

Precarious work in the integration of foreigners into the labour market: the precarity as a result of structural restrictions

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Abstract

In the global context, the debate on insecurity in the labor market remains fierce. In principle, insecure work has several identical meanings. In the literature, concepts such as precarious or precarious work, insecure employment, or “poor” work are often found. One of the most vulnerable groups in terms of precarious work is migrants. Individuals transfer their work experience and knowledge to the destination country to which they immigrate, but challenges arise as if unforeseen. Language barriers, issues concerning wages, social guarantees, and job volatility are part of the daily routine of immigrants, and insecurity itself is understood as “uncertainty and instability.”

This article enters a discussion about the structural restrictions that lead to the formation of precariat itself. The duality of the labour market, which was created by structural changes or pieces of legislation, demonstrates that being a migrant itself brings instability in different dimensions. The article analyses aspects of precarious work in integrating foreigners into the labour market of Lithuania.

The first part provides a theoretical justification for this precarious work, followed by an overview of the theoretical aspects of the integration of foreigners. When analysing legal and statistical data, Lithuania's labor market realities and immigrant trends are described. According to the structuring theory, the importance of legal status in the integration process is reviewed. The results of the empirical study are revealed in the last part of the article by formulating the conclusions.

Keywords: *insecure work, precarious work, integration of foreigners, labour market.*

Theoretical justification of precarious work

The authors analyse the topics of precarious work extensively. Forms of precarious work, their prevalence, and trends in advanced capitalist societies are studied by Kalleberg (2011). When the level of the individual is analysed through the lens of the younger generation, the changes in the social and historical context that influenced the insecure work presented by Blustein, Diamonti, et al. (2016) and other researchers.

Precarious work is a multidimensional concept that most often reviews the characteristics of work related to the level of legal protection, low wages, control over hours, and working conditions (Vosko, 2010, Standing, 2011). In the context of digitalization, automation of work, and restructuring of companies and institutions, there is a risk of insecurity. As Kallenberg (2009) argues, individual factors, i.e., vulnerability, instability, insecurity, and psychological tension, become a critical point in the labour market. Scientists and proponents of labour argue that insecure work has negative consequences not only for individual employees but also for society. This can contribute to income inequality, undermine workers' rights, and create challenges to social and economic policy. Efforts to tackle precarious employment often involve promoting stronger labour protection, social security networks, and policies that promote fair and stable employment relationships (Elliott, 2013).

The theoretical field of precarious work forms a system that examines and criticizes changes in modern employment. They are characterized by instability, insecurity, and a lack of protection. It focuses on the transformation of labour in the modern economy, where traditional, stable labour relations give way to more flexible, shorter-term, and less definite forms of work (Kallenberg, 2008). The employment trends of the more developed capitalist nations were marked by a greater divide between "insiders" and "outsiders." The duality of the labour market arises from the functioning of the institutional structures that regulate political and legal processes. "Insiders" are understood when the local population of the country

participates in the labour market, and “outsiders” include those who come from abroad. The latter are at greater risk of being outside the official market workforce or otherwise, the likelihood of becoming unemployed is higher. “Outsiders” often agree to work part-time, adaptable hour shifts, and their integration in the labour market is limited by structures “from above” (Thelen 2014; Jaehrling, Méhaut 2012). “Insiders” (i.e., locals) have more security, while “outsiders” feel inequality and less certainty in the dual labour market (Schwander, 2019). A strong emphasis is being placed on the integration of foreigners, or “outsiders,” which leads to the conclusion that their integration into the labour market is considerably more complex than that of “natives,” as indicated by the previous authors.

Theoretical background of migrant’s integration

The concept of integration continues to dominate in politics, sociology, and psychology throughout the twentieth century. The political discourse of many developed capitalist countries currently seeks to describe the expediency of politics aimed at helping immigrants, especially refugees, to “fit” into host communities (Wang, Shen, 2022). However, different concepts such as absorption, acculturation, assimilation, inclusion, and cohesion are paralleled in various studies, revealing the complexity and ambiguity associated with this concept, which is considered “chaotic.” Within the framework of empirical, project-based research, integration aspects can be classified as socioeconomic, sociocultural, or structural integration of immigration policy (Rudiger & Spencer, 2003). It should be noted that the most common type of integration is socioeconomic integration (Blom, 2004), and demographic factors are essential to integration’s success (Potocky-Tripodi, 2003; Bloemraad, 2007). They support the duration of residence in the country, age during immigration, education, and perspectives in the destination country.

In pluralistic societies, foreigners are accepted throughout varied contexts. “Precarity becomes problematic if economic and employment insecurity is combined with the lack of supportive social networks and various other biographical problems (malfunctioning health, family problems, broken intimate relationships, etc.)” confirms Mrozowicki and Trappmann (2021). Welfare state institutions remain significant immunization mechanisms against precarity (e.g., relations). Niesten-Dietrich (2012) claims that integration must be legitimate and structural. The author contends that the acquisition of rights is associated to legal status (citizenship) and indicates the degree of legal integration into society. Structural integration can be defined as “the acquisition of rights and access to office and membership status in the main institutions of society: the economy and labor market, participation in educational and upskilling institutions, access to



the housing system, and so on.” Complete legal integration for migrants implies equality under the law with non-migrants in terms of population rights (Niesten-Dietrich 2012). This can be achieved through naturalization. Legal integration can have an impact on structural integration. Integrating newcomers after their arrival in the host country is complex for individuals and groups. Most often, newcomers seek to maintain a balance between their home and the new culture (Koser, 2007). This can be attributed to the multiculturalism that does not exist in the state or the extremely homogeneous national structure of the state.

As Čiubrinskas (2007) mentions, Lithuanians are characterized by “*post-communist xenophobia, labeling, and stigmatization of foreigners.*” According to Westin (2015), the main criterion for the effective integration of immigrants is participation in the labour market, which is essentially an aspect of structural integration, but Bursell (2015) cites a neoclassical explanation of why immigrants have a more challenging time integrating into the labour market. Immigrants are claimed to be less productive than the local population because they lack human capital, i.e., education, work experience, communal life, etc. Among the above aspects, education is considered the most essential tool necessary for integration (Bursell, 2015). In addition, Bursell mentions Borjas’ idea that while human capital is critical to integration, migrants experience temporary loss when they move from one country to another. It takes several years to change that in the new context of the country where they find themselves (Bursell, 2015).

Laws and structures are intertwined. i.e., designs prepare and form the legislative base’s creation, modification, and implementation. Still, the system level to which the corresponding legislative or law-order function is assigned differs.

The policy of migrant’s integration

Aspects of insecure work should be exposed within a broader context. The case for Swedish immigration policy is analysed considering the nation’s established history of accepting immigrants. As Sweden has more experience than other OECD and OECD countries in the planning and implementation of immigration policy (OECD 2014), the latter’s historical migration context and decades of experience in the realm of political decisions and practices were selected for examination. Poland was chosen for its significant rise of immigrants from Ukraine, and now the country is being called a “New Immigrant Destination,” particularly because of the Ukraine-Russia war, which witnessed a substantial influx of migrants.

Regarding labour migration to **Sweden**, the 1960s witnessed influxes from Yugoslavia, Greece, and Turkey, while the 1970s witnessed influxes from Germany, Austria, and Italy. Approximately sixty percent of immigrants of working age were employed in industry at the end of the 1970s. The Swedish Immigration Board

was established in 1969 and took over the management of immigration affairs from the Swedish Labour Market Board. In the 1970s, the government decided to provide free language training to “immigrant tourists,” who, as mentioned above, most often immigrated for non-tourist purposes. Two years later, a government legislation guaranteed newly arrived immigrants 240 hours of state-funded language training. Integration policies developed as immigration continued to increase. Early immigrants in Sweden could not form a legal entity, own property, or work in the civil service. In 1974, foreign citizens gained equal rights to public administration employment in Sweden, except for police, courts, armed forces, and high-level government positions. Foreigners who lived in Sweden for three years could vote in local and regional elections in 1975. The 1979 Swedish Constitution amendment introduced minority integration guidelines due to the growing number of immigrants. Keeping ethnic, linguistic, and religious aspects while including cultural and social life was planned. Foreign educational qualifications, language training, accommodation, and government integration measures were used to integrate workers. Swedish authorities introduced a results-based prize in 2009 to encourage immigrants. In the allotted time, immigrants without basic education received free and flexible post-working hours Swedish language training. (OECD, 2014).

Poland is both an emigration and immigration country. Poland’s employment policy towards foreign nationals underwent significant transformations resulting to its accession to the European Union in 2004. Foreigners were granted accessibility to the Polish labour market because of the unification. As a result of the liberties granted by EU membership, work permits are no longer required for Polish nationals traveling to EU member states or for EU nationals visiting Poland. Furthermore, it should be noted that in certain situations involving immigrants from Ukraine, Belarus, Russia, Moldova, or Georgia to Poland, the authorities may be satiated by an employer’s declaration of intent to hire a foreign national (e.g., permanent correspondents of foreign media, artists, athletes, clerics, students, scientists, etc.) (Kałuża-Kopias 2014).

Gromadzki, Lewandowski (2023) specifies that the strong economic growth in Poland helped refugees integrate into the labor market, but the inescapable economic slowdown will decrease labor demand. Recessions often hit market services sectors, which may hurt refugees’ employment prospects. Second, many refugees have tertiary education but work in low-skilled jobs. It may deter Polish workers and cause mental health issues. It also causes skill mismatch. Poland faces labor shortages in skilled jobs, but only few migrants fill them. Finally, refugees may not learn new skills they could use in Ukraine after the war, which has a high opportunity cost. Germany temporarily housed 700,000 Yugoslavian war refugees in the 1990s. In the 2000s, returning refugees strengthened economic ties between Germany and their countries, benefiting both parties. Refugees in Germany who



worked in fields that transferred knowledge, technologies, and best practices drove this positive change.

Public policy should support refugees in learning Polish, addressing skill mismatches, and helping them find jobs that match their education. Industries that employ foreigners in Poland are the least prestigious and pay the lowest wages. For regular employees and simple, monotonous work, very often in difficult environmental conditions. In many cases, employment does not require a good command of Polish. As far as the form of employment is concerned, non-employee employment predominates (civil law contracts). Currently, despite geographical proximity and common history, Poland is facing a flow of migrants from Ukraine, which is in completely different stage of economic development. Poland, as a member of the EU since 2004, has made good use of the past fifteen years. As the number of Ukrainians employed in Poland keeps rising, an estimated three million are currently employed there. As the number of Ukrainians employed in Poland keeps rising, an estimated three million are currently employed there. (Lis 2017; Polkowska, Filipek, 2020);). Ukrainians have usually taken low-paying jobs in sectors such as agriculture or construction, but this situation is rapidly changing due to the growing demand for professionals in finance or IT in the Polish labour market.

Many migrants plan to settle in another European country or come back to Ukraine, a fact confirmed in our interviews. Unfortunately, the current Polish migration policy is focused mainly on the short-term needs of the labour market, and there is no long-term vision of the role and significance that Ukrainians might play in the Polish economy. Thus, it is estimated that with each passing year, the number of Ukrainian citizens staying in Poland for work purposes will increase. Most often, they will take jobs that Poles no longer want to do that are below Ukrainian qualifications, that are simple and physical, and that are at the lowest hourly and monthly rates. However, the labour market in Poland will remain attractive for Ukrainians. Thus, one must ask, do economic migrants from Ukraine belong to the category of precariat? (Polkowska, Filipek, 2019).

To sum up, a lot of migrants in Poland work in innocuous jobs, with the lowest salary. It's a de facto precariat – It is performed by migrants in occupations that Poles avoid due to the lack of security it offers. Some such individuals acquire exceptional qualifications; however, challenges arise regarding their identification. Furthermore, it is more challenging to require employees to retain a comprehensive understanding of the local work culture. Precariation is a systemic issue that is the result of both market forces and state intervention. On the one hand, researchers are discussing undefined temporary employment, which entails the absence of a guarantee regarding social protection and income stability.

Constraints of Legislation

Most of the studies were carried out in those countries where immigration policy was aimed at filling the shortage of skilled labour (e.g., the United Kingdom, Ireland) (McDowell et al., 2008). The plan for temporary and permanent migration was aimed at facilitating the cross-border movement of people, but structures, in this case state control mechanisms, were not created to protect both “their own” and “strangers” (Anderson, 2010).

To protect the migrant workforce, the intention was to maintain immigration control. This aspiration was not only protected but also limited and categorized. Failure to do so would cause “own” citizens to suffer, so the need for control is unquestionable (Anderson, 2010). Citizenship in the narrow legal sense refers to the internal relationship between the individual and the state and determines the legal status of a person in the state (Brubaker, 2009). For example, the citizenship of the Member States of the European Union determines the legal status of an individual in the European Union and provides a package of rights and obligations at various levels.

In the European Union, EU citizens can move and reside freely, have the right to non-discrimination on the grounds of nationality, can work in an EU public service, participate in the political process by voting, and stand as candidates in elections to the European Parliament and local government. These rights are a powerful and positive moment that demonstrates the crucial importance of being a citizen of the European Union. Foreigners usually have limited rights, but the differences become smaller when a person receives permanent or temporary resident status (Castles et al. 2014). Since the host country has a “framework” of legal regulation, the person who immigrated to it must meet the requirements and complete the procedures lowered “from above.”

The Law on Immigration establishes a legal status and a corresponding legal identity (Basaran, 2008), according to which states can regulate the rights of non-citizens and access to institutions and public resources. In migration research, the relevance of legal status is mainly related to legal presence and access to labour markets.

According to Damidavičius (1999), the main function of the labour market is defined by the distribution of labour between economic activities, professions, territories, and enterprises. The workforce itself is interspersed with economic activities through hiring relationships, so not only employees and employers are involved, but also the state, which regulates relations between the above-mentioned actors. It can be argued that the legal status of a person is directly related to the possibility of integration.

Legal status, in particular citizenship, can have a significant impact on the rights and capabilities of an individual. Non-citizens, i.e., those who have immigrated to the country, may face restrictions on employment, education, health care, the ability to secure housing or live in certain areas, and other essential services. (Hamrin, 2019). Labour laws and regulations can reflect structural restrictions and have a direct impact on the rights and protection of workers. For example, foreign workers may be afforded limited legal protection and may therefore be more vulnerable to exploitation or unfair labour practices (Vosko, 2010). Also, legal status can clash with societal bias, which criminalizes specific identities or behaviors. This can disproportionately affect marginalized groups, contributing to structural constraints in areas such as employment, housing, and social participation (Anderson, 2010). Workers from abroad (i.e., foreigners) are more likely to face inappropriate behavior at work (Esses, 2021) and face greater difficulties in integrating into the labour market (Hamrin, 2019). “In addition, insecure work is characterized by uncertainty, low incomes, and limited social benefits, as well as discriminatory laws and limited rights to benefits” (Vosko, 2010). Atypical or insecure work can have negative consequences not only for inclusion in the labour market but also for a “weakening of social relations” (Anderson, 2010).

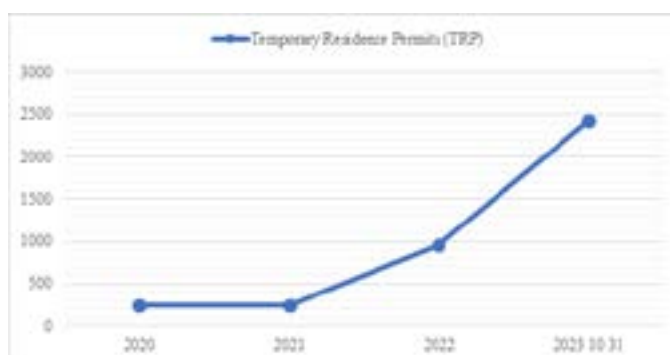
Structural restrictions through legal status usually imply restrictions or obstacles faced by individuals or groups due to their legal position in society or in the system. This can take many forms, often affecting access to rights, opportunities, and resources. Migration policies regulate how people from third countries can access national labour markets, while specific restrictions on integration are provided for in the national laws of each EU country. In the Republic of Lithuania, the Law “On the Legal Status of Foreigners” (the latest consolidated version from July 1, 2023) directly responds to the need for the Lithuanian labour market. A foreigner can come to Lithuania and enter the labour market if he meets certain criteria (he has low or high professional qualifications, which he has created or has created a family, comes as a researcher or scientist, etc.). It can be assumed that structural restrictions through the legal status of a foreigner are revealed through the availability of social services (benefits, housing policy, health care, etc.), the success of integration into the labour market (the desire of employers to employ foreigners), educational opportunities (formal and non-formal education and access to them), and the experience of social contact (discriminatory attitude of the host society, admission to the society).

Precarious status may be attributed to the absence of specific fundamental security criteria, extending beyond employment and work, including but not limited to work authorization, permanent residency permits, access to public goods (e.g., education and healthcare), and the ability to sponsor family members within the policy boundaries available to permanent residents and citizens., e.g., family reunification (Goldring, Berinstein, and Bernhard 2009).

Recent immigration trends in Lithuania

According to the Migration Department (2023), more than 200 thousand foreigners already live in the Republic of Lithuania. If in July 2023 the number was 195 thousand, then in September there were already 203,157 foreigners. About half of the arrivals are workers, according to the list of missing professions (long-distance drivers, workers in the construction and other industrial services sectors). Temporary residence permits issued based on less qualified work in Lithuania prevail, and only just over 6 thousand people worked in highly qualified jobs. As of September 1, 2023, many foreigners who immigrated were Ukrainians (85579 persons), Belarusians (60 thousand persons), Russians (16179 persons), Kyrgyz (4172 persons), and Uzbeks (4141 persons). Also, more than three people live in the Republic of Lithuania. Citizens of Tajikistan and India, more than 2 thousand each Azerbaijanis and Kazakhs, almost two thousand Kartvels, about one and a half thousand Turks, slightly less Moldavians. We note that the number of people immigrating to Lithuania is tending to increase. It applies not only to citizens of the surrounding countries but also to those of countries that continue to exist, such as those who have Turkish or Azerbaijani citizenship. In October 2023, a response was received from the Migration Department to a special request about the issuance of documents for Azerbaijani citizens. The data obtained showed a jump in the issuance of temporary residence permits in 2023 (see Figure 1). In 2020, the number of temporary residence permits issued was 247; in 2021, only a few more documents were issued, i.e., 249. That's how, since 2022, the indicator has been increasing at least several times (962). In 2023, the number of LLGs issued until October 31 jumps strongly, and compared to 2020, it increases almost 10 times. It is assumed that the mentioned change in the law (i.e., "On the legal status of foreigners") influenced the issuance of documents or another legal stay in the Republic of Lithuania.

FIGURE 1. Trends in the issuance of temporary residence permits of Azerbaijani citizens in Lithuania 2020 –31.10.2023 (special enquiry to the Migration Department, 2023)



When concretizing the obtained statistical data, separate categories of foreigners are distinguished. This means that the Migration Department in Lithuania distinguishes foreigners according to the purpose of entry. In Table No. 1 not all are visible, but most categories of foreigners who have been issued temporary residence permits. The main categories are immigration for the purposes of work, study, family reunification, and business creation.

TABLE 1. Statistics on the issuance of temporary residence permits of Azerbaijani citizens in Lithuania (special enquiry to the Migration Department, 2023)

	2020	2021	2022	31 October 2023
After graduation (job search)	6	5	4	7
Family reunification	21	14	17	34
Work	149	146	814	2155
High qualifications	0	5	2	10
Business	2	0	1	2
Startup	0	1	0	0
Studying at a higher educational institution	67	72	89	200
Education according to the vocational or general education curriculum	2	6	18	9

The Public Employment Service (2023) announces that the gaps in the labour shortage have not been filled, so a review of immigration rules and procedures becomes a priority. One of the most recent changes in relation to foreigners in Lithuania has been the amendment of the law “On the Legal Status of Foreigners,” the latest version of which, published on July 1, 2023, led to changes in statistical indicators (see Table 2).

TABLE 2. Number of foreigners, document issuance statistics in Lithuania 2022 07 01-2023 07 01(Migration Department, 2023)

	1 July 2022	1 July 2023
Number of foreigners residing in the Republic of Lithuania	145118	195550
	2022 I semester	2023 I semester
Decisions taken on applications by foreigners for permission to change employer or job function	6480	10638
Foreigners with a temporary residence permit in the Republic of Lithuania	117002	168860
Issued Schengen visas	10721	13274
National visas issued	26518	12503

When comparing the data for the same period in 2022 and 2023, there is a tendency to increase the number of foreigners in Lithuania. During the calendar year, 50432 people immigrated to Lithuania. As has already been said, the significant change was due to the mass immigration of Ukrainians into the European Union. The number of Schengen visas (issued mainly for tourist purposes) has decreased by several thousand. Still, the number of national visas, which were explicitly issued for work immigration purposes, has halved (i.e., from 26518 to 12503 units). It can be assumed that it was for this reason that the number of temporary residence permits issued (51858 pieces of documents) also increased. In addition, the change in the law “On the Legal Status of Foreigners” may have influenced it.

The move on is further to an empirical study that reveals the multifaceted problems that presuppose the context of insecure work integrating into the labour market. The analysis expressed the views and experiences of experts and foreigners or workers.

Methodology

Participants. For the implementation of the empirical study, a dual categorization of informants was chosen, i.e., experts and foreigners working in Lithuania. Due to the insufficient results of the survey of foreign informants, four business representatives assigned to the expert group were interviewed.

Measuring instruments. Qualitative measurement involves collecting and analyzing non-numerical data to gain a deeper understanding of complex research phenomena. This approach was chosen for research for focusing on contextual and subjective aspects of the research topic, possibility to provide rich and nuanced findings that might otherwise be overlooked in quantitative studies (Maxwell, 2012; Bryant & Charmaz, 2007). Unstructured interviews allows researchers to gather in-depth, detailed information about a participant’s thoughts, feelings, and experiences (Kvale, 2007). This type of interview is particularly useful for exploring complex, sensitive, or previously unexamined topics, as it enables participants to share their perspectives in a flexible and open-ended manner (Arksey & Knight, 1999). By using unstructured interviews, researchers can gain a rich, nuanced understanding of a phenomenon, which can be particularly valuable in the early stages of a research project or when studying a previously under-explored area (Mason, 2002).

Procedure of data collection. The study used the unstructured interview method by calling the contact phone number directly on December 13–14, 2023. Assuming that the expert is a person who has experience and knowledge in a particular field,



four informants working in Lithuanian companies and directly dealing with the peculiarities of the employment of foreigners were interviewed. All informants have received codes that began with the characters “Eksp” and ended with numbers that ranged from 1 to 4.

1. Eksp1 (work experience: 5 years; about 60% of all employees of the company are foreigners);
2. Eksp2 (work experience: 3 years; about 25% of all employees of the company are foreigners);
3. Eksp3 (work experience: 12 years; about 45% of all employees of the company are foreigners);
4. Eksp4 (work experience: 5 years; about 80% of all employees of the company are foreigners).

On August 10–11, 2023, five informants who met several criteria were interviewed in an interactive way with the participation of an Azerbaijani/Turkish translator. Official work in Lithuania citizenship of non-EU countries. The study used the unstructured interview method using remote communication via the Internet and the chat app WhatsApp. The search for informants was carried out by one company operating in Lithuania, which is engaged in construction contract work. Often, companies invite non-EU citizens to work in Lithuania according to the quota list, where, in a simplified procedure, non-highly qualified workers can come to Lithuania faster and easier. In accordance with the ethics of the investigation, confidentiality and anonymity were ensured, without distinguishing any aspects of possible identification. Informants were identified and classified in letters and numbers according to the chronological order of the survey (Inf.1; Inf.2, etc.). The general characteristics of informants are presented in Table 3.

TABLE 3. Sociodemographic characteristics of informants.

Code	Gender	Citizenship	Age	Type of document	Specialty in Lithuania
Inf1	Male	Azerbaijani	29	Visa D (issued for the purpose of work)	Welder
Inf2	Male	Azerbaijani	33	Temporary residence permit	Electrics
Inf3	Male	Turkish	52	Temporary residence permit	Pipe fitter
Inf4	Male	Azerbaijani	47	Visa D (issued for the purpose of work)	Electric welder
Inf5	Male	Azerbaijani	49	Temporary residence permit	Pipe fitter

Results

The data analysis strategy was chosen based on a study conducted by Huseynova, and Brazienė in 2022, which used the theoretical dimensions of the phenomenon of insecure employment. With a slight modification of the aspects of the analysis itself, several analysed levels were obtained (based on Niesten Dietrich, 2012; Broughton, 2016; Landolt, Goldring, 2009; Rodgers, 1989, etc.): the importance of legitimacy; (no) security through the activities of the institutions; individuals in society; individual factors. The results of the expert survey are presented through the dimensions of legitimacy and (un)security through the activities of the institutions, and the individual and social (i.e., society) contexts are fulfilled specifically through the experiences of working foreigners. The importance of legitimacy in interview questions started with the sociodemographic characteristics of a person. The age, profession, and nationality of individuals were revealed. Later, information about the legal stay in the Republic of Lithuania was obtained, i.e., what identity document justifies the informant's legal stay in Lithuania. The fundamental change that occurred in 2023 was the reorganization of the issuance of visas and temporary residence permits. If earlier, when intending to enter Lithuania for a period longer or less than a year, it was possible to obtain a national visa, then from July 1 of this year, a decision was made to control labour immigration—only temporary residence permits (or TRP) are issued. As Niesten-Dietrich (2012) argues, legal and structural integration are separate, and the acquisition of rights itself is associated with legal status (citizenship) and indicates the level of legal integration into society. In response to this statement, the procedure for legal stay in Lithuania has become more sophisticated in relation to informants; therefore, the amendment of the law as a basis for ensuring legitimacy has a significant impact on the legal integration of foreigners. In complicated situations, attempts are made to save with the help of friends and try to find a way out of the complex migratory “traps.”

“I have a work visa now, but it's going to be over in two months. I don't know what I'm going to do, because I'm not going to stay in this company, I'm probably going to Azerbaijan again. I could still stay in Lithuania until the permit is issued, but as they said, it is no longer right here. I must work right here again if I want to exchange a document” in Inf1

“I have had a temporary residence permit since before. But what is happening now, full of Ukrainians, all the procedures are stalling for colleagues. They should be allowed to Lithuania as much as possible. Paid by a friend for the document in a hurry, and did not receive it, instead of a month four passed” Inf2



“I just got a temporary residence permit; a friend brought me to Turkey. I gave up and had to leave. The visa time is over, I can’t pick it up myself. The employer withdrew, then through a friend he handed it to me already in Istanbul.” Inf3

“I was unlucky because I came to Lithuania and I wanted to hand over the documents for a residence permit, but the employer cheated, said he would not pay for migration, and I kept my visa until there were jobs again” Inf4

The expert interviews revealed that legal status is critical when hiring foreigners (i.e., non-EU citizens) for work abroad. When sending on business trips, problems with certification and legalization of documents arise, and the costs of the host company increase. A higher salary is offered for a person who was born in one of the Member States of the European Union; foreign companies do not always accept foreigners, preferring Europeans. When working only in the Republic of Lithuania, a legal stay in Lithuania is essential since the differences in the payment of taxes and social guarantees are practically the same as those of Lithuanian workers.

“We don’t want foreigners because a lot of Ukrainians have come, they’ve been in conflict with other nationalities, they want to go to work, they want to don’t, they celebrate. Does not bear responsibility, sometimes disappears altogether” Eksp3

“We are willing to take to France foreigners who pass our tests and receive a certificate of the level of English. Then we prepare documents for a business trip abroad, however. Let’s say in the Netherlands without an EU passport, no way. The European is a European, and the salaries are better with the EU passport” Eksp1

“We work only in Lithuania, there is no difference for us, it is important that a person has minimal conversations and does not do a defect. It doesn’t matter to us, it’s important non-conflict. Salaries are the same with us and Lithuanian welders and foreign ones, we pay taxes equally to both, because there are no visas left” Eksp4

“Turkish or Azerbaijani certificates don’t suit us here, there’s a problem with apostilization of documents, you have to drop the tests here again, it’s such a hassle and money again. If the visa was there, there were no health fees, it was on top of it, now it’s all” Expo2

(In) security through institutions. All foreigners said that the burdensome bureaucratic procedures make them feel powerless against the institutional mechanism. Bauder’s (2006) and Basok’s (2002) assertion that the concept of the

liberal labour market is not valid in the case of immigrants is confirmed because their incorporation is limited by law. Informants highlighted the change in the law “On the Legal Status of Foreigners” in 2023, as it directly impeded their integration into the labour market. Even if you want to work legally in Lithuania, it is impossible to do this if the visa expires and if you want to change employers. It turned out that the procedure for changing the employer became more complicated, expensive, and formally more complicated.

“I wanted to go to a friend’s company here in Lithuania, but when I found out how much it would cost, I said that I can’t, because everything I get, I send to the children and my wife. I even have a few hundred already big money. Now, from July, that change, if already with a card (LLG) already costs 100 EUR, before that over 20 EUR was. I need a new permit to order at all, because with a visa I can’t change the company. And that’s not all here, there’s more paperwork. I don’t remember.” Inf1

“It’s already easy for me with permission. It used to be harder, because with a visa, if you change an employer, it cancels it, gives it a new one while you wait and if you’re in Lithuania it’s just a permit. Other visas are not available for a long time. And already with permission, earlier you pay a few tens of euros and that’s it. Now I don’t know, because I don’t plan on the firm’s weirdness, now I like it here. But what I’ll say is that it’s hard. I was a month late from the withdrawal of my permit to declare because the company didn’t do it then I was looking for where to do it for the money” Inf2

“My case is interesting. I came to a new company still with an old visa. I go to migration, says a not so completed application. Rejected. Queue for a month. I’m saying this how do I survive here? I spent the money on the ticket, I can’t wait a month and even longer just for a visit. It’s good that the new company found the visit cancelled by another person and I went no longer to Kaunas, but to Klaipeda and applied it a few days later. That’s not all. It turns out the law has changed since July, and I arrived on July 3. And I can’t apply for a waiting visa anymore. I’m saying what would you do? To Azerbaijan, travel. I say I don’t have money, offered to borrow. I borrowed from a new company and flew out. I had to wait 3 months for the document. Even if a Lithuanian application is submitted, it is not possible to work. Illegal. I was very disappointed in Lithuania.” Inf3

The experts confirmed the statements of the interviewed foreigners and emphasized that structural restrictions are not solely negative; overall, immigration control and strict labour market regulations protect the internal structure of Lithuania. However, from the perspective of the employee, these restrictions seem illogical and adversely affect individual integration. On the contrary, experts



underscore that the current legal changes limit and hinder participation in Lithuania's labour market, demotivating foreigners and stalling long migratory processes that inhibit involvement and entrenchment in the labour market. It was noted that even changing employers is met with unfavourable and inflexible procedures. For instance, once an employer officially dismisses an employee, it becomes impossible to change employers without first obtaining a new temporary residence permit, which can take up to five months in a non-urgent process.

“I don't see any problems; there's no shortage of foreigners with us. The Kyrgyz, the Uzbeks for the most part, the Ukrainians removed a lot or left on their own. We got the visas easily for them, although if no one controlled them, they would sail here en masse” Eksp1

“You know it's made it difficult for them to come in for sure. Somehow, this year there are not so many of those documents maybe, because everyone from other companies in Lithuania is running over to us. I'd say you're looking for easier ways now than to deal with it. That change is normal I'd say, but it's already coming with temporary residence permits, the procedure is simpler than for a new contribution” Ex2

“People are uncomfortable with procedures. Came from another company, says throws me waiting for ana company because I asked about the salary why the hours were less written down. And told me to go, looking elsewhere for a job. The man's permit was made in migration already, quickly went the same day after receiving the registration and registered for the change of employer, because there are so many nuances there, extraordinary. Went to migration says they don't have a residence declared. The man is waiting for a migration visit again, we helped with the declaration. Goes, says you can't change your employer, because you've already been fired, order a new one. It is a great pity for people Without money leave in the will of fate” Eksp4

“Indeed, migration has made things very worse because there used to be a waiting visa, you can work while you're waiting for a temporary residence permit. Now the processes take a long time, sometimes up to 5 months, and he can't legally stay here after arriving before, say, going back. Tickets are terribly expensive. Wow, a person would go and work like it, we say we pay them everything, we give them to live. But migration has made it so that if we help, we will be punished for illegal work. No one wants to take risks. And it's bad. Not from the good life comes here” Eksp3

The influence of society. The integration of newcomers after arrival in the host country is difficult for both individuals and groups themselves (Koser, 2007). In one way, assistance is provided by small surrounding collectives, which are usually

limited to citizens of the same country of origin; otherwise, they receive help from employers or from the collectives around them (Inf2). Sometimes support is provided from the circle of relatives, even at a distance (Inf3). The provision of assistance in the collectives of compatriots includes not only moral but also financial subsistence assistance (for example, food and transportation services) and consultations not only on work but also on legal subsistence issues in Lithuania.

“It was very uncomfortable when, without asking for anything, a company representative helped me for free. I wanted to change my employer after I already had an LLG, and I was rejected by the migration because I didn’t have a declared place of residence. To get it, you need to pay. I didn’t have the money. It’s a man who arranged everything for free, not like he does everywhere else. And then there’s the suggestion that until I get the document, I’ll live in their employees’ house that month. With no money at all when I stayed, my colleagues where we lived together were eating. I sent everything I earned here. Although the company did not pay out about 3000 EUR, it deceived what I had to send to the children. I want to get out of that company, but I can’t, there’s no money. What to borrow from? How long do I wait to get to work again. No one wants it illegal. In a word, blindfold. Neither go back nor stay. Anyway, I didn’t stretch for two weeks and had already changed to a normal company.” Inf2

“My friend sent money for a flight home. Because I came here, I gave up my permit, they say there are no more waiting visas. When will the LLG betray, who knows. Wait without work for two to three months, that’s what you eat. I paid already for the flight here, then again, the minus. In a word, it’s a special stumbling block, it looks like the rich are going to work here, where you have something to pay for tickets. It’s not like that, not from a good life we fly to Lithuania. One-way ticket as the salary of some Turks” in Inf3

“Information from closer colleagues who have already come across...” Inf4

Individual factors. Bursell’s (2015) claims about more complex integration of immigrants in the labour market due to lower productivity caused by a lack of human capital have been confirmed. The answers of the informants respond to the statement, and we see that extremely difficult integration occurs when a person has difficulty speaking or understanding often used languages. In this case, Russian and English in addition to these linguistic abilities, obstacles are felt everywhere: both when contacting institutions (Migration Department, etc.) and when signing contractual obligations, such as changes in employment contracts, opening bank accounts, etc. It turned out that integration into the labour market is faster and easier for workers who speak English, while Russian-speaking or other (often

native) speakers work in lower-paid jobs in Lithuania. A fragmentary mention is made of the motivating opportunity to bring family members to Lithuania. An important factor is the successful establishment in Lithuania and the labour market (Inf4).

“I understand Russian, but there’s no way to speak, that’s where I go with Google. Our boss was accompanied to the doctor because you can talk. And if you don’t talk around anymore, it’s very difficult. So, it’s scary to change the company, and there’s still fines or money for tickets for what kind of certificate.” Inf1

“For me, the Russian change of the employment contract was made, although I only speak English, I do not speak Russian, I asked for it to be changed, because it is not often who here understands Russian. Every Russian-speaking person here remains in Lithuania or Poland. If anyone speaks English, then the salaries are much higher, they are quickly taken to the objects in Germany” Inf3

“I’m just Azeri and Turkish. A couple of words in Russian, it’s very difficult for me with the phone around the store when necessary. You won’t talk to people. It seemed like I’d learn, but how do you learn if you only work in the same squad” Inf2

“I also know English and Russian, but what of this, not doing well with employers, I go to the minus for everything.” “I know it’s possible to bring a wife when you already have a residence permit, this opportunity comforts my wife waiting for me.” I was afraid to leave the last company, and so Owed was a few months’ salary, then they would have cancelled the visa. Now, and with a temporary residence permit, this may be the case. A lot of it’s just silent. Inf4

After summarizing the responses received by informants, the actual changes that affected the process of integration of immigrants in Lithuania into the labour market through structural restrictions were highlighted. i.e., an amendment to the law (see Table 5). The results of interviews with foreigners were identical to the data obtained during expert interviews. In this case, the latter structural constraint was singled out, which led to frustration for both employees and employers. Both groups of informants noticed a negative impact on the integration of workers into the labour market, and structural control was rated as more precarious than if it were. Precarity through structural limitation manifested itself as uncertainty about the work and financial situation while working in Lithuania, especially if you want to change employers; complicated procedures for declaring the place of residence; fear of official interruption to change employers; and a deteriorating socio-economic situation with increasing costs in the documentation process. There is also a feeling of distrust, hopelessness, inability, and not knowing where

to search for help if the employer is not paying a salary or violating the terms of the employment contract. The precarious aspect also appears at the level of individual motives, when diminishing motivation and trust in structures leads to lower self-esteem and possible condescension's regarding the number of wages, working conditions, and accommodation conditions in relation to employers. Campbell et al.'s (2019) conclusion about foreigners' unwillingness to report payroll violations due to employer retaliation was confirmed. Individuals who do not believe in their own abilities seek assistance from those around them (intermediaries).

TABLE 5. Actual changes in relation to immigrants already in Lithuania before and after the adoption of the law "On the Legal Status of Foreigners" in 2023. On July 1st.

The current version of the law "On the Legal Status of Foreigners" until 2023. July 1	The current version of the law "On the Legal Status of Foreigners" from 2023. July 1
Legal stay in Lithuania is extended by issuing a visa (the so-called "waiting visa")	Interruption of legal stay in Lithuania
After obtaining a temporary visa, can work	Can no longer work because visas are not issued
When changing employer, you can continue to work in Lithuania after receiving a temporary visa.	Must leave the European Union or wait for the LLG to be issued until he can legally work again
The cost of issuing a temporary residence permit was EUR 120 or EUR 240 as a matter of urgency	The cost of issuing a temporary residence permit is EUR 160 or EUR 320 as a matter of urgency
Employers did not pay health insurance premiums during the period of validity of the visa	Employers are obliged to pay health insurance premiums during the period of validity of the temporary residence permit
Lower level of legal integration	Higher level of legal integration.

Conclusions and policy implication

Empirical research revealed multifaceted problems that presuppose the context of insecure work integrating into the labor market. During the research, it was noted that legal status is of great importance when hiring foreigners for work outside Lithuania based on business trips. Difficulties arise in document preparation, certification, and legalization, leading to increased costs for employers. It can be said that these restrictions result in lower wages for foreign workers. When working solely in the Republic of Lithuania, having legal residency is important, as the differences in the payment of taxes and social benefits are significantly different compared to those of Lithuanians.

A diverse socium of foreigners now resides in Lithuania, with a noticeable increase in numbers over recent years. Many of these newcomers are filling labor shortages in key sectors like construction and transportation. A significant portion of immigrants comes from neighboring countries, including Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia, along with smaller groups from Central Asia and Turkey. The issuance



of temporary residence permits has experienced remarkable growth in recent years, attributed in part to recent changes in immigration laws that came into effect on 2023. The Migration Department categorizes foreign nationals based on their immigration purposes, such as work, study, family reunification, or business endeavors. Despite the rising influx of immigrants, challenges remain in filling labor market gaps, leading to calls for a review of existing immigration policies. Concurrently, there has been an increase in the issuance of temporary residence permits, while the number of national work visas has declined. Additionally, a decrease in Schengen visas reflects shifting immigration trends. Recent studies have highlighted the obstacles foreign workers face as they strive to integrate into the Lithuanian labor market.

Structural restrictions are not understood solely in a negative way, as immigration control and strict labor market rules protect Lithuania's internal structure. It has become clear that the current changes in the law reduce the motivation of foreigners; long migratory processes do not facilitate but rather inhibit involvement and integration into the labor market. The precarious aspect also extends to the individual level, where lack of motivation and trust in institutions can lead to lower self-esteem, possible condescension from employees regarding wage levels, working conditions, accommodation conditions, and issues related to non-payment of wages. As foreigners' confidence in their own abilities decreases, they often seek help through third parties or intermediaries (family, friends, colleagues, consultants, etc.). Changing employers or obtaining temporary residence permits in Lithuania based on work involves unfavourable and inflexible procedures, causing frustration for both employees and employers. A negative impact on the integration of workers into the labor market has been observed, with structural control being assessed as more precarious than it initially appeared. Precarity due to structural constraints is recognized as: uncertainty about work and financial stability; complicated procedures for declaring residency; the inability to terminate an employment contract to change employers; and a deteriorating socio-economic situation further exacerbated by rising costs in the documentation process. Precariat work is primarily characterized by uncertainty. Most of the work is governed by volatility, which originates from the nature of the work itself: for instance, whether it will continue in the future or not. Furthermore, employment may be terminated at any moment, and the terms of the agreement do not guarantee continuity of the work. The contentious issue is rooted in insecurity and ignorance, resulting from structural limitations. Can a person feel secure in the labor market if they are unsure whether a temporary residence permit will be issued or altered before their visa expires? Is insecurity manifested in feeling uncertain and navigating the complex labyrinths of migratory procedures? Does the sudden change in the law push migrant employers and workers into a precarious situation? According to the study, it is evident that recent changes

in the law in Lithuania affect precarious work and create instability in the lives of migrants. Therefore, further research should be conducted to explore the relationship between precarious work and structural restrictions.

Building on the understanding of precarity as it relates to structural constraints, future research should investigate how specific policies impact migrant workers' stability of employment. Considering the identified complexities in navigating legal residency procedures, scholars should examine the psychological effects of such instability on migrant workers, particularly in relation to their workforce participation and mental well-being. Further academic inquiry is necessary to assess the implications of sudden changes in labor laws on the employment landscape for migrants, focusing on how these shifts exacerbate existing precarity and influence the decisions of both employers and employees. To enhance understanding of the interplay between precarious work and structural limitations, researchers should conduct comparative studies across different regions, evaluating how variations in legal frameworks and economic conditions shape the experiences of migrant workers.

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