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# **Lithuanian circular migrants' experiences in wandering between Lithuanian and Norwegian welfare states**

Qualitative analysis of Lithuanian labour circular migrants'  
experiences in managing social welfare through a framework of  
coping capabilities

Master's Thesis of International Social welfare and Health Policy  
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Lithuanian circular migrants' experiences in wandering between Lithuanian and Norwegian welfare states  
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## **Abstract**

*Background.* Economic demands, new technologies and flexibility of national and international legislation led to the development of various migration and employment patterns. One of the highly promoted but little researched pattern is circular migration. Such migration is common between higher and lower living cost countries that are relatively close to each other like Norway and Lithuania. Norway is a high-income country with one of the highest inflow of labour migration between the OECD countries. Whilst Lithuania is a high-income but low-cost country known as a provider of labour migrants. Today, Lithuanians are the second by size group of migrant workers in Norway which, however, remains under-researched. Circular migration not only benefited Norwegian industries, but also challenged the social welfare policy makers with new problems like social dumping. Therefore, as Lithuanian labour circular migrants are a significant group in Norway, they make a relevant sample for a case study of circular labour migrants in a context of social welfare.

*Research questions.* This paper aims to gather more descriptive and explanatory data about how Lithuanian circular migrants approach social welfare while wandering between home country and Norway, and how Lithuanian and Norwegian welfare states support circular migrants and their families coping capabilities.

*Methods.* The research consists of two major parts. First one is an online forum content analysis, which was performed as a pilot to gather more knowledge about Lithuanians' concerns and problems while migrating to Norway (in case of circular migration and not only). It also served as a tool to narrow down an extremely broad topic of social welfare and to prepare a more accurate interview guide for the following research part. The second method comprises eight semi-structured interviews with 11 respondents, which provided comprehensive data to the research questions.

*Conclusions.* This study has provided with a broader knowledge of Lithuanian circular migrants' perceptions and experiences in accessing social welfare on a transnational level. Nevertheless, attempts to understand this phenomenon better, led to a development of a conjoint theoretical framework of coping capabilities. Circulation, as a coping capability, is common between people with short-term problem-solving preferences and high degree of wish to be in control. Circular migrant and their families tend to rely on the Norwegian market for

the provision of social welfare, with little expectations from the states. Norway supports coping capabilities of circular migrant by providing access to public healthcare, stricter regulations related to employment and housing, and developing a circular migrant friendly taxation policy. Lithuanian welfare state supports coping capabilities of circular migrant indirectly by targeting his family members that live in the home country.

*Keywords:* circular migration, Lithuanian labour migrants in Norway, coping capabilities, transnational social welfare.

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# 1 Introduction to the study

## 1.1. Background and significance

According to OECD (2014, 45) Norway has been the second OECD country by the percentage of labour migrants to the number of inhabitants, with a significant majority of workers from the EEA. Today Lithuanians are the second biggest group of immigrants in Norway (Statistics of Norway, 2017), while Norway is one of the top five most popular destinations of migration from Lithuania (Department of Statistics of Lithuania, n.d.). Consequently, Norwegian institutions related to welfare and labour started translating documents and information from Norwegian not only to English and Polish, but Lithuanian too.

The Fafo research organization (Fafo<sup>a</sup>, n.d.) draws attention to the fact that around 8% of white labour market employees in Norway have fixed term contracts, and yet an unknown part of this number is definitely temporary/circular migrants. Friberg (2016, 81) claims, that temporary staffing agencies, which are actively recruiting workers from Eastern Europe, have become a significant ‘migration industry’ in Norway. He also refers to literature (as McLoughlin & Münz, 2011) and European policy documents, that see temporary staffing agencies promoting temporary and circular labour migration within Europe (Friberg 2016, 85). However, workers hired through such agencies are usually excluded from Norwegian labour statistics as their contracts are issued in home countries. Even though temporary work agencies seem to generate the most of circular migration, it should be kept in mind, that circular migration is not limited to their activities and is a much broader phenomenon.

Migration has awarded Norwegian businesses with better access to labour. However, this has come with high costs as labour market crimes, low wage competition and social dumping (Fafo<sup>b</sup>, n.d.). Friberg (2016, 81) observes, that Eastern European migrants, hired through temporary work agencies, have lower earnings and have a higher risk to become in need of welfare state support. Therefore, as the phenomenon of circular labour migration is becoming more common, and as social inequality problems are spreading along with it, researching circulation from an angle of social welfare issues is becoming increasingly crucial to both sending and receiving countries.



After acknowledging the relevance of circular migrants' vulnerability in the Norwegian labour market and Lithuanian work migrants' role in Norway, the topic of Lithuanian circular migrants in Norway and their access to two different welfare states was settled. In order to check the significance of this topic, relevant search was conducted on the two biggest social science databases EBSCOhost and Web of Science on 24th of May 2017. Playing with keywords such as "circular migra\*" (stands for circular migration, circular migrants), "lithuani\*" (refers to Lithuania, Lithuanians) and "welfare", various outputs appeared. Initially, circular migration did not seem to be a widely researched phenomenon as using such keyword only 228+757 hits were found on two different databases. Searching for more detailed articles, as including "welfare" the lists of articles shrunk down to 7+26 options on the same databases. Nevertheless, when trying to search for articles related to circular migration and Lithuanians, no relevant articles were found.

As it can be seen, Lithuanian origin labour circular migrants in Norway make up a significant group, which did not receive enough attention, especially in a context of social welfare. Basic knowledge exists, which should be researched broader. Therefore, this study has taken place starting from May 2017.

## **1.2. Research questions**

This study was chosen to answer these two research questions:

- How Lithuanian circular migrants approach social welfare while wandering between home country and Norway?
- How Lithuanian and Norwegian welfare states support circular migrants and their families coping capabilities?

The topic of the paper refers to two welfare states, however, the first research question concerns the broader concept of social welfare. That is because the welfare state is an important actor on the social welfare scene, and it should always be defined via a relationship to other actors of social welfare provision such as market and family.

The research questions presented above are of the descriptive, explanatory nature, as the point of this study is to gather more knowledge about circular migrants' social welfare practices and the roles of two different welfare states in comparison to the performance of family and market. After the pilot study (*see chapter 5.1.*) the focus of the study became more

specific and narrower. The context of the research problems was set within the groupings of employment, health, housing and family.

### **1.3. Structure of the paper**

The answers to the complex research questions, presented above, were uneasy to find, thus, a multilevel study was performed. First, existing literature was reviewed (*chapter 2*) and cited to present the most relevant theoretical concepts and data related to the circular migration and the welfare state. Afterwards, a theoretical framework of coping capabilities (coping strategies + capability approach) was introduced (*chapter 3*) as a suitable tool for understanding the phenomenon.

The empirical section employed two different research methods. The first was an online forum's comments-content analysis, which, most importantly, helped to focus on the most crucial parts of the social welfare for further study (*chapter 5.1.*). The second method utilised semi-structured interviews with circular migrants (*chapter 5.2.*), which provided more accurate and detailed information regarding the experiences of Lithuanian origin circular migrants in wandering between two different welfare states. The research questions are answered in the discussion part, where findings are discussed using the theoretical framework of coping capabilities (*chapter 6*).

The key highlights of the literature review, pilot study, interview results and discussion of the coping capabilities in the context of labour circulation between Lithuania and Norway, were summarized in the concluding section. This last chapter also provides suggestions for potential further studies.

### **1.4. Limitations and challenges**

While conducting this study, several limitations and challenges were met. Firstly, researching social welfare as such, is always challenging due to the broadness of the concept and multiple variables within it. To reduce the risk of broad and vague research, the pilot study was performed. This helped to narrow down to some more crucial parts of social welfare that are the most relevant to the circular migrants. However, no matter how social welfare parts are classified, it will always overlap, which will always raise another challenge of fluent discussion. This challenge was met with considerable efforts to keep the structure of the paper consisted and clear.

Another similar challenge appeared while analysing interview data and searching for outcomes of circular migration in the cases of circular migrants who lived in Norway as full-time residents before circulation. It was challenging to measure whether the impact is due to permanent or circular migration, and to clarify it while summarizing results and developing the discussion. However, if in a text the presented period of permanent migration is not specified, the reader should assume circularity is the condition that determines the results and dependent variables.

The study was limited to stories of relatively successful circular migrants, as those that got into traps of social risks and circulation, were no longer circulating, and would not classify for the sample. Nevertheless, the latter type of interviewees is much harder to scout, as it is a more randomly distributed case. As a result, many of the major social-economic risks were not discussed (as for example, severe disability after accident) as they are not applicable to the sample.

This paper does not focus on listing and assessing the welfare state support activities from Lithuania and Norway. This study focuses on circular migrants and their families' perceptions of what social welfare possibilities are available to them. The welfare state activities mentioned in the paper do not mean that they are the only ones available to circular workers, but it means that it is those few they are aware of, or do not mind being involved in.

## **2 Literature review**

The sources of literature available and relative to this study are broad and various. Due to the limitations of the volume of the paper, it was decided to briefly go through only the most important literature. The review commenced with a presentation of transnationalism, as international circular migration connects at least two countries. Afterwards, migration theories and a broader definition of circular one were introduced. Other important determinants in this study are social welfare and welfare state, thus, an explanation of welfare concept, its functions and the welfare state's role in it was briefly presented too, with hints what this could mean to circular migrants. The literature review was completed with the socioeconomic context in Lithuania and Norway, with an explanation of their current roles on the migration's scene, as experiences of circular migration are highly influenced by the home country and what is the receiving one. The literature was understood as important to set the circumstances of the study,

and for a reader, with or without a background knowledge of main variables of the topic, to successfully follow the paper and acknowledge the academic contribution of the thesis.

## **2.1. Transnationalism**

The concept of transnationalism started with early studies of return migration and ideas that departure does not mean definitive departure, and return is not necessarily a definitive return either (Brettell and Hollifield 2008, 17). Waldinger (2013) uses a metaphor and defines transnational migrants as ‘the transplanted’ ones, and emphasizes that most of the theorist would agree, that such migration leads to cross-border connections (2013, 756). Vertovec (2009, i) explains, that transnationalism has multiple ties and interactions that connects across the borders not only people, but also institutions.

Massey et al. (1994, 737-738) link this new culture (which exists across borders) to the spread of consumerism and migrants’ success that leads to even more migration. International mobility becomes an expectation and a normal part of life and new technologies (especially telecommunications) serve to connect such networks more effectively (Vertovec 2009, 3).

Shmitter Heisler (2008) highlights how transnationalism coloured the understanding of rights and citizenship. For example, the author refers to Aihwa Ong (1999), who started using a term of “flexible citizenship”, which is not fixed to any country; she also mentions Baubock (1994), who talks about “transnational citizenship”, which includes two or more countries; or Soysal (1994), who discusses a “post-national citizenship”, which exists outside of the nation-state (cited in Shmitter Heisler 2008, 92). These are just a few examples of how the concept of transnationalism affected the literature and understanding of what the individuals place on the international scene is.

Modern times with its contemporary problems, policies and technologies brought concept of migration to a new level, a level of transnationalism. It makes us reconsider, what was known about people and migration before and enhance the knowledge by reviewing it in a context of transnational values, ties, rights and possibilities.

## **2.2. Migration**

Migration is a complex process, which has been analysed through various angles. Brettell and Hollifield (2008, 20) highlights eight disciplines, which concern migration and

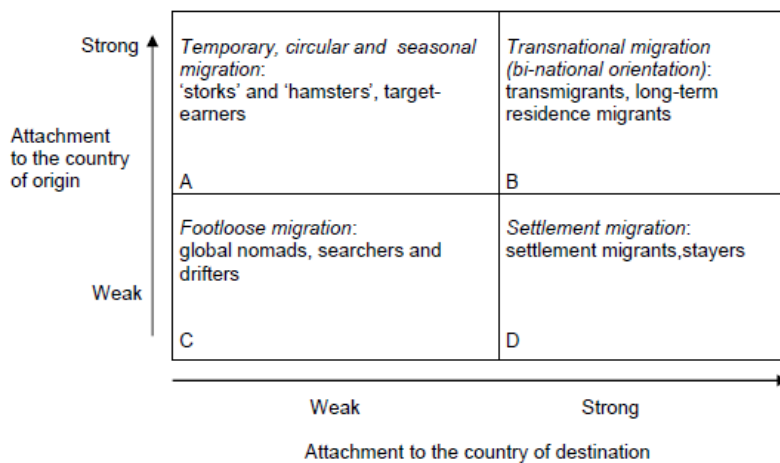
demonstrate distinctive approaches towards it. Those are anthropology, demography, economics, geography, history, law, political sciences and sociology (ibid.). Nevertheless, there are multiple typologies, classifications and explanation theories within each of the disciplines. Some theories can also be common and broadly used between the different branch of studies.

Datta (2003, 25) states that for a long time one of the most important theories in human migration studies was the theory of push and pull factors, which represents two different values of one same variable, as for example, negative material well-being is a push factor in a home country, while potentially improved material well-being is a pull factor in a receiving country. He sees this theory, however, rather limited and promotes, according to him, the most advanced push and pull theory created by Lee (1966), who incorporated both push and pull factors in both sending and receiving countries (ibid.). This means that in the case of migration, migrant sees the advantages (pull factors) of a destination country outweighing the advantages of staying in a home country (pull factors). Push and pull theory leads to understanding of reasonability behind migrants' behaviour, and can be used in any discipline, but itself does not provide any classification of migration types.

Chiswick (2008, 64) suggests a typology of migrants based on main motives (main push or pull factors) of migration. Migrants either fall into a category of tied movers, who decide to migrate in order to keep the relationship with family members; refugees, that move due to concerns of their safety and freedom; ideological migrants, those that decide to move due to ideological reasons (political, religious beliefs); and economic migrants, whose decision to move is based on economic wellbeing. The author also claims, that economic migrants tend to be more capable, ambitious, aggressive, and healthier than similar individuals, who decide to remain rooted (Chiswick 2008, 64).

Economic migrants can be classified into smaller categories depending on several different variables. As for example, duration and frequency of migration periods leads to subgroups of temporary, circular, and permanent migration. Engbersen et al. (2013) have presented a more advanced and detailed framework for this kind of classification, which is highly relevant to this study.

Engbersen et al. (2013) drew a table of common different patterns of labour migration based on general knowledge of Polish work migrants after Poland became a member of the EU (*see figure 1 below*). This study is relevant not only because of the focus on labour migration, but also because Polish and Lithuanians had a long history together, are culturally similar, therefore, studies of Polish workers can be particularly useful.



**Figure 1. Different patterns of labour migration of Polish labour migrants after EU enlargement, created by Engbersen et al. (2013, 965).**

One of the two main dimensions (*see figure 1*) of pattern definition (axis x) is a degree of attachment to destination country (weak/strong), which depends on socio-cultural, socio-economic and demographic variables (command of language, connection to nation of origin, market position, family status and situation in a destination country) (Engbersen et al. 2013, 964). The second dimension is placed on axis y and represents the attachment to the country of origin and ranges from weak to strong on similar factors (financial commitments, family status and location of partner, children) (*ibid.*).

The combination of attachments to the destination country and the country of origin leads to four main ideal-types (Engbersen et al. 2013, 964-966):

- A. *Temporary, circular and seasonal migration: 'storks' and 'hamsters', target earners.* Common between low-skilled migrants.
- B. *Transnational migration (bi-national orientation): transmigrants, long-term residence migrants.* Usually met between educated migrants with higher human capital.

- C. *Footloose migration: global nomads, searchers and drifters.* More common between better educated, highly skilled young migrants with higher human capital and need of wide range of options when it comes to work and life possibilities.
- D. *Settlement migration: settlement migrants, stayers.*

This conceptual framework was tested by performing a survey with Polish, Bulgarian and Romanian migrant workers in the Netherlands (Engbersen et al. 2013, 976). After testing the concept, the theorists drew the following conclusions related to circular migrants (only the results related to the circular migrants were presented below, as they are the focus of this specific study) (Engbersen et al. 2013, 976):

- Shorter distances to the country of origin increases chances of becoming a circular migrant.
- Circular migrants start migrating at a later age and have a partner at home, and less commonly is planning to stay in a country of destination for an elongated period.
- Circular/temporary/seasonal migrants tend to be less socio-culturally integrated in destination communities, as they do not speak local languages and do not get much interaction with the locals.

### ***Circular migration***

Circular migration has been already introduced in this study, but as it is one of the main focuses, the need of broader definition appears. Vadean and Piracha explain circular migration as “the repeated back and forth movements between the home country and one or more countries of destination” (Vadean, Piracha 2009, 1). Triandafyllidou and Marchetti believe that many policy makers in Europe fancy the concept of circular migration as it is a solution to many problems starting with labour market shortages, finishing with issues of integration of migrants (2013, 339).

Hugo (2013) explains, that circular migration is important in a process of resource distribution, for instance, from high-income countries to low-income countries. Such redistribution helps to encourage development and reduce inequalities in poorer places, especially in the cases, when migrants keep strong ties to home country (Hugo 2013, 2). Circular migration becomes more significant due to the availability of fast and affordable modern forms of transportation and communication, which enable efficient and close connections to both places (ibid.).

While trying to define “push” and “pull” factors of circular migration, it is important to look at it through the advanced perspective of Lee (promoted by Datta (2003) in the previous section), that looks for both push and pull factors in the sending country and in the receiving one. The complexity of combinations of factors makes people choose circulation rather than settlement in either of the countries.

There are several reasons for migrants to prefer circularity instead of being settled. Most importantly, circulation enables people to maximize the purchasing power of their incomes, as they earn in the high-income country, and tend to spend money in the low-cost native country without losing their cultural identity and social network (Hugo 2013, 3). Moreover, circular migration, as any other kind of migration enables migrants to get a chance to improve language skills and cultural competences (Privarova and Privara 2016, 12910).

The sending countries of circular migrants also can gain from the situation. In the case of high rates of unemployment, circulation might keep some workers occupied and empower them to provide social welfare to their families (Hugo 2013, 6). Nonetheless, next to material support circular migrants bring back improved labour skills, broader understanding of market possibilities and potentially useful networks, that can become trade connections in the future (ibid.). In this manner, the country of origin reduces the risk of brain and muscle drain, as migrants’ commitment to circularity is directly related to their attachment to the home country (Hugo 2013, 7; Privarova and Privara 2016, 12913).

The benefits for the receiving country is a chance to deal with seasonal and short-term shortages and demand in the labour market without the burden of complicated processes of migrants’ integration (Hugo 2013, 7). Nevertheless, in the cases of lacking specifically skilled employees, countries get more time to find workers between the locals and train them for the tasks (ibid.). For those countries that face the problem of an aging society, circular migration may reduce the burden of working age citizens without contribution to a growth of an amount of the retired people (ibid.).

However, circular migration can also do some harm. For example, sending countries might experience the shortage of human capital, what can affect economy and communities. Whilst receiving countries might be challenged with problems of labour market crimes, low wage competition and social dumping. The most vulnerable in possible scenarios are the



circular migrants themselves before, during or after the process of circular migration. Migrants might be exploited, challenged to reintegrate in to their native countries or face negative effects of separation from their usual social surroundings (Hugo 2013, 6; Fafo<sup>b</sup> n.d.).

### **2.3. Social welfare, welfare state and circular migration**

Given that circular migration has been already introduced, it is important to move on to the other equally important dimension of this study, which is social welfare. It is a broad term that still challenges theorists in defining it. Macarov (1995) follows a wide-ranging definition created by The Social Work Dictionary: “a nation’s system of programs, benefits, and services that help meet those psychological, social, and economic needs that are fundamental to the well-being of individuals and society” (Macarov 1995, XV).

Fitzpatrick (2006) offers his own more detailed explanation that includes an extra component of social solidarity and points out the most common areas of activities:

‘Social welfare’ consists of arrangements predicated on the notion that people can exercise solidarity with others to ensure individual well-being, particularly in the areas of income support during times of poverty, unemployment or low-paid employment; care of children through child support or benefit payments; and old age pensions. Its realization has traditionally been associated with the welfare state funded through taxation, social insurance contributions by those in waged work and full (male) employment. (Fitzpatrick 2006, 1306)

Social welfare programs usually fall into one of the three main groups: those that give financial aid, those that provide goods (in kind) or those that offer services (Macarov 1995, 10). Fields of service can be grouped into the broad categories of justice (correctional services, free legal aid), education, health (including disability, sickness leave, old age care), family life (children care services and benefits, parental leave, elderly care), employment (labour activation, unemployment support, retirement), housing (Macarov 1995, 10; Fitzpatrick 2006, 1306). Categories, which after the pilot study were defined as the most relevant, are presented more broadly in following chapters.

Social and economic support and protection can be provided by three main actors. As Esping-Andersen (2002, 11) explains, welfare is a product of shared responsibilities between market, family and government. Once the focus narrows down to the government’s responsibility and efforts to assure basic welfare for its citizens, a term of welfare state comes to action (Esping-Andersen 1990, 18-19). The welfare state attempts to modify the possible

negative influence of the market by mitigating poverty (providing security against various social risks) (Andersen 2012, 4). However, it is important to remember, that the welfare state is more than social security, despite the latter is being the most visible and important part of it (Fitzpatrick 2006, 1543).

Fitzpatrick (2006, 1544) calls the welfare state a “European invention”, which was kicked off by such activities in the 19th-20th centuries as Bismarck’s policy changes in Germany and pensions in Denmark. Andersen (2012, 5) points out several of the most common explanations for the development of the welfare state, such as class conflict, growth of working class influence through trade unions and social democratic parties, also social changes like ageing populations, migration and change in family structures.

Another important term widely discussed in the context of social welfare or welfare state, is social policy. Social policies are all the governments’ policies related to welfare and social protection that assure and develop equity and well-being (Fitzpatrick 2006, 1280). Titmuss during the second part of 20<sup>th</sup> century defined three main types of social policies that are being quoted up till today. As the author admits, all the models (*see table 1*) are just approximations of what has been presented and discussed previously by economists, philosophers, sociologists and other theorists. Categories of the residual model, the industrial achievement-performance model and the redistributive model have been shaped by following major differences in work ethic and family institutions between various modern societies (*see table 1*) (Titmuss 1974, 31-32).

<b>The Residual Welfare Model of Social Policy</b>	<b>The Industrial Achievement-Performance Model of Social Policy</b>	<b>The Institutional Redistributive Model of Social Policy</b>
Primary sources of welfare – family and market, only if they fail, state interfere temporarily	Social needs are met according to merit, performance and productivity in labour market	Universal provision outside the market based on needs
Example: USA	Example: (West) Germany	Example: Sweden

**Table 1. Titmuss models of social policies (1974, 30-31)**

Later Esping-Andersen built his own definition of three welfare state regimes, which also relates to the work of Titmuss. The main principle of the theoretical specification of the welfare state is summarizing not only rights that it grants, but also how it interconnects with market and family, which are two equally important parts in social provision (Esping-Andersen 1990, 21). The most common combination of activities of these three actors has been grouped into 3 different regimes of democratic capitalist societies (*see table 2*).

<b>Type of regime</b>	<b>Prototypical countries</b>	<b>Philosophical basis</b>	<b>Degree to which labour is de-commodified</b>	<b>Entitlement based on</b>	<b>Stratification of benefit</b>
<b>Liberal</b>	Australia, UK, New Zealand, USA	Classical liberalism	Low	Need	Poor relief
<b>Corporatist</b>	Austria, France, Germany	Conservative social policy	Moderate	Work	Social insurance
<b>Social democratic</b>	Denmark, Sweden	Socialism, Marxism	High	Citizenship	Universal

**Table 2. Characteristics of welfare regimes (Esping-Andersen 1990), table was created by Fitzpatrick (2006, 1535).**

Esping-Andersen (1990) has introduced few new terms, that play important roles in classifying democratic welfare states. One of them is de-commodification, it's "concept refers to the degree to which individuals, or families, can uphold a socially acceptable standard of living independently of market participation" (Esping-Andersen 1990, 37). Another parallel Esping-Andersen's (1990) variable is defamilialization, which refers to the level of independence from a family institution. As it can be seen from the table above (*table 2*), stratification of benefits is also important in this classification, as institutions of welfare state have the main power in structuring the social hierarchy, order and solidarity (*ibid.*, 55).

In Esping-Andersen's (1990) typology (*see table 2*), Anglo-Saxon countries tend to promote a liberal regime, which focuses on market and provides modest benefits (usually receiving it comes with stigmatization). For the conservative corporatist regime, good examples are countries from the old continent such as Austria, France, Spain and Italy, where the welfare state is based on the concept of insurance, with high influence of status, as rights are commonly attached to social class. The Nordic countries, illustrate so called social

democratic regime, which promotes universal coverage and high equality. However, not all today's democratic countries can find their place on this typology, as for example, Lithuania. How the Lithuanian welfare state should be named, is further discussed in the chapter 2. 4..

When concerning circular migration, welfare state activities and goals might face some challenges. Most commonly, people have accessibility to social welfare support and protection in countries, where they are citizens and/or where they pay taxes. Circular migrants depending on the legislations of the countries that they are involved in, and their work contracts' (if such exist) conditions and duration have certain rights to welfare state support and protection, which might be inadequate in comparison to people that are settled.

Nevertheless, in a context of social welfare we should care not only about the migrants themselves, but also about their closest family members. If a circular migrant himself is not in need of unemployment support, that does not mean that their spouse does not need it either. Therefore, it is important before starting empirical section to briefly go through the groups of welfare state activities and introduce them to better understand what to expect.

As social welfare, and welfare state activities is a very broad topic, to guarantee, that the data gathered would have sufficient depth, the areas of interest were lightly narrowed down by following the pilot study findings (*see chapter 5.1.*). In further columns only areas of employment, health, housing and family life will be presented.

### ***Employment***

Employment is a highly market related area, however, the welfare state has ways to regulate it, or, at least, compensate its negative outcomes, such as unemployment, underemployment, poor and unfair working conditions. The most common measures of the state towards employment problems are workers' compensations, unemployment/underemployment compensations, work safety regulations, discrimination laws or income tax policies (Sullivan 2004, 205). These are just the main actions common in Europe, but the list of activities is not limited to this. As full employment does not equate to a sufficient standard of living, it can be compensated through other kinds of policies such as family, housing and so on.

Another very important actor in this arena is active workers' trade unions that negotiate salaries, work conditions and other work-related rights (Sullivan 2004, 205). Participation in trade unions' activities usually comes with monthly/ annual fees, which are not set and varies from union to union. Perks of belonging to the union, besides the support mentioned before, include free legal help, possibilities to participate in various events with a reduced fee or free of charge and also discounts from partners.

Migrant workers tend to face wider range of problems as they are more often exposed to poor working conditions, exploitation at work, low/ unfair payments. Employers that hire foreign labour force are usually very interested in costs saving, which also leads to a provision of poor conditions, as migrant workers are not familiar with local regulations and ways of protecting their rights. Nevertheless, workers from poorer countries agree to inadequate conditions, as ultimately, they still earn significantly more than what they would in a similar job in their home country.

### ***Health***

Health is another complex concept that is tricky to define. The WHO in 1948 described it as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (WHO, n. d.<sup>a</sup>). It has not been amended, but was expanded in 1977, by adding that health enables to build socially and economically efficient life (WHO, n. d.<sup>d</sup>).

While explaining the relation between healthcare and the welfare state a need to define couple of more terms appears, such as health policy:

"Health policy refers to decisions, plans, and actions that are undertaken to achieve specific health care goals within a society. An explicit health policy can achieve several things: it defines a vision for the future which in turn helps to establish targets and points of reference for the short and medium term. It outlines priorities and the expected roles of different groups; and it builds consensus and informs people." (WHO<sup>b</sup>, n. d.)

Another key term that relates to health policy, but is more common in discussions of actual practices and outputs of healthcare, is health systems, WHO defines it as:

"A good health system delivers quality services to all people, when and where they need them. The exact configuration of services varies from country to country, but in all cases requires a robust financing mechanism; a well-trained and adequately paid workforce; reliable information on which to base decisions and

policies; well maintained facilities and logistics to deliver quality medicines and technologies.” (WHO<sup>c</sup>, n. d.)

Any activities of health systems aim to improve and promote health (WHO 2000, 5). All health systems, supposedly, share similar objectives to improve level of health of the society and to protect people from health-related financial burden, while treating them with dignity (ibid., 8).

However, health systems are complex and costly mechanisms as it requires properties, staff, supplies, transport, communications, guidance and so on (WHO 2010, vi). Systems receive financing either from general taxation, compulsory or voluntary health insurance, user fees or charity donations (Lindstrand et al. 2006, 280-281). Most of high-income countries fund their health systems through general taxation or social health insurance contributions (WHO 2000, 96).

When it comes to circular labour migrants’ relationships with two different health systems, many questions arise. Thus, later in this study it was researched whether circular workers have accessibility to health systems in both countries and are treated with dignity. Interviewees were asked, whether they felt protected from financial burden in both countries and what health system they prefer, and view healthcare provision as the better option.

### ***Housing***

The UN emphasize the importance of housing as it is:

“the basis of stability and security for an individual or family. The center of our social, emotional and sometimes economic lives, a home should be a sanctuary; a place to live in peace, security and dignity” (UN, n. d.<sup>a</sup>).

Every human being has a right to adequate housing, according to the human rights declaration article 25 (1), Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights article 11 (UN, n.d.<sup>b</sup>). This means every individual has the right to secure tenure, to life in place that is one’s culture friendly, with access to appropriate facilities (UN, n.d.<sup>a</sup>). The UN emphasize that the best way of ensuring adequate housing is through appropriate government policies and programs, including national housing strategies (ibid.).

Smart and Lee (2003, 87) stress that housing is a complex topic as it connects economy, politics, social world. Nevertheless, housing is one of the main goods of both consumption and production (Smart and Lee 2003, 89). The authors also believe that social policies may encourage the growing need of housing and, at the same time, respond to social tensions by subsidizing producers and mortgages (ibid.). While, Bengtsson does not criticize housing as a human right, but thinks that state should rather care about its people's capacity to successfully access housing through voluntary transactions in the market, than just provide it or try to regulate the natural processes in the market (2001, 265).

Circular migrants might be interested in owning housing in the home country, if they are not planning to settle in the receiving country. Whilst housing can be an attempt in the receiving country, in the cases when circulation is a stepping stone to the destination country. The goal to improve housing conditions in a sending country can be a push factor for workers to migrate or circulate. However, housing conditions in a receiving country raise many questions as it is a high-cost country. Thus, prevailing models and problems of housing for migrant workers in Norway will be discussed further.

Matejko and Stefanska (2007) after studying Polish migrants in Norway note, that usually newcomers cannot afford getting their own accommodation and tend to live with other natives in shared properties. The Poles that came to Norway specifically to earn money are very motivated to save their incomes and to minimise their living expenses, which is understood as the highest monthly expenses. Therefore, they live restrictedly and in poor conditions, while some even end up living in the cars. Whilst international employment agencies usually guarantee accommodation in Norway in motels or caravans (Matejko and Stefanska (2007) cited in Søholt et al., 2012, 23). The researches came to the conclusion that many labour migrants were satisfied with their housing in Norway, despite usually it is inferior to their living conditions in the home country (ibid).

Even in accommodation provided by the employer, workers commonly have to live in crowded housing, or even sleep on mattresses on the construction sites' floors. Poor living conditions provided by the employer are hard to follow and control, especially, if it is away from the actual workplaces (Søholt et al., 2012, 37).

Søholt et al. (2012) have found, that The Working Environment Act, section 4.4, demands that the accommodation provided by the employer must be safe, finished, decorated and maintained. Labour Inspection Authority is the institution that is responsible to monitor and evaluate whether the accommodation is safe and meets the law. Nevertheless, the same authority has also issued regulations how accommodation provided for workers should look like. According to those regulations, in the case a worker is sleeping in a workplace, he should be provided with a separate room, suitable only for living, which has a window, bathroom (with cold and hot water), toilet, shower, and additional place to keep food and drinks for consumption. Accommodation, which is not on the work site, should be furnished with an additional table and chairs with a back (Søholt et al., 2012, 41).

Søholt et al., (2012), also points out specific regulations that applies to employees covered by tariff agreement, which is also applicable to Eastern European migrant workers. These are very detailed rules, for instance, bedrooms, including bathrooms, should not be less than 8,6 m<sup>2</sup> and the roof height not less than 2,30m. Furthermore, there is a requirement, that rooms should contain a wardrobe, shoe rack, bed with wall-mounted reading lamp, a chair and an armchair. Walls and the roof must be washable and insulated, and the window surface should be at least 10 percent of the floor area. The window must have either blinders or curtains (Søholt et al., 2012, 42).

In regard to the literature review, the study aimed to investigate circular workers views towards housing they have available to them in both sending and receiving countries. Also, the study captured different patterns of circular migrant's housing in Norway and housing as both a push and a pull factor.

### ***Family life***

Before starting a discussion about family policies, the term of family itself has to be defined. Oxford dictionaries (n. d.) describe family as “a group consisting of two parents and their children living together as a unit” or “a group of people related by blood or marriage”. Wilson presents a broader definition:

“a group of people related by blood or by law, living together or associating with one another to a common purpose, that purpose being the provision of food, shelter, and the rearing of children.” Wilson (1985, 2).



In this paper two types of families will be mentioned. Nuclear family, which basically was defined above referring strictly to parents and their children, and an extended family, what is a nuclear family with plus other relatives, who usually share the household or live nearby and have close connections (Collins, Jordan, Coleman 2009, 27).

Macarov (1995, 43) defines two ways of how social welfare may affect different kind of families: first, by strengthening or limiting it, and secondly, by encouraging family members to provide social welfare to one another. Governments are interested in supporting family institution, because strong and healthy families grant a well socialized human capital that is surrounded by a healthy and encouraging environment, where members support one another (Macarov 1995, 44). Michel (2011, 120) adds, that many family policies happen to target specific member of a family (that eventually has an impact on surrounding people), not so much the family as a whole.

Daly (2015, 801) notes that family policies in most of the countries are highly related to having children, as it brings additional expenses for a long period of time. Size and ways of support varies between the countries, but usually it includes family allowances (in cash or in kind, provided universally or after means testing, or according to the size of the family), parental leave compensation, tax refunds or free/compensated services. Historically, family allowances seemed to be the main pillar of family policy in Europe (Daly 2015, 801). However, in recent years the importance of education and care has grown a lot (ibid., 801-802).

There is one distinctive feature of Norwegian family welfare policies that distinguishes Norway not only in the comparison to Lithuania, but to the rest of the world too. That is children welfare institution called Barnevernet. In Norway the high standard of welfare provision comes together with the high involvement of the state in each of citizens' life, thus, an institution like Barnevernet has an explicit power, what might not be understood and well met by the foreigners. Differences between cultures and welfare systems results with multiple international scandals due to aggressive actions of Barnevernet towards migrant families with children (Hollekim, Anderssen, Daniel 2016, 52-53). Lithuania also has institutions focusing on children's welfare, however, it appears in the media for its poor performance and a lack of initiative.

The most relevant family welfare policies for the circular migrants are mainly related to financial support due to having children, also all the policies and measures that affects childcare and children’s education. A wide range of policies related to parenting is actually not applicable to circular migrants, especially those that are related to employment. For example, policies that allow parents to use parental leave or have paid days off once their children get sick, are not an option for circular workers, because, in one way, they are physically too distant from their children to make use of the policy, or in another way, due to the specificities of their contract are not eligible for it.

#### 2.4. Social welfare context in Lithuania and Norway

Before studying circular migrants’ access to two different welfare states it is important to briefly introduce Lithuania and Norway (*see table 3*).

Measure	Lithuania	Norway
Size of the country in sq.km, 2016 (World Bank, n. d. <sup>a, b</sup> )	65.3	385.2
Size of population in millions, 2016 (World Bank, n. d. <sup>a, b</sup> )	2.87	5.23
GDP in billion US\$, billions, 2016 (World Bank, n. d. <sup>a, b</sup> )	42.74	370.56
Poverty headcount ratio at national poverty lines (% of population), 2016 (World Bank, n. d. <sup>a, b</sup> )	22.2	..
Life expectancy in total at birth, 2016 (World Bank, n. d. <sup>a, b</sup> )	75	82
Total expenditure on social protection per head of population. ECU/EUR, 2014 (Eurostat, n. d. <sup>c</sup> )	1,744.70	18,078.97
Average annual wages before taxes in EUR, 2016 (OECD, n. d.)	838.7	56340.76
Total unemployment rate, 2016 (Eurostat, n. d. <sup>b</sup> )	7.9	4.7
At least upper secondary educational attainment, age group 25-64 - %, 2016 (Eurostat, n. d. <sup>a</sup> )	94.6	82.3
Tertiary educational attainment age group 30-34 - %, 2016 (Eurostat, n. d. <sup>a</sup> )	58.7	50.1

**Table 3. Statistics of Lithuania and Norway. Source: Eurostat (n.d.<sup>a, b, c</sup>), OECD (n. d.), World Bank (n.d.<sup>a, b</sup>).**

Lithuania is a high-income non-OECD country and Norway is a high-income OECD country. As it can be seen from the table above, Norway is six times larger country with only twice the size of the population, with more than 9 times bigger current GDP and ten times

higher expenditure on social protection per head. Norway possesses oil plants and, thus, a great economy, none the surprise, it has also twice a smaller rate of unemployment in comparison to Lithuania. Nevertheless, Norway successfully spends a large amount of GDP to grant the welfare of its people, and it is one of the factors that lead to a 7 years longer life expectancy.

Many demographic differences between these two countries (*see table 3*) are due to differences between economies. Yet, when it comes to educational statistics Lithuania takes the lead, with over 10% higher part of population attaining at least upper secondary education, which is considered as the minimum qualification for sufficient social and economic performance (Eurostat, n. d.<sup>a</sup>), and an 8% higher rate of people of age 30-34 that have successfully graduated from higher education institutions. However, even though these numbers refer to educational politics, it is important to keep in mind, that numbers presented do not reflect the quality of education.

The differences between economic and historic development of Lithuania and Norway resulted with their different roles on a transnational scene of migration. Lithuania is known for being a post-communist country and a provider of educated migrants, while Norway the opposite – a wealthy universal coverage state, an attraction and a receiver of various types of migrants. In order to shape expectations for what to expect from the further study, both countries and their roles are presented briefly below.

### ***Lithuania: post-communist welfare state and a “sending country”***

Aidukaite (2009, 24) points out, that whilst theorizing the concept of welfare state in capitalist democracies, most of the times, former communist countries as Lithuania were excluded, as it went through a different historic and economic development. The author also reminds that Titmuss (1974), however, has considered Soviet Union welfare state and aligned it next to France and Germany under a name of Industrial Achievement performance model of social policy (Aidukaite 2009, 25).

Where Lithuania, in a context of social welfare, stands today is a lot affected by former Soviet Union policies and ideologies, thus, it is important to go through it briefly. Aidukaite (2009, 25) explains that citizens of the Soviet Union had a right to health care and social security (in the case of old age/illness/loss of abilities to work), also right to education, work,

and vacations. As it can be seen, the government of Soviet Union aimed to grant or, at least, enhance equality and population's well-being and longevity (Aidukaite 2009, 26). Therefore, as the Soviet Union was an authoritarian regime, where the state was the main provider of welfare and promotor of equality between classes, it can be called an authoritarian welfare state (ibid., 26).

The Soviet Union has collapsed, Lithuania is promoting capitalist democracy for over 25 years and is trying to follow the example of the Western countries. However, half of the century long history of being under the Soviet regime and performing authoritarian welfare state has influenced current values and fears.

After gaining independence, new political parties in independent Lithuania had a weak attitude towards social security (Aidukaite 2009, 28). For example, Guogis et al. (2000) studies found that most of Lithuanian parties demonstrated critical attitudes towards a social-democratic model of social policies and seemed to be more supportive towards a liberal one. However, none of the parties prioritized the corporatist model (based on social insurance), which happens to be prevailing in the country (Guogis 2000 cited in Aidukaite 2009, 28).

In the times of Soviet Union occupation, it was obligatory to belong to a trade union, as it was an important actor in redistribution of services, goods and property (Aidukaite 2009, 29). However, trade unions were also a channel for communist ideas and values to be spread, which has nothing to do with today's goals of the capitalist economy's trade unions, which are to expand social rights and negotiate salaries. After regaining independence, Lithuanians seem to be passive once it comes to trade unions, due to misleading previous experience. Numbers of unions decline with every year that passes, and all the post-communist countries seem to have a low percent of workers that belongs to them, at least five time less than the number in Western countries with developed practice of trade unions (ibid., 28-29).

Mazeikiene, Naujaniene and Ruskus (2014, 645) explain that the current social security system in Lithuania was mainly an attempt to adapt the Soviet social insurance system to a newly shaped market-based economy. The insurance is based on performance in labour market, and the social assistance, that consists of benefits and services, has a smaller role and is provided by the state, municipalities and NGOs. Lithuania has inherited Soviet values (solidarity, universalism, egalitarianism, state paternalism), structure of major institutions and

tradition of financing latter ones instead of services, which often leads to ignorance of potential new actors of service provision (ibid., 645, 652). However, the system of social welfare (that consists of recipients, communities, NGO's, municipalities and state institutions) tends to move towards deinstitutionalization, diversification and decentralization (ibid., 646). The Study of Mazeikiene, Naujaniene and Ruskus (2014, 650) found, that the current social service situation could be defined as liberal with a residual approach to service delivery.

Aidukaite (2009) summarizes the main features of East European welfare state model (also could be called post-communist model) that fits not only to Lithuania. Commonly those countries have high social security deductions, but relatively small benefits; social policies are still based on Soviet ones and, therefore, a low level of trust prevails from people towards state institutions. Nevertheless, despite this the state is a vital actor in social welfare, the market and family remain as two of the most important agents that grants an adequate standard of life for citizens (Aidukaite 2009, 34-35).

Today, according to the International Organization for Migration Mission (2011) Lithuania is one of the few European Union sending countries in the context of migration. Following up the statistics, on average 30, 000 people have been emigrating every year since 1990 (IOM 2011, 5). Krupickaite and Poviliunas (2012) drawn several main political reasons that kicked off the migration processes from Lithuania in the period from 1990 till 2010.

Firstly, once the latest independency was at a stake, every person that remained in the new territory of Lithuania with no citizenship of other country at the time of the independence establishment, would have been granted and received Lithuanian citizenship. As not all the inhabitants identified themselves as Lithuanians and not every citizen supported the change, part of the population decided to move away from a newly created country to another country from the block of Commonwealth of Independent States (Stankūnienė, 19954, 135 cited in Krupickaite and Poviliunas 2012, 3).

The most important political circumstance for migration processes from Lithuania still resulting in these days was in 2004, when Lithuania became a member of EU, and in 2007, when it became a part of Schengen area (Krupickaite and Poviliunas 2012, 3). Since then Lithuanians received an access to labour markets and welfare systems of strongest and wealthiest European countries.

Besides political changes, socioeconomic reasons have also played a big role in migration flows from Lithuania. Mainly that was high rates of unemployment due to changes of market relations and international economic crises, and later family reunifications after first wave migrants had successfully settled in foreign countries (Krupickaite and Poviliunas 2012, 3-4).

In sending countries like Lithuania, circular migration should be perceived as the most welcomed type of migration, which, at least, for a period of time does not participate in the growing numbers of emigrated human capital, and keeps citizens engaged in local activities with low needs of support.

### ***Norway: Nordic social democratic welfare state and an attraction for labour migrants***

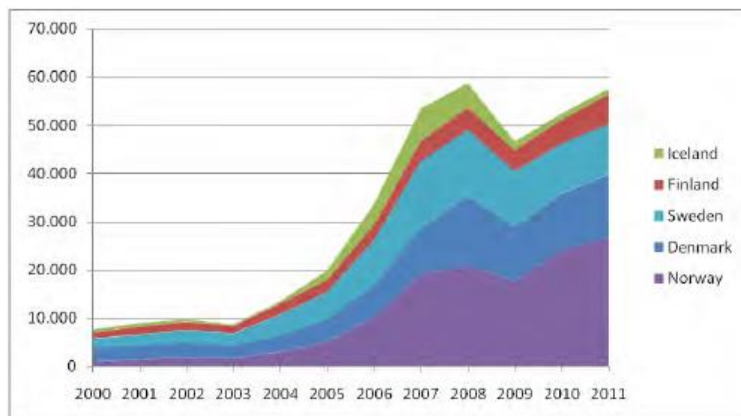
Kautto (2010, 586-600) notes, that the distinctiveness of the Nordic welfare state, which is attracting attention by its lasting economic and social success, appeared long before Esping-Andersen had presented his concept and typology of welfare capitalism. Generally speaking, the Scandinavian model can be defined as “broad, tax-financed public responsibility and legislated, collective, and universalistic solutions that respect employment interests yet aim at welfare and equity goals” (Kautto 2010, 600).

Especially due to wealthy economy countries such as Norway became an attraction to migrants of various backgrounds. In labour migration, the majority of job seekers came and are still coming from Central and Eastern European countries (Cappelen and Midtbø 2016, 691). Although, as according to the agreement of 1994 between Norway and the European Economic Area (EEA), Norway is obliged to open its labour market to the EU population and to provide the same social security rights as to the native citizens. It is noticed that the Norwegian media attention towards such migration has been mostly negative (ibid., 691). However, Cappelen and Midtbø (2016, 693) note, that EU labour migrants are less threatening to the welfare state than other types of migrants, for instance, refugees. One of the main reasons is that their main goal is to perform well in the labour market (Cappelen and Midtbø 2016, 693).

The popularity of Nordic countries among Central and Eastern European countries can be explained by some main differences between labour markets of sending and receiving countries. Firstly, high rates of unemployment and low salaries encourage people to migrate

for work to countries with low unemployment rates, high employment possibilities and significantly bigger payments for labour (Tronstad and Joona 2013, 21). Secondly, receiving countries, that have a lack of certain employees, or difficulties in hiring local people to do low status jobs, create a niche for international labour migrants coming from less wealthy countries, who are ready for any kind of jobs that awards them with relatively high salaries. Thirdly, once migrants' communities settle in receiving countries, they tend to attract more migrants through their social networks (ibid., 21-22).

The growth of the volume of migrants between 2000 and 2010 from the Central and the Eastern European countries can be seen below (*see figure 2*). Since 2007, Norway seems to be significantly the most attractive country for labour migrants from all the Nordic countries.



**Figure 2. Gross inflow from Eastern and Central EU countries to Nordic countries in a period between 2000 and 2011, chart was created by Tronstad and Joona (2013, 26).**

Tronstad and Joona point out that women used to dominate among migrants from Central and East European countries, but after the EU enlargement already in 2007 two out of three migrants were males. However, later the differences decreased. Changes can be explained by the dynamic demand in labour market (for instance, need of construction workers triggered male migration) and family reunion afterwards (Tronstad and Joona 2013, 32).

Labour migration helped the Norwegian economy, however, it also brought additional challenges and problems for the policy makers related to work and welfare. Friberg et al. (2013, 45) uses the term of social dumping, that has become more commonly used since 2004. The term includes such negative activities as low wage competition and unfair working

conditions. In Norway, this problem was met by tightening collective agreements and legal regulations towards wages and labour standards (ibid., 45).

Friberg et al. (2013, 45) assume that labour migrants would not be scared away by lower wages and work and life conditions in a receiving Nordic country, if the alternative they have in their country of origin happens to be even worse. Labour migrants tend to be satisfied with sub-standard conditions, because in their mind they compare themselves with the situation back home, not with the colleagues in a host country.

Even though, Norway has been ranked as a provider of the highest standard of life through a successful redistribution of resources, efficient bureaucracy and generous insurance system, it still has social problems to work on (Leonardsen 2012, 117). Norway, as other Scandinavian countries, is unable to protect its most vulnerable citizens, not so much from material, but more against existential distress (ibid., 118). Moreover, the Liberalisation of the EU labour market and its negative effects in receiving countries such as social dumping is believed to threaten the base of the Nordic social model (Friberg et al 2013, 46).

### **3 Theoretical frameworks**

Technically, both macro and micro theories may be useful in explaining and understanding experiences and choices of circular migrants in the context of social welfare. Theoretical standpoints of functionalism, social constructionism, materialist strategy would help to explain how system affects welfare of labour circular migrants and their families. However, this study was built to gather more knowledge about individuals' perceptions of what choices are available for them, trying to understand the decisions they make. Thus, theories of individual level as capabilities approach and coping strategies were chosen. Theoretical framework combined is an effective way to answer the main research question: how Lithuanian circular migrants manage social welfare while wandering between the home country and Norway? Each of theories is presented further in the following chapters.

#### **3.1. Capabilities approach**

Roybens (2005, 94) presents capability approach of Sen as widely used, but the most commonly cited in studies of human development, welfare, social policies or political philosophy. It is important to keep in mind, that this approach does not answer, why poverty



or inequalities as such exist at all, it rather provides a framework to evaluate and conceptualize the phenomena itself (Roybens 2005, 94). Nussbaum (2011, 18) adds that capabilities approach is often seen as comparative assessment of quality of life.

This approach explains individual quality of life through a combination of “doings and beings”, which is understood as personal capabilities to achieve valuable functionings (Sen 1993, 31). Resources and interpersonal differences (socioeconomic context) define functionings that are available for an individual. For instance, being well nourished, or being well integrated socially, having education lead to capabilities such as being healthy and strong to work, having knowledge to get a well-paid job (ibid, 31). Things that an individual chooses from his capability set are called achieved functioning or functioning achievement (ibid, 38), and a relative well-being (an outcome) is understood as utility (ibid, 43).

Nussbaum stresses the need for Sen’s capabilities approach to acquire a list of actual broad capabilities. The theorist suggests 10 categories that may sufficiently summarize it (Nussbaum, 2011, 33):

- life (to be able to live long and worth living life);
- bodily health (having adequate health, nourishment and shelter);
- bodily integrity (being mobile and protected from any kind of assault, being able to have sexual satisfaction and make own decisions related to reproductivity);
- senses, imagination and thought;
- emotions;
- practical reason (having a liberty for conscience and religious beliefs);
- affiliation;
- other species (ability to live with a concern towards nature);
- play (capability to have a good time, have access to recreational activities);
- control over one’s environment.

Nussbaum believes, that the state is obliged to guarantee, at least the threshold level of these central capabilities for citizens to have a dignified and minimally productive life (ibid.).

The capabilities approach is understood to be relevant to the study, as it helps to explain specific and not common decisions that circular migrants might make. It is useful in trying to

understand, why circular migration as such was chosen at first, and in defining more detail the capability set of circular migrants, which is expected to be determined by their constant back and forth migration. Capabilities approach also inspires a discussion, if functionalities available for circular labour migrants are enabling and just.

### **3.2. Coping strategies**

Snyder (2014) defines coping as:

“a response aimed at diminishing the physical, emotional, and psychological burden that is linked to stressful life events and daily hassles” so coping strategies “are those responses that are effective in reducing an undesirable “load” (i.e., psychological burden). The effectiveness of the coping strategy rests on its ability to reduce immediate distress, as well as to contribute to more long-term outcomes such as psychological well-being or disease status” (Snyder 2014, 5).

Life pushes people out of their comfort zone, and makes them discover new ways of behaving, thinking or feeling. Such stressful situations that provoke individuals to cope is a base of the human change process. Snyder (2014, 5) also notes that a happy life is an actual example of successful processes of coping.

Lazarus and Folkman explain, that the concept of coping is found in two very different theoretical literatures. One came from animal experimentation influenced by Darwinism and emphasizes the natural reactions of animal to aim predict and control their environment in order to reduce psychophysiological disturbance. The second model is formulated by psychoanalytic ego psychology, it defines coping as realistic and flexible thoughts and actions that fix problems and reduce stress and anxiety. The main difference between these two models is that the latter one sees cognition of the environment more important than instincts-based behaviour (Lazarus and Folkman 1984, 117).

In the context of labour circular migrants, the psychoanalytic ego model seems to be more relevant, as the situation itself demands specific knowledge, skills, social network for an individual to succeed. The Darwinistic model tends to be more relevant to situations on a lower scale, that includes less of planning and more spontaneous behaviour.

Drummond and Brough (2016) discuss the types of coping and points out that coping can be past or future oriented, and the previous one can be proactive or preventive. The authors use Schwarzer's (2000) definitions and explain that proactive coping aims to build up the

resources to improve chances for personal growth, while preventive coping uses the resources to reduce the potential negative outcomes (Drummond, Brough 2016, 123).

Following such coping theories circular migrants' decisions, actions and perceptions will be categorized to, whether it is future/past oriented, proactive or preventive nature. These categories will help to conduct thematic analysis and understand circular migrants' strategies in accessing services and benefits of different welfare states.

### **3.3. Coping capabilities**

Earlier, two different, but not opposite frameworks were briefly presented: capabilities approach and coping strategies. These concepts can be linked, firstly, because both refer to individual efforts to improve wellbeing and, secondly, because one compliments the other. If the capability approach asks, what options are available for the subject, and questions whether they are just or limited, then coping theories encourage to search for an answer, why certain functionings were chosen, what stressors hide behind, or what dangers might ambush the subject. "Coping" puts an emphasis on the fact that certain functionings were achieved in order not only to reach certain well-being, life that one has reasons to value, but also to reduce the distress, or solve a problem that occurred or might occur and that creates a concern and a motive for the subject to take actions.

The context, where coping capabilities are used, supposed to answer two main questions: what is the problem (that demands for coping solution)? And what the subject is able to do about it (capability set)? The use of conjoined framework and calling it "coping capabilities" is a convenient way of summarizing discussion related to both capability approach and coping strategies. Therefore, it will be used in the discussion part to not only summarize the findings, but, most importantly, to answer the research questions in a more generalized way with a focus on social risks.

## **4 Methodology**

### **4.1. Methods and strategies for data collection and analysis**

The research questions presented (*see chapter 1.2.*) were answered by performing qualitative design research. Creswell (1998, 15) explains that such research aims to build a holistic picture of social phenomena by analysing informants' views in their natural

environment. To be more precise, case study qualitative tradition of inquiry was followed throughout this study. That means an in-depth data collection was performed while combining multiple sources of information in order to draw a more detailed picture of the phenomenon (Creswell 1998, 61).

Firstly, content analysis was performed over users' comments of the relevant online discussion. Silverman (2011, 64) explains, that in content analysis the researcher, first, defines categories and afterwards counts instances, when those categories were used. Abbot and McKinney believe "online forums are essentially electronically hosted focus groups" (2013, 212). This method seems to be cost saving and easier to perform, as respondents do not have to travel to participate and, nevertheless, participants have a sufficient level of confidentiality (ibid.).

Another advantage of analysing forums is that it can be asynchronous, that means it allows participants to have time to reflect on a topic and other comments before commenting back (Abbot and McKinney 2013, 212). Therefore, it was used as a pilot study to gather more knowledge about problems of Lithuanian origin migrants in Norway. Findings also helped to prepare a more constructive interview guide and assure more fluent and fruitful process of interviewing.

Content analysis was a useful but limited tool for this study, as the information there appeared in a sort of chaotic way with little stimulus for deeper discussion about social problems and circularity. Thus, a definite need for a more organized research method arose. Therefore, the next step was interviewing, as it is "most importantly a form of communication, means of extracting different forms of information from individuals and groups" (Byrne 2004, 180). Semi-structured interview type was chosen for this study. Burnard (2005, 5) emphasises, that the semi-structured interview is the most common type of interviewing in qualitative research, where the researcher follows a set of certain questions to capture necessary data throughout the interview (the *semi-structured interview guide of this study is available on the appendix 3*).

Due to a concern of limited time for the study and significant differences between gender roles in Lithuanian society, it was decided to choose only one gender for deeper analysis. As men are more common among circular migrants, males were decided to be the main

interviewees. However, several females also participated in the study. Three spouses of male circular migrants shared their stories and insights along with their husbands.

First, interviewees were recruited through the recommendations received from the network of acquaintances. Later informants were chosen by using snow ball sampling. Everitt (2002, 353) describes it as a type of method for sampling, where sample members provide contacts of other people suitable for the study. The use of this way of recruiting, however, might come with certain risk, as, for example, approaching interviewees with similar background and gathering a lot of insufficient data. To avoid this, three different sources of contacts were initiated.

It is common in a qualitative research to continue recruiting interviewees and perform interviews until thematic saturation is reached. That is a point in the study once the researcher does not discover any new observations and themes in the new data collected (Guest, Bunce, Johnson 2006, 59). Full saturation was not reached in this particular study due to time and travel budget limitations and difficulties with schedules of potential interviewees. However, as this thesis is of the explanatory type, it does not require to be representative. The knowledge gathered was enough to develop an attention-worthy discussion, observations and to inspire for further studies.

Transcribed interviews were analysed following a thematic strategy. According to Seale (2012, 367) such a strategy makes the researcher look across the whole data set and search how certain issues are perceived by various individuals. Similarities and differences were captured while coding and systemizing the data set using Microsoft Excel software. Knowledge gathered was analysed through the theoretical framework of capabilities and coping strategies (coping capabilities) that has already been presented in chapter 3.

#### **4.2. Ethical considerations**

Norwegian National Committees for Research Ethics (NNCRE) emphasizes:

“Research is of great importance – to individuals, to society and to global development. Research also exercises considerable power at all these levels. For both these reasons, it is essential that research is undertaken in ways that are ethically sound.” (NNCRE, n.d.)

Furthermore, his particular study gathered statements about the employment conditions, participation in the black labour market, what is a highly sensitive data and requires even more precautions of ethical considerations. Therefore, ethics were considered in every part of the research by following the 4 main principles (NNCRE, n.d.):

- **RESPECT** - All the people related to the research (gatekeepers, respondents) were treated with respect. No judgement or personal evaluations affected the data gathering or paper writing. Interviewees were informed about the goals and the importance of the research and also that they may withdraw from the research at any time. The precautions were taken to assure the anonymity of interviewees. All sources were coded from the very beginning, as no names or personal details were required for this research. Nevertheless, all the information obtained was stored safely in password protected private computer until the thesis was finished, and by May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2018 after submitting the thesis, recordings and transcriptions of interviews were deleted.
- **GOOD CONSEQUENCES** - The aim of this study was to seek for good consequences, with all possible negative consequences minimized as much as possible.
- **FAIRNESS** – The study is fair and transparent, therefore, methodology is presented in detail, information used is referenced according to Chicago style guidelines, and observations made were followed with relevant examples and arguments.
- **INTEGRITY** - Study complies with not only existing norms, but with Oslo Metropolitan University's (previously HIOA) requirements and national regulations. Nevertheless, no data or information used were fabricated, falsificated or plagiaried, data presented is original.

As there was a need to perform and record interviews for this study, which eventually was published, requirement of ethical clearance appeared. Therefore, research notification with a letter of the consent and the preliminary plan of interview guide were submitted to NSD Data Protection Official for Research in Norway in July 2017. Only after the research proposal was assessed by NSD organization and the ethical clearance was received on August 24<sup>th</sup>, 2017 (*see appendix 1*), the empirical part was taken forward.

As this research was related not only to Norway, but to Lithuania too, the research-based university in Lithuania (Kaunas University of Technology) was contacted to update the knowledge of the latest ethical clearance requirements. It was found, that the Lithuanian authorities do not require an official ethical clearance, it only requests for an informed consent to be available for the interviewees.

The consent form was provided to all the 11 (8 male circular migrants + 3 spouses) participants of the study (*see appendix 2*). Every one of them agreed to sign it, thus, 11 signed consent forms were obtained in the end of the study. The consent form was adjusted throughout the period of the research, as firstly, it was created to serve circular migrants, and later altered to suit circular migrants' partners too.

### **4.3. The researcher**

I have Lithuanian origin myself, so all the interviews were held in mother tongue's language to all the participants. I am 28 years old female, currently living in Oslo, Norway. I am familiar with both Lithuanian and Norwegian labour markets and most common ways of social welfare provisions. Consequently, I am highly qualified to perform this study. Furthermore, I have experienced labour circular migration myself, however, only on an interior level (not internationally). A number of efforts were made to keep the study objective, however, my social and educational background might have affected the data gathering and analysis.

### **4.4. Interviewees**

All together 8 interviews about 8 different cases of Lithuanian circular migrants were conducted. 11 people have participated in this study, as three interviews were held not only with the circular migrants themselves, but with their partners at the same time (*the table of interviewees is available on the appendix 4*). Interviewing couples was more challenging, but also far more rewarding in gaining better knowledge. Partners not only helped one another to tell the stories, but also validated each other's statements.

Five interviews with only male circular migrants themselves were conducted within Eastern part of Norway (in Norwegian - Østlandet). The rest of the interviews were held in Lithuania, therefore, possibility of interviewing circular male migrants with their spouses appeared and was used. Traveling in Lithuania was also required to meet workers' families:

two couples were interviewed in different places in the second largest Lithuanian city, and one family was met in the smaller town.

Eight males and three females answered the questions. The age of the respondents varied between 26 and 63 years old. The male participants had education mainly from high school + professional training or unfinished higher education. The females varied between unfinished higher education and master's degree. Only two of the circular migrants were single and had no children at the time of the interview, while the rest were married and had one or two children, the ages of the children varied between 2 and 26 years old.

Five of the circular workers were hired by the Norwegian company that has a subsidiary company in Lithuania. Two men were hired by the Norwegian organisations in Norway, and one migrant had an official status of unemployment (but worked unofficially). Two of the male respondents admitted of being involved in the informal labour market and having some work assignments in Norway that are not seen by the tax office.

Respondents of 4 cases are settled in towns or cities of Lithuania that has over 100 000 inhabitants, and the rest were currently living with their families in towns or villages having less than 40 000 inhabitants. In the home country two migrants lived in owned private houses, four circular migrants lived in private houses with extended family, one lived in private owned apartment and one couple lived in rented apartment. Two interviewees admitted that they were planning to purchase housing in Lithuania in a near future.

Four of the respondents had circulated on an international scale before, two had migrated to other European countries and lived there for some time, and three families had been full time residents in Norway before starting current circular migration. Periods of current circular migration varied from around one year to more than eleven years. All the circular migrants have family members or other close relatives currently living in migration or also being active in circular labour migration in Europe. One participant had only started his circular career, therefore, he was excluded from some parts of analysis, but his statements were still taken into consideration while summarizing such topics as circular labour migrants' experiences in housing in Norway or transnationalism.



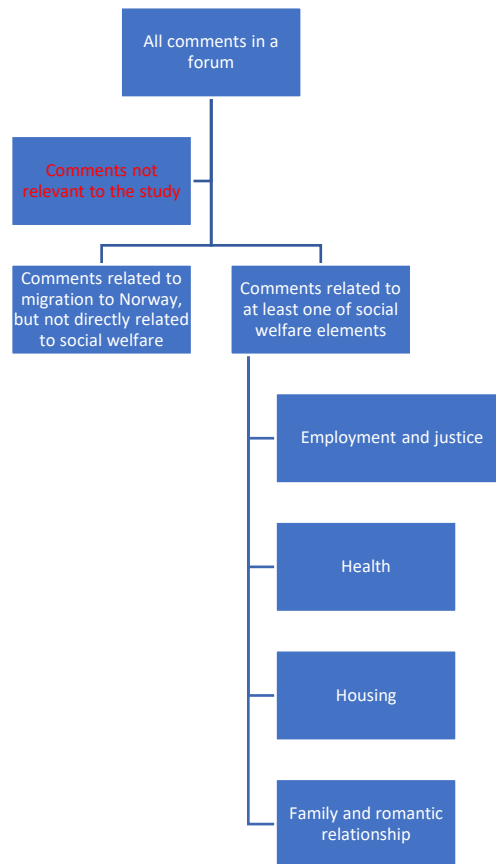
## 5 Results

### 5.1. Internet forum comments content analysis

One discussion was analysed from the online forum [www.supermama.lt](http://www.supermama.lt). This forum originally was created for mothers to share motherhood knowledge and worries but became so phenomenally popular that it attracted other women and men of different age with no children. The forum kept the name but provides numerous various discussions far from the original area of interest. By using search engine and keyword “Norway” 26 discussions were suggested. Topics were related to learning a language, traveling, migration and so on. Another search was attempted with more detailed keywords as “work in Norway” 13 topics were found. Due to research purpose the topic related to labour migration was subjected for the content analysis.

The topic named as “Work in Norway, in fish factory or else” was chosen as its content was most suitable for this study. Discussion was created on 11th of April, 2006. It kept being opened over years, thus, last comment was posted on 18th of July, 2017 (Last accessed on 30th of July 2017). Topic at that time contained 172 comments. From nicknames and grammar used, it can be assumed that discussion is highly females dominated, however, it is clear that at least several males expressed their views too.

As main goal of this content analysis is to help define themes for future semi-structured interviews, basic map of analysis was followed (*see figure 3*).



**Figure 3. Basic map for online forum content analysis**

On the first step, 9 comments were rejected from the analysis since they contained commercials or statements not related to the subject of the study. For example, “Hello those in search and those that has already found their place abroad”. 163 comments were kept and divided in various categories for more detailed analysis. Almost all the analysed comments were originally posted in Lithuanian (two comments were in Russian), but the examples presented in further analysis were translated to English.

***Review and analysis of online forum’s comments related to migration to Norway***

Most of the comments did not specify duration and type of migration, but 22 comments referred to the temporary or circular migration specifically. Nevertheless, the high interest in temporary work agencies, and continuing questioning of length of work encourages the conclusion, that majority of discussants are not interested in settling in Norway and first want to try the conditions, the culture and the experience before considering the option of permanent migration to Norway.

12 posts referred to a situation when a male left or was planning to leave the female partner (with or without common children) in Lithuania with ongoing relationship. Only one comment referred to a female thinking of leaving her children in Lithuania and going to Norway for work. One message referred to a couple going to work and leaving their children in Lithuania, and 15 comments were about both partners, or whole family (including children) planning or already succeeding in migrating to Norway due to employment reasons. The rest of the comments did not specify the situation, but, most seemingly, belonged to single individuals attempting or being active in migration.

According to experiences and views of forum participants, males are more likely to migrate as temporary or circular workers than females as they are more experienced, skilled and suitable for jobs that create opportunities and needs for such migration:

*“Hi, I read this topic, but I haven’t found enough of information about oil platforms. Maybe there is more of the feedback from females? I wonder how to get there if you are not a male? Because the advertised jobs are highly male oriented”;*

*“Well, they could not offer me anything, maybe only next spring... to be honest, I think there are really low chances that they will offer me something, because it is way more realistic for a man to get a job with them”;*

*“I was reading more about Norway, and hell how hard it is to get a job there!! Unless you’re a construction worker and you know how to do various handy man jobs”.*

Most popular subject of discussion was temporary employment agencies, 72 comments expressed opinion or interest in them:

- 9 out of those comments presented positive relation towards agencies, as for example:

*“I have worked with this employment agency for a couple of times, and I have no complains so far. And now I really want to go again so I am waiting for the offers from them, but since there are many wishing the same, it is much harder to leave”.*

- While 11 criticized and had negative views, for instance:

*“As much as I have heard from others, those agencies charge almost the half of your salary (around 40%), therefore, it is the best to search for a job directly. However, without Norwegian language, that is extremely difficult.”*

*“Practicaly, after checking each of the agencies on skusk.lt the wish to contact them just evaporates.”*

- All the rest of the comments mentioning employment agencies were neutral, seeing agencies as a very important, but also sort of precarious actor in migration process:

*“Could anyone share more information about this firm XXX, I would be very grateful.”*

*“Girls please, suggest something, at least on a private message, if there is any agency that you worked with in Norway, and that they did not fool you”.*

In comparison, only 11 comments referred to a role of acquaintances and relatives that has already successfully settled in Norway. An importance of personal efforts like searching job on the spot or directly contacting an employer were promoted 8 times throughout the discussion. This represents a significant impact of employment agencies in international labour migration. However, it should be taken into consideration, that people, who have less contacts abroad, tend to be more active in searching and sharing information online with active and open virtual community. Nevertheless, such people are more in a position to trust and try employment agencies, as they are often the main option for them to migrate.

Throughout the discussion various areas of jobs were mentioned. Some were jobs requiring education as medicine, accounting, but mostly it was skilled work as electricians, bakery workers, construction workers, or arduous job that is easy to learn but physically harder to perform as helping in farms, laundry services, cleaning in hotels, campings, bars, working in restauration or factories.

Labour migration to Norway is expected to be challenging, as it is, first, related to a hard work, second, it is expected to be unpleasant due to being in a foreign culture, living in a very basic housing far from social surroundings that individual is used to. But such options remain attractive for a short period of time as it may solve or improve financial problems quickly. As discussants share:

*“It’s hard...when you have to leave the homeland...but that’s the reality”;*

*“This month, I am planning to leave for work with agency XXX, because I see no other option”;*

*“Well, I am considering myself a possibility to work, but max for 2-3 months, because I won’t make it longer without kids. And I was wondering, if employer likes you, can you extend the contract? I mean, that you come back to Lithuania for some time, and then return to Norway to work hard again. I’m sorry that’s probably a stupid question, but I have no experience with it. A month ago, one acquaintance went to England to work as a prepacker, and she has two children,*

*so I am also tempted by such a possibility, I would rather work hard for 3 months and earn a salary of the year”.*

Lithuanian, who are interested in temporary or circular migration to Norway, tend to make more short-term decisions and concern more about the near future. Not many comments provided reasons for migration, but the main push factors presented in the comments were either difficulties with employment or lack of money.

It also seems that most of Lithuanian labour migrants see migration as the way to earn more money in exchange of reducing personal human rights/living standard. In case of temporary or circular migration, or at the beginning of migration processes abroad, people seem to be fine with the fact of cutting on the living conditions. People do not mind hard jobs abroad, which they would mind in Lithuania. Nevertheless, forum participants pointed out unexpected advantages of some demanding jobs in Norway, as possibilities to work overtime (for example, in a hotel), or a chance to find money or other valuables (while working with specific laundry from hospitals).

#### ***Review and analysis of comments specifically related to social welfare***

The most important block of content analysis is comments related to social welfare. As mentioned before in this study, social welfare can be broadly grouped into categories such as justice, education, health, urban families, employment, housing. 30 comments from the discussion provided experiences, knowledge, concerns and interests towards at least one or more of these parts of social welfare.

While analysing this block of comments, statements, but not comments were assigned to categories, as most of the comments related to this block were complex, broad and mentioned more than one area of social welfare. The most common element was employment possibilities, conditions and payments, what was highlighted 17 times throughout all 30 comments. The second biggest concern was housing with addition of basic needs (15 times). Equal interest was presented towards health and urban families (each mentioned 7 times). Justice was also brought to attention, though only two comments provided discussion over it, and both were related to employment.

The only social welfare element not found in this particular, randomly moderated forum discussion was education. Despite the fact, that education is crucial in shaping the capabilities set of any individual, for temporary or circular migrants it is not considered as a valuable functioning as they (even with diplomas from the higher education) are ready to do the unqualified jobs in Norway.

As mentioned before, employment is the most important part of social welfare for circular migrants. Several comments were found, that explain labour migration as part of coping strategy, or functioning that would help to better their conditions, in other words, to attempt the life that they have a reason to value:

*“I struggle to find a job in Lithuania for already a year, but I need to live somehow”;*

*“Despite the fact, that I have a higher education, I am still ready to work even in the creepiest jobs, all I care is to manage to earn more money”;*

*“We really wanna go there, because we do not see anything good here. Salaries are small and requirements are high, we have enough only to pay the bills, and everything else it’s just to dream of”.*

However, general discourse about working in Norway contains ideas about well-paid work but in tough conditions:

*“In Norway there are very tough weather conditions, even -52 celsius is possible. Therefore, even with special work clothing it is still very challenging, you have to have ideal health, as it is very easy to catch a cold there”;*

*“It should be extremely hard for a person to work there, because you’re always placed remotely from the shore, view there is not pleasant either, I have seen the pictures of those platforms myself”;*

*“Work ain’t easy, because it is very cold as you have to work in a freezer room, but with time you get used to it”.*

As mentioned above, tough conditions do not scare motivated future migrants away, as they see migration as the only option, that could help them improve their wellbeing significantly. Employment conditions are one of the biggest migrants concerns as it affects health, which is the main resource and functioning for a typical labour migrant. One discussant also shared her concern towards health insurance provided by the employer:

*“The first two months they do not provide the health insurance, unless you get some kind of trauma, but acute diseases are not covered. It is possible this is old information, I cannot guarantee...”*

On forum it was also shared an unsuccessful temporary worker's story with Lithuanian employer in Norway, which was related also to justice element of social welfare:

*“Hi, I have a problem: employer did not pay the salary for two months of work. I was officially working as a carpenter’s assistant for two months, 90 NOK for an hour, on a contract it was 23 000 NOK per month. Work was practically without days off, sometimes we were working even up to 12 hours a day without lunch break.”*

The individual expressed concern that he does not belong to any trade-union, has no previous work experience in Norway and does not know how things work and how he should assure the justice. This story brought up the question of additional vulnerabilities temporary/circular labour migrants may have.

### ***Focus on healthcare***

Interest in healthcare services was noticed more among people planning long-term migration. Comments shared more information about how the healthcare system works, or what to expect in Norway, but did not provide a comparison of healthcare systems in Lithuania and Norway:

*“I am not aware of medication, which could be compensated by the government, but if you have some special illnesses, I do not think you would have any problems”;*

*“For what I have experienced with doctors, hospitals, so far, the impression I have is great, I feel safe and I am not scared, that they might miss something. Sometimes you need to wait, things are not as fast as sometimes we wish it to be, but... there are no saints on Earth, only in heaven”.*

### ***Focus on Housing***

As temporary work agencies receive a lot of attention from potential migrants, the housing they might provide is one of the concerns too, especially if migrants have children. Even comments that was positive towards the agencies, did not necessarily share a positive feedback about the accommodation provided by them:

*“Talking about trustworthiness, they have never betrayed what relates to work, however, living conditions is another thing, agency promised better, but once people came there they just freaked out... Nevertheless, work was a long drive away, despite they promised that workplace would be not more than 10km away from the housing”;*

*“The only minus is that they gave an accommodation for cosmic prices, but we found a better place to live”;*

*“How about the baby, who will look after it, I don’t think you will succeed as the provided accommodation is in a house with many youngsters, so I am not sure if you want to live in such dorm with many rooms”.*

However, such facts did not demotivate other discussants, rather prepared them for what to expect. Determined potential migrants seem to be ready to cut off on living standards especially in the beginning of migration, as expenses towards accommodation is much higher than what Lithuanians are used to, or have savings for:

*“Most of Lithuanians migrate like that: in parkings you have showers and toilets, so in a beginning they sleep in the cars.”*

### ***Focus on families***

While performing discussion search on online forum, two more specific topics showed up highly related to urban families as “Norwegian Barnevernet” with 598 responses, and “Pregnancy and giving birth in Norway” with 24 comments. In the comments of the discussion that is under analysis in this study, the biggest concerns related to urban families were about ability to work while having small children, and possibilities of day care while working in Norway:

*“Who will look after your baby, while you will be working?”;*

*“Where would you leave your small child, if you work? There kindergartens are very expensive, nannies too”.*

In the discussion it was also pointed out, that parents with older children also consider circulation to Norway, as the children are big enough to stay living with their grandparents. In such cases extended families are seen as important support systems for the circular migrants.

### ***The input of the pilot study to the rest of the research***

This pilot study helped to take into consideration more specific aspects of social welfare that are relative to circular migrants. As in the literature review, in the pilot study also it was confirmed that temporary and circular migrations are more common among male workers, thus male circular workers were interviewed for the second part of the research. Pilot study also pointed out the significant role of temporary employment agencies, however, informants recruited for the interviews happened to be not hired by them, so they (workers hired through temporary employment agencies) remain as a suggestion for the future studies and comparisons.



Furthermore, the content analysis was used to narrow down the social welfare topic. Education part was eliminated from the further study as it was not of an interest to circular/temporary work migrants that are willing to do skilled or less qualified work in Norway. Education as such was in a way included in family life part as it is crucial to children care. Justice part was also refrained from, as it was barely developed and in all of the cases related only to employment. Healthcare was noticed to be of the high interest, but mostly discussed by people that are settled in Norway, and those that are migrating on permanent basis with no plans to return yet. In this way, health issues are not expected to be common, but remained among the welfare parts covered by the interview guide. The last, but not least important part of social welfare is housing. From the pilot study performed, problems with living conditions seem to be highly relevant to circular labour migrants.

## **5.2. Semi-structured interviews' results overview**

As mentioned before, 8 interviews were held with 11 Lithuanian origin participants (*read more about the participants in chapter 4.4.*). 402min of interview material was recorded and it was transcribed into 61 pages of Microsoft word format text. Transcriptions were systemized and coded using Microsoft excel software. Interviewees were coded from a very beginning with no trace to their identity.

Codes for respondents started with either letter M (stands for male) for men, who participated in the study alone, or letter F (stands for family) for all the information gathered from the couples' interviews. The letter was followed by the sequence number (whether that is the 1st or 2nd male that gave interview, or the 1st or 2nd family that answered questions). Family codes also included additional letter representing the gender of the spouse. For example, M1 stands for the first single male answering the questions, while F1M stands for a male from the first couple that was interviewed (*for more examples see appendix 4*). It was decided to distinguish codes for males, who were interviewed together with their wives, as stories they shared were presented from two angles at the same time. Nevertheless, all the cases of interviews held with both partners happened to be the cases of circular migrants that lived in Norway before circulation. This was also seen as an important determinant in the results review and discussion.

Interview results were presented in smaller blocks following not only grouping that was highlighted in the pilot study (employment, healthcare, housing conditions and family life),

but also following some topics presented in the literature review, that were not covered by the content analysis, but seemed to be significant and relevant to the research questions.

### ***Transnationalism culture and circular migration***

Circular migration between Lithuania and Norway is highly an interest of transnationalism, as it not only includes two foreign countries, but is also influenced by the international regulations of the transnational European Union. The interesting finding is that most of the circular migrants themselves have experienced migration before:

*“I have already worked in United Kingdom and Spain. In Spain work was poorly paid, so I did not stay there long. But in England I worked for six months, I planned to stay there temporarily, just to save money for my first motorcycle.” [M1]*

*“I have worked with constructions in Siberia in 1975-1980. We built there railroads, bridges for cars over rivers, that was where I learned how to work with crane.” [M5]*

*“I worked like this before. I went to Sweden, but I was circulating there just for 6 months, later I went to work to Poland, worked there for a month, came back home for two weeks, and then again went to Poland for a month and so on. After that I started working in Norway, but, at first, we settled there.” [F2M]*

And/or have close relatives that live in migration:

*“My whole family, I mean brother and sister live in United Kingdom for already 18 years. They own houses there, settled 100%. I am not sure, but I think their children have already British citizenships, or something like that, since they were born there and lived there ever since. I do not really know the details, what I know, is that they have nothing in Lithuania.” [M1]*

*“My both sisters, first, moved to live to Netherlands. Later, one of them got married to a Dutch, who is also half Spanish, so they decided that they rather live where it is warmer and moved to Spain eventually.” [M3]*

Experience with migration and/or having close relatives living abroad seem to encourage development of transnational values and expansion of perception in what is one's capability set. Interviewees shared more or less successful stories of migration (dislike of the culture is not understood as unsuccessful story) and eagerness to travel for work, vacations and so on. Nevertheless, circular migrants believe to successfully maintain social relationships on a transnational level, except in cases of having small children, as it is more challenging to keep the strong bond with toddlers, even with the help of new technologies.

## ***Beginning of circular migration***

Stories, of how current circular migration began, fell into three main categories:

- 1) Participants found job advertisements (of circular work in Norway) on a Lithuanian media and applied themselves:

*“I saw an advertisement, sent my cv and got a job in the Norwegian daughter company established in Lithuania, without a possibility to work in Siauliai, Lithuania. Houses that are manufactured in Siauliai later are sent and built here in Norway. We always work in resorts around skiing centers.” [M1]*

*“I remember. I was having lunch at home and I was reading a newspaper. I came across this advertisement: “crane operator wanted in Norway”. Idea crossed my mind, why this is not for me? I should think about that more. After few days passed, I remembered that newspaper once again, I thought I should give them a call. So, I did it and that was how we started working with this company, and we continue working today.” [M5]*

- 2) Job with circulation was offered by family members or acquaintances:

*“Me and my brothers had established some small business with furniture manufacturing. But the crisis came, and since our business was small and young it did not survive. Afterwards, my brothers left to Norway. Later I joined them.” [M2]*

*“One guy, that I met while working in Sweden, suggested me a job in a Norwegian daughter company in Lithuania. I started in this manufacturing base in Lithuania, but since they always need people in Norway, they suggested to me to try here.” [M3]*

*“This job was offered to me by one acquaintance. He told me about this place and I got interested to try.” [M4]*

- 3) Respondents, first, moved to live to Norway and only after some time had passed, they decided to gradually return to Lithuania with their families. Females with children settled in homeland, while males rearranged their work agreements to be able to keep their Norwegian incomes and assure fluent return to their families:

*“At first, we thought that we are going to live in Norway for the rest of our lives, because it seemed so easy to buy a nice house, new car there, it seemed as a dreamland, but that was before we had our child. After birth of the child, we started thinking that we more and more want to come back to Lithuania. We did not want for our child to go to a kindergarten in Norway. We wanted to bring her up in Lithuanian way. We wanted our child to spend time with grandparents. We wanted our daughter to be and feel equal, what would be much harder in Norway. My sister’s son went to kindergarten and school in Norway, eventually they had to decide if their child will go to the second class in Norway or repeat the first year in Lithuania, and they decided to come back to Lithuania and put the boy to the first grade again. So here we are, on this stage of transition from migration to permanent return.” [F2F]*

*“One day while working as a janitor in Norway, I woke up and said that I don’t want to finish my life like that (this participant at that time had a master’s degree education acquired in Lithuania.). Then I was offered a position in Lithuania and I came back. <...> Later we had some financial problems so we returned to Norway with 6 months old daughter. But once the time came for her to go to the first class, I wanted her to be away from Norway, because I do not like the education system there, the ways of upbringing, I think it makes people dumb <...>” [F3F]*

*“That culture is very unfamiliar for me, it does not work for me. There was nothing to do there, for example, we did not have where to go with our child. Here (in Lithuania) there are plenty of places to go and things to do, just have money for it. There was only one so called children’s room.” [F1F]*

It can also be noticed, that cultural differences and care of children (thinking of their education and well-being) made migrants to re-evaluate everything and consider the return. However, in all the cases females with common children moved back to Lithuania, but their husbands (all the partners were married) started circular migration with contacts they made while living in Norway in order to assure families wellbeing in a time of change.

### ***Push and pull factors for circular migration***

The primary push and pull factors for workers to begin circular migration and maintain this status through the time are highly financial:

*“I borrowed money to buy a new motorcycle, so I needed bigger incomes to give back the debt, nevertheless, we built a house and there was still some expenses and work that needed to be done for the house to be finished. So, I thought, I am tired of struggling all the time and I left to work to Norway.” [M1]*

*“It is not about liking or disliking the circulation, we are pushed to do this. I mean, if we want to have something in this life... in Lithuania you can only exist. If two people are working in a family, it is possible to pull this off, but if you are the only one providing to the family, and if you want to plan a housing or something, it is impossible.” [M2]*

*“What can we do? We choose from starving in Lithuania or working here and trying to save money for retirement <...> As there is a saying, money in the pockets is not yet wings, but it surely improves the walk.” [M5]*

First interviewee later added, that soon he got rid of all the expenses and debts, however:

*“Just once you get used to this big money you stop seeing any kind of perspectives to stay in Lithuania.” [M1]*

*“My older daughter has not been in only maybe 10 countries in Europe, and only in those not so much popular like Ukraine or Belarus. She travelled with our*

*family, or with school projects. With those projects she lived in Turkey, France, Austria... We also received some girls from those countries at our house. Now in April she is going to Vatican to meet the pope, if I were not here, you think she would be able to do all this? She plans her trips without asking, just once I am back she shows me her plans, and I always say yes to it, I only remind her, that exams are coming and I want her to pass them well. I believe traveling is the best education, to practice languages or learn more about people and cultures.” [M1]*

Another respondent, while asked if he is going to continue circular migration after already circulating for more than 2 years, answered:

*“I don’t have a choice <...> because of the money... I’m finally able to let my wife obtain higher education. She is studying now, and we have to pay for her studies. Nevertheless, I have a son, who is going to the second grade, another smaller son goes to the kindergarten. You need money for all of this. My wife does not work, only studies. Medicine, nursing, first aid. She is already studying for one year and a half, and she still has two more years to go. Thus, I’m planning to continue working here for at least two more years.” [M2]*

More examples:

*“People say happiness is not hidden in money, but if there is no money, then there is an inner tension, or tension between family members. No one will be happy living only on pasta and potatoes.” [M1]*

*“I have to go to Norway, I need money to finish my car service here, moreover, we need a house. I do not want to leave again at all, to leave the family, but I cannot escape it, we would not survive from only my wife’s unemployment money.” [F1M]*

The higher incomes from circular employment provide better capabilities to eat better, own more, empower the whole family to access experiences related to future perspectives.

Secondary pull and push factors can be related with curiosity and/or lone type of personality. In the case of having children, time, when children become more independent and less interested in spending time with parents is also seen as a sort of push factor for an individual to experience other markets with little feeling of guilt for leaving (that was not mentioned by the respondents directly, but, for example, quotes below were of men with teenage or adult children). Curiosity to explore the world was also seen as a pull factor:

*“I feel I have enough time to spend with my family, once I am back, after two weeks I already start feeling that I want to leave again.” [M1]*

*“I have no family of my own so I have no problems with working like that. It is honestly fun to work here, all the mountains. Beautiful. Now I am changing my living place probably every week, so I get to see so many nice places. Time just flies in such conditions.” [M4]*

*“It’s enough for me, I am a loner, and my wife got used to that, she says if I want I can go, if I don’t I may not. If you count, I spend at home maybe 7 months a year, 5 months in Norway, because all the Christmas adds up, later it’s slow with work so there is not enough for everyone.” [M5]*

Positive experiences from working in Norway could be classified as tertiary pull and push factors to circulate. It was never directly named as the reason, but positive views towards Norwegian working conditions, the emphasis on differences between experiences while working in the similar field back home, suggests that it may work as an indirect stimulus to stay engaged to labour market in Norway:

*“I can tell you, I really liked working in that Oil company. I liked pretty much everything about it starting with views towards people, finishing with work security regulations. It was American oil company, with American values, but Norwegian work culture, all this added up.” [F3M]*

His partner commented:

*“I told my husband myself, that he does not really have a reason to come back to Lithuania. Here he would definitely have worse working conditions, much worse salary.” [F3F]*

Following the situations presented above, push factors from the home country are understood as low incomes and a wish to improve the material wellbeing. The push factors from Norway are related to local culture and social norms, also a feeling of missing the usual social surroundings. Such push factors were most relevant to families that actually lived in Norway before male started circulating. In all of the cases, pull factors to home country was dear surroundings and family presence, while positive work experiences, joy of traveling and relatively high salaries were pull factors to the receiving country. Only one interviewee, who is not a circular labour migrant, but wife of one, admitted that she remains engaged to Norway due to its welfare state benefits (she worked there for many years).

### ***Employment conditions and welfare***

All male workers specialise in construction and renovation industry, mechanical services or oil industry, also one male had a flexible additional job in a cleaning agency. Most of the workers gave a positive feedback about their Norwegian employers. However, it was noticed that workers had a very basic expectations and knowledge of their rights, contract conditions they have:

*“Holidays are defined in the job contract, we do receive the holidays money... but maybe those two weeks at home is considered as our holidays. I do not know really, I never had problems, never needed additional holidays to what I have. <...> Our contract changes every couple of years. It changes from Lithuanian to Norwegian and back again. Now, for over a year we are having Norwegian work contract. Usually conditions do not change. Only before we used to work 9 hours a day, now only 8. That is a condition in a contract. However, the salary did not change. <...> I do not know well, management is the one to be concerned with all the working hours and Norwegian laws, but we are checked by the authorities time after time. Within five years since I work here, I have been checked by them once, last spring. It was nothing special, they asked for HMS cards, work contracts and that was it. They communicated more with the bosses.” [M1]*

The most important employment condition for circular migrants was a salary, that they considered as big, and that it was paid always on time, or even in advance in case the payment day happened to be Sunday or public holidays:

*“There are three different kinds of salary that we may get. One for a beginner, another for a middle stage worker, and one for a team leader. So, the new guy may get a salary raise in a year, I think. I do not really know, if I might have any salary raise, since I am not a beginner. So far salaries seem to be stable.” [M1]*

*“Salary has never been late within all five years. Always perfectly on time, if the payment day happened to be Sunday, for example, then we get salaries even earlier, on Friday”. [M2]*

*“We always get our salary. I have no reproach to what is related to the salary, it always comes on time. Honestly, I never had big problems in Lithuania either, just there the salary was so small...” [M4]*

*“I do not really care how we are paid, I look at the amount which satisfies me and that is it.” [M5]*

No respondents pointed out inequalities between nationalities and payments, they felt they are fairly paid. However, basically in every cases people did not have a steady salary raise with years of experiences adding (despite the probation period).

Work and time at home duration varied between the cases. Periods in Norway varied from 4 up to 6 weeks and periods at home from two to three weeks:

*“Now usually we work six weeks here, and spend two weeks at home, at least since our company started building accommodation blocks. Before that, I was spending two months here and three weeks in Lithuania and so on.” [M1]*

*“My work contract never changed. Only in the beginning it was temporary contract for the probation period. After I had this permanent contract and that is it. It did not change from what I had once I was living in Norway till now, despite I*

*am traveling a lot. Four weeks in Norway and two weeks at home <...>. Before I started circulating I was working 37 hours per week, from 7am till 3pm. Since I started traveling every month, I started working from 7am till 5pm plus Saturdays, so when I go home to Lithuania they cover those days with overtime.” [F2M]*

Long working hours were seen as a positive or at least not a negative thing. This is because the job is well paid, so workers feel responsible to perform well. Secondly, because their main social life is not in Norway, and they do not feel a need to have a lot of free time there:

*“We are working six days a week, but if we would have two days off, we would simply have nothing to do, we would get mad here. Sunday as only free day is totally enough.” [M4]*

*“What I do not like in Norway is being without the family, I do not care so much about working conditions. I know, what I came there for, not to rest, but to work, so if I get to work for 15 hours, I do not see any problem in that.” [F1M]*

Workers demonstrated a positive attitude and understanding towards overtime policies. Working more than the typical 40 hours per week empowered them to have frequent returns home, as the overtime was later used to cover the days they were in Lithuania. Nevertheless, interviewees assured that in the cases of overtime, they were paid extra as supposed to:

*“All the overtime is paid as supposed to, up to two times more than usual hour.” [M2]*

*“Sometimes overtime happens, for example, they order the concrete, but it comes late, you cannot cancel it anymore, and you cannot delay using it, in such cases, we stay working extra hours, but that is understandable.” [M4]*

*“I spend six weeks here (Norway), two weeks at home, pretty much like that. Sometimes I have to spend more time here, and less at home... Last time I spent only eight days at home, because in the end of year there is always a pressure to finish everything, what was planned for the year. It does not matter if it is Norway or some other country, plans are plans.” [M5]*

Almost all circular migrants believed that work security is at high interest in their workplaces, more than what they were used to back in Lithuania:

*“In the last two years work security became very important topic in Norway. For example, I had to pass the special courses as the one authorized by the management. That test had maybe 300 questions. Others had to pass other kind of tests also, everyone here has certificates and stuff like that.” [M1]*

*“Here (Norway) they definitely care more about safety at work. We have well trained safety at work specialists in our company. They make sure we go to the courses, provide us with necessary materials to read, explain what and how to use,*



*provide with all the safety equipment as belts, helmets. Before in Lithuanian company all I had to do is to sign the paper, no one really spend time with me explaining all the rules... I feel safer here.” [M2]*

One respondent also pointed out that there are some shortcuts in Norway when it comes to work safety:

*“Everything is well adapted to work needs all the shoes, gloves, helmets. But once we go to the site, we are always supposed to have a training about safety in that specific site, but they do not do that, just put the stickers on the helmet and let us in. The Lithuanian way. That’s understandable, hundreds of people pass there, you cannot give a proper training to everyone. However, we are aware of all the risks and safety measures, because we work in this area, we do not have to get those trainings every single time.” [F2M]*

*“Safety practices differ a lot if you compare Lithuania and Norway. In Norway they are much more serious about it.” [F2M]*

*“He is laughing every time he sees racks in Lithuania. He says, who walks on them?!” [F2F]*

All the interviewees claimed never having a serious injury at work, or even witnessing it, only minor accidents, or at least what they consider as minor injuries:

*“We always work with moving and sharp mechanics, so yes, sometimes someone lightly cuts into a finger or something, but that’s nothing. However, in such cases we just call to the office, ask where the closest hospital is, where should we go, they tell us the address, we go there and fix everything.” [M1]*

*“Once I had hit my fingers hard in that illegal job, but I did nothing, endured it and moved on. That is my job, I do not bother myself with such details.” [F1M]*

Several respondents mentioned disappointments of work experiences back in Lithuania:

*“In Lithuania you have a big work load, but that does not reflect in a salary. Overtime is very little paid.” [M2]*

*“I was actually expecting that it will be a very hard work, because in Lithuania constructing base for the house is a hard job, but here with all the technologies it is relatively easy.” [M4]*

*“Here we are provided with working clothes and shoes, in Lithuania sometimes they give it, sometimes they tell you to buy it yourself.” [M4]*

*“In Norway they take work security more seriously, in Lithuania maybe they are saving money or something... in Lithuania you can see people working with slippers, while here, if you come without boots with metal front, you will already have some problems.” [F2M]*

Some stories of negative experiences in Norway also appeared:

*“We won’t get any retirement money and we cannot get a paid sick leave.” [M5]*

*“I was employed as a full-time employee, but out of nowhere they changed my contract to a part-time/extra. However, I did not complain, because at the same time my family came back to Lithuania, so with my new contract of extra worker I can come back home, whenever I want with no problems, and once I am there available, I call them and they always give me some job.” [F1M]*

*“Technically, for what I heard, the company is supposed to provide with specific contract for circular workers like me, but then the company needs to get lots of documentation and requirements, so they are not doing this officially.” [F2M]*

However, despite this, informants demonstrated more of the positivity towards Norwegian working experiences, however, once asked if there are any additional benefits that comes with their work, they answered:

*“Since we changed to Norwegian work contract, we have to pay up to 90 euro for a ticket home from our own money. If it costs more, company compensates the difference. Before, company used to pay full amount for travels.” [M1]*

*“Tickets we are buying ourselves, but from the company we receive accommodation, car, tools, you basically do not have to think about anything you just come and work.” [M2]*

*“Why I like this company is that they organize Christmas events every December for our kids. Children receive gifts. It is nice that company cares about our children. The attention in general.” [M2]*

*“We do not have anything like bonuses or gym allowances, we also have to bring our own lunch. Everything is very Lithuanian, despite the company is Norwegian, I guess because the main manager is Lithuanian himself. But it’s ok I do not mind.” [F2M]*

*“You got once a jumper for your birthday...” [F2F]*

It was noticed that employers do not grant circular migrants with additional benefits and compensations. A provided opportunity to circulate is seen as a privilege, that many people are interested in, and the employer does not have to put extra effort in keeping the employees or recruiting new ones.

### **Trade Unions**

The majority of respondents had a slightly negative or neutral attitude towards trade unions. Interviewees demonstrated a vague understanding of what trade union is and why it can be useful:

*“There is a trade union in our company, but I do not have much of information about it <...> because I am not interested in it. If I have a problem, I send an email*

*to the responsible people. You send one email, you get hundreds of answers. Company always immediately reacts to our issues.” [M1]*

*“Trade Union? No... I never needed it. It is not relevant to me.” [M2]*

*“I never belonged to any trade union, I am even not sure what does it mean.” [M4]*

*“I guess trade unions concern about working hours, working conditions, I think, I am not sure. As I do not have any problems, I have no need of some trade unions.” [F2M]*

One interviewee had a poor previous experience with belonging to a trade union in the Soviet Union era, and today, he sees it as an unnecessary organization:

*“I belonged to trade Union long ago, in Soviet times... Now I do not see a point to get involved. I remember once I wanted to get a carpet through a trade union. The head of the union said to me that I am young, I even do not have a family of my own, why do I need some carpet, but he still promised to get me one, but I had to wait one more month. I happened to forget that carpet, so what did that man do, he sold it really cheap, and just used that money to get wasted. So that is the trade union that I have experienced <...> One friend used to be the leader of one trade union back in Soviet times also. She provided us with some good priced Czech beer, vodka. It was very practical to know someone from management of trade unions. Especially those that are related to actual trades and commerce.” [M5]*

However, circular migrants that work in the construction industry stated that trade unions are aware of them and that they actively recruit new members:

*“Actually, we did receive some offers from trade unions here, in Norway. Both Lithuanians and Norwegians trade union representatives were coming and recruiting new members.” [M5]*

The most positive attitude was demonstrated by the couple who had been settled in Norway since Lithuania became EU member (currently the male circulates, and the female lives in Lithuania, but is on maternal leave in Norway):

*“Yes, we have a very positive experience with trade unions in Norway, we think we need such in Lithuania too. In Lithuania the employer feels like a lord, and employee is afraid to disagree, and that does not help.” [F3F]*

*“Trade unions are very active in Norway, they contact new employees themselves.” [F3M]*

Belonging to the trade unions was seen as a potential ground for a conflict with an employer. Moreover, many interviewees believed that asking for help in the foreign trade union can be complicated and fruitless:

*“I am not sure, but I think if 30% of employees belong to the trade union, the company is checked all the time, I think, I heard something like that. Of course, companies do not like that. You have to stay human everywhere, you have to understand that someone has to work, when someone else has needs to be away, maybe a wife is giving birth, or one has a wedding coming. You cannot complain straight away.” [F2M]*

*“You should understand, once you become a member of union, some time has to pass, that you would be able to receive some kind of help. Nevertheless, there is a barrier of language, it should be taught explaining a problem and asking for a specific help. You really need to have a big problem to actually be ready to go and try to get a support from them.” [F2F]*

As it can be seen, most of the circular migrants, who are not interested in actually living in Norway, are not interested in investing into their safety within the Norwegian labour market. It was also brought up by some interviewees that the monthly fees to the trade unions are not so small and, thus they are not interested in paying it. Critical views towards trade unions are one of the most prevailing features in post-communist welfare states, and circular workers are not an exception. However, living and making effort to be included in a country with successful trade unions changes the understanding.

### ***Informal labour market***

Two respondents admitted being involved in both white and black labour markets. They do not see that as something wrong as black labour market provides them with flexible sufficiently paid work, which may not have the best conditions and security provided, but that, may be compensated by official jobs that they are involved with at the same time. Secondly, they do not feel in need of support or additional conditions, because the money that they earn empowers them sufficiently, and nevertheless, they enjoy doing what they do for black money. The main drawback of working in black labour market is the lack of regulations for working conditions:

*“In the place that I work illegally, it does not matter if we work at night or on Sundays, we are paid for an actual work result, not per hour <...> I appreciate a lot my illegal workplace, because I learned so many things there, and I keep on improving. I learned how to weld, paint, planish, cut the metal. Really, I am telling you, I have learned so much there.” [F1M]*

*“I was working in an oil industry but I left (left with a severance pay due to crisis in oil industry). Now we are back to Lithuania and I do not want any contracts, I go when I have work to do (illegal work is related with cars, not oil), and I am paid in black money.” [F3M]*

## **Health**

When it comes to healthcare coverage, informants either had active public coverage in both countries:

*“We are insured by the obligatory health insurance in Lithuania, we won’t get the retirement only, but healthcare is fully paid by the company. Also, we cannot have paid sick leave, but to see a doctor, get some medication prescriptions, receive treatments - we can. Everything is taken care, we do not have to pay any additional fees.” [M5]*

Either only in Norway, because they have been registered as emigrants in Lithuania:

*“I registered out from Lithuania since I moved to live to Norway, so, I suppose, I have nothing here (in Lithuania), maybe only the emergency services I could receive.” [F2M]*

However, those that do not have active public health care coverage in Lithuania still prefers Lithuanian health institutions (if there are no emergencies), and rely on private sector or acquaintances that work in health institutions and can help:

*“I do not have problems, I am never sick. Or if something I go see the mother of my friend, who is a nurse. Once, for example, she arranged a blood test for me.” [F1M]*

*“If he needs any kind of medical service, he would go somewhere private, we no longer go to any public clinics.” [F2F]*

*“If I need any care, I would come back to Lithuania, unless it would be something very urgent.” [F2M]*

Respondents emphasized that they have never had severe health problems, which also supports the fact that economic migrants tend to be healthier than people that do not migrate. Most of them did not need to take sick leave while circulating, or while residing in Norway on a permanent basis:

*“I have worked in Norway for 7 years and I have never been sick. I called sick only once and only, because I had a visit and they did not give me a day off.” [F1M]*

*“Surprisingly, I never got sick. I have taken two days off, from those days that you can call and warn that you won’t come without an explanation or doctor’s permission, and I did it only because my child was born.” [F2M]*

However, sick leave seems to be a last resort solution, for those that were hired in Lithuania to circulate to Norway, as they tend to be unpaid for those days:

*“In case you get sick, you can take a day off and stay in bed, but company does not pay you for that day. Despite, I believe they should pay for it still.” [M1]*

Being sick and unpaid is a case only for those that are hired to be a circular migrant, those that has fulltime Norwegian contracts, as supposed to, are eligible for Norwegian sick leave:

*“Others do take the sick leave. For example, one colleague of mine is on the sick leave for a fifth time this year. It is good for him, he is still getting paid 100%. <...> it is not hard to get a sick leave, you just tell where you work and, for example, that you have a backache and that is enough. Therefore, that colleague is always on sick leave. But of course, in that case you must stay in Norway, you cannot travel.”*  
[F2M]

Respondents demonstrated very radical and different views towards health systems in Lithuania and Norway. Whilst the sample is not big, opinions varied considerably. Once again, it is important to keep in mind that all the respondents had very few experiences with Norwegian healthcare system (even in cases of those that have lived in Norway for some time) as they demonstrated good health while residing in Norway.

Most positive attitudes towards Norwegian healthcare were presented by Lithuanians, that have never lived in Norway on a long-term. Those men were, at first, afraid to use medical care in Norway due to stereotype of how costly it should be in comparison to what they were used to back at home (free consultations to begin with):

*“Once one man had a severe belly ache so we brought him immediately to the hospital. We paid those 30 euros, immediately and very operatively it was reacted, he received attention that he needed. Afterwards, we are no longer afraid to go get a medical help. I like healthcare here. I have never waited more than 2 hours let’s say. Usually they are very fast to provide the help needed (referring to Norway).”*  
[M1]

*“I go to see doctors in Lithuania though. Still not often. Now since I got old, I have to do some check-ups. In Norway we go only once we have an emergency. But I trust doctors more in Norway than in Lithuania. Here they seem to be more human. Lithuanian hospitals are still soviet, you go there and feel like in some basement, creepy.”* [M1]

*“Once I had to go to see a dentist in Norway, everyone was freaking me out for how much I will spend there, however, after I came back to Lithuania and continued going to a dentist there, for my surprise, there was not such big gap between the prices I paid.”* [M2]

The latter interviewee demonstrated inconsisted views towards health care systems:

*“In Lithuania everything feels somehow easier, we have a very good family doctor, who takes a very good care of our children, at first, I was registered with her, later my wife registered with her too. Now the whole family is in one place, so*

*the doctor is caring about all of us, prescribes free tests and things. And with dentists it is also easier in Lithuania, and prices eventually is still lower than in Norway.” [M2]*

However, he also said:

*“You cannot compare the level of technologies in Norway and in Lithuania. For example, the way they numb the tooth, in Lithuania, after that procedure you cannot feel the whole mouth for the rest of the day, but here, only the area around the tooth, that they worked on, was numbed.” [M2]*

One more interviewee preferred Lithuanian healthcare system due to convenience, long lasting relationship with competent doctor:

*“I never had to go to see a doctor in Norway. But in Lithuania I do go, I do some check-ups prophylactically. My wife works in clinics as dentist, so our family doctor works next to her, actually. So, I go there time after time, chat with the doctor, do some catching up, check the blood pressure, sometimes she prescribes me some pills.” [M5]*

Surprisingly, the most negative opinions about healthcare in Norway were from couples that had lived in Norway as fulltime migrants, however, it was based highly on others experiences or maternal care and small children healthcare in Norway:

*“Yeah I heard that in Norway doctors are googling the diagnosis.” [F1M]*

*“We heard so many bad examples with Norwegian healthcare from others. My cousin had a broken arm, doctors said it all be fine, no need of a surgery, everything would heal naturally. As a result, bones healed, but incorrectly, so after he had to redo everything in Lithuania. One friend had an accident with motorcycle. Broke his collarbone, Norwegian doctors checked him and said he was fine. It was good that he could not bear the pain and went back to Lithuania to have a check, Lithuanian doctors were shocked, he had 5 hours long surgery, metal stripes were added to fix his bone... It is not a question of money, where to get the medical help, it is about how they care about people.” [F3M]*

*“I was pregnant three times, the first child died. On the third pregnancy Norwegian doctors told me that I am very lucky, because since September they have starting injecting new medication for my kind of negative blood group. I had such medication, when I was pregnant the first time just in Lithuania, if they weren't giving it to me then I would not have this third pregnancy now. They are so lagged behind. <...> as I knew how pregnancy care is happening in Lithuania, and in Norway, I saw a big difference <...> I was very scared to give birth in Norway... so I went to Lithuania and made it work that they would let me give birth in Lithuania, despite, I was not supposed to give birth with no extra charges in the home country, but I found a way. Anyhow, Norway managed to fine me for a no show in a hospital, when appointed. I paid taxes in Norway, but I gave birth in Lithuania, I think Norway had to pay to Lithuania for that.” [F3F]*

## **Housing**

Substantially housing conditions of circular migrants in Lithuania and in Norway were described as decent. Homes in Lithuania were perceived as more precious, but predominantly only because of emotional value and presence of family. Most respondents lived in owned housing in Lithuania (two single interviewees lived in parents' house, two married interviewees lived with extended family, and lived in their own housing with only nuclear family) and one was renting an apartment for his nuclear family. No respondents complained about their living conditions neither in Lithuania nor in Norway. However, in the receiving country circular migrants tend to live in more crowded housings or stayed as a guest with their relatives or friends:

*“Everything is good about the accommodation I have in Norway, it is renovated and I have everything I need there. Since we lived in Norway before, I still have a lot of things that we left behind, so there is nothing I am lacking. I am very satisfied, it is cheap, decent, we can use work car to go to work and come back. Nevertheless, the place is only 5 km away. We are renting the place with other colleagues. It is a big house, and first floor is rented for us. It is five rooms with private bathrooms and one shared kitchen. It was made for such kind of rent.” [F2M]*

The most interesting stories about accommodation were shared by men, who have signed job contracts in Lithuania and brought to Norway to work as circular migrants. Also, they were the only cases that had accommodation provided by the employer. Such workers explained that they have to change their living place time after time, and, depending on what their work specialization is, they have to move from one project to another, sometimes even more often than once a week. Migrants share:

*“It is an interesting case with this exact accommodation we are now. My company has invested in this property, everything what is in the house belongs to the company, but the building itself belongs to one Norwegian, that we built the first accommodation block for <...> For the last three years I have always had a separate room for myself. Usually an accommodation provided for us is something rented. In the best-case scenario, you have only a small wardrobe for yourself, furniture wise... Well it depends. For example, here, I do not have a wardrobe, I know there are all materials provided, I could make one myself, but I was never in a mood to do that, I just use the hooks on the wall and that is it.” [M1]*

*“I remember, when I started working here, the company was only started growing little by little. Then we used to sleep five people in one room, in bunk beds. Once the company had lots of loss with one project and was saving money, and they put to work there as many people as they could, to finally finish the project. We ended up in a very crowded accommodation <...> Two years ago, in a high season there was a problem to find a house to rent. For one week we had to live in the house, where if you go to the toilet – you pay, if you wash dishes – you pay. It is hard to explain. Accommodation had only beds to sleep, small kitchen with no tap,*



*no water... And we had to live there for a week. But that is not common, such stories are very rare. Now we are seven people living in this house, we have two bathrooms and one toilet room. We have one big tv to share with Lithuanian channels. Happiness is happiness, everything else you can create yourself. We are trying to make this place pleasant, here we built a sauna. The company helped, we did not pay. we just had to organize everything. We made the terrace ourselves. We try to make sure that everyone would want to come back here.” [M1]*

*“Mainly all the accommodations provided are similar. In one place it is a bit better, in another a bit worse... There was one place, where electricity installation’s wires were too short and electrical switches were breaking all the time, you could not turn on a stove, but that is just some small thing. One colleague told me, that once the office rented them such a terrible place, that they even did not stay there. It is kind of understanding, administration do everything online, they do not get to see how it actually looks. They did not live there, they left, so office had to book a whole new place for them. I think they came back to a previous place that they lived, because the rental period was not yet over. He showed me some pictures, it was creepy there, outside toilet, weird sink, I guess, in person it looked even worse.” [M3]*

Workers did not criticise most of the living places they have been provided, however, their conditions did not match all the requirements that were briefly presented in the literature review (see chapter 2.3.), such as the private space, table and chair, reading lamp and a wardrobe.

Men that had accommodation provided by the employer, mentioned that they sometimes have the opportunity to host their families in Norway for short period of time. Nevertheless, families evaluated their housing well:

*“Since I settled in this town with work, every family member came to visit me here at least once, also the whole family came here to see the winter, as we no longer have proper winters in Lithuania.” [M1]*

*“Last year, for example, my wife came to visit me here once, and once again she came here with our older son. She really liked here, no surprise, conditions are good.” [M2]*

One respondent explained, that his flexibility and humbleness, once it comes to housing, came from his previous experiences when he was young:

*“I really do not feel any kind of discomfort. Maybe because since I was 18 years old I started driving cars from Germany to Lithuania, so in those times we lived in campings, cars. We searched for cars in Netherlands, Germany everywhere. So now I do not feel stressed, If I have to, I can sleep a few nights in a car.” [F3M]*

Owned housing was also mentioned as a major value. Some were encouraged to circulate to finish a new family house, some to save for their own living place. Housing is seen as the base of stability, a wealthy life, the main goal of incomes and the major challenge to own:

*“In Lithuania you could not dream about such things. Without a loan to buy an apartment is impossible. However, now we are about to move to a new apartment.”* [M2]

*“It is problematic to get a housing loan, because if incomes are not in euro, bank treat it as you earn nothing. I have no incomes, and we want a common family loan, but we cannot get it yet. One of the options is for him to come back to Lithuania, we work here for a half of the year and get the loan. Another option, if we have a 70% of house already finished, we can try to get a loan again. That is what we are trying now, if it does not work, he will be obliged to come back to Lithuania for 6 months for sure. And then he would leave again. Or maybe even stay. He would not have problems to come back to Norway to that job, because he has good relations with management, and they like him.”* [F2F]

### ***Nuclear family life***

Nuclear family seems to be the main reason for males to circulate and to wish for terminal return. Males feel as main providers for the family:

*“We talk on skype and so on... I don't know, everyone soon noticed that we have way better life as I am here, than there, with a minimum salary and low chances to be employed in a town I am from.”* [M1]

However, only parents with children younger than 7 years old expressed feeling of guilt, because of frequent departures and problems of being away from their children:

*“For example, I do not see how my children are growing. That is the hardest thing. Despite that, work is work everywhere, no one will pay you for doing nothing.”* [M2]

*“I see how hard it is for her when you leave. The first week she is crying all the time, screaming, demanding for dad, she does not understand why the father is gone. Once he is back, she just sticks to him, watch him that he would not leave the room without her. If he goes to the toilet, she waits for him outside, just sits on stairs and waits. Then there is this middle stage, when he is gone for some time and she get used to that, it's a good time, she's calmer. Then he's back again and she sticks to him again, he even asks me to take her from him, how overly attached she is.”* [F2F]

*“I heard how my child was playing with dolls and said: don't worry I won't leave you, I am not your dad... That is an outcome of this circulation.”* [F1F]

*“You can talk to her on a phone, only when she is in a good mood, nevertheless, he has to put on bunny ears or a cat on a head, that she would talk to him, because otherwise she is not interested. She is too little yet, it's impossible to have an actual*

*conversation with her, she gets bored, she does not ask: hey daddy how was work today, she is curious only to see him.” [F2F]*

*“It is more problematic to make the child go to the kindergarten, once the dad is back. Kindergarten teachers said they always notice on a child, when her father is back, for example, in a middle of the day she starts asking them, where is her dad.” [F2F]*

While with children from 7 years old communication seem to be more effective and easier:

*“She is doing fine, I was thinking it will be harder. I thought we will have to solve somehow problems that will come with my husband not being at home all the time, but I did not speculate before the time came. Everything is going fine, most important for a child is to have a routine, clear agenda. They talk a lot on a phone, and she is always being told the truth, nothing ever was hidden from her. She misses him, but child just like every adult finds a way to deal with that. She has many people around her here that loves her very much. It is very important to keep her busy.” [F3F]*

Another issue in the family is to keep the romantic and normal relationships with the partner:

*“I think my wife never liked me circulating, never within all of these 5 years.” [M1]*

*“I live most of the time alone, he comes back, he comes to my routine, to life I built alone. Every time he comes back, it is very hard for me to deal with him, I have to adapt every time, every time we try to act as a family from a beginning.” [F1F]*

*“It would be much easier just to live together all the time, because every time he comes back it is like holidays, so we have holidays almost every month. In this way we spend more money, because we always want to do something, to spend time more efficiently once he is back. Some time passes, routine takes over, everything settles, you get over with all the work that was piled, and then he is back and we feel like on holidays again.” [F2F]*

All the respondents that have children, admitted receiving or trying to get the so called monthly children’s allowance:

*“We tried to apply for the child money in Norway but did not get yet. You see, they are changing our contracts, changing employer from Lithuanian to Norwegian, and back again. So, we are just not fast enough to fill the papers, because there is a requirement for the contract length. Now we are going to remain employed by this company, our contracts are more adapted to Norwegian standards, I think. But it’s ok, I heard you can get the money for up to three years back.” [M1]*

*“We are receiving those 970nok for each child, but soon they should stop paying us the money, because our older child is not going to school in Norway and is living in Lithuania.” [F3F]*

Since January 2018 Lithuania also started providing children allowances for every child in a family no matter the incomes (30 euro for a child monthly), however circular migrants' families were not interested in that:

*“Now when Lithuania will start paying child money as well, we won't even apply for it, because we get it from Norway, and you cannot receive it from two countries, you would have to give it back in case they catch you. We decided to get this money only from Norway as long as husband is working there, since the amount is bigger.” [F2M]*

Circular migrants shared, that people like them with families living abroad are eligible for the income tax reductions in Norway:

*“I also get back some taxes: as I have two children, I am supposed to pay less taxes. Last year, for example, I got the tax refund of around 1000 euro.” [M2]*

*“My colleagues said that, if your family is registered in a foreign country, you can get some tax money back as compensation for constant travel expenses.” [F2M]*

Barnevernet institution appeared on interviews too. However, it was mentioned only by those that have children and lived in Norway before circular migration:

*“I feel safer in Lithuania, despite Barnevernet has never touched us or anything, but I always had this fear. For example, taking my daughter to the hospital... Once there was this stupid story, we left our child with an aunt, when we both had bachelor's parties. Of course, we both had some drinks that night, but we were not drinking next to the child, so the next day aunt brought the child and as a coincidence, child got very sick. I did not know, what to do, should I take her to the doctor, or not, as I was drinking last night, I was sober at that moment just a bit hangovered. In Lithuania I take my daughter to doctors with no worries.” [F1F]*

Two out of the three families that moved back to Lithuania expressed dissatisfaction with Norwegian kindergartens, what also added up to their decision to return, in a contrast, the same families happened to be very happy with Lithuanian education system and kindergartens:

*“I go to the kindergarten to pick up the child, I see her without a scarf, with her jacket wide open, I pick her straight from a mire, as she was still very little, she was in the water till her knees, and kindergarten teachers are somewhere else, no one cares. A child of friends was also going to the same kindergarten, but she was older, so she sometimes would look after my daughter. <...> in Lithuania, if I have some bad morning and I leave my daughter in kindergarten not so nicely prepared, I pick her up all nice, with her hair nicely braided, like some Elsa character or so. When*

*I see parents in Lithuania complaining, I look at them with such surprise, I think you should go to Norway, and see how things work there, before you complain.” [F1F]*

*“It’s a first kindergarten we’re trying in Lithuania and we are totally satisfied with it. It’s a public kindergarten, nearby our home, we pay 60 euro a month and everything is provided, like warm meals. In Norway in some kindergartens you have to pack food for your child to eat.” [F1M]*

*“I think Norwegian system is fine, the laws are fine, the problem is with human factor. For example, they hire random people, they even do not require an education from pedagogy, if you have a child of your own, you are understood as capable to work in kindergarten. They also do not request for a medical check before applying for a work with children, so you just get an email, that teacher has tuberculosis, so you should go check the child.” [F3F]*

### ***Relationships with members of extended family and friends***

Single circular migrants did not express any problems or concerns related to relationships with the rest of the family or friends. Generally, none of the interviewees thought that circular migration had affected any other relationship as with parents, siblings or simply friends, as the receiving country is relatively close, and returns are frequent and relatively long:

*“Not really, parents are parents, we are not small kids to be in need to see them every day.” [M2]*

*“I don’t really have a struggle, I do not have family of my own, so I have no problems. I am single. Maybe if I would get a girlfriend then... but if you get a proper girlfriend, she can wait those six weeks.” [M4]*

Circular migrants extended families seem to be important actor in case of housing both in Lithuania and in Norway:

*“We live in a private house with my parents, it is a bit tight for all of us, but we have a plan to welcome the New Years in our own new apartment (referring to situation in Lithuania)” [M2]*

*“I live with my aunt (in Norway). She owns a house, we are three living there in 121 square meters, I have my own room. I do not pay any rent, but I always bring lot of stuff from Lithuania. Last time I asked her, how much should I give for living there, she told that if I ask that again, she will kick me out. I live in my cousin’s room, he got a job in Aalesund, so now I took over his room. I have very good relationship with a family of my aunt.” [F1M]*

*“Now in Norway I stay with my brother or with my cousin. Many friends of our migrated to Norway and still live there till today, so I do not really have a problem to find a place to stay for those short periods. There is one Norwegian, that I could*

*stay with too. I also have premises full of stuff that stayed in Norway since we moved back, I even should bring everything to Lithuania at some point.” [F3M]*

Having relatives around, time after time, helps with looking after smaller children too:

*“The only help we have from my parents, who we live with, at the moment, is that sometimes when my wife has to stay at school longer, they pick up the smaller child from the kindergarten, spends some time with kids. That is the only help. Financially, I support my parents sometimes. Everyone needs more help than I do. When we move out, I will continue helping them, they are my parents, you know.” [M2]*

The lost contacts with friends seem to be a natural process of life and popularity of migration processes in Lithuania:

*“Those friends that I lost over these years of circulation, I lost on purpose, I do not need people in my life, who try to benefit from me.” [M1]*

*“Almost all of my friends are bursted around the Europe, so there is no big difference, where I spend most of the time, I would still see them rarely, but we all try to keep in touch on messenger, calling one another often.” [M2]*

Circulation also seen as empowerment leading to a better relationship, as one respondent pointed out, that improved purchasing power of him allows him to see his sister more often:

*“I have a sister in Spain, I would see her only once a year, because that is how often she comes back to Lithuania. Now I am more able to go visit her myself, I am going there again next spring.” [M4]*

### ***State’s support and entrepreneurship***

The main activities of welfare states that directly affects the circular migrants are public healthcare (in Norway and/or in Lithuania), child allowance (available in both countries but preferred from Norway), income tax deductions and work regulations in Norway. Nonetheless, when it comes to circular migrants’ partners and children greater variety of relative welfare states activities appear. Those can be unemployment allowance, work activation services, maternity leave payments, education provision and so on:

*“If my wife graduates with her average grade higher than the average of the whole group, she may get half of the money back of what she paid for studies.” [M2]*

*“At the moment I am unemployed, I receive unemployment money from the state, but mainly I am provided by my husband. Next week I am starting web design courses provided by the state, once I finish it I will also stop receiving the unemployment money.” [F1F]*

However, while performing interviews negative attitudes were observed, as with a support of Lithuanian welfare state comes also stigmatization. Nevertheless, the competence of Lithuanian welfare state has been questioned:

*“I am bringing up my children in a way that they would never want to ask for support. I taught them to value, what they have, and be responsible with money.”* [M1]

*“We knew from a beginning, that it will have to pass quite some time before we will start making money from our farm. My point is, that, however, those social allowances and things aren’t so cool to receive, so we do not mind missing it, because of starting our own farm.”* [F2F]

*“We would not want for the state to take care of us.”* [F2M]

Some welfare policies are taken for granted and not seen as something to be grateful for. Interviewees mentioned free education system, low priced kindergartens in Lithuania that they are very satisfied with, medical care that they do not spend money on. However, once asked about Lithuanian welfare state they answer negatively, that country does not take care of them and that in case of accidents they do not believe to receive any help or support from the government:

*“That the state would take care of us, I would not believe, I am sure we would receive help from people around, if there would be some fire or something, but if you have some financial problems and that the state would take a good care of you, I do not believe. I think everything depends on us.”* [F2F]

Circular migrants seem to be a type of people that rather have the control in their own hands than do nothing and wait for a support. In this regard all the male respondents shared similar personality traits, they were kind of traditional men, that work hard, feel highly responsible for their families and feel obliged to be the main family providers. They also do not like to complain or show emotions:

*“I cannot complain, I do not lack a thing, I am the one in charge of my own happiness.”* [M5]

*“I am not sure... all I care about is my salary, so that I could live with dignity as a human being. As long as I can use my hands, my legs, and my head I do not bother myself about any retirement and I am not looking for any kind of support from any of the countries.”* [M5]

Another interesting finding was the level of entrepreneurship between circular migrants. In five out of eight cases, respondents had and/or is planning to have a business or work for oneself:

*“When Lithuania gained over the independency, I opened my own company. I was fixing cars, engines, automatic gearboxes.” [M5]*

*“All the incomes are from my husband, we also have started this farm, what was the idea of my husband. So far, we have no profit from that farm. That was the plan, I came back, start the farm, we develop it with a time and start making a living from it. Now we have to invest in it all the time, it is only expenses so far. For half of the year, I am also baking cakes for special orders, it adds up some money in the end of the day, but it’s more as a hobby.” [F2F]*

Entrepreneurs and circular migrants tend to have similar traits as high-risk tolerance, high level of responsibility, eagerness of control and so on. Probably, the last trait can cause some discussion, as why would circular migrants wish for control. From the interviews conducted it was noticed that circular migrants feel empowered and more in control of their environment. Earning in the high-cost country provided them with the better capabilities to improve their and their families lives. The lifestyle they’re having is not what they dreamed of, but they do not pity themselves as it is the best they can achieve with the educational background and work specialization that they have:

*“I believe if two people work, and if you’re reasonable with money, you may have sufficient life in Lithuania, but for one to take care of the whole family there are no conditions for sure. Of course, I am talking about people like me, my social class, I am just a carpenter, just another skilled worker.” [M2]*

*“After establishing our farm, we lost any kind social security payments or programmes. I cannot get an unemployment money anything like that. My maternal holiday is over and I have no incomes, while my sister, who also came back from Norway, receives it, because maternal leave and work in Norway is recognised in Lithuania too and you are eligible for the support.” [F2F]*

### ***Future plans***

When it came to future plans, circular migrants were the most unsure, no one could say how long circulation will continue. Some had plans to own or start something before they stop circulating, however, circulation to Norway seems to remain as a constant solution of empowerment, always available in case their families would need higher purchasing power:

*“I will continue like this for at least two years, after we buy an apartment, my wife graduates, then I will want to rest from this distance and maybe work in Lithuania for a year.” [M2]*

*“In a near future I am not planning to change anything, but, eventually, I will live in Lithuania, Pakruojis (where the respondent is from).” [M4]*



*“I have no plans for the future, I won't be building any house for myself, because I am too old for this, I live well so far, and what tomorrow will bring, we will see tomorrow.” [M5]*

*“I am not sure for how long I would continue circulating, maybe till we get rid of the loan.” [F2M]*

*“What? How long are you planning to work there?” [F2F]*

*“Maybe just a one more year, so we would give back the whole loan.” [F2M]*

*“I do not know, maybe once I start expecting the second child you would finally return home for good. I mean, our farm is growing with every year, and if we would have two kids, oh my God...” [F2F]*

As one of the circular migrants' wife noted, for people that emigrated at an early age, and were used to other labour markets than Lithuanian, settling in the home country can be challenging and disappointing:

*“People that emigrate after the high school perceive everything differently, it's harder for them to return to live in Lithuania and actually work here. For me it's easier, because I have worked here, I know, what does it mean to work and live in these Lithuanian conditions.” [F1F]*

None of the respondents had a plan to settle in Norway. Migration, as such, also remain as a future option, no matter what the age of the participant is, however, to a new destination, and preferably with welcoming weather conditions and more entertaining culture as, for example, Spain:

*“I have to admit, I am still having some thoughts to migrate somewhere else... but only for work, I am not curious to travel just for sightseeing. I like to stay in a place for a longer time, to get to know people, and how things work.” [M5]*

*“I would like to live in country like Spain. I like their culture.” [F1F]*

*“At the moment I am working on establishing my own business here, with frequent returns to Norway for temporary work assignments. Maybe I will get a job there again, I could do that with my experience, but the problem is that I don't want to live there. Before it was easier, but now with the crisis in oil sector things got more complicated. I am trying to get a special kind of job so I could work in Norway for a month and come back to Lithuania for every second month, that is my condition.” [F3M]*

*“If I migrate ever again to another place, then it rather be somewhere warm. Miami, Spain, not where it is a constant wind and rain.” [F3M]*

When it comes to welfare, as presented before, respondents and their families do not wish to rely on it. However, one family with a female, that worked for many years in Norway

but now is settled in Lithuania, is hoping to keep the contact with Norway and improve their wellbeing with the support of Norwegian welfare state while continuing living in Lithuania:

*“Once my maternity leave is over, I will go back to Norway and try to apply that they would pay me for staying at home and not taking my child to a kindergarten, but I might not get it, as there were many changes with policies lately. If they not going to pay for that, I will register with NAV as in search for a job in European Union. If that won't work, I will take one year of unpaid holidays from work. I do not know now. Maybe something will change again. I do not cut off Norway, I left there so much of hard work, taxes paid, stress... I want to take back, what I have deserved.” [F3F]*

## **6 Discussion**

The discussion part is dedicated to test the theoretical framework (*see chapter 3*) and to draw the deeper conclusions from the data gathered. The chapter starts with separate discussions of Lithuanian circular migrants' capabilities and coping strategies, and in the end of this section those discussions were summarized together at the same time using the conjoint theory of coping capabilities. Such a structure helped to demonstrate the convenience of using coping capabilities term.

While analysing data, a need to divide circular workers into two groups appeared. The first group consists of those workers that never lived in Norway, and whose experiences in Norway are related only to the current circular migration. The second group consists of those interviewees that actually lived in Norway as full-time migrants before starting circulating.

### ***Capabilities approach and Lithuanian labour circular migrants***

All labour circular migrants, who participated in the study, had a similar educational background: all respondents had graduated from a high-school, many of them had additional professional training and in one case - unfinished higher education. Education is one of the main functionings in the capability set, a variable that affects incomes and career possibilities. Theoretically, free education is available for everyone in Lithuania, however, skilled workers due to personal preferences, low eagerness to study or due to socioeconomic reasons chose a path of skilled workers, which determines their capabilities to have the life they.

Family is one of the main reasons and stimulus to start or to end circular migration. Having children results in a growth of expenses and, thus, in a growth of financial burden to the bread winners. A wish to provide the closest people with better functionings, as to eat

better, to travel more, to live in a better housing, is the main push factor to circulate, and pull factor to work in Norway. However, the majority of interviewees, that have created families of their own, struggled to be away due to limited capabilities to spend time with loved ones. Workers admitted having problems with keeping strong relationships with partners, or communicating with small children, that have limited abilities to communicate, demonstrate high attachment and little control of emotions. Having children and a partner influences male workers' capabilities and decision making significantly.

Geographical location of where workers live (in the home country), is another factor that remarkably shapes their material capabilities in the home country, and what pushes them to consider circular migration. Some of the interviewees brought up low chances of employment in the area, where they and their extended families live and where they grew up or own housing. However, they also shared that they are not willing to migrate within the country due to attachment to the home town, and only two interviewees shared that they have moved to a bigger city for better employment possibilities.

In order to improve living conditions, earn more and provide their families with a better life, such people do not have many legal functionings to choose from. One of the options, especially since most of the interviewees had the transnational connections with people living abroad, is migration. However, permanent migration is not seen as an option for workers with high attachment to the home country, or those that have families. In such cases circular migration seems to be a more tempting solution, because it not only enables workers to earn in a higher economy and spend money in a lower-costs one, but also keeps them socially engaged in the home country. The last option for workers to improve their capabilities is having own business, therefore, having business was an attempt of interviewees in the past, in the present and/or a plan for the near future.

Capabilities of circular migrants to access welfare states services and benefits depend on which aspect of welfare states provision we are looking at. In case of employment, despite no severe complaints were captured regarding employment conditions, most of the circular migrants seemed to have worse conditions than the prevailing standard in Norway, though similar or better than what they have experienced in Lithuania. This study was not aiming to compare conditions between settlers and circular workers, thus, this remark is rather subjective.

Nevertheless, no matter if a migrant is circular, permanent or temporary, the employment contract that he signs (if signs, in the case of black labour market) defines the access to welfare state's benefits and protection in the receiving country and sometimes in the sending country too. Workers that never lived in Norway tend to have less enabling contracts and more limited capabilities to access Norwegian welfare state's protection and support. Furthermore, they have less capabilities to access social welfare in Norway, because of little knowledge and experience of how the system works. In comparison, migrant workers that lived in Norway before circulation, tend to benefit more from the Norwegian welfare system.

Capabilities in accessing healthcare seem to be sufficient and do not concern migrants themselves, as they, first, are healthy and, secondly, are eligible for public healthcare in at least one of the countries or have resources to use services of private healthcare institutions. However, it is only sufficient as long as circular migrants have minor problems and basic needs for healthcare, in the case of severe illness or injury, results could radically change.

Housing topic was also the most crucial to those that were married and had children. Circular migration/ migration improved workers' capabilities to live/own better housing in their homeland, which many of them did not see happening in the case they would have lived in Lithuania the whole time. Owning housing in Norway was of a very little concern to the circular migrants, as no one was circulating in order to establish them in the receiving country. Only those workers that lived in Norway before circulation, shared insights and stories related to owning housing in Norway. Respondents admitted that they considered or bought housing in Norway only when they were planning to stay and live there with their families for unlimited period of time.

Many of the circular migrants had less control over living conditions in Norway, as they rely on extended family members or employer. Workers see their stay in Norway as temporary and highly work related, therefore, they do not mind living conditions there sometimes being inferior to what they have in Lithuania. Due to low expectations males do not complain and even express satisfaction with whatever conditions they have in Norway. Furthermore, as the main goal of circular migrants is to bring back to home country as much money as possible, they are very keen on saving in a high cost country as Norway. Constant saving limits migrants' capabilities to live in better conditions, nonetheless, capabilities are even more

limited in the cases when workers are obliged to change living places often due to constant traveling with work.

To quickly sum up, it can be said that skilled workers, especially from small towns in Lithuania, have limited capabilities to achieve the life they have reasons to value, which means owning better housing, eating better food, being able to provide family members with better capabilities to grow and achieve more. However, belonging to the EU, having connections abroad empowers workers with additional functioning of various types of migration. Circular migration improves material capabilities but limits such a central capability as affiliation. A circular migrant is able to see his extended family and friends that live in his home country more often than a full-time migrant, however, such migration still complicates relationships with small children and spouses. For young, healthy and single workers, circular migration is least harming.

Circular migration expands workers and their families' capabilities to access social welfare as such, because they actively participate in and rely on the Norwegian market, which so far have fulfilled all their expectations. However, that does not mean, that circular migrants are well protected from social risks and market failure. Circular migrants demonstrated little knowledge about and low interest in Norwegian or Lithuanian social policies that could strengthen their capabilities in the cases of severe material, social or health problems. How circular migrants would act in such scenario should be further researched with a more targeted sample.

### ***Coping strategies and Lithuanian labour circular migrants***

The two groups of circular migrants have pointed out different stimulus that made them choose circular labour migration as a coping strategy. Men from the first group were trying to cope with daily hassles and improve their material capabilities. In some cases, it was related to debts, what would refer to past related coping, but mostly it was related to the future and the aim to improve it. Circulation brought stability to their family lives, less worries of daily life problems or less stress for not being able to have lives that they have reasons to value. It was all related to financial wellbeing, what also has a direct impact on the psychological state.

It is more complicated to explain coping strategies of those migrant families that first lived in Norway, before male started circulating. In this case, disliking the foreign culture and

missing the homeland and/or the wish to raise the children in their home country is an emotional distress, which was addressed with an attempt of terminal return. In such a case circulation is understood as a future oriented coping. It prevents not only from the growth of the emotional distress, but also from all the challenges and negativities that might come with the return and outcomes of being away for a long time. At the same time, it can be understood as proactive coping as it can be directed towards assuring wellbeing of the family on the time of change or for an unlimited period of time to grant a higher standard of life.

The coping strategies for both groups were chosen after evaluation of the risks (compromised relationships, social distress), potential rewards (improved capability to own; commitment to a culture of origin) and challenges. Those, whose initial decision to circulate was past oriented, or future oriented but of the preventive nature, eventually moved towards a proactive future oriented coping, as a joy of improved material state set relatively high expectations and needs for the future.

Circulation as a coping strategy seems to be very efficient as it solves the problems fast, however, it is not an ultimate solution. Those people, who still circulate are, in a way, the lucky ones, because those that actually faced severe health or family problems do not circulate anymore (respondents mentioned stories of other people that stopped circulating). Such strategy works as long as the migrant himself is healthy and strong and is able to do the frequent trips and physical work. Their eligibility for the social support in Lithuania is compromised, as social benefits are based on the performance in the local labour market. In some cases, working in the EEA and paying public social insurance in any of the EEA countries can successfully provide benefits in the home country at the time of the settlement.

However, no circular migrants stressed about potential social risks or such ultimate state as retirement. Respondents agreed on not being sure, what is waiting for them when they are no longer able to work. None of them expressed concerns about it, because, firstly, they have decades left to work before turning old enough for retirement, secondly, because they rely on the market to provide them with material wellbeing sufficient to be able to save for the future. Nevertheless, once again it has been pointed out that circular migrants are the type of people that are concerned mostly about the near future and coping tools that are most effective in the short-term.

Welfare state support (which is not provided universally) is being stigmatized, thus, understood as a coping strategy of the last resort. Circular migrants are a type of people that prefers empowering coping strategies rather than those that makes them recipients of support and help. In most of the cases respondents were the main bread winners, who were providing to nuclear family and sometimes even to extended family members, thus, coping solutions with highest potential rewards are the most welcomed, with little concern of the possible risks.

Lithuanian circular migrants and their families are good examples of old fashioned gender roles in a family setting, which is still prevailing in Lithuania. Even though, this was not a subject for this study, it is still very visible in the data related to coping and welfare. Circular migrants are usually males, feeling highly responsible for their families' well-being and successful coping. In the meantime, females are expected to stay at home (employed or not) and look after the household and children.

### ***Coping capabilities***

If a researcher is using the term of coping capabilities that means one is aware of the socioeconomic background, capability set of the subject and reasoning of what makes individual behave one way or another. Coping capabilities role in a context of social welfare is not only to define the capabilities of individual to have life he has reasons to value, but more the capabilities to address past problems, preventively prepare for the future social and material risks or to proactively work towards a better tomorrow. Such approach not only takes into consideration the resources, interpersonal differences and individual expectations (capability approach) but also fears and hopes (coping strategy approach). As these variables have already been presented in the previous columns of this chapter, research questions will be attempted to answer in the following column already using the conjoint term of coping capabilities.

### ***How Lithuanian circular migrants approach social welfare while wandering between Lithuania and Norway?***

Circular migrants coping capabilities to grant welfare to themselves and their families relies highly on the Norwegian labour market. Variables as attachment not only to home country, but to home town, in particular, work specializations, family situation limit individuals coping capabilities in the home country. However, the differences between Norwegian and Lithuanian markets, the circulation friendly transnational agreements created

an additional coping capability as labour circulation, which not only successfully addresses the source of stress, but also makes circular migrants welfare dependent on Norwegian market. Such a coping capability is available to currently healthy people that have certain skills and/or reliable contacts in the receiving country. Usually it is past or future oriented, and the previous one is directed proactively or preventively towards the material needs and emotional distress.

Type of people that at least were met across this study, take their relatively happy lives for granted. They came from humble backgrounds and improved their whole family wellbeing with (circular) migration. The market is the source of social welfare that they count on the most. However, both states that workers are committed to, do provide some support too. Employer still remains as the main gate keeper towards Norwegian welfare state, as work contract conditions affects the access to welfare state benefits. Lithuanian welfare state affects circular migrants and their families' coping by targeting family members that are living in the home country.

As it is common in post-communist welfare states, circular migrants just as the majority of the Lithuanian citizens see their coping capabilities mostly supported by the market or the family institution, but not the state. Nevertheless, despite circular migration gives certain access to labour migrants to two welfare states, it is not seen as boosting coping capabilities of circular migrants in a time of market failure. Workers try to invest current big incomes or save for future to protect themselves and their families from potential social risks. Also, circulation allows to keep strong social ties in the home country, what strengthens their coping capabilities in the case of market failure to rely on family and friends in the home country.

### ***How Lithuanian/ Norwegian welfare state support circular migrants and their families coping capabilities?***

Generally, Norwegian government helps to broaden coping capabilities of circular migrants by strengthening regulations related to working conditions, work safety and requirements for accommodation that is provided by the employer. That improves living and working conditions of workers and protects their psychological and physical wellbeing, which is essential for circular migrants to successfully continue circulation.

Moreover, the Norwegian flexible taxation and tax refund system, that reduces the burden of taxes for men that have children and/or families living abroad also improves



financial coping capabilities of migrant workers, which is their essential goal. Monthly child allowance adds up to this pile too, however, soon it might not be relevant due to tightening of the rules. Circular migrants already expressed problems with failing the application process for it, or that soon they will not be eligible as requirements demands for children of school age attending Norwegian education system. The Norwegian healthcare system is also open for circular migrants' needs, however, it is not so popular as migrants tend to be healthy and/or distrust the specialists working there and avoid any contact.

Circular migrants and their partners that lived in Norway before circulation have a wider range of coping capabilities to access Norwegian welfare state's support as they are more aware of how local social policies work, had paid taxes for a longer time, had/have better working contracts, thus, are eligible for more of the social benefits and services. Furthermore, migrants that were settled in Norway also have more contacts in the country that becomes very handy at a time of circulation to find accommodation, to get flexible temporary jobs in the black market and in many other scenarios.

One of the main obstacles for Lithuanian circular migrants to access Norwegian welfare state programs and benefits are limited job contract (in case it has a termination day or workers is employed by the company that is founded in Lithuania). Another major problem is little knowledge and/or interest in their rights. As circular migrants tend to rely mostly on the market for welfare provision and stigmatize most types of state support (especially in the home country), they tend to spend very little effort on researching the situation and broaden their understanding of coping capabilities that are actually available to them.

When it comes to coping capabilities in the home country, the situation changes. Circular migrants themselves barely attempt to access Lithuanian welfare state services and benefits. Most of the migrants prefer Lithuanian healthcare provision as they are more familiar with it or they believe it has a better-quality service than what they would get in Norway. However, Lithuania remains the main provider of welfare support in comparison to Norway. This is because circular migrants' families live there. Their partners receive unemployment and/or other social insurance benefits, use more actively healthcare services, their children go to compensated public kindergartens or free public schools, their parents receive pensions and the list goes on. The Lithuanian government by supporting family members of circular

migrant, improves coping capabilities of the whole family and, in this way, reduces the burden for the main bread winner, what is the circular migrant himself.

Despite that the Lithuanian welfare state is more important in shaping the circular migrant's family's coping capability set, it is still seen as a failing one as a very few measures exist to protect those citizens that are excluded from local unemployment statistics and still bring a lot of money to the economy – that are circular migrants. Some transnational policies compensate the lack of local support by making home country approve working time in other country within the European Economy Area.

Main problems that limits coping capabilities related of welfare state support in Lithuania were, first, a stigma that may come with, second, the low trust of the state to take care of its citizens in a time of need, and third, little developed policies towards circular migrants' rights to welfare services and benefits.

## **Conclusions**

Norway has been one of the top OECD countries by the percentage of the labour migrants to the number of inhabitants, with the majority of workers coming from the Eastern Europe. Lithuanians are the second biggest group of immigrants in Norway, while Norway is one of the top five most popular destinations of migration from Lithuania. Consequently, these two countries have developed a special transnational relationship that deserves a greater attention, especially, in the field of social welfare. Therefore, this thesis has researched how transnational circular migrants manage their lives between these two countries, and whether this transnational activity improves their accessibility to social welfare protection or limits it.

### ***Transnationalism and circular migration***

As new technologies made traveling and communication through distance easier and more affordable and as migration became a normal part of life, we start talking about connections over the border - transnationalism. As it was seen from the study, personal experience with migration and/or having close relatives living abroad encourage development of transnational values and expansion of perception of what is one's capability set. Lithuanian circular migrants believe that they manage to successfully maintain social relationships on a transnational level, at least, with grown up individuals, who, in one way or another, are not

expected to be seen every day. Such connections are easy to maintain since the distance between sending and receiving countries (Lithuania and Norway in this case) is relatively short and circular migrants afford frequent returns home.

Migration is a complex process, therefore, migrants can be categorized in various different ways. Regarding concerns, migrants can be classified to tied movers, refugees, ideological movers and economic migrants. The latter type is expected to be people that are healthier and more ambitious than those with similar social characteristics, but who remain in their home country. Economic migrants, following the combinations of attachment to the countries of destination and origin, can be categorized into four main groups: temporary, circular and seasonal migrants, transnational migrants, footloose migrants and settled migrants. The migrants of the first category, particularly circular ones, were in the center of attention in this paper.

Circular migration is the repeated migration from home country to other countries. European policy makers support concept of circular migration as it addresses labour market shortages without putting a burden of integration issues. Nevertheless, circulation works as a tool in the resources distribution between higher and lower-costs countries. However, circulation might come with negative outcomes such as shortage of human capital in sending countries, and social dumping, low wage competition in the receiving countries. The most vulnerable to the negative outcomes seemed to be circular migrants themselves as there are very little policies that would protect them in the case of market failure.

According to the literature circular/temporary/seasonal migrants tend to be less socio-culturally integrated in destination societies, as they do not speak the local language and do not get much in touch with the locals. That was also met while performing the study with circular labour migrants. It was also found that participants themselves are not very eager to attempt better integration, what is an outcome of the fact that circular migrants lack collective values in the receiving country.

How respondents of the study got engaged to circular labour migration fell into three main plots: participants found job advertisements and applied themselves; job with circulation included was offered by family members or acquaintances; respondents first moved to live to Norway and once later their families decided to move back, they started circulating. Three

main pull and push factors that stimulate circular migration are: first, material, financial problems or a wish to provide a better life and future perspectives to families; second, curiosity, lone type of personality; and third, positive working environment experiences in Norway.

### ***Social welfare and circular migration***

Social welfare is a complex concept that still challenges theorists to define it. Generally, it is understood as a system of services, benefits and programs that promote solidarity in assuring individual well-being in a society. Social and economic support and protection can be provided by three main actors: market, family and government. Fields of social welfare can be grouped into broad categories as justice, education, health, family, employment and housing.

Titmuss was the first theorist to provide with classification of social policies. Later, in a relation to his work, Esping-Andersen built his models of three welfare state regimes. Regarding to how capitalist democracies interconnect with activities of market and family, Esping-Andersen grouped democratic capitalist societies into 3 different regimes: liberal, corporatist and social democratic.

Today's Norwegian welfare state is a great example of social democratic regime with universal coverage, progressive taxation, high level of defamiliarization and decommodification. In comparison to Lithuania, Norway has much lower rate of unemployment; significantly higher GDP, higher salaries and bigger expenditures on welfare provision. Lithuania is harder to place on Esping-Andersen's classification as it went through rather different historic development. The most suitable term for the Lithuanian welfare regime is post-communist welfare state. It is distinguished by remaining soviet values and structure, by the social insurance being based on performance in labour market and by market and family being the most important parts of the standard welfare provision.

Struggles with a newly shaped economy and later opened walls to Europe led to massive migration from Lithuania to countries with wealthy economies like Norway. Labour migration helped Nordic economy, however, it also brought additional challenges and problems for the policy makers related to work and welfare as low wage competition, unfair and inadequate

working conditions, social dumping. In Norway, these problems were met by tightening collective agreements and legal regulations towards wages and labour standards.

After the content analysis of discussion from the popular online forum, it was found that many people prefer circular or temporary migration before considering permanent migration. Discussants believed that males are more likely to migrate as temporary or circular workers than females, as they are more skilled for jobs that demands for temporality or circulation. A significant amount of comments was related to international temporary work employment agencies. It was popular between those discussants that had poor or no contacts of people living in Norway, who could help to find a job or a temporary accommodation there. Potential future migrants demonstrated awareness of challenging work conditions that migrants in Norway are exposed to. Discussants stated knowing that it will be hard being away from the home country, nevertheless, jobs easiest to find are hard, working conditions might be harsh and they might live in very humble places.

The pilot study helped to narrow down the most crucial parts of social welfare for circular migrants to employment, healthcare, housing and family life. It also highlighted that circular or temporary migration often is seen as a problem-solving solution, which makes a high improvement in a short-term. People keen on choosing such solutions tend to have little concern on long-term consequences or potential future risks.

### ***Employment***

The most important part of social welfare in this study is definitely employment. Employment is a lot regulated by the market, but also has a high impact from the state. The state regulates minimum or maximum working hours, sets requirements for certain level of work safety, aims to control provision of living conditions, sets the taxes that affects how much person earns.

Employment problems such as under employment, unemployment or poor working conditions may affect circular migrants in different ways. Firstly, directly, and secondly, indirectly as it may be a problem of a family member and, in this way, put a heavier burden of bread-winning on the shoulders of the circular migrant.

In the study performed it was found that most of the workers gave a positive feedback about their Norwegian employers as they believed that work security is of the high standard and they did not witness any inequalities between the nationalities at work. However, it was noticed that most of the workers had very basic expectations and knowledge of their rights and job contract conditions.

The biggest advantage for circular migrants was relatively high salary that is paid with no delays. As long as this main condition was met, workers barely cared about any other smaller or bigger issue. Things like long working hours were justified and even welcomed as it grants frequent returns home and keeps them busy in the foreign culture, where they claim having very little things to do on the free time.

Circular migrants, that have never settled in Norway, seem to have lightly negative or neutral attitude towards trade unions. Interviewees demonstrated vague understanding of what trade union is and why it can be useful. In most of the cases, trade unions were seen helpful only in the case of having severe problems with employer, and, also, seen as a manifestation of distrust towards employer. Such specific views are an outcome of disturbing experiences with trade unions from Soviet Union. It is also negatively affected by these days Lithuanian trade unions struggle to follow the Western practice.

Circular migrants that at the time of interview were included in black labour market, happened to be involved in official employment at the same time. This gave them basic access to some of the welfare state services and security related to healthcare or children allowance. In the cases captured, only migrants that lived in Norway before circulation were included in the black market, interviewees shared, that this was possible due to having connections in Norway from before.

### ***Healthcare***

Health is a broad term that includes physical, mental and social well-being. All healthcare systems aim to improve health, preferably without putting a financial burden on patients. Most commonly, health systems are funded from taxation, compulsory/voluntary health insurance and user fees or charity.

As it could be expected, circular migrants tend to have good physical and mental health, and very basic experiences with healthcare provision in any of the countries. That is because health is an obligatory functioning for circulation. However, in cases analysed informants either had an active public coverage in both countries, or only in Norway, because they have been registered as emigrants in Lithuania. However, those that do not have active public healthcare coverage in Lithuania still prefer Lithuanian health institutions (if there is no emergencies), and rely on private sector or acquaintances that work in healthcare institutions.

### *Housing*

Housing is a basic human right related to feelings of security and dignity. Adequate housing is expected to be granted through public policies and programs. As labour migrants often are exposed to poor conditions in a receiving country, Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority requests from Norwegian employers to provide safe, aesthetic and maintained accommodation. Bedrooms for foreign workers should be fully furnished with washable walls and good sound and heat insulation. Requirement may vary according to circumstances, but in most of the times are very detailed.

Predominantly housing conditions of circular migrants in both countries Lithuania and Norway were described as decent. Workers did not criticise most of the living places that they have been provided with, however, their conditions did not match fully the requirements that were shortly presented in the literature review. Other circular migrants that initiated flexible working conditions while living in Norway for housing rely on relatives/friends or rent affordable accommodation themselves. In any of the cases, no complaints were expressed, because conditions were decent and, nevertheless, migrants themselves do not have high requirements for their own housing while residing in the receiving country.

Owned housing, especially in the home country, was mentioned as a major value. In many of the cases wish to finish a new family house or to save for their own living place was one of the main push and pull factors for circular migration, as housing is the base of stability, wealthy life, the main goal of incomes and the major challenge to own. None of the interviewees had or planned to own housing in Norway at the time of the research, as they had no plans to settle there.

### *Family life*

There are two main ways of how social welfare may affect families, first, by strengthening or limiting it, and, second, by encouraging family members to provide social welfare to one another. Family policies target specific member of a family, not so much a family as a whole. Usually those policies include family allowances, parental leave compensations, tax refunds or free/compensated services.

Nuclear family seem to be the main reason for males (that are not single) to circulate and to wish for terminal return. However, only parents with children younger than 7 years expressed feeling of guilt, because of frequent departures and problems that it brings. While with children that are at least 7 years old communication seems to be more effective and easier. Keeping strong and romantic relationships was also mentioned as a challenge for the circular migrants that have partners in the sending country.

All the respondents, who have children, admitted receiving or trying to get monthly children allowance. The circular migrants admitted that there is another option for people like them with families living abroad - Norwegian government tax deductions. These two options were main welfare support ways for circular migrants in both sending and receiving countries. It was not stigmatized, as the provision of this benefits was not related to incomes or means testing and was provided universally.

Barnevernet institution appeared in the results too, however, it was mentioned only by those that lived in Norway for a longer time with their children but have decided to come back to Lithuania because of children wellbeing. Two out of three families that moved back to Lithuania expressed dissatisfaction with Norwegian kindergartens, what also added up to their decision to return, in a contrast, same families happened to be very happy with Lithuanian education system and kindergartens.

Circular migrants did not express any problems or concerns related to relationships with the rest of the family or friends. Circular migrants extended families seem to be important actor in the case of housing in both Lithuania and Norway. Having relatives around helps also with the care of smaller children. The lost contacts with friends seem to be natural process of life and general outcome of the high emigration from Lithuania. Circulation was also seen as empowerment towards improving certain relationships, as few respondents pointed out, that



higher incomes allow them to visit more often the dear people that live far away from Lithuania.

### *Coping capabilities*

Relation between circular migrants and two welfare states, the Norwegian and the Lithuanian, could be explained using several theoretical frameworks. Since the study aims to explore circular migrants' perceptions of their welfare provision, micro level theories seemed to be the most suitable. One of the useful theories was believed to be Sen's capabilities approach, which helps to acknowledge the socioeconomic context and to evaluate whether the circumstances, that shapes the capability set of the person, are enabling and just. Another relevant approach was believed to be the coping theory. Coping is understood as a response to stressful life events in order to reduce the undesirable burden and improve well-being. The coping theory of psychoanalytic ego psychology school seem to be the most relevant to circular migrants as it defines coping as realistic and flexible thoughts and actions that fix problems and reduce stress. Coping can be past or future oriented, and the previous one can be proactive or preventive.

These two micro level concepts can be joint into one term of coping capabilities. The researcher, who is using the term of coping capabilities, is expected to be aware of the capability set of the subject and reasoning of what makes individual behave one way or another. Coping capabilities is not a new concept, it is just a convenient way of using two friendly concepts at the same time in order to draw deeper conclusions. However, it is the first time, when the term of "coping capabilities" is met in the academic literature in the reference to both Sen's approach and the theories of coping strategies.

Circular migrants' coping capabilities are determined by such socioeconomic variables as geographical origin, educational background and family status. The coping capability as circulation between Norway and Lithuania is available as an option for people that have brilliant health, certain skills and/or reliable contacts in Norway. People that work in Norway, but keep their main social life in Lithuania, tend to improve their ability to cope with various social risks by having broader capabilities to choose from as they have successfully boosted their incomes purchasing power by earning in the high-incomes country and spending in the low-cost country. Most importantly, circular migrants rely on the Norwegian market to assure their and their families' welfare.

Circular migrants coping capabilities are supported by Norwegian government with a provided access to public healthcare, improved requirements and supervision towards work and living conditions, family support with monthly benefits for children support, or tax deductions due to having children and family living abroad. Such support from Norway, however, is attached to the employment status, thus, in the case of market failure, most of the circular migrants are not expecting to receive support from Norwegian welfare state. Workers coping capabilities in Norway are highly determined by their work contract, which differs depending on how worker obtained the job and how one is aware of the prevailing employment standard in the country.

Lithuanian welfare state supports circular migrants coping capabilities mainly indirectly, by providing support to their nuclear and extended families, what eventually leads to a reduced burden to the circular migrant. Interviewees were not aware of Lithuanian social policies that would provide them with safety net in the case of market failure.

### ***Suggestions for further research***

As it was mentioned before, given the scope of the study and the limited number of informants interviewed, saturation through the interviewing process could not be fully reached. However, this research was more of an explanatory kind, thus, it has rewarded with lots of interesting and attention-worth explanatory data. As a result, continuation of the study while trying to approach more different types of circular migrants, especially those that are hired by the international employment agencies, would be very beneficial. Also, the knowledge gathered from this study, could be used as a material for a quantitative study, in order to support the conclusions made and to draw representative generalizations.

This particular study aimed to interview male circular migrants, therefore, a suggestion would be to perform a comparative study with female circular migrants. It would be intriguing to test whether gender is an important variable in the context of circular labour migration and personal welfare management. Gender roles tend to be very defined and separated in prevailing Lithuanian culture, what suggests that gender should always be an important variable in any research related to Lithuanians.

A research of Lithuanian circular migrants in other not Nordic countries with different social welfare regime could also be a great topic for a comparative study. Thus, the comparison could reward with deeper knowledge of how the welfare state's model of the receiving countries influences labour circular migrants' ways of seeing and managing social welfare on the transnational level.

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## Appendix 1: Ethical clearance



Aadne Aasland  
Postboks 4 St. Olavs plass  
0130 OSLO

Vår dato: 24.08.2017

Vår ref: 55079 / 3 / AMS

Deres dato:

Deres ref:

### Tilbakemelding på melding om behandling av personopplysninger

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 09.07.2017.

Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

<i>55079</i>	<i>Lithuanian circular migrants' experiences in wandering between Lithuanian and Norwegian welfare states</i>
<i>Behandlingsansvarlig</i>	<i>Høgskolen i Oslo og Akershus, ved institusjonens øverste leder</i>
<i>Daglig ansvarlig</i>	<i>Aadne Aasland</i>
<i>Student</i>	<i>Evelina Liciute</i>

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet, og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger vil være regulert av § 7-27 i personopplysningsforskriften. Personvernombudet tilrår at prosjektet gjennomføres.

Personvernombudets tilråding forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, ombudets kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven og helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.

Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget [skjema](#). Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en [offentlig database](#).

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 15.05.2018, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Dersom noe er uklart ta gjerne kontakt over telefon.

Vennlig hilsen

Katrine Utaaker Segadal

Anne-Mette Somby

Kontaktperson: Anne-Mette Somby tlf: 55 58 24 10 / [anne-mette.somby@nsd.no](mailto:anne-mette.somby@nsd.no)

Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering

Kopi: Evelina Liciute, [s310267@stud.hioa.no](mailto:s310267@stud.hioa.no)

*Dokumentet er elektronisk produsert og godkjent ved NSDs rutiner for elektronisk godkjenning.*

NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS    Harald Hårfagres gate 29    Tel: +47-55 58 21 17    [nsd@nsd.no](mailto:nsd@nsd.no)    Org.nr. 985 321 884  
NSD – Norwegian Centre for Research Data    NO-5007 Bergen, NORWAY    Faks: +47-55 58 96 50    [www.nsd.no](http://www.nsd.no)

## Appendix 2: Consent form



*Invitation to participate in a research project*

### **Lithuanian circular migrants' experiences in wandering between Lithuanian and Norwegian welfare states**

#### **Background and objectives**

My name is Evelina Liciute and I am currently writing a Master's thesis at the *Høgskolen i Oslo og Akershus*. The theme of my Master's thesis is Lithuanian origin circular migrants' and their families' capabilities and coping strategies in accessing social welfare services/benefits and managing daily life. To get information for my thesis I will interview Lithuanian circular labour migrants (people that are continuously coming to Norway for work assignments, but does not settle there and frequently return to their home in Lithuania) and their families if possible.

I have been advised to contact you, in regard to relevance to this study. Now I wonder if you, being a circular migrant/or a family member of a circular migrant to Norway, would be willing to participate as one of the informants for my study? In the case, you agree to participate, I will ask you general and more specific questions about your social welfare and cover topics such as healthcare, employment, housing and family life.

#### **Participation in the study**

High level of confidentiality will be assured. No personal identification details as name or ID are necessary for the study. All the sources will be coded from the very first moment with no tracks to names or identities. To help the analysis of the data the interviews will be recorded. Recordings will be saved in secured computer till they will be transcribed, and, afterwards, all the audio files will be deleted permanently. Anonymised transcripts will be kept till the Master's thesis will be finished. After that (not later than May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2018) all transcripts

will be deleted permanently, while analysis of anonymised data will be published and available for public. Anonymization will secure that it will not be possible to trace specific answers to you or other concrete individuals.

### **Voluntary participation**

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may withdraw from the research at any time with no need of justification. In such case, all data provided by you will be deleted permanently and will not be used in the final report. If you want to participate or have any concerns related to the study, please contact me by phone +47 465 16 528/+370 602 24983 or by email [s310267@stud.hioa.no](mailto:s310267@stud.hioa.no) .

The project has been approved by the Ethnical Review Committee on 24/08/2017.

### **Consent to participate in the study**

I have received information about the study and I agree to participate

-----

(Signed by the participant, date and place)

### **Appendix 3: Semi-structured interview guide**

#### ***Demographic information:***

Gender:

Age:

Educational background:

Family composition (children, married not, single):

Field of work:

Works only in Norway or also in Lithuania:

#### ***Introductory questions:***

Have you had any other experiences in migration before? Can you tell more about it?

Could you tell more about how you started migrating to Norway? (when was that, what encouraged to try, what was first expectations, who helped)

How does your routine look now? (how much time spends in Lithuania/ Norway, how often travels and in which way)

#### ***Employment:***

What kind of contract do you have with your employer? Could you please tell more about the agreements you have? (accommodation, living and traveling expenses, holidays arrangements, overtime, premiums)

What do you like from the work conditions you have in Norway? And what you don't?

What are other nationalities of people that works with you too? Would you agree that everyone is treated the same way and is provided same fair conditions with no regards to nationality? If not, why?

Could you tell more about health and safety conditions you have at work?

Have you ever had or witnessed any work accident? If yes, could you tell more about what happened and how problems were solved?

What do you like about your employer? And what you don't?

Can you compare your work experiences in Lithuania and in Norway?

Have you taken any sick/parental leave in Lithuania/Norway?

Do you work extra hours and how are you paid for it?

Have you ever received/requested any help (in cash and in kind) due to unemployment, or low employment from Lithuanian/Norwegian government?

Have you ever had problems with receiving salary that you have earned? If yes, what did you do?

Do you receive any additional benefits from your employer?

Do you/have you ever belong(ed) to any trade union? If not, why not? If yes, where and was it helpful?

***Housing:***

Where do you live when you come to Norway for temporary work? Can you describe broader the place (how many people, what are the facilities)?

Where do you live while back in Lithuania? Can you describe the conditions? (rental/ownership, with family/alone)

Do you feel safe and relaxed at your home in Norway and Lithuania? If not, why?

Is there something you would like to improve at your place of residence in Lithuania/Norway?

Have you ever received/requested any help related to housing from Lithuanian/Norwegian government (as provision of social housing, tax reductions, housing allowances)?

Have you ever received/requested any help related to housing from your employer?

***Health:***

How would you describe your health? Has it changed when you started migrating to Norway?

Have you ever had health problems while being in Norway? What did you do?

If it is not an urgent health problem, where do you prefer to receive health care in Norway or Lithuania, and why?

***In case of having children:***

Where and with who are your children living?

What are the ages of your children?

How do you think, are you able to provide everything your children need?

How do you think, do you manage to keep close connection with your children? Is migration affecting your relationship in any way?

What do Norway and Lithuania provide to your family?

***Other social relationships:***

Do you have a partner, and where does he/she live?

In case of living together, what are the incomes of the household and how do you manage common expenses?

How would you describe relationship with your partner?

What challenges does your relationship face due to circular migration?

Would you say that you have many friends? Where most of your friends live?

How did circular migration affect your friendships?

How did circular migration affect your relations with parents, siblings?

***Wrapping up:***

What are your future plans (near future, far future)?

What are the challenges/perks of your constant migration lifestyle?

Is there something you feel thankful for Norwegian/ Lithuanian government?

Do you feel disappointed of Norwegian/Lithuanian government?



#### Appendix 4: Table of interviewees

Code	Gender	Age	Educational background	Marital status	Children
M1	Male	41	Vocational	Married	2
M2	Male	31	Vocational	Married	2
M3	Male	31	Vocational	Single	-
M4	Male	23	Vocational	Single	-
M5	Male	63	Vocational	Married	1
F1M	Male	26	Vocational	Married	1
F1F	Female	29	Unfinished Bachelor's degree	Married	1
F2M	Male	32	Vocational	Married	1
F2F	Female	27	Bachelor's degree	Married	1
F3M	Male	38	Unfinished Bachelor's degree	Married	2
F3F	Female	36	Master's degree	Married	2

**Table 3. Demographic characteristic of interviewees.**

## Appendix 5: Abbreviations

EBSCOhost - Elton B. Stephens Co research database.

ECU – European Currency Unit.

EEA – European Economic Area.

EU – European Union.

EUR – Euro currency.

Fafo - Norwegian abbreviation for Fagbevaegelsens Forsknings Organisation (Institute for Labour and Social Research).

GDP - Gross domestic product.

HIOA - Norwegian abbreviation for Høgskolen i Oslo og Akershus (Oslo and Akershus University College, now Oslo Metropolitan University).

HMS card - Norwegian abbreviation for Helse, Miljø og Sikkerhet (meaning Health, Environment and Safety. It is ID cards for people, who work on building and construction sites).

IOM - International Organization for Migration.

NGO - Non-Governmental Organizations.

NAV - The Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (Norwegian abbreviation for Nye arbeids- og velferdsetaten).

NNCRE - Norwegian National Committees for Research Ethics.

NOK – Norwegian Krone, currency.

NSD - Norwegian abbreviation for Norsk Samfunnsvitenskapelig Datatjeneste (Norwegian Centre for Research Data)

OECD - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

UK – United Kingdom.

UN – United Nations.

US\$ - Dollar of United States of America, currency.

USA – United States of America.

WHO – World Health Organisation.