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FOREIGNER INTEGRATION AND STIGMA IN LITHUANIA

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Abstract

Defining successful foreigner integration in Lithuania is a process still in progress. Therefore, one might have difficulties defining how efficiently newcomers blend into the Lithuanian community. This study seeks to understand how well integrated aliens feel in Lithuania seen from the perspective of the immigrants themselves. By conducting interviews, their situations are presented and analysed.

In addition, an assumption of a xenophobic society in Lithuania is presented. So the paper not only studies what integration is to the foreigners, but also how they are navigating the whole process with stigmatisation involved.

In order to understand what the desired spheres of integration are, theories concerning it, as well as integration policy in Lithuania, are presented. The hypothesis of a xenophobic society is explained by overviewing the opinion polls and studies in the country.

The results show that foreigner discrimination has appeared in the lives of some of the interlocutors, however, it has not affected their lives significantly, if one takes their own assessment. On the other hand, the language barrier is experienced as one of the most important elements of one's ability to fully integrate. This barrier is put forward by the newcomers themselves as they are lacking an understanding of their surroundings. Overall, the study shows that a deeper analysis and more personal conversations with the foreigners could benefit the field and reveal more dimensions of integration and stigma.

Key words: integration, Lithuania, foreigners, immigrants, stigma, discrimination, xenophobia.

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Definitions

Discrimination – treating a person unfairly because of who they are or because they possess certain characteristics.

Xenophobia - fear or hatred of foreigners, people from different cultures, or strangers.

Racism - prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against someone of a different race based on the belief that one's own race is superior.

Foreigner - a person born in or coming from a country other than one's own. In this paper, used as a synonym to immigrant and alien.

Immigrant - a person who comes to live permanently in a foreign country. In this paper, used as a synonym to foreigner and alien.

Alien - belonging to a foreign country. In this paper, used as a synonym to foreigner and immigrant.

Russophobia - an intense and often irrational hatred for Russia, or especially the former Soviet Union, its political system.

Chapter 1. Introduction

Migration all over the world has been a common phenomenon for many years. Whether people travel for business or pleasure, a longer stay usually requires adaptation to the surroundings on a smaller or bigger scale depending on the circumstances. This adaptation process is often called integration in the literature and discussions, and theories of how to succeed in it are not difficult to find (Schunck 2014, 10-12). However, who is the best to describe the process, experiences and expectations if not the immigrants themselves? Having various incentives to move and stay for a longer time, these people may compose quite different definitions of integration, however, such a claim cannot be made unless it is clarified through an examination.

Some countries hold integration policies that have been used in practice for many years now, however, immigration flows to Lithuania peaked only after the country joined the European Union in 2004 and then the Schengen zone in 2007. Together with a growing trend of foreigner arrival, legislative and institutional development in the area of immigration and migrant integration policies emerged (Žibas 2015, 63). Accordingly, the guidelines and expectations of integration in the country can be found through various governmental programmes, laws and NGO initiatives. Immigrants, who come voluntary, have a less regulated and obvious path to integration than refugees and asylum seekers, whose influx was and still is a new phenomenon in Lithuania (Žibas 2015, 68). Since the people immigrating are not from neighbouring countries as per usual, third-country nationals often receive a lot of attention. Consequently, the main focus of the integration aid and dissemination of information is on asylum seekers and refugees in Lithuania. Therefore, a look into the stories of other aliens in the country, can be a beneficial input into the academic literature.

In the case of Lithuania, xenophobic opinions in the society and occurrences of racism lead to believe that there are superfluous obstacles for immigrants to integrate into the Lithuanian society (Budrytė and Pilinkaitė-Sotirovič 2009). So besides tackling the integration issue on its own, people may receive additional pressure or even rejection in their everyday lives. This study

focuses on the newcomers' ability to integrate in Lithuania and how they navigate their lives around stigma, seen mainly from their own perspective.

Research questions

The underlying research questions in this thesis are:

How do foreigners, living in Lithuania, perceive and experience integration? How do they navigate their own integration in relation to the xenophobia they meet?

According to the research question, the main objective of the thesis is to investigate how the term "integration" is defined by the foreigners residing in Lithuania and how xenophobia affects them. I aim to answer how integrated they feel themselves comparing to the make-up of the integration they provide. In addition to that, I am making an assumption that xenophobia is present in the country and I am trying to understand how the same people handle it and what the stereotypes that they meet are.

The reasons for my assumption are shown in Chapter 2 under "Lithuanian opinions".

Structure of the paper

Chapter 1 is dedicated to introduction, research questions and literature review. The review explores the most important theoretical implications about integration and immigrants' situation and policies in Lithuania. Chapter 2 presents the methodology that was used to gather the data and analyse it. Chapter 3 focuses on the theories that were employed to study the gathered information. Chapter 4 are the results, analysis and discussion where empirical discoveries are combined with the theoretical background. Lastly, Chapter 5 is the conclusion of this Master's thesis where I answer the research questions and introduce ideas for further research.

Literature review

In this chapter literature on integration and foreigners in Lithuania will be reviewed to place this study into the context of already existing research and theories.

Two-way process

When researching the literature written about integration I have come across the understanding that it is a two-way process where integrating and “becoming one” with the accepting society is not solely the responsibility of the newcomers. Therefore, in this section I will cover literature findings of integration as a two-way process. I am not claiming that the chosen pieces of literature are the only ones on integration, however, they stood out the most and helped me form a perception on the subject.

By addressing the two-way integration as an important notion, I am trying to justify the reason why I chose to discuss foreigners’ side of this two-way process. The theories and definitions below highlight that democratic approach to integration should incorporate immigrants’ needs as an equal voice in the discussion of their lives. Consequently, I have decided to investigate the meaning of the term from immigrants’ perspective, so that it would be clear if they are happy in the current system in Lithuania.

International Organization for Migration

Firstly, I am presenting the definition of the two-way integration as explained by an organisation, actively involved in improving global migration processes. In this way the notion is discovered not only as a theory, but also as a practice.

International Organization for Migration (IOM) is an intergovernmental organisation in the field of migration, which has been active since 1951. Since IOM deals with migration on a practical level, their migrant integration vision and objectives lay a good foundation of understanding what is currently desired and needed as a final result of integration. Social, economic and cultural inclusion of immigrants, better integration into communities and hosting society’s recognition

are all parts of a two-way integration process which is essential for the existence of thriving multicultural communities. IOM underlines that integration programmes have to be tailored according to individual's characteristics and background in line with receiving country's national trends (International Organization for Migration, 2018). This approach to immigrant integration portrays how unique each immigrant-receiving country case is. To sum up, receiving countries have to adapt their integration programmes and attitudes to immigrants' characteristics while aliens have to be willing to work with the means provided as a part of the national integration policy, and then integration can happen.

James Tully

A theoretical, however, expected to be practical, description and suggestions of integration in the European countries are presented by James Tully. His criticism of existing practices evolves into a similar notion as presented in the previous section.

In 2007 James Tully wrote an article "A New Kind of Europe?: Democratic Integration in the European Union" where he argues for an open-ended approach in this two-way integration process (Tully 2007). The main arguments here are that it is usually the state and European institutions that are negotiating conditions under which integration of immigrants will take place, while immigrants themselves can either agree or disagree with the circumstances delivered. It is essential to invoke a *multilogue* – decision making where "the diverse members negotiate their interactions on an everyday basis (in both senses of 'negotiation')" (Tully 2007, 77). The argumentation, provided by Tully, is based on the existing practices of the many Europeans – they are promoting fair trade, international peace and democratic empowerment. Therefore, he discussed that the democratic relations between people and their governors are not a utopic idea, rather it is the real democracy that some people already recognise and the states should seek it, too (Tully 2007, 83).

In this thesis, I am not evaluating how the dialogue between governmental institutions and foreigners is lead, I am rather looking at the results - the already existing system and how it is operated and evaluated by aliens in the country. However, I found James Tully's insights valuable

as his suggestions and theory assert a strong stance for listening to foreigners and their needs. Thus, my thesis can be placed on one side of the *multilogue* – addressing foreigners’ needs and evaluating integration from their perspective.

Zenia Hellgren

The author below has also focused her study on the fact that integration is a work of two parties. By approaching the notion in a practical manner, she has unveiled how different integrational processes and issues can be in each state.

Zenia Hellgren in her “Immigrant Integration as a Two-Way Process: Translating Theory into Practice” investigates how the two-way integration is approached by integration practitioners in Barcelona and Stockholm (Hellgren 2015). Her findings are suggesting that local economy, lifestyle and stance on multiculturalism in a society make a huge difference on how foreigners can integrate and that the two-way integration is not necessarily a norm amongst practitioners (Hellgren 2015, 24). This study has also proven J. Tully’s point that policies are often made “for” immigrants, but not “with” them, thus, the realistic needs are missed and the expected (by the state and society) level of integration is never achieved. Moreover, Hellgren has included two quite different countries in terms of integration practices and policies, culture and public discourse on immigrants. This comparison disclosed that becoming a member of a community overarches different criteria in each country or even region within the country. It seems that even integration workers and country citizens are not sure when a foreigner will be fully included without any discrimination.

As a conclusion coming out of this work, integration in Lithuania has its own unique setting of migration policies, groups of foreigners and societal issues. The presented countries showcased that even the people working on the matter might not know if their job has been successful, therefore, seeking advice from the immigrants themselves would be the next logical step as they can reveal the societal structures that hinder or facilitate integration.

I will consequently look into studies that have discussed migrants and their experiences in the countries they migrated to.

Lithuanians abroad

There is an abundant amount of literature on foreigners' experiences in the receiving countries. What stood out a lot, while reading through the literature related to my topic, was the texts among scholars, as well as students, on Lithuanians integrating in foreign countries. Ever since Lithuania gained back its independence, the population has been decreasing and that is in particular due to emigration (Stankūnienė 2006). Therefore, Lithuanian minorities are not too difficult to find abroad and conduct a research about. In this section, I will briefly present studies discussing Lithuanian diaspora's integration in other countries as an inspiration and guidance to conduct one of my own with foreigners in Lithuania. Even though the research presented has a focus on one ethnic minority, I would like to point out that I am not aiming to select a single ethnicity for my study as the applied theories of integration also suit mixed groups of people.

Jolanta Kuznecovienė

The article presented below has taken Lithuanian diaspora groups in various countries and applied categorisation to their behaviour in a new country. I will shortly discuss the main findings as I see these categories to be a useful tool for the analysis of integration.

In the article "Strategies of engaging Lithuanian immigrants in Norway, England and Spain: from conformism to navigation" the author discusses the ways in which Lithuanians integrate into the new society (Kuznecovienė 2009). The term "integration" is equated to incorporation/engagement, thus, incorporating oneself into certain activities is analysed. Most importantly, Kuznecovienė states that the incorporation is needed for self-realisation and "being oneself" (Kuznecovienė 2009, 99), which also may be applied in all spheres of life, not only diaspora research. The empirical data shows that people choose to carry their lives and integrate in different ways, to be specific, four strategies are determined: conformist, representative, segregational and navigational. Conformist stresses strong professional and social relations with

various ethnic groups; representative – people are blending into the new society, yet, keeping a solid stance on staying Lithuanian; segregational – this group sees no need to explore the surroundings, people are focused on work; navigational – similar to segregational, yet, the people are oriented on the home country and returning back. The author was able to find interviewees that represent all of the strategies in their economic, social, cultural, political relations, however, she summarised the research saying that integration (or incorporation) cannot be limited to just four categories (Kuznecovienė 2009, 103). Individual approaches exist, meaning that self-realisation is an individual experience and combinations of engagement cannot be summarised clearly.

The four ways of integration that the author has employed have caught my attention as I found these categories in various pieces of literature. Economic, social, cultural and political incorporation into society may also be slightly reshaped into other terms. For instance:

- Rinus Penninx discusses three dimensions or domains of integration: the legal/political, the socio-economic and the cultural/religious (Penninx 2004);
- Leo R. Chavez talks about newcomers who “eventually develop social linkages, cultural sentiments, and economic ties that influence them to continue living in their receiving communities” (Chavez 1991).

Therefore, the categorisation of integration/incorporation/engagement, or however the author chooses to call it in the text, is quite common in the literature. I see this as an important part of integration studies, therefore, incorporating such domains in the analysis and discussion can be useful for understanding how foreigners navigate in the new society. Economic, social, cultural, political domains may also embrace the reasons why aliens move to another country, so they can be accordingly incorporated to understand foreigners’ backstories, which I will do where appropriate in the discussion.

Foreigners in Lithuania

This section of the paper will cover a narrower field – foreigners' situation in Lithuania. As discussed above, each country greets newcomers with different societal norms and policies, so firstly, I will shortly overview how Lithuania looks like ethnically, and then, I will present what opinions Lithuanians have formed about foreigners. The research questions hold an assumption that foreigners in Lithuania are facing stigma created by Lithuanians, so below I will cover studies that give basis for the assumption. Finally, I will present what expectations Lithuanian government has for the aliens residing in the country and what kind of measures to welcome them are planned. So in a sense, the understanding of integration in the country will be discussed.

Ethnic make-up of Lithuania

In July, 2017 there were estimated 2 821 662 residents to be constantly living in Lithuania. All foreigners living in Lithuania made up 1.67% of all residents, which is 47 152 foreigners (Population Register, 2018). The country has a “unipolar ethnic structure” in which Lithuanians are the dominant majority. Though, this characteristic does not apply to south-eastern Lithuania which has a notable number of ethnic Poles and Russians. Nationally, there is only one town where ethnic Lithuanians are the minority - Visaginas. It is a unique place as a nuclear power plant was built there in the 1970s that attracted a great number of work migrants from all over the Soviet Union (Budrytė and Pilinkaitė-Sotirovič 2009).

Polish and Russian ethnicities are the predominant minorities who happened to stay after occupations, divisions and annexations of the country. Vilnius region has been populated by both, Lithuanians and Poles, throughout the history. In 1569-1795, both countries, now known as Poland and Lithuania, were even united into one - Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (Alkas.lt 2016). Consequently, the overlapping history of the two countries has resulted in the mixture of nations in some regions. The Soviet occupations of Lithuania have also impacted the composition of population in Lithuania – many Lithuanians were expelled to Siberia and these people were replaced by resettling ethnic Russians to the biggest cities in the country. In the long run, only a

very small part of the exiles came back and a huge number of ethnic Russians stayed in the country even after the break of Soviet Union (Martin 1998).

The facts, presented above, show that Lithuanian society is not a mixture of various ethnicities, it is rather a homogenous country with just two ethnicities as outliers.

Lithuanian opinions

I will present studies and findings that help perceive the general Lithuanian opinion on foreigners. Theory that explains perceived threats of foreigners will also be included to elaborate on the most common opinions in Lithuania. These opinions are the premise of my assumption in the research question.

The public opinion poll shows that in 2010-2014 people were feeling that newcomers may arouse social turmoil and that most are not fond of the idea that their children would be studying in the same class as immigrant children. The official national surveys show that most Lithuanians have not met many foreigners in their lives, thus, the opinion is often formed by mass media rather than authentic encounters (Blažytė 2015). So the stereotypes and stigma that are assigned to aliens have a huge probability of having been imposed massively via indirect sources (and not necessarily correctly) as having aliens in everyday environment is not common for most Lithuanians. It is evident that people tend to create imaginative personalities for people who are somehow different. And this stereotyping cannot be annulled unless the stigmatised individual is met in person (Goffman 1990, 53).

In addition to this, citizens are afraid of possible job loss if new workforce is coming into the country, therefore, they are not fond of their presence in Lithuania. The data, however, shows that it is the less educated part of the society that has such fears and assumptions (Blažytė 2015). This perception is a form of stigma which in reality seems to have little to none proof of foreigners occupying job positions of the locals. They are, in fact, more likely to stay unnoticed or even benefit the economic indexes of the country (OECD 2014).

The threat can be constructed due various macro and micro level conditions prevailing in the society. The fears mentioned can be grouped into two big categories - perceived cultural and material threats. "Minority group members, or immigrants, may be seen as potential competitors over material resources, and increasing immigrant populations create a threat as they compete for scarce material resources" (Ben-Nun Bloom, Arikan, and Lahav 2015, 1761). The economic fear of foreigners is prevailing in Lithuanian society as the attitude research shows that more than half of the respondents do not see any economic benefits of alien workers coming to the country and they believe that most of the people are living on state welfare. This is contradicting to a Lithuanian majority's belief, and also facts, that immigrants do have jobs in Lithuania (Žibas 2017, 18-19). The economic, as well as cultural, anxiety has started in the country when Lithuania joined the European Union and foreign nationals gained easier access to the labour market. So a massive macro change may have affected the construction of foreigner stereotypes.

"In contrast to the fear of losing access to tangible resources, perceived cultural threat refers to people's fear of risking the positive status of the country's symbolic establishments as well as its ethnic and cultural cohesiveness due to increases in populations of differing race, language, norms and values." (Ben-Nun Bloom, Arikan, and Lahav 2015, 1762). A research, conducted at Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences shows that foreigners from Slavic countries are assigned with more positive qualities than people from Islamic countries. The cultural distance is the precondition for such judgement which may affect the way an ethnic/religious group is treated (Kocaj 2010, 45-46). The gathered opinion data shows that a part of society in Lithuania assign neurotic and threatening character features to refugees (herewith, to foreigners from Middle East and North African countries) (Aukštuolytė 2017, 44). Therefore, they are not seen as desirable co-workers or neighbours.

Material and cultural threats intertwine and create a whole stigma "package" which may impede smooth integration into society. Foreigners, coming to a country, face images of themselves based on subjective grounds which they have very little power changing. This can trouble the integration route to all or just some newcomers if not deter the process overall. To sum up, the

studies about Lithuanian opinions have formed the perception that individuals, coming from other countries, may face some predetermined stigma that is not in favour of them.

Integration policy in Lithuania

The last section in literature review is a brief overlook of how integration means are planned in Lithuania. The tasks that will be presented later in the text will be taken as a guideline of how integration is understood in Lithuania.

Since Lithuania does not have a national foreigner integration policy formed, the most prominent document to project the understanding of successful integration in the country is “Order for the approval of the action plan for the implementation of the policy for the integration of foreigners 2015-2017” (later in text – the order). The order, together with “Lithuanian migration policy guidelines”, marked an emergence of a new area of policy emerged in the Ministry of Social Security of Labour — integration of foreigners (Žibas 2015).

At the end of 2014, “Order for the approval of the action plan for the implementation of the policy for the integration of foreigners 2015-2017” was enacted where foreigner integration is defined as mutual adaptation process of aliens and accepting society (translation from Lithuanian). Additionally, it is stressed that not only foreigners have to put effort into integration, but the society has to be tolerant and prepared to accept them to their lives, the processes of integration should also be monitored (Teisės aktų registras 2014, 2-3).

The overarching goal of the order is stated as “to create conditions for the integration of foreigners into the life of Lithuanian society” (Teisės aktų registras 2014, 4). The goal is then divided into six tasks to be implemented throughout 2015-2017:

1. To provide foreigners with the integration tools and information necessary for their integration, to improve their ability to integrate into the labour market.
2. To improve the resources of educating foreigners.
3. To promote the participation of foreigners in society’s life and activities.
4. To inform the public about the positive aspects of migration.

5. To strengthen the cooperation and capacity of specialists working in the field of integration of aliens and legal migration.
6. To formulate the policy of foreigner integration.

The aim of this order is focused on providing foreigners with work and education opportunities, giving them better opportunities to be a part of the society, which in this case is limited to legally recognising alien work qualifications - “to improve the legislation regulating the recognition of foreigners' professional qualifications” (Teisės aktų registras 2014, 4). The other part of the *mutual adaptation* is expressed by educating the society, employers, and educators, such as language teachers.

The measures of implementing these tasks suggest that in order to integrate a foreigner should learn Lithuanian and the constitutional background of the country, also, a person should have the opportunity to find a job or get education regardless of where he/she got qualified. The *accepting society* is theoretically formed by instilling more professional knowledge, communication and understanding.

To sum up, the order encompasses both sides of the two-way integration: newcomers are expected to learn new things in order to adapt and the institutions and society should be educated and open-minded. So the fight against xenophobia, discrimination and racism is emphasised (Žibas 2015, 69).

Summary

In the first chapter, I have presented the general topic of my paper as well as the research questions that I will work on answering. After that, integration was presented as a two-way process where immigrants' voices are as important as state's policies. A study on how diaspora life abroad can be analysed was presented together with four main areas of integration. Immigrants' situation in Lithuania was shown by overviewing the structure of the population in the country, the most common opinions of foreigners and the order for the implementation of the policy for the integration of foreigners.

Chapter 2. Methodology

In this paper an abductive research logic is applied. Using “the logic of discovery” “we confront a new or surprising fact (a problem), decide how to address it, create an initial explanation, and test it against all our observations and facts to see if it works” (Levin-Rozalis 2010, 95). To put in other words, an unanticipated observation is made, then it is juxtaposed with the empirical facts that are available in the same context to see how it works out. The assumption that I am making beforehand must be within some limits of logic, so I am raising it not purely from the theory but from the facts (Levin-Rozalis, 96, 98). The assumption that is made in this thesis is that of xenophobic society. By analysing academic and popular press articles of varying topics, I have come to the conclusion that foreigners in Lithuania might be stigmatised. Therefore, the data was not forced to fit a preconception of mine that had no basis (Dubois and Gadde 2002, 556). It was the facts rather than intuition dictating the premise.

After the establishment of my research question, main hypothesis and supporting questions, data collection within certain limits has started. Surveys were a somewhat active type of research where I prepared a set of questions and was hoping to find data only within the limitations of them. This sort of data can be called passive as I set myself a goal to find it. The second step was taken where I acted as a passive researcher seeking active data – interviews did have guiding questions prepared, yet, I was not seeking specific results to work with (Dubois and Gadde 2002, 557). Due to the vagueness of integration as a term (Scholten and van Breugel 2018, 216), interviewees were not expected to lay down a list of similar categories and notions or to satisfy theoretical criteria. Nevertheless, I was working around a precondition of stigma presence in the society.

Language schools

The European “integration” carries an ideal of immigrants integrating by learning the national language and being capable of maintaining social life using this language (Schneider and Crul 2010, 1144-1145). Also, significant attention is paid to language course availability and quality in

“Order for the approval of the action plan for the implementation of the policy for the integration of foreigners 2015-2017” where relatively large finances are allocated for language and other educational courses (Teisės Akty Registras 2014, 4). Therefore, it can be expected that foreigners, who are in the process of integration, have the opportunity and are attending national language classes. I have decided to interview people learning Lithuanian as an assumption that they are making an effort to integrate into society.

Website called “Renkuosi Lietuvą” (“I choose Lithuania”) has a vast list of language schools and centres where one can learn Lithuanian (“Renkuosi Lietuvą” 2018). The schools are categorised by cities and towns, therefore, I chose to contact the ones that are located in the capital Vilnius where the most schools are. My first step was to contact them asking whether there are any students at that moment who are learning Lithuanian as a foreign language. I have contacted thirteen institutions and got a reply from six. Only three of them had groups of students that were currently studying Lithuanian, thus, I asked for meetings face to face to investigate how big the groups are, in which language they are learning Lithuanian, whether distributing surveys would be possible. This time two of the institutions replied and they were “Association of Social Educational Initiatives Center PLUS” (SEI) with approximately 30 students and “Lingua Lituanica” with 71 student in February, 2018. Both places agreed to aid me with my research by distributing the surveys among their students.

SEI had a feeling of an NGO organisation with a more relaxed and creative environment with drawings hung in the office, while “Lingua Lituanica” looked as a more strict institution with a neat office and classrooms. I was explained by the language school employees who met me that SEI has a lot of people coming to learn Lithuanian as their workplaces send them, there are also plenty of exchange students learning the language as a part of their “Lithuanian experience”. “Lingua Lituanica” accepts students in person and also online, however, their services are always charged. So, most of the students are people with stable income in need to learn Lithuanian or, as I was explained, just curious polyglots.

The surveys

In this paper, interviews with foreigners living in Lithuania are used for the analysis of migrant integration. Yet, I have chosen to use surveys for gathering initial data. The advantage of questionnaires is that a large group of people can be reached in a minimal time span, so the surveys helped me to create the general idea of the group of people I could be interviewing (Rowley 2012, 261). After two weeks of data collection, a database of Lithuanian language students was created. I have created an online survey as well as handed out printed copies with the same questions (Appendix I). The survey was translated into three languages – Lithuanian, Russian and English and recipients could choose any of them. These languages were chosen since the approached language schools teach Lithuanian in them. 47 students filled out the questionnaires, 6 out of which were completed online. A table with the results is provided in Appendix II where personal e-mail addresses and last names are omitted to avoid publishing personal data.

Next, I selected the criteria important for the study (Rowley 2012, 264): willingness to give the interview, a confident decision to keep living in Lithuania, amount of time already spent in Lithuania. This research has a focus on persons whose goal is to be a part of a new society. Therefore, it was necessary to eliminate those who came with finite goals that did not necessarily include staying for a longer time (business trips or studies) and those who have arrived recently, thus, may not have enough experience to answer my questions.

The interviews

Interviewing was chosen as the best way to understand opinions and experiences as the research explores individual integration instances. Face-to-face conversations allow to achieve the closeness and detail that could not be reached by relying on written answers (Rowley 2012, 261). Semi-structured interviews were chosen where a set of base questions was created (Appendix III) and follow-up questions were added when appropriate. This interview structure is recommended for novice researchers as:

- a) structured interviews have a strict form, thus, they are similar to questionnaires, the answers are not explicit;
- b) unstructured interviews require skill and experience to lead a continuous conversation around a topic and still have a bunch of comparable data sets at the end (Rowley 2012, 262).

So the basis provided by the well-chosen questions helps not to drift away from the main topic, while the supplementary questions allow to explore personal experiences in greater detail.

The people I have contacted by e-mail were living in Lithuania for more than 3 months (I got the results in March, 2018, so nobody who arrived in 2018 were contacted). A foreigner may stay in Lithuania for no longer than 90 days during a 180-day period with or without visa depending on a relevant visa regime. If a person is staying for more than 3 months, he/she must have acquired a residence permit with a valid reason to stay in Lithuania (Migracijos Departamentas 2018). I also chose only those who answered “yes” to the question “Are you planning to stay in Lithuania?” and were willing to talk to me via Skype and/or in person. So 8 out of 47 respondents were e-mailed in Lithuanian, English or Russian depending on the survey language they chose. Finally, 5 of them agreed to give interviews: 2 via Skype and 3 in person. I chose to speak in person with as many people as possible, thus, I suggested Skype interviews only to those who ticked Skype as the only interview option. “Face-to-face visual information increases task efficiency in terms of how many words and turns are required to transmit the necessary information” (Doherty-Sneddon et al. 1997), therefore, I wanted the conversations to be as informative and efficient as possible. Both Skype interlocutors chose to have audio, not video, conversations, so the information transmitted was even lesser than expected.

Below you can see a short outline of the interviews:

Name, age	Date	Place	Language	Duration
Igor, 43	7 April, 2018	Skype	Lithuanian	00:13:20
Beta (fake name), 28	8 April, 2018	Skype	Lithuanian	00:21:53
Olga, 39	19 April, 2018	Café in Vilnius, Olga's workplace	Lithuanian	00:25:47
Gerrit, 30	20 April, 2018	Office in Vilnius, Gerrit's workplace	English	00:24:40
Tatjana, 42	23 April, 2018	Café in Vilnius	Russian (with an interpreter)	00:21:41

The interview with Igor was the shortest as the respondent was laconic with his answers and did not prefer to go into many details. Moreover, there was a general feeling of him not being comfortable speaking in Lithuanian. I have beforehand and during the interview suggested talking in English or in Russian with a help of a friend, yet, he was eager to speak Lithuanian. A few words were spoken in other languages than Lithuanian to clarify, though.

The second respondent asked to remain anonymous in my paper, so I will call him Beta. He was more fluent in Lithuanian than the first interviewee and answered the questions with more details and shared personal experiences. In addition, he provided me with a link to an article written about him in Lithuanian press. As the topic of it was similar to mine - his life and experiences in Lithuania, I found it to be a useful supporting source. The article was altered not to mention Beta's real name or the town he now lives in (Appendix IV).

The interview with Olga happened in a kitchen of the café where she was working. Her co-workers helped me get cosy in the kitchen for the interview and Olga was not only answering my direct questions but also adding additional anecdotes, while working at the same time.

The fourth interview took place in a meeting room in an office building. Gerrit was having a lunch break and he suggested we meet during it. Same as the interview with Olga, I felt a welcoming atmosphere and eagerness to answer. At the very end, Gerrit suggested answering any additional questions by e-mail if needed.

The last interview was the only one where the respondent wanted to speak in Russian with me, so I invited an interpreter to help. The questions were given in Lithuanian and Tatjana answered in Russian. Since Tatjana is a language school student, not all of my questions needed to be translated or at least not to the full extent, the same case was for me – I do understand some Russian. Despite some pauses where we were waiting for translation, the whole conversation went smoothly. The answers were a bit less explicit in comparison to other two face-to-face interviews, nevertheless, she was friendly and seemed happy to share her experience. Tatjana was the only respondent who stayed after the interview for small chat to ask about student life in Denmark (where I was residing at the time).

Analysing the data

I have colour-coded reoccurring topics in each of the interviews and marked down the time when the topic was discussed by the interlocutor. This working file was later used in the analysis.

The analysis chapter was divided into topics that have occurred in the interviews. All five interviews are discussed under each topic as I found common subjects in all or most of them. The questions and topics are not direct answers to the research questions, however, they are the questions that were answered (USC University of Southern California 2018). After the presentation of each topic/question the research questions are answered.

All interview recordings will be uploaded as additional files together with the thesis. They all are referenced in the bibliography and time marks are used in the analysis to refer to each recording.

Summary

Chapter 2 explained how an abductive research logic was applied, surveys and interviews were conducted. Explanations of how surveys and interviews are beneficial to the study were provided. Lastly, the analysis process of the data was presented.

Chapter 3. Theory

In this chapter I will develop a theoretical background which is crucial for the study. The perceptions formed by analysing relevant literature before conducting the interviews determined which theories would benefit the discussion. As a result, I will cover the definition of integration by Gülay Uğur Göksel, recognition theory by Axel Honneth and stigma by Erving Goffman. The provided theoretical framework will later help analyse how foreigners perceive their integration and what kind of stigma they meet.

Integration

Whilst defining integration, the explanation can linger in between two opposing poles - assimilation and multiculturalism. Respectfully, one promotes leaving ethno-cultural identities behind while the other suggests mutual respect to all identities (Göksel 2014, 12). It is indeed difficult to measure how much one must leave behind to feel at home in the new country. As mentioned before, the decision of how much of the new culture to absorb does not only depend on the immigrant – xenophobic society and national politics can force a person to assimilate. Gülay Uğur Göksel in her work “Integration of Immigrants and the Theory of Recognition” develops a new concept for the word *integration* by approaching it “with a criticism of host society rather than of ethnic group formation of immigrants” (Göksel 2014, 183). Integration is identified as the ability of the actual recognition order of host societies to include immigrants as full members of society. This approach is focusing on the individual experiences, on each migrant’s healthy self-realisation. The author talks about equal treatment of immigrant professional skills and cultural upbringing, giving democratic rights and respecting religious or

any other traditions as tools of successful integration into society (Göksel 2014, 180-181). Altogether these “requirements” for integration come into the definition of just integration:

“As opposed to the dominant approach, I have proposed to understand the ideal of integration as a concrete process, through which individuals change societal values as equal members of society. In this sense, the problem of the social integration of immigrants is strongly related to the feelings of misrecognition” (Göksel 2014, 37).

The author employs the theories of Parekh, Tully and Honneth and combines it into the definition above. By eliminating the shortcomings of each theory she uses this definition to analyse economic and labour-market integration issues in Canada. Reading into Göksel’s definition, it is apparent that stigmatisation or any kind of discrimination cannot exist in a society where people are integrating without any trouble. Therefore, recognition and mutual understanding leads to equality, thus, just integration.

The author uses Axel Honneth’s theory of recognition which I would like to also borrow for my research of foreigner integration in Lithuania. Honneth’s recognition is a universal theory, thus, I feel confident that I can apply it to my research as well as Göksel did for hers to understand just integration.

[Axel Honneth. Recognition](#)

I will now explore social theory of mutual recognition as explained by Axel Honneth in accordance with the two-way integration idea I have been debating in this paper. As the author states, a formal concept of a good life is formed in his theory (Honneth 1996, 171).

“Unless one presupposes a certain degree of self-confidence, legally guaranteed autonomy, and sureness as to the value of one’s own abilities, it is impossible to imagine successful self-realization, if that is to be understood as a process of realizing, without coercion, one’s self-chosen life-goals.” (Honneth 1996, 174) The limits of one’s self-realisation are quite broad, as it can be anything on a professional or personal level. Yet, one must note that “self-realization is dependent on the social prerequisite of legally guaranteed autonomy” (Honneth 1990, 177),

therefore, the legal and political conditions must be favourable to one's needs and desires. As declared in the order, Lithuanian authorities are working on assuring a fair transfer of immigrant's education and skills to the local labour market. A legally guaranteed autonomy is created where a foreigner may choose whether to continue the previous professional lifestyle.

In a more general sense, an actor can feel recognised when his/her traits are accepted by the other, who is also equally accepted by the same actor. A person's dignity is maintained if one is recognised as a member of a community for a particular person that he/she is. Therefore, a foreigner can feel dignified if the culture and personality that was brought from the home country is accepted as a part of the immigrant's character. Moreover, the citizens of the accepting country should feel that the foreigner comes with respect and willingness to adapt to the new surroundings. Consequently, both sides feel mutually recognised. Honneth claims that the end result of such relations are a radical expansion of solidarity (Honneth 1990, 179).

In case there is a lack of recognition and mutual understanding, a new question comes up: why one person might not accept the other? To go deeper into the topic of non-solidarity, stigma and discrimination, I will present Goffman's theory of stigma.

Stigma

This section of the thesis presents Erving Goffman's theory of stigma which is adopted to analyse xenophobia that foreigners might be facing in a new country. This theory will help explain how the power of recognition is put into the hands of accepting country's citizens.

Stigma is "an attribute that is deeply discrediting, but it should be seen that a language of relationships, not attributes, is really needed" (Goffman 1990, 13). Goffman has also presented a definition of a *normal* – a person who does not differ negatively from particular expectations. The stigmatized ones might be perceived as *normals* if it wasn't for some features that portray undesired differentness and do not allow them to be stigma-free (Goffman 1990, 15). Subsequently, stigma depends on the group of *normals* that we are dealing with – a foreigner could feel welcome in country A, but not in country B, albeit no character or physical traits were

changed. This is explained by Goffman saying that “a stigma, then, is really a special kind of relationship between attribute and stereotype” (Goffman 1990, 14).

The stigma that Erving Goffman discusses is categorised into three categories:

1. abominations of the body;
2. blemishes of individual character;
3. tribal stigma of race, nation or religion (Goffman 1990, 14).

First category is focusing on people who have visible disabilities and other body deformities. The scope of this thesis does not cover integration cases where one should integrate into society due to such disabilities. However, it must be observed and analysed whether an alien, who is of different race or dresses unconventionally due to different customs, is stigmatised in the recipient country. Abominations of the body in this case is anything that differs negatively in the eyes of the majority – for example, a lighter/darker complexion may be associated with strange undesired behaviour.

The second category encompasses a variety of character traits that are usually seen as flaws or undesirable in certain surroundings. Some of the Goffman’s examples do not necessarily fit in today’s society. For instance, addiction nowadays is often approached as a condition that should be treated with care and addicts should not be shut down from society, also, unemployment can be seen as a luxurious choice when one is taking a break or reconsidering life goals. The purpose of employing this second category in the paper is to discuss what kind of blemishes of individual character are stigmatised and distinguished strongly enough to impede one’s integration.

The last category covers behaviour and qualities that a person attains by being born into a society, community or family. Therefore, for this paper, it is valuable to discuss what kind of features emerge while discussing foreigners in Lithuania or Lithuanians as seen by foreigners. Since foreigners are people who have come to Lithuania, but were not born there, they are likely to have obtained the features of their nation/race/religion. What might be troublesome for an outsider, is to distinguish which feature is a sign of individuality and which is tribal. I see it as a

possibility that a person might assign some features to a whole ethnic group or every foreigner by just knowing one person. According to Goffman, people tend to exclude the different ones from the group and assign new dislikeable features to them to justify the separation (Goffman 1990, 25). Hence, discrimination of a whole group might originate as a dislikeable feature of one is assigned to many and then even magnified for the purpose of disliking the whole group.

The discrimination process that occurs in a homogenous society is said to reduce one's life chances (Goffman 1990, 15) which portrays a very tribal and survival based regime. The reduction of a person's life chances currently can be discussed through limiting the ability to navigate a country's institutional system, purchase goods, find accommodation, friends or a job. The six tasks that Lithuanian authorities have raised to achieve suggest that successfully learning the language, finding a job, having access to education and participating in the communal activities are the survival skills needed for a foreign person to survive in Lithuania (Teisės aktų registras 2014). Therefore, the supposed foreigner discrimination would stop aliens from taking part in these activities and limit their chances of survival/adaptation.

The stigmatized can be put into two categories based on how they believe they are perceived by the surroundings:

- discredited - a person assumes his difference is noted on the spot;
- discreditable - a person does not think that the difference is notable. (Goffman 1990, 14)

The process of a person becoming aware that one is stigmatised is a transition from discreditable to discredited as one is put into centre of attention by exposing a shortcoming of said person (Goffman 1990, 27). To put in other words, the *normals* are empowered to change the status of the stigmatised by exposing or ignoring their differences. In the case of my research, Lithuanians are capable of stigmatising the foreigners since they are the majority vs. the minority (aliens). Hence, by interviewing the newcomers it is possible to determine if they are discredited or discreditable, i.e., how the society treats them.

Summary

The definition of just integration proposes equality as essential for success, and equality crumbles without mutual recognition which is vital for humans. The research questions of this paper have an assumption of a xenophobic society, thus, the existence of mutual recognition is rejected in this case. The only logical conclusion is left that just or full integration cannot be achieved. So either to verify or reject my hypothesis, interviews with foreigners living in Lithuania will be analysed. I aim to understand their perception of integration while coming back to the theory and comparing whether just integration is indeed named as the goal. Moreover, in accordance with the hypothesis I will analyse whether stigma is an obstacle in immigrant lives.

Chapter 4. Results, analysis and discussion

In this chapter I am analysing the data I have attained during the interviews with the five foreigners residing in Lithuania. The following analysis is categorised into topics and questions that have emerged during the conversations. The different parts are discussed using theories presented earlier in the paper, reflections onto the integration practices available in Lithuania are included as well. The aim is, according to the research question, to discuss the immigrants' experience of integration and their encounters with stigma.

Moving to Lithuania

Firstly, I will cover the reasons and processes of moving to Lithuania. Each respondent has a different backstory, thus, their incentives to move are not identical. Through presenting interviewees' reasons to move, I will briefly present each person, so that the different questions and answers analysed later make more sense from each individual's perspective.

Bureaucracy

A couple of the first questions in my interviews (Appendix III) were about the moving process to Lithuania from the bureaucratic standpoint. Since the outcome was mainly positive and did not develop into further discussions, I will shortly present it below.

Even though the foreigners I spoke to came from states having diverse entry and visa regimes, the predominant feeling was that of satisfaction with the admission process. It was often mentioned that institutional workers were helpful, the forms were provided in different languages and it was all manageable (Olga 2018, 2:25; Tatjana 2018, 8:54; Gerrit 2018, 2:45). An opinion that stood out was expressed by Tatjana, who mentioned the constantly changing residence permit laws. She described her life as happy in Lithuania, though, she feels a constant uncertainty regarding the content of the migration laws (Tatjana 2018, 15:21). Since she correlated the laws with happiness in the interview, I will come back to it in the section discussing whether interviewees' lives are happy.

Reasons to move

The interviewees have described their move to Lithuania as voluntarily experiences. For some it was finding a Lithuanian partner, for others it was business, or even a combination of both (Beta 2018, 1:35; Olga 2018, 6:30; Igor 2018, 1:49; Gerrit 2018, 00:25). Tatjana, who is from Russia, has described her reasoning a bit less clearly than others which is "we moved to Lithuania in 2014, there is no need to explain the reason" (Tatjana 2018, 00:49). In fact, it is common knowledge in Lithuania, due to empathetic relations to Ukraine, that 2014 was the year of annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation. Thus, Tatjana, speaking to two Lithuanians, may have omitted the details expecting understanding. As a business co-owner, she might have been affected by Russia's economic shrinkage in 2014 (Treanor 2014). Moreover, she addressed the family situation: her only daughter moved to the Czech Republic for studies (Tatjana 2018, 00:57). As the daughter started an independent life abroad and the country was under political and economic pressure, Tatjana and her husband have decided to move to another country with "a similar mentality", as advised by a Lithuanian acquaintance (Tatjana 2018, 1:37).

A Belarussian man Igor, similarly to Tatjana, has found laws in Lithuania to be favourable to establish a new business. Igor explained that Lithuania, being a member of the European Union, is an attractive country in case you are dealing with financial transactions to/from EU clients. Additionally, the tax system is transparent in comparison to Belarus: “you don’t know what you are paying for and where the money goes” (Igor 2018, 1:49). This respondent was clear on how purely economic the reasons to move for him with his wife and kids were: favourable business conditions determined the country of residence.

Differently from Tatjana and Igor, Olga has created a family with a man holding Lithuanian citizenship. Before moving to Lithuania the whole family was residing in Israel, where Olga spent most of her adult life, even though she was born in Belarus (Olga 2018, 00:17). A reoccurring reason to move to Lithuania resurfaced in this interview as well – a business opportunity for her husband. As mentioned earlier, Olga’s husband holds a Lithuanian citizenship, he also grew up in the country, therefore, accommodation was already ready when they moved, and the husband already had a social circle in the country (Olga 2018, 6:30). Besides the convenience of moving to a familiar environment, Olga expressed how fond of Lithuania she is. Throughout the interview she has mentioned that several times. Further details about it can be found in the section “Is life in Lithuanian happy?”.

The last two respondents Gerrit (a German) and Beta (a Moroccan) both moved to Lithuania for their loved ones, who are Lithuanians. Gerrit explained that moving to Lithuania was a logical decision as his fiancée’s job requires strong language skills which she would not have in Germany. On the other hand, Gerrit’s career does not depend on language that much, so his move was not troublesome career-wise (Gerrit 2018, 1:11). Beta’s decision to move to Lithuania was also based on the difficulties his wife might have had with her career and language in Morocco where he is from (Appendix IV).

Overall, all of the respondents have presented well thought-through explanations, none displayed any anxiety to rush into the decision to move.

Discussion

It is seen that economic safety is an important incentive for the foreigners to move to another country. All of the five people mentioned their country choice to be based on professional skill realisation, whether it was the best for their partner, themselves or the whole family. Tatjana and Igor successfully moved their statuses of business owners from one country to another, even by improving the situation, as advised by Igor. Therefore, both of them are evaluated for the professional abilities in the new country. The conditions in the country are propitious to their careers, thus, interlocutors are able to gain the professional recognition they desire.

Olga, Gerrit and Beta recognised that their partners can excel in their careers if Lithuania is chosen. By using additional details from the interviews, it can be observed that by prioritising the others' professional recognition, Olga, Gerrit and Beta have faced quite different career situations themselves. Gerrit did not leave Germany until he found a job in Lithuania where he is now appreciated as an employee (Gerrit 2018, 13:12). He wanted to assure that his skills and knowledge are evaluated. Beta did not get the same doctor's job in Lithuania at first, however, he has passed all required exams to get his doctor's certificate approved in Lithuania (Beta 2018, 4:40, 19:49). Lastly, Olga claimed that she did not work the same job in Israel, yet, she started working in the kitchen in Lithuania and is seeking to study food technology for her future career (Olga 2018, 22:45).

By departing from the original discussion of the reasons to move to Lithuania, I aimed to prove that even when initially the economic safety and skill appreciation are belittled, the respondents strive after them eventually, i.e., they try to come back to the same career as in the home country or seek further development. To sum up, professional self-realisation is highly important to the group of foreigners I have interviewed. The importance assigned to this criterion may determine the country of residence or future goals of each individual. Honneth's theory of recognition states that the legal autonomy in a country can define the limits of how much recognition one may expect (Honneth 1990, 177). These stories indeed portray that the interviewees had to fulfil specific requirements to gain the recognition. Economic engagement is, hence, observed as an

important dimension in their lives as they all decided to seek it. As mentioned in the literature review, this is the individual choice each immigrant can make to achieve self-realisation (Kuznecovienė 2009). Lastly, the order aims to create the possibilities for the newcomers to be accepted with their knowledge and prosper professionally, which seems to be true in the examples observed (Teisės aktų registras 2014).

Language

One of the reoccurring topics in the interviews was the knowledge of language. Since the interviewees were found through language schools, I questioned them about the incentives of choosing to study Lithuanian and the overall experience and quality of the classes. As stated in the order, it is crucial for foreigners to integrate by learning the local language (Teisės aktų registras 2014, 4), therefore, I am analysing how much importance is assigned to obtaining these skills by foreigners and whether they see it as a part of the integrational process.

Language courses

The means of learning the language were recognised as sufficient by the respondents. Olga, who has already graduated from SEI and passed an A2 level language exam, said that the classes were wonderful and she is really thankful to her teachers for the ability to speak Lithuanian (Olga 2018, 4:24). She explained that her gratitude was the reason she filled in my questionnaire, posted in the “Facebook” group of SEI. Even though the classes at “Lingua Lituanica” nor at SEI do not have a separate focus on Lithuanian customs, some traditions are taught through practising the new vocabulary. The playful and interactive way of learning, “a kindergarten” as Tatjana joked (Tatjana 2018, 6:30), does satisfy the needs of most respondents. Beta has started a free language course, but the two classes per week were not enough for his need to learn the language as quickly as possible. So instead he has dropped out and taken an intensive course at Vilnius University. Despite the short experience, his remarks on the few classes at the language school were very positive (Beta 2018, 4:05, 5:40). Overall, it is revealed that the supply and quality of language teaching institutions is satisfactory and accommodates the different needs of respondents.

Importance of the language

In the interviews, speaking the national mother tongue was stressed to be important for a two-way understanding and communication with other people. General awareness of what is happening on the streets and on the national level, such as television programmes or radio announcements, was important to the foreigners, too (Gerrit 2018, 5:12; Beta 2018, 4:40; Olga 2018, 18:10). Igor even said that he “does not want to feel as a foreigner”, thus, he needs at least level A1 knowledge of the language (Igor 2018, 8:13). Olga claimed that she can navigate her everyday life without Lithuanian, yet, she feels cosier and happier understanding everybody around her and “speaking properly” herself (Olga 2018, 05:21). The necessity of Lithuanian as a functional tool in the institutions was mentioned only by one recipient Gerrit as he described that his fiancée has to come along to be the interpreter during visits to municipalities or doctor’s appointments (Gerrit 2018, 3:33). The majority expressed the will to learn the language or improve their skills in the near future in order to understand and be understood better in Lithuania. The only exception was Tatjana who thought that communication in Russian is absolutely possible and there are no language barriers (Tatjana 2018, 7:00). She reinforced her argument with her husband’s example – he hasn’t had time to study Lithuanian at all, however, he needs only minimal help from his wife (Tatjana 2018, 7:55). Tatjana claimed that throughout the few years in Lithuania there were only a few times when the approached person could not speak Russian¹. She also argued that her general impression is of Lithuanians knowing three-four languages, thus, she started feeling “not that smart” and signed up for Lithuanian courses (Tatjana 2018, 7:00). Despite this outlier, all others felt a communication divider that could only be removed by learning Lithuanian. Beta has also expressed the need to speak Lithuanian in his professional life: he is a doctor and Lithuanian is not only crucial for understanding the patients,

¹ Lithuania has been affected by Russification during the last occupation in 1994-1990 which impacted the composition of population in Lithuania. Many Lithuanians were expelled to Siberia and these people were replaced by resettling ethnic Russians to the biggest cities in the country, so culture, language and population were heavily affected by Russification. Ethnic Russians and other displaced nationalities stayed in Lithuania even after the break of Soviet Union. Mostly, of course, they were Russians, therefore, as a result 4.6% of population is estimated to be Russian in 2017 (Population Register 2018).

but also is a requirement for getting recognised as a doctor with a foreign education (Beta 2018, 4:40).

Discussion

The details above dictate how much language skills are valued by the respondents. A need to be understood and to understand others is seen as essential for one “not to feel as a foreigner” (Igor 2018, 8:13). Four out of five do feel this way, thus, self-realisation through speaking a common language with the people around you is an important factor in the immigrants’ lives. Besides, people are not only aiming to be active communicators - just listening to others and understanding would provide a feeling of belonging where you are. They desire to understand occurrences that do not require a dialogue, therefore, the other party cannot adjust to the foreigners’ needs. The respondents did not express a wish for the TV or radio programmes to be provided in other languages than Lithuanian, therefore, they are respecting the local linguistics and culture and are trying to fit in. Since the Lithuanian classes were recognised as useful and fulfilling the expectations, it can be said that the two-way linguistic integration can be successful if people dedicate enough time to learn the language.

The interviewees do not want to feel linguistically excluded as it can harm their dignity and self-confidence. Honneth states that a key form of exclusion is violating self-esteem (Honneth 1996, xix). In the mentioned cases, the decrease of confidence is not induced by Lithuanians, on the contrary, it is created by the actors themselves. The foreigners cannot consider one selves as complete and equal members of the society since they understand less than the majority, who are Lithuanian language speakers. The interviewees diminish themselves as they cannot be fully aware of the surroundings, thus, cannot realise their possible potential for communication and understanding. Therefore, they are not *normals*, i.e., they are not stigma-free as the majority (Goffman 1990, 15). In this paper, the notions of discredited and discreditable were presented as the two categories of stigmatised persons (Goffman 1990, 14). These stories paint a picture of people who are self-discredited, meaning that they acknowledge their differences themselves

and feel a discomfort. A further explanation of whether Lithuanians see foreigners as discredited or discreditable can be found in the next section where stigma is analysed.

Stigma and cultural differences

In this section, each person's individual experience is presented separately. Diverse ideas were shared during the interviews, thus, the most efficient way to address stigma is by approaching each story independently.

Beta

The question about any unpleasant memories or incidents associated with Lithuania by most was answered very briefly stating that everything has been fine and there is not much to share. Beta was the only one to go straight to a story of an encounter with an intoxicated person. Even though it has happened a few years back, in 2015, the man shared that he was feeling scared at that moment. The attacker was running towards him while shouting angrily. Back then Beta's Lithuanian skills were still at the beginner level, hence, he could not understand the words shouted, however, he claimed that the attacker was swearing at him directly. Beta has shared that the incident was resolved very quickly when his wife started calling the police and the drunk ran off (Beta 2018, 6:45).

Despite this encounter, the interviewee was persuading me that people do not treat him disrespectfully because of his race or religion. On the contrary, he was pleasantly surprised that patients at work meet him with honest curiosity and have no objections to him as a professional. The idea of possible confrontation came to Beta after reading articles on the internet where, he said, there are examples of racism in Lithuania (Beta 2018, 9:28).

The interviewee has introduced me to the differences of national customs that he has noticed over the years as the topic has come up when he was describing the predominant differences of the Moroccan and Lithuanian cultures. As a Muslim who does not consume alcohol, Beta was mostly surprised how important drinking is to Lithuanians during celebrations and that he often

has to explain that not drinking with others does not show a lack of respect (Beta 2018, 15:39). While this sounded as the most common issue he has to deal with, Beta claimed that “respect and understanding” (Beta 2018, 16:20) is what he experiences the most and people tend to adapt to his needs at work and at home.

Olga

Olga, who has lived most of her adolescent life in Israel, talked about the differences between Jews and Lithuanians, however, she did not mention any discrimination instances in terms of religion or culture. Since Olga has joined a vast Jewish community in Vilnius, a big part of the lifestyle she is used to is continued in Lithuania. For example, the respondent has noticed the lack of joy and festivities during celebrations in Lithuania, she has only seen people going to streets and rejoicing together during the 100th anniversary of the restoration of the State² (Olga 2018, 11:00). Moreover, Olga noted that her children can sense the cultural differences (they are raised following Belarusian and Jewish traditions), thus, it is easier to send them to a Russian school where at least the language is the same as spoken at home (Olga 2018, 20:05).

The discrimination that she has noticed and still sometimes struggles which is linguistic. Before learning Lithuanian, Olga used Russian and English to communicate with people, yet, the younger generation has displayed some disdain to speak Russian and sometimes even refused to speak English (Olga 2018, 3:18, 7:40). The frustration felt was one of the reasons for Olga to start learning Lithuanian. And, as she described herself being a perfectionist in learning languages, it is still worrying her not being able to speak the language flawlessly.

Gerrit

Gerrit has not mentioned any cultural, religious or national differences that would provoke discrimination in Lithuania. The outstanding feature of his differentness, that has caught the attention by a Lithuanian, was him being a foreigner. A xenophobic remark asserted that Gerrit, as an alien, cannot express his opinion in a discussion about bikes in Lithuania (Gerrit 2018,

² On 16 February 2018, Lithuania celebrated the 100 years to the restored statehood.

21:15). Even though this was the only example the interviewee has given me, he was confident that he has experienced racism in Lithuania. Gerrit also added that one can realise how much racism there is only after moving to another country and becoming the foreigner (Gerrit 2018, 20:45). After the description of the incident, Gerrit has assured that people in the country are very friendly and this unpleasant remark was the only time ever he felt stigmatised (Gerrit 2018, 21:51).

As Gerrit has pointed out himself, there are things that he notices to be different in Lithuania, but it is due to his personal interests. For example, he detected that Germany is more environmentally aware than Lithuania, therefore, he lacks the advancements in this sphere. Otherwise, there are “things that are ahead” (Gerrit 2018, 6:10) in Lithuania, so he cannot provide a fair comparison of the two countries. Moreover, these other things are not that significant in his life.

Igor and Tatjana

I have put Igor and Tatjana into one sub-section as these respondents have not provided any examples of assigned stigma, discrimination or xenophobia in Lithuania. They both said that Lithuania does not differ from their home countries that much in terms of peoples’ mentalities (Igor 2018, 12:10, Tatjana 2018, 2:12). A slight difference that Tatjana noticed was the pace of living – she believes that business decisions are made slower, there are more queues and waiting in Lithuania compared to Russia. One more difference that she mentioned after the interview was that it is common only for men to shake hands in Russia, while in Lithuania this not an exclusively male custom.

Discussion

As presented above, the society in Lithuania has shown some xenophobic signs to the people I have spoken to. The attributes that were discovered as stigmatised were appearance (Beta), language (Olga) and nationality (Gerrit).

Firstly, the stigma that was assigned to Beta must have been a visible blemish of the body – dark skin (Goffman 1990, 14). Lithuanian society is predominantly Caucasian, thus, a Moroccan might be noticed easily in a crowd. Also, as mentioned in literature review, Lithuanians are more fond of races that are similar to themselves (Kocaj 2010). Even though Beta could not provide reasons for the man to be angry, Beta's wife and her cousin were not the target of the man's aggression, thus, presumably his attack had xenophobic premises. Following Goffman's stigma theory, it is possible to derive a conclusion that the attacker labelled Beta as somebody from a different "tribe" due to his appearance. Consequently, it is observed the differences of the body can go together with the stigma of race, nation or religion. This tribal stigma, illogical hatred towards a different nationality resonate with the opinions discovered in the "Lithuanian opinions" chapter. However, since the details of the story are not very clear, it is difficult to determine what the exact reasoning of the assault was.

Gerrit's story, on the other hand, states a straight forward hatred towards the respondent's nationality. The conversation that Gerrit mentioned had no connection to the nation or country he is from, yet, his opinion was diminished because he is not from Lithuania. Even though Gerrit's opinion might have been disliked despite his nationality, a person chose to bring the nationality up as a disadvantage in the discussion. He picked an attribute that excluded the German from the *normals* and this attribute was used as a shortcoming of the immigrant (Goffman 1990, 27). Since Gerrit has no power to change this feature, this is an example of when a foreigner is stripped of the right to express his opinion as an equal, meaning he is denied recognition which is crucial for a good life (Honneth 1996, 171).

The third person, who has encountered discrimination, was Olga. She did not give any detailed descriptions of the encounters, yet, it was clear that the discrimination was linguistic. To understand why Olga's Russian was poorly accepted one has to look at the historical past of the country. As Tatjana pointed out earlier, there are indeed plenty of people who speak Russian, yet, Lithuanians have quite negative opinions about this minority. The fact that they have stayed in Lithuania since it gained back its independence and still use Russian as their primary language, angers the majority (Ryžakova and Zavjalova 2004). Therefore, Olga encountered a stigma that is

assigned to all Russian speakers. Russophobes, that she met, did not question why her first language is Russian, they most likely assigned her to the minority already residing in Lithuania, in other words, she was associated to a “tribe” of the disliked and discriminated (the third type of stigma by Goffman). One more important fact is that the younger Lithuanians were not in favour of speaking Russian. Surveys and qualitative research show that the post-Soviet generation is more sceptical about the Soviet times and the regimes that were present, therefore, the Russian speaking minority is considered to be the unwelcomed reminder of the Soviet Union by the younger generation (Tuzaitė 2016). Therefore, Olga was rejected recognition even before she managed to show her intentions or disclose any character traits.

The examples discussed portray how foreigners are stigmatised in the country due to various reasons. They are discredited and discriminated by Lithuanians, thus, the majority is reducing the easiness of integration in a new country or, as Goffman would explain it, reducing their chances of survival (Goffman 1990, 15).

On the other hand, the same people have expressed satisfaction with the society and did not hint that their integration into society or everyday lives are disturbed by these occurrences in any way. A common observation of the Beta’s, Olga’s and Gerrit’s interviews is that after telling me about the discrimination, they all jumped to justification of Lithuanian people and an explanation that stigmatisation is not a common attitude that they meet. Moreover, Igor and Tatjana did not encounter anything similar at all. Since they both speak Russian as their first languages, Olga’s situation could have been repeated. It only proves Goffman’s explanation that the discrimination occurs among certain people who decide that some features deserve exclusion (Goffman 1990, 14).

Is life in Lithuania happy?

The quality of life, self-realisation and happiness in a new country are discussed in this chapter. Besides being questioned about how carefree and “at place” the foreigners in Lithuania feel, I have also raised a direct question of whether they feel integrated. This has brought forward even more thoughts of what is successful integration and happiness to each individual.

Current life

Beta said that he is happy in Lithuania, it is his home, otherwise, he would “run away” (Beta 2018, 10:30, 17:25). His work colleagues are now also his friends after the working hours, but a happy family life is the defining feature of his happiness. For this reason, he even chose to move to a smaller town in Lithuania which seemed to be more suitable for raising his daughter (Appendix IV). Visiting his family in Morocco is not simple as it is time consuming, expensive and his daughter is still young. Beta expressed a wish to visit more often, but it is too complicated, thus, “it is ok” (Beta 2018, 12:19).

Olga, who expressed personal admiration for Lithuania from the very beginning, called Lithuania her home and said she feels the best in Lithuania from all other countries without any doubt (Olga 2018, 1:00, 7:00, 13:00). Finding friends has never been an easy quest for Olga, no matter where she lived, thus, not having too many friends currently is not something out of ordinary (Olga 2018, 14:05).

Gerrit discussed losing some friends and not gaining new ones as a natural outcome of relocation at his age (Gerrit is in his early thirties) (Gerrit 2018, 15:10). The interviewee said that, luckily, his free time activities are not language driven, his landlord is helpful, he works in an international company, the new Lithuanian friends do not mind speaking in English and the people are very friendly overall (Gerrit 2018, 10:00, 17:25, 21:51), therefore, he is happy now.

Igor does not feel a lack of family communication as he visits them often (Igor 2018, 10:22). He also claimed that he has some Lithuanian friends, for instance, his neighbour of four years with whom he has barbeque weekends (Igor 2018, 6:35). Igor explained that his life is happy as now it is easy to maintain a business and travel (Igor 2018, 11:15).

Tatjana pointed out that she does miss her family left in Russia and the distance makes it difficult to visit often, but gladly, the family visits her in Lithuania (Tatjana 2018, 3:30, 12:28). The importance of friends in her life was not belittled, yet, Tatjana claimed family time to have always been more important than spending time with friends (Tatjana 2018, 3:55). Overall, she is happy

with her life as the only difference compared to Russia is that now she also goes to language classes (Tatjana 2018, 13:47).

Did they integrate and will they stay?

When asked about integration and whether they feel as a part of the society, all respondents answered positively. However, the ideas and details of each answer were a bit different. For example, Beta was positive that starting off in Vilnius was crucial for his integration process as he was able to communicate and work without speaking Lithuanian at first (Beta 2018, 19:49). Moreover, the intensive language course he has chosen later was only available in the capital. Still, the communication with the elderly is a bit more complicated, thus, Beta expects to improve his language skills and continue successfully living in Lithuania. But overall, he feels integrated (Beta 2018, 18:16).

Gerrit was very precise about how integrated he feels in Lithuania: he is integrated in his own social circle (Gerrit 2018, 16:44), but he is happy in the new country (Gerrit 2018, 5:58). His main concern remains to be the language, which he is aiming to learn eventually. Gerrit used an example of his home country to clarify his struggle: there are many immigrants in Germany and everyone tells them just to learn the language and integrate, however, it is difficult (Gerrit 2018, 20:45). All in all, the respondent sees his future in Vilnius – getting married and buying a house in the suburbs is already planned (Gerrit 2018, 22:40).

Olga feels integrated and, as mentioned in the previous section, Lithuania is truly her home, she would not trade it to any other country. However, being the perfectionist she is, not speaking Lithuanian fluently bugs her, so she is seeking to perfect it (Olga 2018, 5:21). As mentioned before, she is also seeking to study food technology for her future career (Olga 2018, 22:45).

Igor called Lithuania his midway stop and said that he does not feel integrated himself (Igor 2018, 4:45). His mentions of possible future plans, in case he gains the right to Lithuanian citizenship, involved a possible move to Austria or Germany (Igor 2018, 9:42). It seemed that the language is essential to Igor for a happy life: he does not feel at home where his linguistic skills are lacking

and talks about probable countries of residence where he could communicate easier (Igor has mentioned that he speaks German). Igor was convinced that his wife and children have integrated and see Lithuania as their home since they started learning the language earlier than him (Igor 2018, 5:19).

Lastly, Tatjana does feel happy and integrated, however, she is not convinced that Lithuania is her final destination. This is partly due to the unsureness that changing migration laws provide, but also due to her personal attitude – she does not want to plan that far in the future (Tatjana 2018, 15:21). For now, Lithuania is her home, she enjoys the variety of people in Vilnius and notices that they are more open here than in Russia (Tatjana 2018, 17:25).

To sum it up, I will provide the ideas about how one may succeed integrating in a new country as advised by the interlocutors. Asked about integration both, Olga and Tatjana, claimed that everything depends on the person himself/herself, that even without speaking the language anything is possible - a friendly approach and patience can result in anything one is seeking (Olga 2018, 8:23, 24:18; Tatjana 2018, 14:10). Tatjana, in her interview, has also said that “you shouldn’t sit at home” by which she was explaining that a person creates his/her own happiness by approaching the society himself/herself (Tatjana 2018, 4:55). Olga claimed that Lithuanian society is neither closed nor particularly open, each can create his/her own story as long as one does not come with requirements to the new society and predetermined expectations (Olga 2018, 9:01, 25:18). Gerrit explained that no matter from which to which country you move, integration is not easy as an overall experience and it cannot be properly understood unless one tries it (Gerrit 2018, 20:45).

Discussion

Beta, Olga and Gerrit have all described Lithuania as a place where they see their future, where they plan to develop their professional skills and foster family relations (Beta 2018, 13:19; Olga 2018, 22:45; Gerrit 2018, 22:40). Even though Igor and Tatjana said that they are currently happy in the country, both were uncertain of what the future might hold (Igor 2018, 9:42; Tatjana 2018, 11:45). A difference, which may be providing a less settling feeling in Lithuania, is that the three

interviewees, mentioned in the beginning, are all married or about to marry a Lithuanian citizen while Igor and Tatjana have moved to the country together with their spouses who do not hold a Lithuanian citizenship. The common attributes in the lives of the first three aliens is the conditions of attaining a residence permit - they were easier to meet (Migration Department under the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania 2018). Moreover, none of the partners in the relationship of Igor and Tatjana have family members or childhood friends residing in Lithuania. Evidently, social linkages are an important factor determining how connected one is to a particular location. As described in the literature review, there is more than one dimension that can link a foreigner to the new country – social, economic, cultural, political (Kuznecovienė 2009). The interviews reveal that not having your own or your partner's close family members nearby, provides less certainty on how long one is dedicated to stay in Lithuania. Hence, it is important for the foreigners to have a familiar social circle nearby in order to feel settled.

All five interlocutors stated that they are happy in Lithuania, however, the answers about integration varied. Igor and Gerrit do not feel fully included, yet, they are happy. As explained in the theoretical chapter, just integration means that the host state can include immigrants as full members of the society (Göksel 2014). Igor and Gerrit both have jobs, family, friends and free time activities that they are satisfied with (Gerrit 2018, 17:25; Igor 2018, 6:35), thus, they are recognised in these spheres of life. However, the deficiency of language skills concern both of the men, thus, it seems that they are discrediting themselves as not complete members of the society. As already discussed in the previous sections, the lack of language skills is a common topic of self-stigmatisation among these interviewees.

Chapter 5. Conclusion

Answering the RQs

The questions that were raised in the first chapter of the paper are:

How do foreigners, living in Lithuania, perceive and experience integration? How do they navigate their own integration in relation to the xenophobia they meet?

The analysis provides answers to these questions, and they are presented below.

Integration can be achieved quite differently for each individual as they prioritise different areas of life. Yet, being economically safe and close to one's partner was observed as a common desire of all interlocutors in this study. The experiences, that were shared, portrayed integration in both of these spheres, therefore, I can claim that the government and society recognised these immigrants and their needs. Approaching members of the new society and finding a contact with them was explained as a process requiring patience and optimism, with which any personal goal is reachable. Therefore, integration is understood as a mutual contact – you get the results you invoked with your behaviour.

The analysis has also shown that negative stereotypes and stigma are not met as often as assumed in the beginning of this paper. Consequently, the impact of stigma on the foreigners' lives was not observed to be great. However, a conclusion was reached that huge importance is actually assigned to knowing the local language in order to feel "at home". The discomfort that is felt by the aliens is more likely to originate from their side as they discredit themselves as having insufficient language skills. As foreigners advised, the government provides adequate education means, thus, it is left for the foreigner to choose the tempo and importance of language learning. Yet, the frustration expressed by most interlocutors hints that "just learn the language" approach is not so easy. Since this study did not have a focus on the language alone, a deeper analysis on the subject was not provided. Nevertheless, the potential and need for further research on the language skills as an integration tool is evident.

Limitations and further research possibilities

This thesis has explored the definition of integration and stigma as seen by five immigrants who live or lived in the capital. In order to expand on the topic and go deeper into the field, an extension of the study into other cities and towns could provide a greater selection of different opinions. Firstly, Vilnius is highly saturated with students of higher education ("Kur Stoti" 2017), thus, there are more educated people who tend to be more tolerant towards immigrants (Blažytė 2015). Talking to foreigners all over the country could create a different impression of acceptance of the newcomers. Secondly, the importance of knowing Lithuanian language may vary in different country's regions. Beta has mentioned that he was lucky to start off in Vilnius as he could not survive without Lithuanian in his current town (Beta 2018, 19:49), which hints that the capital may have more foreign language speakers and may not be representing the whole country properly. Also, language schools are not allocated in every single town in the country ("Renkuosi Lietuvą" 2018b), thus, the learning possibilities differ from town to town. The choice of the city in this thesis may be limiting the potential outcome of the study, therefore, an expansion to other regions would potentially benefit the study.

As it was observed, the group of respondents had family and career oriented goals and described integration into the new society quite similarly. I assume that approaching a more varying age group and those, who are not in Lithuania to stay for a long time, would produce a different outcome. A study with students, volunteers and people on limited time business trips could reveal a different understanding of integration and different priorities in life, which could result in a different ideas about integration.

Overall, this thesis has proven that the most common xenophobic opinions and attitudes in the society have only a small effect on the immigrants. The results also suggest that linguistic integration is immensely important to the newcomers and the discomfort connected to it should be researched further.

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Appendix I. Survey questions

Survey in English

Integration of foreign language speakers in Lithuania

Hello! I am a Master's student at Aalborg University in Copenhagen. For my Master thesis I am researching integration of foreign language speakers in my home country – Lithuania. As a foreigner in Denmark I often find myself considering whether I am blending into Danish society, whether I should learn the language and whether I need this “integration” at all. Therefore, I am curious to discuss the notion and feeling of integration with others.

Your answers to this short survey would be much appreciated. Thank you! 😊

Please enter your information:

Name

Gender ☐ Female ☐ Male

Age

Email address

Citizenship

Nationality

1. Since when are you staying in Lithuania?

Month Year

2. Why are you learning Lithuanian? (many answers possible)

- ☐ To communicate with family members
- ☐ It is a workplace requirement
- ☐ I am volunteering in Lithuania
- ☐ To obtain Lithuanian citizenship
- ☐ I want to learn a new language
- ☐ I am studying in Lithuania
- ☐ Other

3. Are you planning to stay in Lithuania?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Yes, for some time only
- ☐ No
- ☐ Have not decided yet

4. Could you answer a few questions about living in Lithuania in person or via Skype? The interview could be in Lithuanian, English or Russian. I would contact you via e-mail first. (many answers possible)

- ☐ Yes, interview in person is fine
- ☐ Yes, interview via Skype is fine
- ☐ No

Survey in Lithuanian

Kitakalbių integracija Lietuvoje

Sveiki! Aš esu magistro studentė Olborgo universitete Kopenhagoje. Baigiamajame magistro darbe nusprendžiau nagrinėti kitakalbių integraciją savo gimtinėje - Lietuvoje. Pati būdama užsienietė Danijoje dažnai svarstau, ar įsilieju į danų bendruomenę, ar turėčiau mokytis naujos kalbos ir ar integracija man išvis yra reikalinga. Dėl šių priežasčių man būtų smalsu aptarti integracijos sąvoką ir supratimą su kitais.

Jūsų atsakymai į šią trumpą apklausą man būtų labai naudingi. Dėkoju! ☺

Prašome įvesti informaciją apie save:

Vardas

Lytis ☐ Moteris ☐ Vyras

Amžius

Э-мейл

Pilietybė

Tautybė

1. Nuo kada gyvenate Lietuvoje?

Mėnuo Metai

2. Kodėl mokotės lietuvių kalbos? (keli galimi atsakymai)

- ☐ Kalbos reikia bendraujant su šeimos nariais
- ☐ Kalba reikalinga darbovietėje
- ☐ Savanoriauju Lietuvoje
- ☐ Noriu gauti Lietuvos pilietybę
- ☐ Noriu išmokti naują kalbą
- ☐ Studijuojau Lietuvoje
- ☐ Kita

3. Ar ketinate likti gyventi Lietuvoje?

- ☐ Taip
- ☐ Taip, kurį laiką
- ☐ Ne

☐ Dar nežinau

4. Ar sutiktume gyvai arba per Skype atsakyti į keletą klausimų apie gyvenimą Lietuvoje? Pokalbis gali vykti lietuvių, anglų arba rusų kalbomis. Pirmiausia su Jumis susisieksiu el. paštu. (keli galimi atsakymai)

☐ Taip, tinka gyvas interviu

☐ Taip, tinka Skype pokalbis

☐ Ne

Survey in Russian

Интеграция говорящих на иностранном языке в Литве

Здравствуйте! Я студентка магистратуры в университете Ольборга в Копенгагене. В связи с моей диссертацией, я изучаю интеграцию говорящих на иностранном языке в своей родной стране – Литве. Будучи иностранкой в Дании я часто задумываюсь, влияюсь ли я частью датского общества, должна ли я изучать язык и нужна ли мне эта «интеграция» вообще. Поэтому, мне любопытно обсудить понятие и чувство интеграции с другими.

Ваши ответы на этот короткий опрос мне были бы очень полезны. Благодарю вас за ваше время! ☺

Укажите, пожалуйста, информацию о себе:

Имя

Пол ☐ женщина ☐ мужчина

Возраст

Э-мейл

гражданство

национальность

1. С каких пор вы живете в Литве?

Месяц год

2. Почему вы изучаете литовский язык? (может быть несколько ответов)

☐ Для общения с членами семьи

☐ Для общения на рабочем месте

☐ Я занимаюсь добровольческой деятельностью в Литве

☐ Я хочу получить литовское гражданство

☐ Я хочу изучить новый язык

☐ Я учусь в Литве

☐ Другое

.....

3. Вы планируете остаться в Литве?

- ☐ Да
- ☐ Да, на некоторое время
- ☐ Нет
- ☐ Еще не решил(а)

4. Не могли бы вы ответить на несколько вопросов о жизни в Литве лично или через Skype?
Разговор может быть на литовском, английском или русском языке. Изначально, я связалась бы с вами по электронной почте. (может быть несколько ответов)

- ☐ Да, подходит личное интервью
- ☐ Да, подходит интервью через Skype
- ☐ Нет

Appendix II. Survey results

Respondent	Age	Gender	Survey language	Name	Citizenship	Nationality	1) Since when are you staying in Lithuania?			2) Why are you learning Lithuanian?					3) Are you planning to stay in Lithuania?	4) Could you answer a few questions about living in Lithuania in person or via Skype? The interview could be in Lithuanian, English or Russian.			
							Day	Month	Year	To communicate with family members	It is a workplace requirement	I am volunteering in Lithuania	To obtain Lithuanian citizenship	I want to learn a new language		I am studying in Lithuania	Other	Yes, interview in person is fine	Yes, interview via Skype is fine
1	28	Male	Lithuanian	Beta	Morocco	Moroccan	2	4	2016	✓	✓					Yes	✓	✓	
2	39	Female	Lithuanian	Olga	Israel	Jewish	23	6	2013		✓					Yes	✓	✓	
3	34	Female	Lithuanian	Anastasija	Russia	Russian	8	12	2014				✓	✓		Yes, for some time only	✓	✓	
4	38	Male	Russian	Maksim	Belarus	Russian	1	1	2017		✓		✓	✓		Yes			✓
5	36	Female	Lithuanian	Maryna	Ukraine	Ukrainian	13	8	2014		✓					Yes, for some time only		✓	
6	28	Female	Lithuanian	Liudmyla	Ukraine	Ukrainian	14	8	2014		✓		✓			Yes			✓
7	30	Male	English	Abdulhakim	Turkey								✓		To communicate with locals	Yes	✓		
8	53	Male	English	Nikos									✓			Yes, for some time only			✓
9	52	Female	English	Olga		Greek				✓			✓			Yes, for some time only	✓		
10	43	Male	English	Jaroslav	Poland	Polish							✓		To exercise my brain	Yes, for some time only	✓		
11	28	Male	English	Michel	France, Columbia	French, Columbian		5	2017	✓	✓			✓		Have not decided yet	✓	✓	
12	33	Male	English	Peter	EU	British			7	✓				✓		Have not decided yet	✓		
13	31	Female	English	Alena	Belarus	Belarussian		2	2018						I live in LT	Yes	✓		
14	35	Female	English	Marcia	Portugal	Portuguese							✓			Yes, for some time only	✓	✓	
15	49	Male	English	Mehmet	Muğla	Turkey		12	2014	✓	✓	✓				Yes	✓		
16	28	Female	English	Diana		Estonian		9	2016					✓	I work in LT	Have not decided yet			✓
17	52				Denmark	Danish			1996	✓					Business	Yes			✓
18	33	Female	English	Karolina	Poland	Polish							✓		To communicate with locals	Yes, for some time only	✓	✓	
19	24	Female	English	Laura	France	French							✓		To communicate with friends	No		✓	
20	26	Female	English	Olga	Belarus	Belarussian		8	2017		✓					Have not decided yet	✓	✓	
21	30	Male	English	Gerrit	Lithuania	German		4	2017	✓						Yes	✓	✓	
22	22	Male	English	Arnold	Romania, Hungary	Hungarian		12	2017		✓	✓				No			✓
23	22	Female	English	Maria Eugenia	Spain	Spanish		2	2018			✓	✓			Have not decided yet		✓	
24	22	Female	English	Chiara	Italy	Italian		1	2018			✓	✓			Yes		✓	
25	25	Male	English	Joao Pedro	Portugal	Portuguese		12	2017			✓				No		✓	
26	25	Female	English		Spain	Spanish		1	2018			✓	✓			Have not decided yet	✓		
27	23	Male	English	Mert	Turkey	Turkish						✓				Yes, for some time only		✓	
28	50	Male	English	Mohamed		Egyptian		8	2017	✓						Yes	✓		
29	42	Female	Russian	Tatjana	Russia	Russian		8	2014				✓	✓		Yes	✓		
30	37	Female	Russian	Tatjana	Belarus	Belarussian		9	2015						For myself	Yes			✓

Respondent	Age	Gender	Survey language	Name	Citizenship	Nationality	1) Since when are you staying in Lithuania?			2) Why are you learning Lithuanian?						3) Are you planning to stay in Lithuania?	4) Could you answer a few questions about living in Lithuania in person or via Skype? The interview could be in Lithuanian, English or Russian.		
							Day	Month	Year	To communicate with family members	It is a workplace requirement	I am volunteering in Lithuania	To obtain Lithuanian citizenship	I want to learn a new language	I am studying in Lithuania		Yes, interview in person is fine	Yes, interview via Skype is fine	No
31	50	Female	Russian	Tatjana	Ukraine	Ukrainian		9	2016					✓		Yes, for some time only			✓
32	36	Female	Russian	Nadiezda	Ukraine	Ukrainian		8	2014						To understand and express myself	Yes, for some time only			✓
33	46	Male	Russian	Vytautas	Russia	Russian		9	2015				✓	✓		Yes, for some time only	✓	✓	
34	56	Female	Russian	Iruna	Belarus	Belarusian		5	2014			✓	✓	✓		Yes			✓
35	33	Male	Russian		Belarus	Belarusian			2014	✓	✓			✓		Yes			✓
36	43	Female	Russian	Viktorija	Russia	Russian		1.5			✓	✓				Yes			✓
37	35	Male	Russian	A. M. Farid	Bangladesh	Bangladeshi				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		Yes			✓
38	31	Female	Russian	Lina	China	Chinese					✓			✓	Other	Yes, for some time only	✓		
39	31	Female	Russian	Kamilla	Russia	Uzbekistani		5	2016		✓					Yes, for some time only			✓
40	53	Male	Russian	Imar	Belarus	Belarusian		6	2014		✓			✓		Yes, for some time only	✓	✓	
41	43	Male	Russian	Igor	Belarus	Russian		10	2014				✓	✓	To communicate with friends	Yes		✓	
42	37	Female	Russian	Kanna	Belarus	Belarusian		7	2004						To speak the language of the country I live in	Yes		✓	
43	38	Male	Russian	Qaisar	Belgium	Belgian		5			✓			✓		Have not decided yet	✓		
44	19	Female	Russian	Alisa Taieva	Belarus	Belarusian		7	2016		✓		✓	✓		Have not decided yet	✓	✓	
45	35	Female	Russian	Dzesika	Lithuania	Russian		9	2015						To be admitted to university	Yes			✓
46	24	Male	Russian	Artur	Russia	Lithuanian		1	2018					✓	Job search, integration to society	Yes	✓	✓	
47	41	Male	Russian	Dmitrij Ivanov	Russia	Russian		11	2014						To pass A2 exam	Yes, for some time only	✓	✓	

Appendix III. Interview questions

Interview questions in English

1. Could you please introduce yourself? Where are you from? Tell me shortly about your previous life in your homeland.
2. How long are you in Lithuania? What was the initial reason you moved to Lithuania?
3. Have you ever been in Lithuania before? How was your arrival to Lithuania? What were your first thoughts? Were your expectations met?
4. Was the bureaucratic part of the arrival clear? Did you need help with the paperwork from family/friends/acquaintances? Was the communication with the people at governmental institutions easy?
5. Do you remember any moments that were especially difficult or good in the beginning?
6. How long did it take for you to feel at home in Vilnius or Lithuania in general? (If you arrived to this feeling already.)
7. What is your situation today? Are you working/studying? Was it easy to find a job/educational programme?
8. Have you made Lithuanian friends? How did you meet? How do you spend time together?
9. Could you elaborate on the reason you are learning Lithuanian?
10. Do you ever feel that there is a language barrier in certain situations or places?
11. How do you spend your free time in Lithuania?
12. What are your thoughts about the future? Would you describe your life in Lithuania as a happy life?
13. Do you think about your home country or ever long to go back? How often do you visit?
14. Are you happy in Lithuania at the moment? Do you feel that you have integrated into the Lithuanian society?

Interview questions in Lithuanian

1. Gal galėtumėte trumpai papasakoti apie save? Iš kur Jūs atvykote? Kaip Jūsų gyvenimas atrodė gimtojoje šalyje?
2. Kaip seniai esate Lietuvoje? Kodėl atvykote į Lietuvą?
3. Ar prieš persikraustant yra tekę būtų Lietuvoje? Gal galėtumėte papasakoti apie patį pradinį atvykimo į Lietuvą etapą? Koks buvo pirmas įspūdis apsigyvenus Lietuvoje? Ar lūkesčiai pasiteisino?
4. Ar biurokratinė atvykimo dalis buvo aiški? Ar jums reikėjo pagalbos iš šeimos/draugų/pažįstamų tvarkant dokumentus? Ar buvo lengva bendrauti su žmonėmis dirbančiais valstybės institucijose?
5. Ar pamenate, kad būtų buvę kokių nors akimirų kuomet buvo itin sunku? O gal kaip tik lengva?
6. Ar Lietuvą laikote savo namais? Ar ilgai užtruko taip pasijausti?
7. Ką šiuo metu veikiate Lietuvoje? Dirbate/mokotės? Ar sunku buvo susirasti darbą/studijas?
8. Ar susiradote draugų lietuvių? Kur susipažinote? Kaip kartu leidžiate laiką?
9. Kodėl mokotės lietuvių kalbos?
10. Ar kada jaučiate kalbos barjerą kokiose nors situacijose?
11. Kaip praleidžiate savo laisvalaikį Lietuvoje?
12. Kokie jūsų ateities planai? Ar laikytumėte savo gyvenimą Lietuvoje laimingu?
13. Ar pasiilgstate gimtosios šalies? Ar norėtumėte grįžti? Kaip dažnai lankotės?
14. Ar šiuo metu esate laimingas gyvendamas Lietuvoje? Ar manote, kad jūs sėkmingai integravotės į Lietuvos visuomenę?

Interview questions in Russian

1. Не могли бы вы представиться? Откуда вы? Расскажите коротко о вашей предыдущей жизни на вашей родине.
2. Как долго вы находитесь в Литве? Какова была главная причина, из за которой вы переехали в Литву?
3. Вы когда-нибудь раньше бывали в Литве? Как прошел ваш переезд в Литву? Каковы были ваши первые впечатления? Оправдались ли ваши ожидания?
4. Была ли вам ясна бюрократическая часть прибывания? Вам нужна была помощь с оформлением документов со стороны семьи / друзей / знакомых? Легко ли было общаться с людьми работающими в правительственных учреждениях?
5. Помните ли вы моменты, которые были особенно трудными или хорошими в начале вашего проживания в Литве?
6. Как долго вам занесло почувствовать себя как дома в Вильнюсе или Литве в целом? (Если вы уже достигли этого чувства.)
7. Какова ваша ситуация сегодня? Вы работаете / учитесь? Было ли легко найти работу / образовательную программу?
8. Есть ли в вашем кругу друзей литовцы? Как вы познакомились? Как вы проводите время вместе?
9. Не могли бы вы рассказать о том, почему вы изучаете литовский язык?
10. Вы когда-нибудь чувствовали, что в определенных ситуациях или местах существует языковой барьер?
11. Как вы проводите свое свободное время в Литве?
12. Что вы думаете о будущем? Считаете ли вы свою жизнь в Литве счастливой?
13. Вы думаете о своей родной стране или же желаете вернуться назад? Как часто вы её посещаете?
14. В настоящий момент вы счастливы в Литве? Считаете ли вы, что вы интегрировались в литовское общество?

Appendix IV. Article about Beta

Gydytojas iš Maroko laimę rado X

Medikų emigracija į turtingesnes vakarų Europos valstybes įgauna vis didesnį pagreitį. Lagaminus kraunasi ne tik slaugytojai, bet ir jauni ar nemažą patirties bagažą turintys gydytojai. Tačiau Lietuvą kaip galimybių šalį dirbti, siekti karjeros ir gyventi atranda vis daugiau medikų iš kitų šalių. Prieš kelis mėnesius į X greitosios pagalbos stoties medikų bendruomenę įsiliejo jaunas gydytojas iš egzotiškojo Maroko.

Meilė iš pirmo žvilgsnio

Maroko sostinę Rabatą ir X skiria tūkstančiai kilometrų, tačiau gyvenimas tuo ir žavus, kad niekada negali žinoti, kokių staigmenų gali pateikti. Iš Maroko kilęs Beta, prieš kelerius metus atvykęs į Lietuvą kaip turistas, net negalėjo pagalvoti, kad čia įleis savo šaknis. Tačiau į akį kritusi žavi lietuvaitė apvertė jo gyvenimą aukštyn kojomis. Dabar meilės emigrantas savo gyvenimą sieja su X.

Kaip pasakojo Beta, iki lemtingos kelionės apie Lietuvą nežinojo beveik nieko. Pirmą kartą apie mūsų šalį išgirdo besimokydamas gal aštuntoje klasėje. Tais metais Lietuva su dar keliomis kitomis šalimis buvo priimta į Europos Sąjungos šalių šeimą. Geografijos mokytoja lentoje užrašė visų naujų narių pavadinimus. Vaikinas dar nusistebėjo, kad Lietuvos ir Latvijos šalių pavadinimai arabų kalba – vos ne identiški, skiriasi tik keliomis raidėmis.

„Net nebūčiau pagalvojęs, kad po kiek laiko gyvensiu Lietuvoje. Bet kaip mėgsta sakyti prancūzai – c’est la vie – toks gyvenimas“, – šypsosi jaunasis medikas.

Prieš kelerius metus jis atvyko į Lietuvą kaip turistas. Kelionės metu likimas netikėtai jį suvedė su žavia Xiete. Marokietis atviras – tai buvo meilė iš pirmo žvilgsnio,

privertusi jį pakoreguoti savo gyvenimo planus. Tiesa, vyras tuo metu Maroke dar mokėsi doktorantūroje, o būsimoji jo žmona studijavo Lietuvoje. Tad, kaip sako Beta, kurį laiką teko gyventi viena koja Lietuvoje, kita – Maroke. Bet kai jausmai tarp dviejų žmonių liepsnoja – net didžiausi atstumai nėra kliūtis. Virtualiai jie jau buvo kartu – labai daug bendraudavo internetu.

„Kai susipažinau su savo žmona, supratau, kad tai tikroji mano gyvenimo meilė. Nors atstumas tarp mūsų šalių didžiulis, tačiau tai tik sustiprino mūsų jausmus. Esu maksimalistas ir visada siekiu savo svajonių. Vaikystėje svajojau tapti gydytoju ir šią svajonę įgyvendinau. O kai pamačiau savo būsimą žmoną, norėjosi padaryti viską, kad mes būtume kartu“, – atviravo marokietis.

Nelengva pradžia

Įsimylėjęliai planavo baigę studijas apsigyventi Maroke, tačiau po ilgų dvejonių visgi nusprendė savo gyvenimą kurti Lietuvoje.

Pasak Beta, tai buvo labiau žmonos Dovilės noras, kurį jis palaikė. Maroke yra kalbama arabų arba prancūzų kalbomis. Nors prancūzų kalba ne tokia sudėtinga kaip lietuvių, ją išmokti nėra lengva. Be to, žmonai geresnės darbo perspektyvos buvo Lietuvoje. Tad tik baigęs doktorantūros studijas jis atvyko į Lietuvą, kur Vilniaus universitete pradėjo mokytis lietuvių kalbos, dirbti bei laukti savojo leidimo gyventi Lietuvoje. Pradžia nebuvo lengva – teko kurį laiką laukti, kol oficialiai buvo pripažinta jo gydytojo licencija ir diplomas, gautas leidimas gyventi mūsų šalyje. O didžiausias iššūkis buvo išmokti lietuvių kalbą, mat tik išlaikius lietuvių kalbos egzaminą yra leidžiama dirbti mediko darbą. Todėl vyras pradėjo stropiai mokytis lietuvių kalbos.

„Prisipažinsiu, pats netikėjau, kad galėsiu nors šiek tiek kalbėti lietuviškai. Ir dėstytojams sakiau, kad tai neįmanoma. Bet jau po dviejų trimestrų puikiai išlaikiau lietuvių kalbos egzaminą“, – kad lietuvių kalba nėra neįkandamas riešutėlis, tvirtina Beta.

Jam atvykus gyventi į Lietuvą, jo žmona jau laukėsi. O vos po trijų mėnesių jiems gimė dukrytė, kuriai šiuo metu jau metai ir devyni mėnesiai. Tad teko ne tik mokytis, bet ir skubėti susirasti darbą, kad galėtų išlaikyti šeimą.

Kai tik užsieniečiui buvo išduotas leidimas dirbti Lietuvoje, iškilo dilema – likti Vilniuje ar persikelti į X, žmonos gimtąjį miestą. Sutapimas, bet kai vyrui Vilniuje, privačioje klinikoje buvo pasiūlytas darbas, laisva darbo vieta atsirado ir X greitosios pagalbos stotyje. Tad šeimai teko susidėlioti prioritetus. Galiausiai apsisprendė įsikurti X. Pasak marokiečio, gyventi X norėjo žmona, o ir dukrytei čia augti daug geriau.

„Apsvarstę nusprendėme pasirinkti X. Man patinka čia gyventi. Palyginti su mano gimtuoju miestu, X labai mažas. Aš gyvenau Maroko sostinėje Rabate, kur beveik pusantro milijono gyventojų, o čia kiek daugiau kaip 90 tūkst. Skirtumas didžiulis, bet mažas miestas turi ir savų privalumų. Be to, turiu darbą, iš kurio galiu išlaikyti šeimą“, – kalbėjo Beta.

Paskui svajones

Jau nuo praėjusių metų lapkričio medikas dirba X greitosios pagalbos stotyje – skuba padėti greitosios medicinos pagalbos besišaukiantiems pacientams. Tiesa, jaunas medikas prisipažino, kad buvo šiek tiek nerimo, kaip jį, egzotiškos išvaizdos ir su akcentu kalbantį gydytoją, priims pacientai. Tačiau bent kol kas buvo sutiktas itin draugiškai. Kai kurie pacientai ar jų artimieji pradeda domėtis, iš kokios šalies atvyko gydytojas, prašo daugiau papasakoti apie savo gimtinę.

„Pacientai dažnai nustemba išvydę tamsiaodį gydytoją. Iš pradžių baiminausi, kad gali būti nepasitenkinimo, jog esu užsienietis, bet džiaugiuosi, kad mane X priima labai šiltai“, – atviravo gydytojas.

Nors Maroko ligoninėse jam teko atlikti tik praktiką, jis gali palyginti, kuo skiriasi medikų darbas šioje šalyje ir Lietuvoje. Dažnai tenka išgirsti, kad atvykę pacientai priversti ilgokai laukti medicininės pagalbos Respublikinėje X ligoninėje. Tačiau, kaip

juokauja Beta, jeigu pamatytų, kiek pacientų yra Maroko ligoninių priėmimo skyriuose, tikriausiai taip nebekalbėtų. Didelis darbo plusas Lietuvoje, kad čia medikai turi gerokai daugiau priemonių ir technikos padėti sergantiesiems.

Darbas Greitosios pagalbos stotyje jam padėjo suprasti, kurioje medicinos srityje jis norintis specializuotis. Beta, vaikystėje svajojęs tapti tiesiog gydytoju, nesvarbu, kurios srities, vėliau planavo tapti neurochirurgu, o dabar vis dažniau galvoja apie priėmimo skyriaus gydytojo specializaciją. Tai itin atsakingas ir streso pilnas darbas, tačiau būtent priėmimo skyriaus medikas yra pirmasis, kuris gali padėti pacientui, kai iškilęs pavojus jo gyvybei ar būklė tampa nestabili, paūmėja ligos.

„Tos pirmosios minutės yra be galo svarbios. Taip, atsakomybės ir streso daug, bet gydytojas turi išmokti į kiekvieną situaciją reaguoti ramiai ir greitai. Kai dirbau rezidentu, iš pradžių dažniau pajusdavau didelę įtampą, bet supratau, kad tai nepadės pagerinti paciento būklės. Gydytojas privalo likti ramus ir susikonscentruoti tik į pacientą, suteikti visą reikalingą pagalbą. Norėčiau toliau studijuoti Lietuvoje ir likti čia dirbti. Turiu kolegų, kurie taip daro ir jiems puikiai sekasi. Tikiuosi, kad ir aš galėsiu“, – artimiausiais savo planais pasidalijo medikas.

Šeimos žmogus

Emigrantas iš egzotiškojo Maroko džiaugiasi, kad jį labai šiltai priėmė ir kolegos. Tiesa, jo vardo taisyklingai ištarti iki šiol negali. Kad nereikėtų laužyti liežuvio, jį vadina tiesiog Beta. Be kolegų, jis Lietuvoje turi tik vieną draugą, su kuriuo susipažino gyvendamas Vilniuje. Abu medikai dažniausiai bendrauja angliškai, nes, kaip juokauja Beta, iš Kuršėnų kilęs bičiulis kalba itin tarmiškai, tad jis supranta vos vieną kitą žodį.

„Didžiausias mano gyvenimo ramstis – šeima. Kai tik nedarbu, visą savo laisvą laiką skiriu žmonai ir dukrytei. Žinoma, galėčiau turėti tik savų pomėgių, bet paskui gailėsiuosi, kad tiek mažai laiko praleidau su šeima, nepamačiau, kaip užaugo dukrytė, nebuvau su šeima, kai manęs labiausiai reikėjo“, – kalbėjo Beta.

Jo tėvai ir broliai gyvena Maroke, su jais dažniausiai bendrauja internetu. Įkvėptas brolio pavyzdžio, ir jaunesnysis pasirinko medicinos studijas, tad abu broliai mėgsta pasikalbėti ne tik apie kasdienes reikalus, bet ir naujausius medicinos laimėjimus. Kaip juokauja Beta, apie mediciną jie su broliu gali kalbėti nesustodami. O kai dukrytė paaugs, gal pavyks ir dažniau nuvykti į gimtąją šalį.

„Visi trys buvome kartą nuvykę į Maroką, seneliai jau matė anūkę gyvai. Kelias tolimas, su mažu vaiku tokia kelionė yra sudėtinga, bet kai duktė paaugs, gal vyksime ir dažniau“, – atviravo vyras.

Meilė nugali visas kliūtis

Beta džiaugiasi, kad jo tėvai labai šiltai priėmė žinią, jog jo išrinktoji ne marokietė, o lietuvė. Jo tėvai susilaukė penkių sūnų, tad Dovilė jiems kaip dukra. O dabar turi ir anūkytę. Nors jo žmona nemoka arabiškai, o mama – angliškai, svarbiausios jo gyvenimo moterys puikiai susikalba net ir be vertėjo. Kaip ir jis dabar puikiai lietuviškai bendrauja su savo uošviais.

„Juokauju, kad kartais man net pavydu, jog mano tėvai daugiau dėmesio skiria anūkei, o ne man. Esu laimingas, kad seneliai taip ją myli“, – šypsosi marokietis.

Nors tarp kitataučių šeimų dažnai kyla konfliktinių situacijų dėl kultūrų skirtumų, Beta įsitikinęs, kad kai sieja stipri meilė, pagarba vienas kitam, jokios kliūtys ar barjerai negali sutrukdyti kurstyti šeimyninės laimės židinį.

Pora susituokė Maroke. Nors vestuvės buvo kuklios, tačiau vyko laikantis marokietišκών tradicijų. O Lietuvoje šeima gyvena pagal lietuviškas tradicijas.

Beta mėgsta sukiotis virtuvėje ir gaminti tradicinius Maroko valgius, bet jau pamėgo ir lietuvišką virtuvę.

„Kai yra meilė, kultūrų skirtumai tampa nebesvarbūs. Jų yra, bet aš stengiuosi prisitaikyti prie lietuviškų tradicijų, nes gyvenu Lietuvoje. Čia planuoju ir savo ateitį“, – sakė Beta.