INTEGRATION OF MIGRANTS INTO THE COUNTRY'S SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT: THE CASE OF LITHUANIA

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Abstract. Migration is one of today's most sensitive and relevant topics. In 2022 alone, 32.5 million people worldwide will have left their country due to war, political instability, economic hardship, climate change, and other reasons. In recent years, the constantly growing flow of migrants to developed countries poses increasing challenges to the institutions and organizations of those countries, which are looking for new ways of integrating migrants into the social environment. It is difficult for state institutions that do not have the right tools to assess the integrity of the state, and it is difficult to control the ongoing migration processes and quickly make decisions regarding the increased flows of migrants, which could be solved promptly with minimal use of resources. One of the most important solutions for overcoming the challenges of migration is using a dynamic complex instrument that would allow us here and now to identify the causes of changes and efficiently mobilize the necessary resources to solve the challenges of migration that are usually not planned. The article aims to form a complex evaluation instrument to integrate migrants into the social environment. To achieve the goal, a systematic, comparative analysis of concepts and methods published in the scientific literature, statistical processing, and multi-criteria evaluation methods (COPRAS), and the method of determining weight coefficients (CRITIC) is applied.

Keywords: migration, integration of migrants, social environment.

JEL Classification: F66, J00, J23.

Introduction

The events that have taken place in Lithuania in the last five years have shown that a lot of attention is paid to the topics of migration and integration of migrants in society both at the state and scientific levels and a lot of research has been carried out in different aspects, for example: migration processes and their impact on the Lithuanian labour market (Vepšta et al., 2009), Lithuanian migration policy towards third-country nationals (Leveckytė & Junevičius, 2014), Migrant integration and migration networks in Lithuania (Žibas & Platačiūtė, 2012), gender aspect in migration processes (Erentaitė & Sotirovič, 2012), analysis of an effective immigrant integration policy in Lithuania (Čepeliauskaitė, 2018), the need for integration measures for immigrants from countries outside the European Union in Lithuania (Bartkevičienė & Raudeliūnaitė, 2012), migrant integration policy, perceived threat to the community and general trust (Tatarko & Jurcik, 2021), the Migration Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) has been developed, which covers the following areas: labour market

mobility; family reunion; education; health; political participation; permanent residence, access to nationality, anti-discrimination (Migrant Integration Policy Index, 2020). However, an instrument that enables a comprehensive assessment of the integration of migrants into the social environment is missing. It is difficult for state institutions that do not have the right tools or do not have enough of them to assess, control the ongoing migration processes, and make the necessary decisions quickly. Therefore, in most cases, government bodies and state institutions react only intuitively to the unfolding circumstances of the crisis.

It should be emphasized that every decision made about a migrant can have positive and negative social, economic, and other consequences for the receiving state and its permanent residents. The possible solution options analysed and new interactions with society found will ensure the successful social and economic integration of migrants into society and create conditions for the proper use of new labour resources. The favourable conditions created for migrants and their proper integration into the social

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environment will raise the economic level and competitiveness of the host country concerning other countries in a multi-year perspective.

Existing methods for assessing the integrity of migrants are not adapted to determine the integrity of migrants in terms of the social environment. Still, they can be quickly and easily adapted to assess such integrity. Based on the evaluation principles, a complex evaluation instrument for the integration of migrants in the social environment was developed, which will allow the evaluation of the integration of migrants in the social environment concerning time and other states and to determine the main factors determining successful integration according to individual environments.

1. Theoretical aspects

The concept of migrants generally includes a broad group of people who leave their country of origin to settle and live in another country. They can be both legal and illegal migrants, depending on their legal status and the migration channels they use.

It is important to emphasize that migrants can be representatives of different nationalities, ethnic groups, religions, or cultures. They may have different needs, assets, education, and qualifications. Some migrants may plan to live abroad temporarily, while others may seek long-term or permanent residence elsewhere.

The concept of migrants is also related to social, economic, and legal aspects. This includes their rights, responsibilities, and opportunities, and migration policy, where countries establish rules and procedures for the reception, integration, legality, and possible repatriation of migrants.

Many researchers have examined the definition of a migrant in their works and have provided their interpretation and definitions, which are presented in the table (see Table 1).

In summary, Table 1 can be said that to understand the concept of migrants and consider their needs, it is essential to assess their rights, security, health, education, work opportunities, and other essential aspects. In addition, it is important to implement a just and humanitarian approach to ensure that migrants are accepted and integrated according to international and human rights. Different researchers define the concept of social environment in different ways. A healthy social environment means less social tension, conflict, inequality, and exclusion. Similarly, the well-being of the social environment helps promote health, education, economic growth, and community cooperation. Social factors and the environment partly shape human behaviour and affect his life, helping or hindering him in adapting to the community around him and in adapting and conforming to local traditions and habits. Social exclusion and lack of well-being can determine an individual's emotional state, general well-being, health, diseases, or even the population's mortality rate; therefore, demographic indicators of the population are predicted based on social factors. Accessible social health care services, social benefits in various forms, and free social services are essential for people adapting to a new environment. Social services are most needed by the vulnerable population, who cannot purchase basic goods and services due to financial deprivation (Makovskaja & Okunevičiūtė Neverauskienė, 2020). One of the factors in an individual's decision to migrate is poverty and deprivation, so this poorest group is the most vulnerable, and with the addition of the unknown factor, the unfamiliar

Table 1. The concept of a migrant (compiled by the authors)

The concept of a migrant	Author
Migrant – a person who lives abroad for more than one year and intends to leave his country or live abroad for a certain period.	(Massey et al., 2007)
A migrant is a person who legally crosses an international border to settle permanently or temporarily in another country.	(Martin & Radu, 2012)
A migrant is a person who changes his place of residence, leaves his home country, and goes to another country to live or work.	(Ambrosetti et al., 2016)
A migrant is a person who changes his place of residence, crosses national borders, and moves from one social environment to another.	(Castles, 2018)
A migrant is a person who has aspirations and capabilities to migrate within given sets of perceived geographical opportunity structures.	(de Haas, 2021)
Migrant is a person who moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons.	(International Organization For Migration, 2023)
A migrant is a person who, due to persecution, is a person who is cannot exercise his or her origin in the country of origin or because of fear of such persecution defence of the country.	(Demidenko, 2019)
Migrant is a person who is living in a country other than his or her country of birth	(United Nations, 2016)
Migrant is a person who, in order to move to or stay in a desired place, has to struggle gainst bordering practices and processes of boundary-making that are implicated by the national order of things	(Anderson & Blinder, 2019)

environment becomes very risky for the community of the country. Social factors and state policies towards them create a positive or negative atmosphere and environment that can determine the migrant's integration into or rejection of this community. The impact of these social factors, such as unemployment and social exclusion, on each state is very systematic by a researcher (Mikulionienė, 2005). It is not possible to single out only one system of government or policies implemented by the state. In all forms of government, social hierarchies are formed in societies, distinguished by the following common features: longevity, health, and well-being. Only in some countries are the social evaluation indicators better than in others, reflecting the general evaluation of the countries in the context of globalization.

Distribution in social hierarchies in most cases, groups with better social indicators are at the top, characterized by long life, disease prevention, and happiness index, and at the bottom are social groups with signs of early diseases, shorter life expectancy, low happiness index, reflecting the impact of the social system on society.

Although the main evaluation indicators are associated with poverty and deprivation, ethnic, political, racial, cultural, and religious factors are no less shaping the individual to decide to migrate, only appearing less frequently and to a lesser extent (Jokūbaitis & Norkus, 2006). With these acts of armed conflicts plaguing the world today, war refugees in various parts of the world become the object of the causes of their own and other countries' vulnerable crises. What unites most social factors at the same time are the danger to life, violations of human rights, poor humanitarian aid, the absence or reduction of health services to the most essential services, poverty, high crime rates, discrimination, and intolerance of various social groups (religious, ethnic, racial, and attitudinal). Scientists agree that these factors shape and determine migration; the sharper the divide between established and universally acceptable relations and norms, the greater the probability of causing mass population migration. Recently, many migrants have arrived in the European Union who were forced to leave their homes due to political instability and economic-social consequences caused by war or military actions. Researchers (Bruneckiene et al., 2012; Snieška & Zykienė, 2014) distinguish four sectors and evaluate the following factors: public transport, health and social protection (health and social protection infrastructure), education and science (general, professional, and higher

education systems, scientific research infrastructure), public security infrastructure. Scientists Snieška and Zykienė (2014) attribute to social infrastructure everything that ensures the satisfaction of social needs and thus contributes to the growth of the national economic level.

Panda et al. (2016) analyse the social environment by distinguishing the following factors: the ability to satisfy basic needs, housing, health protection, security, education, personal capital, demographics, poverty level, culture, recreation area, and the possibility of obtaining credit. The authors of the article defined the social environment through the following factors: human capital; migration; social burden for the city; urban safety, community learning, partnership, and activism; social infrastructure of culture and sport, educational, and educational system; psychological climate of the town; demographic situation of the city; medical protection infrastructure (Činčikaitė & Paliulis, 2013). The analysis of sources from the scientific literature showed that the social environment and its defining factors are defined differently. The authors of the article describe the term migrant as a person who has left his native country to live in another country due to the pursuit of better living conditions, family reunification, study or career search, political persecution, fleeing from war, or simply wanting to experience a new culture.

1.1. Changes in migration flows

In 2019, the International Labour Organization gathered researchers from various countries and conducted a global statistical assessment of the migrant labour market, dividing migrants from each country into multiple groups. According to data collected by the International Labour Organization, in 2019, there were 272 million working and unemployed migrants in the world. Migrants worldwide are distributed as follows: 38% in Northern, Southern, Western Europe and Central Asia, 26% in North America, 14% in Arab countries, and 22% in other countries. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) says there were 281 million migrants worldwide in 2020, with an almost equal gender distribution. It can be seen that the scale of migration is growing every year, according to data provided by the High Commissioner for Refugees of the United Nations in May 2022. Forcibly displaced persons exceeded 100 million (see Figure 1).

Depending on the causes of social migration, the demographic trends of individual regions or countries can
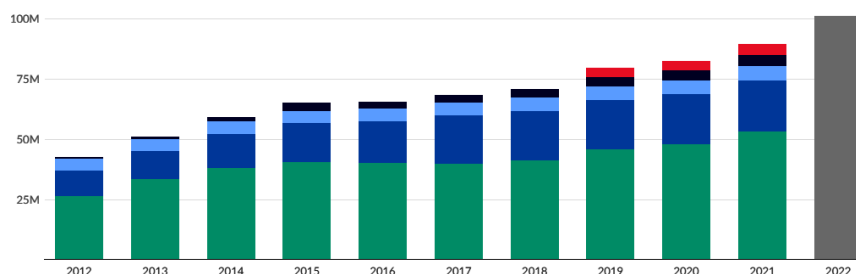

Figure 1. Chart of forcibly displaced individuals (source: United Nations, 2022)

also be named. Sometimes, it is difficult to find the dividing line between social and demographic factors because, episodically, they intertwine, but only interpretation in one or another environment reveals the main motive. Global human population size trends have continued to increase since the beginning of humanity, but the highest population growth has been recorded since the 18th century. Scientists say that this number is related to the beginning of the application of medicine to a large part of society (Tulchinsky & Varavikova, 2014). It is not an exception, and the number of human populations continue to increase in the world's countries, but not so rapidly in all of them, while in others it is decreasing; demographic processes reveal these phenomena. The growth, decline, ageing, and youth show the country's general trends and provide the prerequisites for the interpretation of future demographic indicators of the country's population. In the context of large states, it would seem paradoxical that states with better social conditions have a smaller population than states with a large population.

However, poorer living conditions are provided to the citizens. The People's Republic of China and the Republic of India can be singled out among such countries. On the other hand, the United States of America and the countries of the European Union are equal. Evaluating these countries in more detail reveals that, holistically, the majority of the world's population would prefer to immigrate to the United States of America or European Union countries than to the People's Republic of China or India. Both the People's Republic of China and the Republic of India are characterized as the countries with the largest population by these demographic indicators: high birth rate, high mortality, high migration, and high population density in large cities, poor living conditions with many population constraints and restrictions make these countries less attractive (Žibas & Patačiūtė, 2012). Scientists say that demographic factors are directly correlated with economic indicators, which is very well reflected by the number of immigrants who have come to the United States of America (The World Bank, 2023). The migration of citizens due to economic or demographic reasons is mainly related to the country's unemployment rate, violations of workers' rights, the inability to ensure working conditions, and the poor state of the state's economy. Migrating residents to another country expect a higher salary, a higher quality of life, or the opportunity to get a better education. Most scientists mention the main driver of migration as the search for better living conditions of a person.

Migration in the European Union. In 2019, the European Union granted asylum to 295,800 people. In 2020, arrivals from war-torn Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq represented the largest share of all asylum seekers, at more than 25% (European Commission, 2010). One of the most prominent examples is the war in the Ukrainian state. However, humanitarian aid was provided and state institutions carried out their activities as long as possible. Still, the fear of loss of life, the disintegration of the former social relationship, the introduction of the rules of a new reality and the presumed change of the criminogenic situation forced the majority of Ukrainians to choose migration.

The European Union consists of 27 European countries, but most migrants go to the three most significant EU member states: Germany, France and Italy. Germany is one of the leading countries in the world in terms of the number of migrants accepted from different countries. According to German migration statistics, more than 37.6 million people have come to Germany in the last five decades from other countries. Initially, the most significant migration flow was from Southern Europe, which later included more countries. The diversity of different nationalities in the context of migration is also noticeable in the population of modern Germany. The accurate scale of migration is shown by the fact that, according to the German National Household Survey, 13.4 million migrants lived in Germany in 2020, not including more than 7.3 million migrant children. International migration is one of the main factors behind the development of Germany's population and today's social structure (Ette et al., 2020); in France in 2018, 6.5 million migrants lived there. But significantly more children were born in emigration, 9.1 million (Eurostat, 2023).

Lithuania's migration balance (migrants minus emigrants) from 1990 to 2020 in the period (inclusive) is –679,244 inhabitants. The total number of emigrants during this period was –1,052,241, and the migrants were –372,997. 1990–2018, the migration balance was negative. However, a turning point occurred in recent years: the number of migrants increased sharply, and emigration has been decreasing for four years in a row, so the migration balance (net emigration) in 2018 approached zero, and in 2019 finally turned to the positive side. Negative migration abroad was the most important reason for the decrease in the population of Lithuania between 1990 and 2017. Still, in 2018, the situation changed: due to net emigration, the decrease in population was for the first time lower than due to natural change (natural change is the difference between births and deaths). In recent years, the number of migrants has increased significantly; this was also caused by military or political conflicts in neighbouring and other countries, citizens of the Republic of Lithuania returning from emigration, and labour immigrants from the East.

Lithuania's membership in the European Union has become an important factor in the attraction of migrants because when you enter Lithuania, you enter the common space of the European Union, from which you can easily enter European Union countries such as Germany. Current trends show that the Republic of Lithuania is becoming an increasingly attractive place for migrants to live. One of the possible reasons is favourable climatic conditions: Lithuania has a middle climate zone, there are no large temperature jumps, the hydrological conditions are quite well predictable and controlled, there are not many rains with catastrophic amounts of precipitation that pose a threat to the public, and no dangerous earthquakes or

mudslides are recorded. Thus, compared to other regions of the world, Lithuania is superior and more attractive in terms of climate. Indeed, climate conditions similar to those of Lithuania prevail almost throughout the European Union, so it could be said that the factors for choosing a country for foreign citizens who want to immigrate Lithuania based on climate conditions are similar to those of other EU countries. According to the statistical data of the Republic of Lithuania, the number of foreigners living in Lithuania has been increasing for several years in a row; for example, in 2017 – 49,387 foreigners lived there and in 2020 – 87,267, which is almost 40% more foreigners.

Also, more and more citizens of the Republic of Lithuania who left Lithuania are returning to their homeland, and there is a trend that from 2015 until 2021, there will be a significant increase in the number of citizens of the Republic of Lithuania returning to Lithuania and citizens of non-European Union countries arriving there.

Suppose that the return of citizens of the Republic of Lithuania can be associated with improving living standards in Lithuania. In that case, the more significant number of citizens of non-EU countries arriving in Lithuania is related to political and military conflicts in neighbouring states that directly affected Lithuania: this is 2020. The presidential election in Belarus, followed by protests by the population over falsified results, caused an influx of migrants to neighbouring countries. In 2021, the migrant crisis at the Lithuanian-Belarusian border was caused by the Belarusian state and in 2022, Russia launched a large-scale war in Ukraine.

The diagram in the picture (see Figure 2) shows the increase in the flow of migrants arriving in Lithuania. Statistical data provide an objective and reasonable view of migration trends and flows. It can be said that the situation in neighbouring countries is directly correlated with the statistical data of migrants arriving in Lithuania.

A general assessment of migration flows to Lithuania over the last five years shows a steady upward trend.

The flow of Russian citizens to Lithuania from 2016 to 2021 fluctuated. This was influenced by Russia and Lithuania's political, economic, and social situations. Some years have seen higher arrivals from Russia, while others may be lower.

The flow of Belarusian citizens to Lithuania has obviously grown. Especially in recent years, due to increased political tension and repression in Belarus, many Belarusian citizens have sought refuge or better living conditions in Lithuania.

The flow of Ukrainian citizens to Lithuania has also increased since 2016. It concerns the conflict in Ukraine, the economic situation, and the quest for a better life. Many Ukrainians migrate to Lithuania for job opportunities or a better quality of life.

Other non-EU countries: Foreign nationals from non-EU countries to Lithuania also increased. It depends on various factors such as political situation, economic situation, and personal motives in these countries. Some people may migrate to Lithuania for job opportunities, education, or family reasons.

1.2. Factors determining migration processes

Different reasons for migration are distinguished in the scientific literature. Regardless of whether migration is caused by military action or climate change, all causes of migration are social in one way or another. Suppose that it is a migration determined by military factors. In that case, the migrant usually seeks security, social guarantees, and economic migrants – the opportunity to get a job and earn more money than in their home country. The readiness of states and communities to assess and adapt to these needs (factors) determines the migrants' ability to integrate and adapt to the new environment.

It should be noted that Ukrainian migrants in Lithuania are successfully integrated into society. Private individuals provide shelter and assistance to Ukrainians and help them integrate into society. Ukrainians have the right to receive social and medical assistance, and children have the right to education. However, the opposite situation exists with citizens from Syria and Iran, who were forced to cross the Lithuanian-Belarusian border.
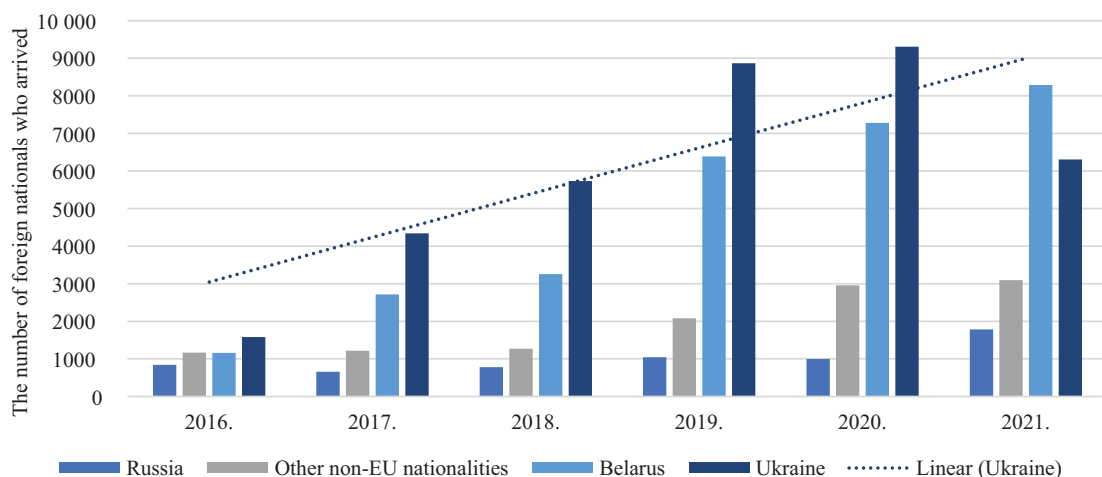

Figure 2. Flows of foreign nationals arriving in Lithuania (source: Lithuanian Statistical Data Portal, 2023)

Migration is a complex process that involves many social, economic, political, and cultural factors. The main factors shaping migration processes:

Economic factors: The state of the labour market and the economy are the main drivers of migration. Many migrants travel for good job prospects, higher wages, and economic stability.

Political factors: Political conflicts, human rights violations, wars, and other conflict situations can force people to seek safety in other countries. Political measures such as migration laws can also affect migration processes.

Cultural factors: Cultural differences, including differences in language, religion, and traditions, can affect migration processes and migrants' adaptation to a new location. Cultural differences can also lead to social exclusion and discrimination.

Effects of education: The education system and access to education are important drivers of migration, as migrants may want better education and opportunities to start a new career.

Geographical situation: unfavourable geopolitical situations, climate, and natural environment can also affect migration processes. For example, few people want to live in places with poor air quality or ecological conditions.

Social norms and their absence, such as family values, national identity, and gender roles, can also shape migration processes and migrant behaviour in new places.

The analysis of the scientific literature showed that most scientists arrive at similar factors that determine migration processes. Summing up the factors presented by researchers, it can be said that economic factors such as job opportunities (Bevelander & Lundh, 2007; Stoet & Geary, 2020; Stojilovska et al., 2022) and economic prospects (Loukidis et al., 2023) are given the greatest attention as the main drivers of migration.

Other researchers emphasize political causes such as conflicts or repression (Bondarenko et al., 2020; Canovas et al., 2023). Still others emphasize social factors such as educational and healthcare care opportunities or the prospect of social integration (Cullen et al., 2017; Korom, 2023).

In addition, migration processes can be highly individual and depend on personal motivations and circumstances. Therefore, researchers also pay attention to psychological factors, national identity, personal aspirations, and interpersonal relationships (Korom, 2023; Martin & Radu, 2012).

Researchers continue their research and debate to better understand migration factors and their impact on migration processes. These factors are often interrelated and can influence migration pressures and shape the composition of the new community. Understanding these factors can help to better understand migration processes and ensure that migrants receive appropriate support and assistance in adapting to their new circumstances.

1.3. Assessment models of migration integration in the social environment

Researchers use various models and research methods to understand and predict the impact of migration on the social environment, the integrity of migrants, and the impact on the country's economy Schlueter and Davidov (2013) presented two-level models analyse the characteristics of individual migrants and their impact on societal integration, taking into account macroeconomic and institutional factors, Economic models explore how the integration of migrants into society affects the migrants themselves and the host country from an economic perspective (Simionescu, 2019), Competence models explore migrants' competencies, education level, professional experience assessment, and ability to adapt to a new society (Urzúa et al., 2021). Social models examine social aspects that may affect the integration of migrants into society (Kindler, 2021), based on historical data and factors, forecasting models are used in decision making and policy development (Agliari et al., 2018).

The research methods for integrating migrants into the social environment may differ depending on the specific research area, objectives, and data collection possibilities. The most commonly used methods are questionnaire surveys, qualitative interviews, observational studies, and literature reviews. Depending on the research objectives and circumstances, these methods can be applied separately or in combination. It is essential to choose the most appropriate method that will provide a diverse and reliable understanding of the processes of integration of migrants into the social environment.

Migrant integration models developed by researchers can be a valuable tool to understand and predict the process of migrant integration in the social environment. Still, it is essential to consider that the complexity of real-life conditions and factors can challenge the models and results. Researchers can use a variety of data analysis and statistical modelling techniques to understand how migrants integrate into society and what factors determine this. Integration of migrants into the social environment requires a lot of effort and resources, so it is important to have effective policies and programs dedicated to this area. The objectives of this policy should be to ensure that migrants have the opportunity to learn the language, obtain the necessary qualifications, familiarize themselves with the country's culture, and find work. This makes it easier for migrants to integrate into the country's life and provides opportunities for prosperity. It is important to understand that the integration of migrants is a long-term process and must be strongly supported and encouraged. Social integration needs to be promoted, where migrants can join local communities and actively participate in their place of residence's culture and social life. It is important to monitor the potential problem of discrimination that migrants may experience and to promote tolerance and equality. Integration should not be a one-way process that only replaces the features of

the migrants' culture with the local culture, but must be a mutual process in which migrants and local residents get to know each other, communicate, and share their experiences.

Lithuania, as a member state of the EU, is committed to complying with EU immigration policy and laws, including issues of immigrant integration (European Committee for Standardization, 2005). The EU has established common principles and policies for all member states. This includes a new area of legal migration based on the principle that immigration can benefit both the immigrant and the host country. One of the EU's migrant integration policies is the Language Learning Program, which encourages migrants to learn the local language and culture. The EU also applies policies encouraging migrants to find work and integrate into the local labour market. In this area, measures are provided to facilitate the integration of skilled migrants into society, for example, by recognizing their qualifications acquired in foreign countries or providing opportunities to obtain the necessary professional experience.

In addition, as an EU member state, Lithuania has national policy guidelines and programs to promote the integration of migrants into the country's life. This includes teaching and learning language programs, cultural integration programs, professional integration programs, etc. (Eur-Lex, 2009).

Therefore, Lithuania's migrant integration policy is related to EU and national policy guidelines to ensure the integration of highly qualified migrants into society and help them become active participants in the country's life.

It is important to note that the integration of migrants into the social environment is a complex process determined by many legal, social, cultural, and economic factors. Therefore, researchers are trying to create a more detailed and objective picture of this problem, applying various models and research methodologies to contribute to the improvement of the integration process of migrants.

2. Methodology

To assess the integrity of Lithuania according to five groups of economic, social, educational, cultural and political factors and to compare the results with seven European Union countries, four of which are close to them in terms of geography and comprehensive environment, namely Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and Poland, and the three most prominent and one of the most advanced countries in the European Union, namely Germany, France, and Italy, choose the multi-criteria assessment method COPRAS (Complex Proportional Assessment method). Determining the weight of the indicators and indices was carried out using the CRITIC method.

Normalization of the initial data is performed according to the formula (see Equation (1) (Zavadskas & Turskis, 2011):

$$S_j = \frac{r_{ij} w_i}{\sum_{j=1}^{n} r_{ij}}, \tag{1}$$

here: S_j – multicriteria evaluation value of the j-th alternative; r_{ij} – the normalized value of the i-th indicator or index for the j-th alternative; w_i – weight of the i-th indicator or index; i – indicator/index; j – alternative dimension space (state).

The sum of the normalized evaluated indicators and indices maximizing the dimensionless form of the indicators and indices is calculated according to the following (see Equation (2)):

$$S_{+j} = \sum_{i=1}^{m} d_{+ij}, \tag{2}$$

here: S_{+j} – the sum of the values of the maximizing normalized indicators/indexes with the estimated (multiplied) weight; d_{+ij} – the weight of the i-th normalized indicator or index; i – indicator/ index; j – alternative dimension space (state).

The sum of the normalized evaluated indicators and indices that minimize the indicators and indices that have acquired a dimensionless form is calculated according to the following formula (see Equation (3)):

$$S_{-j} = \sum_{i=1}^{m} d_{-ij}, \tag{3}$$

here: S_{-j} – sum of values of minimizing indicators / indices with estimated (multiplied) weight; d_{-ij} – weight of i-th normalized indicator or index; i – indicator/ index; j – alternative dimension space (state).

In the next step, the significance of alternative j is calculated from the sum obtained by maximizing the normalized evaluated indicators and indices and minimizing the sum of the normalized evaluated indicators and indices. The higher the Qj, the higher the effectiveness (priority) of the variant. See Equation (4):

$$Q_j = S_{+j} + \frac{S_{-min} \times \sum_{j=1}^{n} S_{-j}}{S_{-j} \times \sum_{j=1}^{n} \frac{S_{-min}}{S_{-j}}}, \tag{4}$$

here: Q_j – significance of the alternative j; S_{+j} – sum of values of maximizing normalized indicators/indices with estimated (multiplied) weight; S_{-j} – sum of values of minimizing indicators/indices with estimated (multiplied) weight; S_{-min} – the smallest sum of all obtained for minimizing indicators/indices with an estimated weight (multiplied).

The CORPAS method is one of the more straightforward multi-criteria evaluation methods. The calculation is not complicated and the results obtained are easily interpreted and unambiguous; ranking the estimates obtained and comparing the results is easy. The method is universal, so it is possible to use complex criteria whose values may vary enormously from each other at the initial stage. After normalizing the obtained data, it is easy to compare them.

Consistent results do not characterize the model, so the results may be dynamic.

The CRITIC method determines the weighting factors for indicators and indices, which allows the determination of objective weights or criteria. Standard deviations of the ranked criteria values of the options in the columns and the correlation coefficients of all paired columns are used to determine the contrasts of the criteria (Žižovic et al., 2020). This method was proposed by Diakoulaki et al. (1995); it incorporates contrast intensity and conflict in the structure of a decision-making problem. Correlation analysis is often used to clarify criterion contrasts (Tuş & Aytaç Adalı, 2019). The CRITIC method evaluates the decision matrix, and standard deviations of the columns of normalized criteria values and the correlation coefficients of all pairs of columns are used to determine the contrast of criteria (Madic & Radovanovic, 2015).

The CRITIC method is applied in different fields. For example, Diakoulaki et al. (1995) used the CRITIC method to a sample of the Greek pharmaceutical industry by evaluating the three most prominent company performance indicators (Yilmaz & Harmancioglu, 2010) to a water resource management model in the Gediz River basin in Turkey, where management alternatives were evaluated using different methods, such as Simple Additive Weight (SAW), Compromise Programming (CP) and Order Preference Method by Similarity to Ideal Solution (TOPSIS). The studies of other authors have also used the CRITIC method to evaluate the performance of logistics companies, financial indicators, the sustainability index of urban water management systems, the education information index, and other indicators.

3. An empirical study

The indicator criteria used in the study are divided into five groups of factors (see Table 2). After identifying the problem areas of integrating refugees into the social environment, the necessary steps can be taken to improve performance indicators by carrying out planned activities or actions that reduce risks.

Table 2. List of determinants and indicators of migrants' well-being in the social environment (created by authors)

Factor	Indicator	Sources
Economical		
GDP per capita	GDP gross domestic product per capita. A higher number is better for the comparative rating scale of EU countries from 0–200.	(Eurostat, 2023a)
Distribution of income among citizens	The Gini coefficient measures the distribution of income and wealth among the population. Measured as a factor of 0–100%, higher is better.	(Eurostat, 2023b)
Index of people working in agriculture	Comparison of the number of people working in agriculture with the number of people in the state. Measured as a percentage from 0–100%, a higher number is worse.	(The World Bank, 2023)
Export of goods and services	Provision of goods and services to foreign countries. Measured in monetary units from 1 to infinity, the higher the number, the better.	(The World Bank, 2023)
Dominant industry	This indicator is measured by an index based on the reference period, which expresses the change in production volume. Measured on a scale of 1 (no change) to 100 (change), the higher the better.	(The World Bank, 2023)
Social		
Population growth	Demographic growth as a percentage of the country's current population. Measured in rates from 0–100%, higher is better.	(Worldometer, 2023)
Average life expectancy	It is measured in the population's statically derived average life expectancy in years. Measured in years from 0–120, higher is better.	(Eurostat, 2023c)
Gender equality	A composite index measuring the distinction between women and men. A smaller divide indicates less discrimination between the sexes. A lower number is better measured on a scale from 1 (no discrimination) to 100 (high discrimination).	(Eurostat, 2023c)
Infant mortality	Shows the mortality of the population under the age of one year. Measured in units from 1 to infinity, the higher the number, the worse.	(Eurostat, 2023c)
Medical expenses	State appropriations for the health care system from GDP. Measured as a percentage from 0–100%, higher is better.	(Eurostat, 2023c)
Cultural		
Spending on culture	State appropriations for Culture from GDP. Measured as a percentage from 0–100%, higher is better.	(Eurostat, 2023e)
Number of tourists per night	The index of tourists arriving in the country is calculated as the number of tourists per inhabitant. Measured in units from 1 to infinity, the higher the number, the better.	(Eurostat, 2023d)

Factor	Indicator	Sources
The percentage of the population out of the total employed in the non-cultural sector	The percentage of the country's population working outside the cultural sector. Measured in rates from 0– 100%, the lower number is better.	(Eurostat, 2023c)
Percentage of participants who participated in the events	The percentage of the country's population that participated in the events. Measured as a percentage from 0–100%, higher is better.	(Eurostat, 2023e)
State expenditure on sports, rest and recreation as a percentage of GDP	Financial allocations allocated by the state for sports, rest, and recreation from GDP. Measured as a percentage from 0–100%, higher is better.	(Eurostat, 2023e)
Educational		
Illiteracy of the population	The percentage of the country's illiterate population ranges from 0–100%, the lower the number, the better.	(Eurostat, 2023f)
Education	Percentage of citizens with higher education Measured as a percentage from 0–100%, a higher number is better.	(Eurostat, 2023f)
Expenditure on education	Financial allocations allocated by the state to the education and training system from GDP. Measured as a percentage from 0–100%, higher is better.	(Eurostat, 2023f)
Costs of non-formal education	State financial allocations for nonformal education from GDP. The comparison scale of EU countries from 0–27, the higher the number is better.	(Eurostat, 2023f)
Knowledge of one or more foreign languages	The percentage of citizens of the country who know more than one foreign language out of the country's total population. Measured as a percentage from 0–100%, higher is better.	(Eurostat, 2023f)
Political		
Number of political prisoners	The number of prisoners convicted and imprisoned in the state for political expression. Measured in units from 1 to infinity, lower numbers are better.	(Eurostat, 2023g)
State political stability index	Political stability and absence of violence/terrorism. The rating is measured on a scale from 2.5 (unstable) to 2.5 (stable); more is better.	(The World Bank, 2023)
Third-country residents who have been ordered to leave the country index	The number of third-country nationals is distributed proportionally to the distribution of the country's population. The rating is measured on a scale from 0 to 1, the lower the number, the better.	(Eurostat, 2023h)
Corruption	Control of corruption. The rating is measured on a scale from –2.5 (high) to 2.5 (low) level of corruption, more is better.	(Eurostat, 2023i)
Corruption Perception Index	The index of perception of corruption in society is measured on a scale from 0 (favourable) to 100 (unfavourable) environments in the community; more is worse.	(Eurostat, 2023i)
Migrant integration index	Integration of migrants into the country's society. Measured from 0 (low) to 100 (high), more is better.	(Migrant Integration Policy Index, 2020)

Indicators and indexes of factors are assigned weighting coefficients. Applying the CRITIC weighting method determines the weighting factors (see Table 3). A necessary condition is that the sum of the weighting factors for one group of factors is equal to 1.

The empirical study was applied to 7 countries of the European Union. Countries were divided into two categories based on historical and/or geographical location provided by other sources (see Table 4). The country categories have an unequal number of countries; all countries are considered high-income countries according to World Bank data, so they are not divided according to this.

Using multicriteria evaluation methods, COPRAS calculated estimates of refugee integrity concerning time and countries of seven European Union countries and

Table 3. List of determinants of migrant integration in society in the social environment with coefficient weights used in the study (created by the authors)

Factor	Indicator	Coefficient
Economical		
GDP per capita, FIV price index	Index from 0–200.	0.197
Distribution of income	Percentages from 0–100%.	0.19
People who work in agriculture	In percentages from 0–100%.	0.2
Export	In monetary units from 1 to infinity.	0.199
Dominant industry	On a rating scale from 1 to 100.	0.213

End of Table 3

Factor	Indicator	Coefficient
Social		
Demographic growth	Percentages from 0–100%.	0.177
Average life expectancy	The average life expectancy is from 1 to 120.	0.157
Gender equality	On a rating scale from 1 to 100.	0.372
Infant mortality	Units from 1 to infinity.	0.16
Medicine	Percentage of GDP from 0–100%.	0.134
Culture		
Culture	Percentage of GDP from 0–100%.	0.215
Tourists	Units from 1 to infinity.	0.268
Residents outside the cultural sector	Percentages from 0–100%.	0.217
Participants in events	Percentages from 0–100%.	0.15
Sports, recreation, recreation	Percentage of GDP from 0–100%.	0.148
Educational		
Illiteracy of the population	Percentages from 0–100%.	0.26
Education	Percentages from 0–100%.	0.154
Scrubbing	Percentage of GDP from 0–100%.	0.205
Non-formal education	On a rating scale from 1 to 100.	0.173
Foreign Language	Percentages from 0–100%.	0.247
Political		
Political prisoners	Units from 1 to infinity.	0.229
State stability	Rating on a scale of 2.5 to 2.5.	0.227
Residents of a third country	Proportionality index of citizens of the country and residents of the third country from 0 to 1.	0.16
Corruption	On a rating scale from –2.5 to 2.5.	0.19
Perception of corruption	Rating scale from 0 to 100.	0.186
Integration of migrants	Integration of migrants into the country's society. Measured from 0 (low) to 100 (high), more is better.	0.264

ranked the countries according to them. The data covers the period 2017–2022. The Baltic countries and Poland are analysed separately because they are geographically and politically the closest countries, and their rankings change.

Table 4. Classification of countries in the European Union (created by the authors)

Classification	Countries
The group of Western European countries with the highest economic indicators (according to the United Nations classification)	Germany France Italy
States close to the Baltic region	Estonia Lithuania Poland Latvia

Table 5 presents the result of the social environment of refugees in 7 countries of the European Union, in which the ranking obtained by the COPRAS method is aligned according to 2022. from the most favourable country for integrating refugees into the social environment to the least attractive. France is considered the most attractive country, Germany and Latvia are in the second and third places, and Lithuania, Poland, Estonia, and Italy are in the next group. When evaluating the ranking of countries from a five-year perspective, one can see the trends of the first places shared by France and Germany. The country that stands out the most is Latvia, which managed to rise from the sixth place to third, showing a comprehensive improvement in the situation of integrating refugees into society to achieve social well-being. Lithuania does not trail Latvia in the 5-year trend of integrating refugees into society to achieve social well-being. Lithuania's fourth position in the rankings varies from fifth to third. Poland is usually ranked sixth according to the five-year trend, but in 2022, it rose to fifth. Estonia's ranking, which fell from third to sixth, shows a worsening trend with regard to other countries. Italy consistently maintains the last position with respect to other countries, although as a country it is classified as one of the countries with the largest market in the European group.

Table 5. Ranking of the integrity of refugees from seven European Union member states in terms of time and countries in 2017–2022 (COPRAS method, created by the authors)

Country	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
France	2	1	1	1	2	1
Germany	1	2	2	2	1	2
Latvia	6	5	5	6	5	3
Lithuania	5	4	4	4	3	4
Poland	4	6	6	7	6	5
Estonia	3	3	3	3	4	6
Italy	7	7	7	5	7	7

The results obtained by the COPRAS multicriteria evaluation method during the selected six-year period are quite dynamic. Still, there is a visible tendency for developed countries to maintain high positions, except for Italy. The ratings of the countries of the Baltic region are quite stable and, regardless of the rating results, all countries

are close to each other's assessment (see Table 6). Only minimal differences between countries make it possible to distinguish and rank, but on the other hand, ranking becomes dynamic and competitive within that country's environment. The period under investigation is from 2017. until 2021 allows Estonia to take the lead from the entire region. Only in 2022 did Estonia give way to Latvia, which is most likely due to the improvement of Latvia's economic factors compared to previous years, while the opposite deterioration of Estonia's cultural factors forced it to enter the ranked list.

Table 6. The classification of integration of refugees in Baltic countries in terms of time and countries in 2017–2022 (COPRAS method, created by the authors)

Country	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Estonia	1	1	1	1	1	4
Lithuania	3	2	2	2	2	2
Poland	2	4	4	4	4	3
Latvia	4	3	3	3	3	1

Lithuania's position in the ranking of the Baltic countries did not change for almost the entire evaluation period and was second, except in 2017, when it took third place. Poland is also very stable in the rankings from 2018 to 2021, occupying the fourth position; only in 2022 did it rise to the third position, and in 2017, it occupied the second position in the rankings. Latvia's place in the rankings was dominated by the third position from 2018 to 2021. In 2022, Latvia rose to the first position. But this can only be a temporary jump because in geopolitics, various political, economic, and military activities are related to the spheres of activity of the territories of states or regions, their resources, and their inhabitants. Successful geopolitical activity can help ensure regional or global stability. Still, ineffective or aggressive geopolitical activity can have negative consequences, such as conflicts, instability, and human rights violations, which will ultimately determine one or another results and rankings.

Conclusions

1. Analysis of the scientific literature revealed that various researchers, highlighting different aspects, define the concept of migrant. The authors of the article define the term migrant as a person who has left his native country to live in another country due to the pursuit of better living conditions, family reunification, study or career search, political persecution, fleeing from war, or simply wanting to experience a new culture. The analysis of sources from the scientific literature showed that the social environment and its defining factors are defined differently. The authors of the article define the social environment through the following factors: human capital; migration; social burden for the city; urban safety, community learning, partnership,

and activism; social infrastructure of culture and sport, educational and educational system; psychological climate of the town; demographic situation in the city; medical protection infrastructure.

2. In the methodological part, a mixed multifaceted strategy of research methods was formed, consisting of an in-depth interview, questionnaire survey, analysis of statistical data, and analysis of multicriteria COPRAS assessment method, which allowed a comprehensive assessment of the integration of migrants in society while ensuring social well-being. The obtained research results were processed with Excel and SPSS computer software.

3. An in-depth interview was conducted and primary data was collected, which revealed the satisfaction of the individual's needs and refined the research instrument. The questionnaire survey was conducted and the results obtained from it made it possible to determine the impact of determining factors from the perspective of personality. Statistical data analysis made it possible to compare data between different countries in different periods and interpret the results obtained. The multicriteria assessment method allowed for a comprehensive assessment of the integration of state migrants into society over time and concerning other states. Empirical research showed that during 2017–2022, among European Union countries, the first and second place in the integration of migrants into society alternated between France and Germany. Among the states in the Baltic region in 2017–2022, Latvia emerged as the most integral to society in terms of ensuring social welfare for migrants. Meanwhile, Estonia in 2022 was quoted as the lowest-ranked country among the countries of the Baltic region.

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