



## MIGRANT IMPACT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF CREATIVE SOCIETY IN LITHUANIA: A CRITICAL OVERVIEW

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**Abstract.** Migration has become a significant issue in many countries and it has been highly debated topic in economic and social policy areas. Only recently, the impact of migration on the culture, norms, values and development of creative society had begun to catch the attention of policymakers and researchers. Migrant contributions to the society are seen not only as significant component to economies and their labour markets, but also as an important factor in stimulating creativity and innovation. This paper analyses this inter-relatedness and presents empirically-based arguments in support of the position that a migration can be regarded as the main prerequisite for the creation of a knowledge economy and as providing the potential for development of creative and inclusive society.

**Keywords:** creativity, diversity, migration, social innovation, tolerance, youth policy.

### Introduction

Migration has become a significant issue in many countries and it has been highly debated topic in economic and social policy areas. Recently the impact of migration on the development of creative society had begun to catch the attention of policymakers and researchers. The hypothesis saying that both the mobile and the non-mobile skilled persons contribute to the development of the national innovation system of the country is constantly checked on the basis of migration-innovation relationship model where different types of migration (economic, highly-skilled, talent, asylum; macro-societal, household (*mezzo*) or individual level, transnational and national or local) intersect. The so called migration-development nexus has become a key parameter for development policies, thus this paper has two overall objectives: (1) to address the importance of migrant contributions to the development of creative society; (2) to assess the scope of migration policies in Lithuania and their role in the development of the country's creative potential.

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## 1. Migrant economic and socio-cultural contributions to creative society

When analysing the impact of migration to creative society first we need to address the social and economic factors on the macro level. According to the *World Migration Report 2020* (International Organization for Migration, 2020), there are four ways through which migrants contribute to society and enhance innovation: (a) migrants are higher concentrated in economic sectors that tend to be more innovative; (b) migrants contribute to innovation through patents and as entrepreneurs; (c) they contributions to business start-ups are greater compared with natives; and (d) migration foster investment, trade and technology linkages (International Organization for Migration, 2020). These above mentioned dimensions of innovation are related to creativity, as many industries need talented workforce and quality human capital in cultivating creative industries and creative class (Williams, 2007; Kačerauskas, 2012).

The importance of migrant contributions has been given an unprecedented level of importance in research literature and policies to innovations in the society. For example, Hart (2007), who analyses the way in which migration of highly skilled persons contributes to innovation potential, suggests the analysis of the expenditure (input) and output of the migrant human capital can be understood as an input to the national innovation system. Especially young skilled persons who come to the destination country as students are tied with the institutional, organisational, legislative and political-cultural context of that country, and thus their input in the infrastructure of innovation is greater (Hart, 2007). Moreover, labour force which is culturally diverse determines the origination of innovation (Niebuhr, 2010; Stuen et al., 2012). For example, Stuen et al. (2012), who investigated migrant employees working at the universities in the United States (US), concluded that national diversity among scientists (not just being a foreigner *per se*) was the determinant factor in the increase in innovation. Florida (2005) also favours these conclusions and suggests that cultural diversity is the most important factor that attracts the workers who belong to the “creative classes” to a certain country or region. Innovation supplementation model means that the arrival of educated people to the country creates a flow of knowledge to certain sectors or areas as well as the adjacent sectors and areas in the country while the primary consequence of such flow of knowledge is innovation (Hunt & Gauthier-Loiselle, 2009). For instance, Hunt and Gauthier-Loiselle (2009), who analysed the non-economic merits of migrants in the US, calculated that 26% of the US scientists who received Nobel Prizes in 1999–2000 were migrants (notwithstanding the fact that there were only 12% of immigrants in the General Register of Immigrants). These authors also calculated that when the number of immigrants who possess higher education increases by 1%, the number of patented inventions for one resident of the US increases by 6% on average. According to Hunt and Gauthier-Loiselle (2009), the number of patents for one resident may increase due to the fact that the local scientists use the “brought in knowledge” of the immigrants and this constitutes a critical mass of creative specialists in a certain economic field, while the flow of knowledge eventually contributes to the innovation of other secondary areas, e.g. management and enterprise (Hunt & Gauthier-Loiselle, 2009).

Another migrant contribution to creative society may be described as the immigration attraction of highly skilled personnel model. This model states that although immigration is regulated through visa programmes, the continuous flow of immigrants is actually maintained by the “infrastructure of attraction”, *i.e.* the exceptional conditions that exist to create, to study or conduct scientific research activities in that country attract highly skilled persons to migrate to the country. Quite a number of authors take the aspect of infrastructure of attraction as a basis for their analysis of the input of highly qualified persons to the infrastructure of innovation. For example, foreign doctoral students contribute very much to science production: *e.g.* if there is a 10% decrease in the number of foreign doctoral students in the universities of the US, the number of articles in the fields of physical and engineering sciences and their citation level decreases by 5–6% (Stuen et al., 2012). Thus, although the quantitative statistical evidence on the input of highly skilled immigration to the creation of innovation “fluctuates”, it can nevertheless be stated that the possession of the critical mass of “creative talents” in a country is a positive stimulus for innovation and inventions and acts as a prerequisite for creative society. Psacharopoulos and Woodhall also claim that economic capital and natural resources are passive factors of production, while at the same time

“human beings are the active agents who accumulate capital, exploit natural resources, build social, economic and political organisations and carry forward national development” (1986, p. 102).

In this respect, the model of creative class, developed by Florida (2005) suggests that the gathering of the personnel who have immense knowledge in a particular field in a certain country, region or city attracts other creative persons of similar thinking to that country, region or city. In this way the concentration of human capital and synthesis of ideas create the cycle of innovation and economic growth. The critical mass of personnel of a particular field in a city or country acts as a magnet, which further attracts creative potential.

Creativity is clearly an important economic driver and an integrated element of city development and the role of creativity in developing a city is recognised supporting evidential base provided by Florida (2005). Hence, the economic prosperity of a country depends both on physical and on human resources, therefore it is both material and economic capital together with the human resources of a “critical mass” of highly skilled persons that determine the economic and social development of the countries.

In scientific literature on migrant contributions to the economy we may also find attempts to analyse the transfer of knowledge and innovation in respect of the qualitative aspect, *i.e.* migration as a culture of knowledge acquisition and display (Williams, 2007). Namely, interhuman-interinstitutional relationships are the basis for the creation of innovation potential (Etzkowitz & Laydesdorff, 2000). Knowledge lies in these relationships, therefore, if the individual knowledge is comprehensively employed, two forms of knowledge turn out to be important: tacit and explicit/precise knowledge (Allee, 1997). Tacit knowledge is the knowledge which resides in the heads of individuals and groups due to their experience, perception, beliefs, rituals and values, as well as learning whereas explicit knowledge is most often a documented knowledge (Harris, 2000). Contrary to tacit knowledge, explicit knowledge creates a definite result – a product, service, *etc.* According to Harris (2000), in order to increase the level of explicit and precise knowledge, investments should be directed

towards enhancement of tacit knowledge *i.e.* interhuman-interinstitutional relationships (also see Favell (2008) who analyses the forms of urban cosmopolitanism and networking among young professionals in big European cities). Since the knowledge lies in interhuman-interinstitutional relationships and co-operation among individuals, the positive country “image” of migrant attracting and respecting their culture is significant in providing greater opportunities to share explicit and tacit knowledge.

A vast number of researchers focus on the “brain drain” and “brain gain” debate in the context of migration of the talented, creative individuals. Brain drain can be described as an international, voluntary, legal, long-term or short-term, individual or collective, economic, professional skilled labour migration. Such migration is caused by globalization and is discussed in the context of migration theories and transnationalism phenomenon. Marcinkevičienė (2004), while analysing the migration discourse in Lithuanian media, provides the linguistic explanation of that concept. The metaphor “brain drain” has negative associations and means the vanishing of intellect, abilities, talent, creative potential, knowledge, and wisdom. It is possible to infer, that due to such application of the metaphor, the meaning of the concept “brain drain” has never been agreed among social scientists. The causes of brain drain are classified in different ways. Most commonly identified “pull” and “push” factors are difficulties in finding work at home, low salaries and poor living conditions, the desire to live with family (chain-migration), career ambitions, unbalanced workload, the country’s historical, social, political and cultural “heritage”. Such factors as the shortage of labour in certain sectors and aggressive foreign country policies to attract labour are also significant. Networks of highly skilled persons (creative or scientific diaspora) are a significant “pull” factor that results in “brain gain”. When talented and creative workers are arriving in the country their arrival results in creative work and contributes to national economic growth, research and innovation and creates a chain effect *i.e.* skilled immigrants can help employers to attract more highly skilled workers thus, there is no need for additional spending on education (Hart, 2007; Niebuhr, 2010).

## **2. Recognition and acceptance of migrants’ contributions to creative society: tolerance and diversity agenda**

As we addressed the impact of migration to creative society through the macro level social and economic factors in the first chapter, it is equally important to consider immigrant “perception” factors. Much of research provides strong evidence that cultural perceptions about migrants and tolerance are very significant to the fulfillment of creative individuals. Lacroix et al. (2016) coined the term “social remittances” in order to highlight that in addition to economic prosperity, the circulation of new ideas, creative practices, social capital, and identities between migrant sending and migrant receiving communities results in socio-cultural exchanges within these communities (Levitt, 1998). According to Lacroix et al. (2016), exchanges among migrant sending and receiving societies reinforce and are reinforced by forms of cultural circulation *i.e.* cultural exchanges are conveyed interpersonally between individuals who learn of, adapt, and diffuse ideas and practices through their roles in families, communities, and organizations (Levitt, 2015, 1998). The study *Migrants as Agents of Change* (Grabowska et al., 2017),

puts individual (skills, practices and objects) agency at the centre stage of migration and trace how social remittances are evolving, and the ambiguous impact that they have on society. The authors examine each stage of the process, through “acquisition” and “transfer” to “diffusion” (adaptation and implementation) of new innovative ideas and practices.

Research also provides strong evidence that high-tech and creative industry flourishes in areas where tolerance of diversity is implied by the prevalence of foreign-born residents, gays and artistically creative bohemians (see Florida, 2019; Florida et al., 2015; Chen, 2011 and for a more sceptical account see Pereira Lopes et al., 2011). Research also suggests that migration and multiculturalism increase receptivity of new ideas and practices. Humanism, tolerance and acceptance of different culture (including religion, ethnicity, sexuality, gender, social background *etc.*) comprises core characteristics of contemporary ideas of what is to have a creative society made up of equal, supportive and mutually respectful individuals and groups. The spectrum of diversity and migration issues stretches from discussions at the micro level on the identity politics of individual social groups, tending to involve members of various social groups (women, members of ethnic minorities and also lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT)), to the macro level with the central axes of social inequality, for example, hierarchical gender relations, class relations or migration regimes, and also encompasses, at the meso level, approaches to diversity in the workplace in the form of organisational diversity management policies (Vertovec, 2015). In this context the question of how individual people “deal” with difference and cultural diversity is an important research topic (*e.g.* attitudes to immigrants, hate crime and victimization, integration issues, discrimination *etc.*).

Another important but highly under-researched aspect of migration is related to value orientations. It is argued in literature that it is important to include value orientations as powerful explanatory migrants’ contributions to the society variable. For example, Blanchflower and Shadforth (2009) used Eurobarometer life satisfaction scores and concluded that the propensity to migrate is even more highly correlated with life satisfaction than it is with gross domestic product *per capita*. Prytula and Pohorila (2012) base their analysis on two-factor theory and prove that in nations where intrinsic values (*e.g.* personal self-fulfillment, content of the job task *etc.*) are prevalent, the rates of out-migration are lower. On the contrary, in nations where strong extrinsic work values (salary level, physical working conditions, and working hours) are prevalent, out-migration rates are higher (Prytula & Pohorila, 2012). According to Prytula and Pohorila (2012) extrinsic values could be conducive to migration because they are prevalent in periods of social instability (Ardichvili, 2009). However, migration studies have been slow to engage with critical debates on values and norms and little research has been conducted on the analysis of the meaning of migration in order to understand the mental models that shape the way migrants think about trust, competition, authority, and other critical value variables.

### **3. The transformative potential of migrants: the case of Lithuania**

Lithuanian migration exerts a major influence upon the character of Lithuanian society today. For example, 2011 census data revealed that almost 670 000 people, or 18% of the population, had lived abroad for more than a year since 1990, when the country regained

its independence (see Ambrozaitienė, 2013). Of this number, the majority were 25–40 years of age and economically active, while one-fifth were either highly-skilled or had at least tertiary education. Furthermore, immigration and return migration have not been sufficient to maintain population growth. Return migration for the period noted was less than 110 000, and the level of immigration was consistently low (Huddlestone et al., 2015). That is to say that Lithuania became an exporter of its workforce and creative talent. The causes of the loss of talented and creative individuals from Lithuania can also be described as either external, such as the social, economic, legal, and cultural environment in which a country is located (*the situation in*), or internal, including personal needs and aspirations and the possibilities for self-actualization (*the situation of*). The most commonly identified “pull” and “push” factors are difficulties in finding work at home, low salaries, poor living conditions, the desire to live with one’s family (chain migration), career ambitions, unbalanced workloads, and a given country’s social, political, and cultural heritage. Such factors as the shortage of labor in certain sectors and aggressive country policies to attract talented and creative workers (in the information and communication technology sector or other creative professions) are also significant, as are networks of highly-skilled and creative persons (creative diaspora). The departure of talented scientists and professionals – a country’s intellectual capital – limits the competitiveness of certain areas of the economy, especially those associated with advanced technology and creative industries.

In order to reverse the emigration trends for the benefit of creative society in Lithuania the economic, social and cultural strategies have to address the complex phenomenon of talent migration. Different countries deal in different ways with the issues connected with the international mobility of knowledge workers, and three main approaches can be identified in this regard: a) an active regulation model; b) a policy of non-interference; and c) a future scenario approach (Ushkalov & Malakha, 2001). The first of these involves active intervention by the state in migration flows by means of administrative, legal, and economic measures. It is argued (Ushkalov & Malakha, 2001) that the use of such management tactics is appropriate in countries experiencing a significant emigration of talented persons. According to this opinion, the policy of non-interference implies that the state has no right to regulate migration processes insofar as doing so may violate fundamental human rights and freedoms; the future scenario approach acknowledges that individual state policies cannot successfully regulate emigration and immigration by itself and this issue instead needs to be addressed at a supranational level so that the interests of the individual migrant as well as her home country can be protected insofar as the migration of highly-skilled individuals is inseparable from both national and individual future development (Ushkalov & Malakha, 2001).

However, besides policies it is significant to address the “soft” dimensions of migration of creative individuals in particular. In order to attract or to retain creative individuals, some Lithuanian scholars often discuss the need for increasing tolerance as being crucial for Lithuania to fulfill its social, economic and creative potential (see Janušauskienė, 2013; Sprindžiūnas, 2006; Labanauskas, 2014, 2019) but we may find many examples in policy that signal of a lack of consistent political will to integrate tolerance and diversity in every domain of life. Lithuania has been only recently experiencing larger-scale immigration (mainly from Ukraine and Belarus, as well as larger-scale return migration) but it is expected that

immigration will increase gradually. Since 2014 migrant integration policies started to move beyond ad hoc principles (Huddleston et al., 2015). First the Migration Policy Guidelines set out a special chapter on the Integration of Foreigners, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (Lithuania) created a multi-stakeholder working group and finally an Action Plan on the Integration of Foreigners, the implementation of which should lead to new support measures and concrete policy changes in 2015 and beyond (Huddleston et al., 2015). Moreover, recent immigration to Lithuania became quite likely among citizens of countries of The Commonwealth of Independent States and other, because this is cheap, easy and fast way to get total entrance to European Union (EU), move across Schengen Area freely and use all services and facilities of European countries. Another reason is that Lithuania has agreed to settle 1105 refugees in the period of 2015–2017 according to European Commission proposals. As Lithuania opened borders to the citizens of EU and non-EU citizens the situation mostly have changed in higher education institutions as they are receiving students from different countries from Africa (Nigeria, Congo, Ghana) or Asia (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh).

This poses a challenge as the Lithuanian “multiculturalism” and “diversity” is different from that of multiethnic or immigrant societies and Lithuania need policies how to turn immigration into a factor to foster social cohesion and creative society. So far the information, data and research in migration, creativity or “social-remittances” is rather fragmented. In *The Global Creativity Index 2015* (see Florida et al., 2015) Lithuania ranks very high (12th place) in talent dimension (education policy, share of educated and creative workforce), 65th in technology (investment in science and research infrastructure) and only 105th in tolerance (attitudes to different identities) dimension. Thus, although creativity, openness and responsibility are the values to be followed in taking public strategic decisions, as it is stated explicitly in Lithuania’s Progress Strategy “Lithuania 2030” (State Progress Council, 2020) there is a mismatch between the reality and political strategies. According to Beresniová (2010) since 1991 Lithuania enlisted its education system as a tool for imparting the democratic skills and worldviews necessary for EU accession, the internalization of new democratic norms proved to be more complicated than the unidirectional transmission expected by many elites, as students, parents, and politicians played a part in the way that educational reforms were understood, implemented, embodied, and even resisted. Tolerance education was initially included in Lithuanian reforms, but there has been an increasingly visible backlash against it, as some now see its existence as an encroachment on the right of “Lithuanians” to develop a strong national identity after 60 years of occupation (Beresniová, 2010). In Lithuanian planning documents tolerance is mentioned in more general terms as one of the values of the National Education Strategy 2013–2022 (Lietuvos Respublikos Seimas, 2013). Tereškinas (2007) argues that pro-tolerance (especially pro-LGBT) issues are routinely characterised as things that “humiliate the Lithuanian nation” and Lithuanians are called upon to “defend the nation and the family” (Tereškinas, 2007). Janušauskienė (2013) in her literature review on diversity and tolerance in Lithuania concludes that despite the fact that the majority of the population in both Lithuania and “ethnic Lithuania” is optimistic with regard to diversity, the relations between people of different backgrounds in individual cases might sometimes be problematic (Janušauskienė, 2013). This is leading to incidences of social tensions, hate speech and hate incidents on the individual level (also see Labanauskas, 2019).

Successful implementation of any inclusive immigration policy is largely dependent on citizens being positive about cultural and identity differences. In 2016 a survey was undertaken into the attitudes of 16–29 years of age Lithuanian towards tolerance and diversity and the way these concepts are interpreted by young people (Grincevičienė et al., 2016). The survey showed that the majority of the youth do not have much contact with persons with disabilities, or persons from diverse social, ethnic, racial, gender or sexual background. The survey also revealed that young Lithuanian men bear more negative and exclusionist views towards diversity and the attitudinal factors of discrimination and gender equality scored very high (in a negative sense). The authors concluded that the roots of these attitudes can be found in history and, particularly, the Soviet-time immigration regime that was very restrictive. Thus, it is possible to conclude that political and theoretical statements of tolerant society are not necessary consistent with the social reality because the agenda of educational policies has more focus on nationalistic values but not the values based on human rights. Developing positive attitudes to diversity in youth might prepare them to contribute to making the society more tolerant and open. This is of paramount importance in promoting creativity and fostering social cohesion and lessen chauvinist and exclusionist attitudes.

Another impediment for the development of creative society in Lithuania is related to the integration of return migrants (the majority of whom are Lithuanian citizens). One study examined the experiences of 15 of Lithuanian students who returned to the country and found jobs in public institutions (primarily ministries and governmental agencies in Vilnius, Lithuania), after completing at least one full-time course of study in developed Western world, including Sweden, Denmark, the US, United Kingdom, Belgium, Australia, and the Netherlands (see Labanauskas, 2014). The focus of the study concerned how mobility and migration helped to develop their human, social, and cultural capital, how their identities as formed abroad were “brought back” to Lithuania, and how identity clashes with colleagues at work led to some type of innovation. Innovation in this regard referred to something that was either new or a visible improvement. This study revealed that the educational mobility of young Lithuanian students was a very complex phenomenon. First, their perception of “good life” did not necessarily involve territorial attachment (“I’m working in Vilnius now, but I might leave [...] soon”). They spoke about their global lifestyles in a cosmopolitan world without borders, which made it difficult to term their departing to study abroad as emigration in the strict sense. In addition, their return to Lithuania generated challenges to the existing ways of thinking and acting, particularly in work environments. The paternalistic management style that pervaded public sector organizations obstructed the transmission of innovative knowledge and behavior, including self-perceived “Western” values and work ethics. This resulted in returnees being unable in many cases to utilize their highly developed social competences and professional qualifications due to the ingrained resistance in the public sector to innovation and new knowledge, even though a respected foreign university diploma provided them with an expanded range of opportunities on the Lithuanian labor market. In addition, the returnees’ competitive advantage in the workplace was primarily determined by the fact that a foreign university diploma tended to be overvalued by employers as a desirable, and difficult to obtain, and the highly-skilled returnees might have felt themselves to be doubly privileged in the labor market with high inequalities.



## Conclusions

This article aimed at explaining the key conceptual inter-linkages between migration and fostering creativity and explored dimensions of the concepts that are particularly useful for understanding the so-called migration-development nexus that has become a key parameter for inclusive migration and economic development policies. We may conclude that migration studies in Lithuania have been slow to engage with the important current debates on migration impact on fostering creative society. There has been little research concerning the meaning of migration, the relationships between creativity and mental models that shape how migrants (be it immigrants, emigrants, return migrants or asylum seekers) think about trust, competition, authority, tolerance and acceptance of difference and other factors that drive innovation, and encourage the productive use of their creative potential. Although socio-economic variables have an important influence upon migration decision, people respond to external conditions in a manner that is often mediated by culture, values and their subjective individual perceptions, intentions, and goals. Thus, besides socio-economic considerations other most significant reasons for migration of creative and talented individuals are normative and psychological in character.

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## IMIGRANTŲ POVEIKIS KŪRYBOS VISUOMENĖS PLĖTRAI LIETUVOJE: KRITINĖ APŽVALGA

Liutauras LABANAUSKAS

Santrauka

Straipsnyje analizuojamas aukštos kvalifikacijos imigrantų poveikis kūrybos visuomenės plėtrai Lietuvoje. Straipsnio tikslas – išanalizuoti teorines aukštos kvalifikacijos imigracijos poveikio kūrybos visuomenės plėtrai prielaidas, imigrantų įtaką priimančiosios šalies kultūrai, normoms, vertybėms ir talentingų darbuotojų pritraukimo į šalį veiksnius. Straipsnyje laikomasi požiūrio, kad imigrantų indėlis į visuomenę vertinamas ne tik kaip reikšmingas ekonomikos ir šalies darbo rinkos komponentas, bet ir kaip svarbus veiksnys, skatinantis kūrybiškumą ir inovacijas. Šiame straipsnyje analizuojamas minėtas tarpusavio ryšys ir pateikiami empiriškai pagrįsti argumentai, patvirtinantys poziciją, kad talentingų darbuotojų migracija gali būti laikoma pagrindine sąlyga kuriant žinių ekonomiką ir siekiant kūrybiškos bei įtraukios visuomenės potencialo plėtros.

**Reikšminiai žodžiai:** kūrybiškumas, įvairovė, migracija, socialinės inovacijos, tolerancija, jaunimo politika.