important pull factors (see Table III) influencing emigration, the dominating factor is higher income in the host country. Its importance indicated 52.9 percent of the respondents. However, the other four factors at the top are not economic. Relatives living in the host country influenced the decision to migrate for 41.6 percent of the respondents, the possibility of self-development – 36.2 percent, better opportunities to get a job – 33.1 percent and higher possibility for self-realization – 31.6 percent. A large number of Lithuanians living in the host country was important just for 3.3 percent of the responding emigrants. This highlights that generally the Lithuanian network is not very important for emigration, while family members living abroad are in the second place among pull factors. Lower taxes were important for 4.5 percent of the respondents.

Looking at pull factors, relatives living in the country was the most important factor for housewives (71.4 percent) and better opportunities to get a job for qualified specialists of agriculture (also 71.4 percent). Higher income was the third important factor out of the pull factors. It was selected by 69.3 percent of unskilled workers. At the same time, 46.4 percent of unemployed people emigrated because of the possibility for self-development abroad.

Relations between the push and pull factors in comparison with gender and age groups of respondents who are 29 years old and younger, 30 years old and older are given in Table IV. Statistical analysis showed statistically significant differences with six pull factors from the perspective of age groups.

Only one statistically significant association was found between the pull factors and gender – relatives living in the destination country, which is of greater importance for females (see Table IV). However, males are more likely to identify with such reasons as better opportunities to get a job, lower cost of living, higher income, possibility of self-development, political stability, better conditions of health care, destination country's prestige and higher possibility for self-realization.

In the case of pull factors, most reasons are more important for the younger group. Statistically significant associations were identified in case of such reasons as relatives living in the destination country, better opportunities to get a job, higher income, language and the possibility of self-development, which are more common for younger group, while more attractive weather is more important for the older age group.

### *Home location and links with demographic data*

Looking at the country, which emigrants consider as their home country, 68.5 percent of the respondents selected a host country as their home. In total, 61 percent of men and 70.4 percent of women agreed with this statement. According to previous occupation, more than a half of respondents, except for service employees and sellers (42.9 percent), selected foreign country as their home. As much as 80 percent of students, 73.3 percent of managers and more than 71 percent of ex-unemployed and housewives selected this option as well.

Looking at the age descriptive statistics, grouping the respondents into seven age intervals, the distribution of the respondents who identified host country as home could be listed as follows: 30-34 (77.9 percent), 35-39 (76.7 percent), 40-44 (69.5 percent), 25-29 (64.8 percent), 45 and older (61.4 percent), 20-24 (58.8 percent) and the lowest 14-19 (50 percent).

Analysis of the age and home location showed a significant relationship. A statistical difference was found between some classifications of age, related to birth and the years lived in the period of Soviet occupation and in independent Lithuania. First, dividing respondents into two groups – born during Soviet occupation (25 years old and older respondents) and in the independent Lithuania after the main changes (till 24 years old respondents)  $\chi^2$  test's value = 16.66 ( $p < 0.001$ ) and  $\varphi = 0.106$  ( $p < 0.001$ ). Second, regrouping children who were born during the Soviet occupation but lived in this period for quite a short period of time, up to five years, to the group with people who were born in the independent Lithuania, and leaving

the remaining people – 30 years old and older – for the second group, significant association remains ( $\chi^2$  test's value = 23.23,  $p < 0.001$ ) and significant effect becomes a little bit higher –  $\varphi = 0.125$  ( $p < 0.001$ ). In both cases, the younger group is less inclined to consider the destination country as homeland than the older group. More detailed results may be provided distributing age into more intervals. The number of respondents allowed us to distribute ages into seven categories, such as 19 and younger, 20-24, 25-29, 30-34, 35-39, 40-44 and 45 and older, which have weak but statistically significant links ( $\chi^2$  test's value = 45.52,  $p < 0.001$ ; Cramer's  $V = 0.166$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Observed numbers were higher than the expected numbers in the three groups covering ages from 30 to 44 years old. It shows that those people are more likely to identify with the destination country as their home.

In addition, women are more likely to consider the foreign country as their home in comparison with men ( $\chi^2$  test's value = 10.140,  $p < 0.01$  and  $\varphi = 0.082$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The relationship between gender and home location is significant but  $\varphi$  value shows a very small effect. The age factor included in the analysis provides a higher effect for the group of respondents aged 30-34 ( $\chi^2$  test's value = 7.18,  $p < 0.01$  and  $\varphi = 0.148$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The interpretation of these findings remains the same as stated above.

## 6. Discussion

### *The main economic factors influencing the decision to select western countries*

Low wages still remain one of the main reasons for emigration, and it is even more important for younger emigrants. Considering that a higher proportion of older respondents emigrated because they were unemployed, means they viewed migration as a means of survival. Kaczmarczyk and Okólski (2005) mentioned this survival strategy in their study as well. In addition, as wages are less important for older people, it could be noted that younger generation lived already in better conditions. Moreover, a study by Liubiniė (2002) showed that younger people are more likely to be concerned about social justice than older ones. The statistical analysis of the survey data and the scientific literature on Lithuania's emigration situation both report that people left desiring a better life elsewhere. Curran and Saguy (2013) pointed out that the labor market in the place of origin may change with growing migration because the outflow of migrants increases wages in the home country. Therefore, the wage difference no longer creates the motivation to move. However, the rising outflow migration did not influence an increase in wages in Lithuania. Of course, low wages are related to the shadow economy as well, but this fact was not analyzed in this paper. In summary, minimum wages in Lithuania are among the lowest in the entire EU, i.e. third out of 23 Europe Union countries which regulate the minimum wage and fifth out of 23 considering the minimum wage as a proportion of Purchasing Power Standards (PPS) (see Table V), occupying bottom of the list just before Bulgaria and Romania (Statistical Office of the European Union Eurostat, 2015a, b, c), and thus still remains the main push factor for migration from Lithuania.

Comparing the statistical data provided in Table V, one can see that presented indicators for Lithuania are lower than average in the context of the European Union (Kumpikaitė-Valiūniė and Žičkutė, 2016). For example, the average minimum wage in the EU is 807 Euro, taking into account 22 countries where this regulation exists. Lithuania's minimum wage is 325 Euro since 2015. It was 290 Euro in 2013 and 230 Euro during 2008-2012. Even after the increase of this wage in 2015, Lithuania stays the third country with the lowest minimum wage in the EU and only Romania and Bulgaria have even lower wages. Lithuanian's minimum wage is 2.5 less than the EU average and for other Baltic countries with similar history, 35 Euro less than in Latvia, 65 Euro less than in Estonia and 93 Euro less than in Poland. In comparison with Luxemburg, Lithuanians' minimum wage is almost six times lower. Around 20 percent of employees receive minimum wages in Lithuania. In total, 10 percent of them work full time and 64 percent of full time employees earn less than the average monthly wage.



Country code	Monthly minimum wages in bi-annual data 2015			A ratio in		People at risk of poverty or social exclusion (2014)		GDP (2014)		Net migration 2014	
	Euro	A ratio in euro	Country code	PPS	PPS	Country code	Percentage of total population	Country code	Per capita in PPS	Country code	Per 1,000 population
LU	1,923	2.4	LU	1,601	1.9	CZ	148	LU	266	LU	19.9
UK	1,510	1.9	DE	1,451	1.7	NL	165	IE	134	AU	8.7
NL	1,508	1.9	BE	1,375	1.6	SE	16.9	NL	131	SE	7.9
BE	1,502	1.9	NL	1,362	1.6	FI	17.3	AT	130	DE	7.2
DE	1,473	1.8	FR	1,352	1.6	DK	17.9	DK	125	MT	7.1
IE	1,462	1.8	IE	1,211	1.4	SK	18.4	DE	124	DK	6.5
FR	1,458	1.8	UK	1,096	1.3	FR	18.5	SE	123	UK	3.3
EU22	807	1.0	SI	958	1.1	LU	19.0	BE	119	BE	3.0
SI	791	1.0	MT	873	1.0	AT	19.2	FI	110	FI	2.6
ES	757	0.9	EU22	862	1.0	SI	20.4	UK	109	NL	2.1
MT	720	0.9	ES	816	0.9	DE	20.6	FR	107	CZ	2.1
EL	684	0.8	EL	794	0.9	BE	21.2	EU28	100	EU28	1.9
PT	589	0.7	PL	749	0.9	MT	23.8	IT	96	IT	1.8
PL	418	0.5	PT	726	0.8	UK	24.1	ES	91	FR	0.5
HR	399	0.5	HR	596	0.7	PL	24.5	CZ	85	PL	0.4
EE	390	0.5	HU	596	0.7	EU28	24.7	MT	84	HU	0.3
SK	380	0.5	SK	554	0.6	EE	26.0	SI	83	SK	0.3
LV	360	0.4	CZ	521	0.6	LT	<b>27.3</b>	CY	82	SI	-0.2
CZ	338	0.4	LT	<b>508</b>	<b>0.6</b>	IE	27.4	PT	78	BG	-0.3
HU	333	0.4	LV	500	0.6	CY	27.5	SK	77	EE	-0.5
LT	<b>325</b>	<b>0.4</b>	EE	491	0.6	PT	29.2	EE	76	RO	-0.8
RO	235	0.3	RO	435	0.5	IT	28.3	LT	<b>75</b>	ES	-2.2
BG	194	0.2	BG	401	0.5	ES	29.2	EL	73	HR	-2.4
DK	n/a	-	DK	n/a	-	HR	29.3	HU	68	PT	-2.9
IT	n/a	-	IT	n/a	-	HU	31.1	PL	68	IE	-3.6
CY	n/a	-	CY	n/a	-	LV	32.7	LV	64	LT	<b>-4.2</b>
AT	n/a	-	AT	n/a	-	EL	36.0	HR	59	LV	-4.3
FI	n/a	-	FI	n/a	-	BG	40.1	RO	55	EL	-8.5
SE	n/a	-	SE	n/a	-	RO	40.2	BG	47	CY	-17.6

**Notes:** Denmark, Italy, Cyprus, Austria, Finland and Sweden are excluded as these countries do not regulate the minimum wage. Designed and calculated by authors in accordance with the Statistical Office of the European Union Eurostat (2015a, b, c and 2016a, b, c). Data of Lithuania is provided in bold

However, better indexes of the economic situation of citizens are purchasing power and the number of people living at the level of risk of poverty. According to PPS, Lithuania's index is 0.6, the same as in Slovakia, Czech Republic and other Baltic States: Latvia and Estonia. PPS is lower just in Romania and Bulgaria. Poland's indicator is similar but still a little higher – 0.9. The highest PPS is in Luxemburg, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands and France.

In total, 24.5 percent of Europeans lived at the risk of poverty or social exclusion in 2014. This number is the lowest in the Czech Republic, Sweden and the Netherlands. Lithuania is ranked 17th place, almost 3 percent lower than the average for the EU. All countries with negative net migration (except Slovenia) have above average risk of poverty or social exclusion.

According to provided study (see Table III), too low wages in Lithuania were statistically more important for technicians and younger specialist, service employees and sellers, all workers, plant and machine operators and assemblers in comparison with other analyzed groups. Compared to the pull factor – higher income was important for all of those groups as well. In addition, provided study (see Table III) showed wage differences and income inequality was important for managers and self-employed migrants. Moreover, based on the Statistical Office of the European Union Eurostat statistics on structure of earnings survey currently available for wages in 2014, elementary occupations on average earned 359 Euro, plant and machine operators and assemblers 601 Euro, skilled manual workers 584 Euro, service and sales workers 414 Euro and technicians and associate professionals 632 Euro (Statistical Office of the European Union Eurostat, 2016a, b, c). Comparing the monthly difference between Europe Union countries and Lithuania, the difference varies from three to 4.1 times. The PPS evaluation lowers the difference but still it varies from 1.8 to 2.4 times of the above listed occupations. The highest difference between Europe Union countries and Lithuania is identified for professionals (4.3 times for mean earnings and 2.5 times considering mean earnings in PPS). However, relatively often those employees received just the minimum or a small amount higher than the minimum wage.

Summarizing, it should be mentioned that even as the most important push and pull factors influencing migration to the West are economic factors, non-economic factors are also important, especially concerning the pull factors.

#### *The main non-economic factors influencing the decision to select western countries*

Social conditions were more important for employees working in lower positions (except unskilled workers) and self-employed people. Study and education system and family reasons are just two factors important for students. Family reasons were relevant for people in higher positions as well as for students and unemployed migrants.

Family reasons, especially for females, were one of the most important factors for emigration. It could be a result of two reasons. First, it is quite common when a husband is living abroad to earn money to ensure the well-being of their families. These reasons were confirmed by this study, finding differences among genders in which males described personal life conditions (low family income, the burden of housing expenditure, inability to acquire one's own home), wages, and product price policy as more important factors. In addition, Stark (1991) found that in order to minimize economic risk families prefer having wage earners both abroad and in the homeland. When husbands create well-being abroad, the wives with children often emigrate, too. Therefore, the females' reason for migration becomes family issues. Second, honoring parents and elders and the family's health are among the most important values for Lithuanians (Liubinienė, 1999, 2002). In addition, these values do not vary based on respondents' age, meaning that these values remain important for younger Lithuanians as well. Whereas, for example, in Estonia and particularly in Latvia, according to Liubinienė (2002), these values are more important for the older generation.

*Formation of migration culture*

According to cumulative causation theory (cited by Massey *et al.*, 1993), which identifies regional distribution of human capital the conducted study found that income distribution is the second most important push factor in Lithuania after low wages. Further, drawing on Berger and Luckman (1967), the belief that migration offers a better way of life for Lithuanians, remains meaningful, partly because they are integrated into networks of emigrants such as in the UK and Norway. These networks transmit values and cultural perceptions (Portes and Sensenbrenner, 1993) that spread those beliefs to relatives and friends in Lithuania, accordingly forming the migration culture in their homeland.

Moreover, Lithuania historically has a culture of migration, and it seems that migration became the community value of the Lithuanian community. This corresponds with Massey's *et al.* (1998) findings, introducing the idea that when migration is deeply ingrained in people's behavior at the community level it becomes a community value. The described situation increases the chance of future emigration. This particular phenomenon helps to explain the prolonged period of emigration from Lithuania over the past 25 years and it is common in early transitional society. Thaut (2009, p. 205) provided a similar perspective "that emigration is part of a cultural or social mindset in Lithuania." Moreover, in the 2010 survey, 58.30 percent out of the 29.30 percent of the total population (including respondents up until 29 years old) surveyed answered positively to the question "Would you like to move abroad to work for a longer period?" (Europos migracijos tinklas, 2012). In addition, our study depicted that younger respondents, especially students more readily accept the host country as their home. These results again demonstrate that emigration is a community value and norm for Lithuanians.

Moreover, according to Bhugra (2004), people could face different problems of self-identity. He points out that it does not matter what migration reasons are, and migrants do not abandon their beliefs or leave all of their values behind. People leave the country with their ethnic and cultural identities. However, the changes they face after migration and acculturation often changes their identity (Bhugra, 2003). Moreover, Bhugra (2003) adds that family and socio-economic factors as well as gender also have impacts on identity. Some of these mentioned aspects were found in this study. For example, the high response rate to the questionnaire in a short time frame and the willingness to answer open questions we interpret shows emigrants want to share their life stories with others. In addition, some comments of the respondents, such as the following, witness that too: "My home is in both countries: in Lithuania and abroad and I spend approximately the same time in both of them" (respondent, 40), "Lithuania always will stay as my home" (respondents 40 (female), 747 (male), 1,183 (female)), "My home is always there, where I am" (respondents, 100, 1,351 (both females)), "I do not know where my home is. I do not have a home" (respondent 158, female), "In a foreign country, because my family is here" (respondent 248 (female), "At the moment in the UK, but someday I will be back to Lithuania" (respondent 306 (female)), "I have been abroad for 8 years, but all social life and my home is in Lithuania" (respondent 705 (female)).

According to Bhugra (2004), when individuals migrate abroad for economic, political or educational purposes, their cultural and ethnic identity is likely to change. It could explain why emigrants start considering their new country as their home. However, it should also be remembered that the percentage of older respondents (group over 45 years), who consider Lithuania as their home, is increasing (49.6 percent). It could be because mature people re-evaluate their values, and traditions become more important for them, as mentioned in Liubiniene's (2002) findings.

Moreover, it should be remembered that the majority of immigrants in Lithuania are returning Lithuanians. For example, in 2013 86.2 percent of immigrants were Lithuanians (Statistics Lithuania, 2016). Looking at these explanations, some linkage with the National

identity score increase in Lithuania in 2013 (Butkevičienė *et al.*, 2015) could be seen. Older people start returning to Lithuania with feelings of concern for their roots, and their pride in being Lithuanian increases. All these observations demonstrate that Lithuania has a culture of migration, and the main reasons for migration are changing from primarily economic to a combination of economic and social reasons. This prompts us to argue that there exists a migration normative value and culture in Lithuania. However, these ideas and claims require further investigation in future research.

## 7. Conclusions

To answer *RQ1* it was highlighted that the economic factors, such as too low wages, income inequality and personal life conditions are the main identified push factors. This partly corresponds with the findings of statistical economic data analysis by Kumpikaitė and Žičkutė (2013). It should be emphasized that too low wages in the home country and higher income in the destination country influenced the decision of more than 50 percent of respondents to migrate. Therefore, in accordance with the neoclassical migration theory, it could be concluded that differences in wages remains the main migration reason for Lithuanians. In addition, this reason is the most important for all analyzed occupational groups except for self-employed people (*RQ3*), who indicated tax system and the burden of it as the most important factor for migration. The possibility of self-development is significant for qualified workers and masters, students and unemployed citizens. Attractive weather influenced the decision to migrate of such groups as managers, specialists, office employees, high skilled workers and self-employed people. Political issues are also important for those groups.

The main three pull factors (*RQ2*) were identified as higher income in the destination country, relatives living there and the possibility of self-development. In total, 41.6 percent of the respondents selected that relatives living in the host country as a factor influencing their decision to emigrate. With reference to push factors, family reasons were the fifth important factor in the list. In total, 24.9 percent of the respondents indicated its importance. This factor, as well as push family reasons, was more important statistically for females than males (*RQ5*). These responses demonstrate that the networking of family members influences the emigration decision for Lithuanians. However, it should be noted that diasporas of Lithuanians do not play an important role for the migration decision, as this factor was the least important for respondents.

Results showed that younger (*RQ6*) respondents selected emigration because of the unemployment level, education system, relatives living in that country and language. They see emigration as a means for self-development and self-actualization. However, older respondents were more influenced than younger respondents to migrate for better weather conditions. Almost two-thirds of respondents selected the foreign country as their home country (*RQ4*). This percent was higher among females. More than two-thirds of students, managers, unemployed and housewives already consider the foreign country as their home country.

Summarizing, it should be mentioned that Lithuanians used to migrate earlier in the nineteenth century. However, emigration stopped during the period of Soviet occupation due to the lack of freedom of movement and closed borders for 50 years. During that time, Lithuanians wanted Independence and freedom, and when the borders were opened, they began moving again. Changes in the economic and political systems decreased the quality of life and individual economic situation of many citizens and they began emigrating in order to survive. In accordance with Pridemore *et al.* (2007), after adoption of new systems, economic and social equilibrium will return and emigration should decrease. However, as statistical data analysis and the study conducted both show even after 25 years of Lithuanian Independence, it has not been possible to provide sufficient well-being for its citizens. Therefore, it remains common that a substantial number of citizens prefer to reside in western countries rather than Lithuania.

Finally, it shows that migration values, formed primarily due to economic issues, continue to encourage Lithuanians to believe that “the West is still the best,” and leave their homeland of today’s modern independent Lithuania.

### *Limitations and implications*

The majority of answers (more than 79 percent) were received from females, even though statistically more men emigrated. Therefore, the comparison made between genders may not be very representative. Moreover, the questionnaire survey was conducted via internet and so only people using the internet participated in this study. In addition, the unequal distribution among countries does not allow us to make comparative analysis among them. This cross-sectional, quantitative study demonstrates only the situation analyzed in the Fall of 2015 and does not give insights over a longitudinal perspective. In addition, the minimum wage is not the best indicator to prove that wages are too low in comparison with the EU. The better alternative could be the average wage. However, not having access to sufficient data on the number of people earning minimum or average wage, this area requires further discussion and research work.

The study was quantitative and no direct question was included asking why the west is better than Lithuania. Therefore, answers about why the West is still the best are based on the highlighted push and pull factors and preferences for the host country rather the home. Inevitably, this is a limitation of the study. Qualitative study with deeper analysis answering why the West is still the best could enrich our knowledge further as well as assist with understanding the concept migration as a community value and norm, which requires more research in the future.

No scale was provided for respondents evaluating push and pull factors. Therefore, the sources of statistical analysis were limited. For example, correlation or regression analysis could not be used for data analysis.

Keeping the limitations in mind, some very basic guidelines and following practical implications could be provided. This study gives some new insights about push-pull factors for decision to emigrate in accordance to previous occupation, age and gender of respondents. Highlighted factors could be useful for managers of organizations and policy makers in order to keep qualified employees, to decrease emigration’s rates and to develop remigration of different groups of specialists as well as to restore equality and economic and social well-being of Lithuanian citizens. In addition, some basic differences comparing the western and other countries are found. Lithuanians migrate to countries with a higher minimum wage basically to the western countries. This corresponds with the official statistics of declared emigration according to the destination country. However, a range of countries, such as India, Egypt, Australia (more than 50 percent of respondents), Brazil, the Dominican Republic, the UAE, Mexico, Singapore, Portugal were selected based on the wish for changes. In addition, we can see that pull factors could be used to analyze attractiveness for emigration of different host countries.

This study highlighted that not just economic push-pull factors influence migration to the West. It shows that the roots are deeper and a general picture of emigration from Lithuania over the last 25 years give us insights into how it becomes a community value and provides us with a background for future studies.

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