

Knowledge work and transnational networks in Lithuanian public sector



Liutauras Labanauskas

Doctor, Research Fellow of Lithuanian Social Research Centre, Institute of Sociology (A.Gostauto g. 11, LT-01108, Vilnius Lithuania, Liutauras.labanauskas@gmail.com, institutas@lstc.lt)

Abstract. International and transnational student mobility is becoming a global strategy of young persons' career, and in this regard Lithuania is not an exception. Nevertheless, we lack studies in the analysis of the mechanisms and processes of the integration of mobile culturally privileged persons in the labour market of their country of origin, as it is these mechanisms and processes that allow mobile persons to increase their value in the labour market of their country of origin and to be in the forefront of the creation and transfer of innovations. In order to bridge this academic gap of studies on mobility/migration, this article deals with the "returning to Lithuania" experiences of the citizens of Lithuania who completed Bachelor's or Master's studies abroad. The main question of this study is how the mobility/migration experience helps in developing human, social and cultural capital and how the returnees act as the agents of innovation in their country.

Key words: knowledge work, transnational networks, student migration, innovation, Lithuania.

Introduction

International migration encourages the emergence of innovations [20, 24], thus studies on the connections between migration and innovations are mainly focused on high-technology and/or knowledge-based sector innovations and their connection to the migration of highly-qualified personnel [25].

On the other hand, innovations are also created indirectly "below" or in sectors that are less knowledge-based, e.g. the public

administration sector, while the input of mobile highly-qualified personnel as innovation carriers to public administration has faced less analysis thus far because "only migrating entrepreneurs are considered to be the heroes of capitalism" [26; 24].

Due to this fact this article will focus on the experiences of persons (young people) who acquired higher (Bachelor's and/or Master's) education abroad and returned to Lithuania

and who, at the time of research were working in the public sector of Lithuania¹. It is assumed that these employees as a “cohort of innovators” can use their knowledge to contribute to the development of this sector in Lithuania. The present study is based on qualitative participatory observation and interviews with 15 people who had acquired their higher education abroad and in 2012–2013 worked in the branches of institutions of the public sector of Lithuania (the Ministries of the Republic of Lithuania or their departments). The **aim of the study** is to reveal the personal migration/mobility trajectories of the citizens of Lithuania who acquired a Bachelor’s or Master’s degree education abroad while paying more attention to the decision of a particular individual to return to his/her country of origin, to analyse how the mobility/migration experience helps in developing human, social and cultural capital and how the encounter of “brought over identities” shaped in other countries and “local identities” influence the creation of innovation. The study also raises the question of whether these persons are the source of “uncommon knowledge” [24], what innovations they create, what is the level of the extremeness of their innovations and how they increase organisational (bureaucratic) effectiveness [31; 37]. In Lithuania, there is a lack of studies which could reveal the aspects of the connection between the **transfer of knowledge and innovation** and migration and innovation through **interhuman-interinstitutional relationships** as well as investigate the migration experiences/mobility of highly-qualified persons and new ways of global life in the world with no borders. Taking into consideration the aspects mentioned above a study on persons who acquired a Bachelor’s and/or Master’s education abroad and returned to Lithuania was conducted.

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The returning migrants/mobile persons (students) in this article are defined as persons returning to the country of their citizenship after some time spent as international migrants (short-term or long-term, students) in another country and planning to spend at least one year in their country of origin (see [27]). The persons who acquired higher education abroad (Bachelor’s or Master’s degree) are those who left Lithuania to study a full programme of full-time and/or part-time studies in a non-Lithuanian higher education institution(s).

The article comprises 3 parts: the first part focuses on research on students’ international mobility/migration and analyses the relevant statistical data. The second part provides a theoretical conceptualisation of the role of mobile servants/migrants in the innovation creation process and discusses the complexity of migration/mobility of international highly-qualified personnel. The third part presents the results of qualitative empirical study.

The Determinants of International Mobility of Lithuanian Students

The movement of Lithuanian people from one country to another continues to be a major influence on the country’s society. The 2011 Census data [29] revealed that since 1990 when Lithuania regained its independence almost 670 thousand people or 18 percent of the country’s total population had lived abroad for longer than one year. Of these 670 thousand the majority were aged 25-40, were economically active and one fifth of them were highly skilled/ or had tertiary education. The return migration and immigration have been rather insignificant with respect to maintaining “healthy” levels of population growth. The return migration in the period of 1990-2011 did not exceed 110 thousand persons and non-EU immigration levels were never high [17]. After Lithuania joined the EU it became an exporter of its workforce, with a significant proportion being well-qualified and highly skilled.

Since 1990 the policy debate on highly skilled and knowledge workers leaving Lithuania has centered around the *brain drain* phenomenon. It is generally agreed that the emigration of the highly-skilled from the country has been encouraged by political, economic and social changes that started after the reestablishment of independence. A demographic misbalance, differences in wages, outdated technical and scientific infrastructure, and structural changes in scientific institutions all helped to predetermine the departure of high-skilled labor to other countries. With the development of the economy, especially after 2004 the country was affected by the globalization of economic activity, which was in many aspects related to the changes in the Lithuanian labor market and membership of the European Union. In Lithuania, the “brain drain” phenomenon poses a serious threat not only to the socioeconomic development, but also to the development of a middle class. Although fierce debates exist over the term of social class, for illustrative purposes, we can note that using E. Wright’s typology (education, autonomy at work and earnings) of measuring social class, it is possible to state that the Lithuanian middle class is small and makes up 12 percent of the total population [32]. Compared to Western countries where the middle class, calculated by the following criteria, makes up more than 50–60 percent of the population. The abundance of doctors, engineers, IT professionals and other knowledge workers is a precondition not only for economic growth but also enables a country to create a stable democratic society, whereas emigration complicates the middle strata development and “facilitates” the development of bureaucracy, corruption and irresponsible governance, [15, p. 23]. Despite the fact that Lithuania is no longer considered a country in transition by some authors, the trends in middle strata development remain blurred (see [19]) for a quantitative comparative account on social

class developments in Lithuania and other European countries) i.e. the middle strata development interferes with the advantages of globalization (free movement, cheap flights, international labor regulation) as well as purely *homo economicus* value orientations at an individual level.

A study (commissioned by the Lithuanian Ministry of Education and Science and carried out by the Lithuanian Social Research Center in 2009) focused on the immigration policies and practices relevant to non-EU researchers, doctoral students and highly skilled employees in Lithuania was carried out in 2009 (see [34]). The study included researchers and scholars, who had lived in Lithuania for more than 6 months and who were working under an employment contract or were full-time doctoral students at a university or research institute in Lithuania.

The study revealed that there was no accurate data on highly skilled persons in Lithuania. According to Statistics Lithuania, 174 permits of residence were issued in 2008 to the non-EU citizens coming to Lithuania for training and study purposes and more than 1,200 permits of residence were changed (prolonged). Thus, the total number of non-EU nationals in Lithuanian higher education could be estimated at about 1,500. However, highly skilled persons “dissolve” in the overall immigration statistics. According to Statistics Lithuania there were 5976 individuals with a doctor’s degree in 2006, 0.5 percent of which were foreigners (including EU and non-EU, permanent and non-permanent residents).

On the basis of these figures it can be estimated that there were up to 30 non-EU researchers (including doctoral students) in Lithuania in 2006. Given the fact that the total number of those possessing a doctor’s degree did not change drastically (in 2008 there were 6326) we can imply that the number of foreign researchers has not changed a lot since then. The study of non-EU researchers also proposed

a typology of the highly skilled persons coming to Lithuania. This typology (see also [34]) revealed that early stage researchers/PhD students from non-EU countries mainly came to Lithuania to gain international experience/“improve their” CV or were attracted by money/scholarships (origin state allocated funds, or exchange, double degree, competitions and other programs as well as project funding). It also revealed that local recruitment procedures are not oriented to the international job market. Lithuania as a country of immigration was often chosen not only as a place to carry out research but also for economic reasons. The study shows as well that the entry of researchers from developed countries into Lithuania to a large extent was determined by cost of living differences, whereas immigration from developing countries was highly instrumental (e.g. to obtain a residence permit or a nationality and freedom to “move” to another EU country, or arriving from countries with a relatively expensive and lower education level, with the aim of returning to the country of origin). The non-EU researchers often had “unsafe” jobs on fixed-term contracts, short-and medium-term visits were the most characteristic feature of highly skilled immigration in Lithuania. International recruitment and selection procedures were not common inside universities and research centers.

To sum up the latter study revealed that non-EU researchers in Lithuania “learned” to become the “invisible” social group [34]. The “recipe” of their integration into the broader context of Lithuania was “to be invisible”. Contacts with the majority of Lithuanian society were limited to professional and working relationships with the exception of spouses and close friends. Their contacts with the symbolic (citizenship) or social institutions of the country were self-limited as non-EU researchers in Lithuania automatically set themselves apart from the rights and obligations

to the host country, i.e. they felt they were tolerated, accepted, economically and socially and they felt more or less safe, but they did not belong and considered themselves migrants *par excellence* [34].

When knowledge and highly skilled workers arrive in a country, their arrival results in a chain effect i.e. skilled immigrants can help employers to attract more highly skilled workers thus, there is no need for additional spending on education [9; 13; 14; 21]. The relevance of studies on students’ international mobility/migration is influenced by the fact that after Lithuania entered the EU in 2004, the unrestricted movement of the citizens of Lithuania in the EU and the world began. Educated and qualified people as well as young people who leave to study are a part of this movement. In 2009-2010 full study programmes – Bachelor, Master and Doctoral studies – in the EU member countries were studied by more than 7 thousand citizens of Lithuania. This made up 3.5% of the total number of students studying in Lithuania (ŠMM 2010). Among Lithuanians the most popular members of the EU, in terms of studying, were the United Kingdom (2,325 students), Germany (1,274 students) and Denmark (911 students). In respect of the study cycle more than two thirds of students studied in Bachelor studies and in Master and Doctoral studies – 18.9% and 4.6% respectively. In comparison to other members of the EU, Lithuania was above the EU average in the number of people studying abroad. In 2008 1,458 citizens of the Republic of Lithuania studied in non-EU countries, most of them – in Russia (841) and the USA (495) (ŠMM 2010).

According to the data from the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service of the United Kingdom (UCAS), 682 citizens of Lithuania were admitted to the first cycle studies in 2008, in 2009 – 895 (out of 1,061 study applications), in 2010 – 1,515 out of 2,146 applicants (UCAS 2010). In accordance to UCAS, in 2011 there were more than 4 thousand young citizens of

Lithuania who studied full study programmes at the universities of the United Kingdom. Taking into consideration the forecast of the Ministry of Education and Science, due to the demographic situation – low birth rate and migration – in 2023 there will be 40% less pupils who finish secondary schools than in 2010. Thus, it is likely that the number of people who come to study or conduct scientific research will not warrant the appropriate “turnover” of intellectual capital because there are more highly-qualified people who leave Lithuania than there are those who come [16; 28; 33]. Therefore, the mobility of students turns out to be the initial stage of the loss of human capital which eventually turns into permanent emigration [5]. These younger age educated citizens will be participants of the labour market for another 40–50 years, thus their departure may affect not only the sectors of the knowledge economy, but the system of pensions and social security as well.

Aidis and Krupickaitė [1; 2] investigated the factors that influence students who finish their studies to look for a job outside of Lithuania. This was the biggest in scope quantitative research on students’ migration/mobility and their attitude towards emigration in Lithuania which was mainly focused on the peculiarities of the emigration of the academic youth, its factors and arising problems.

Over two stages of research (in the academic year 2004–2005 and 2005–2006) 2,394 (1,252 and 1,142) students from the majority of Lithuanian higher university education institutions, and in 2006–2007 another 661 students from higher non-university education institutions were surveyed. One of the most important conclusions of the research was that the attitude of quite a significant part of Lithuanian students is close to the world’s prevailing tendencies of transnationalism; however there are only few preconditions in the country to form cyclic migration flows [1].

To sum up, it is possible to state that while analysing both general and highly-qualified personnel’s migration/mobility three closely inter-related research areas may be distinguished: macro, intermediate level analysis and analysis of the individual causes and consequences of migration (common to all residents, less often to a particular group of society or sector), investigation of residents’ attitude towards emigration and certain research on immigration topicality. In summarising the research and studies conducted in Lithuania it can be observed that there is a lack of studies which could reveal the migration experience/mobility of highly-qualified persons and which would investigate new ways of global life in the world with no borders. Taking into consideration the above-mentioned factors, a study on persons who acquired a Bachelor’s and/or Master’s education abroad and returned to Lithuania was conducted.

The role of mobility and migration in the innovation creation

David Hart [13], who analyses the way in which mobility/migration contributes to innovation, suggests the analysis of the expenditure (input) and output of the human capital, i.e. migration is understood as an input to the national innovation system, or said in another way, young people who come to the country as students (more than the older work personnel) are tied with the institutional, organisational, legislative and political-cultural context of that country, and thus their input in the infrastructure of innovation is greater.

In other words, Hart [13] states that the policy and model (assimilation, multicultural or open society-civic) of the accepting country’s national identity may well be important in the innovation “output”, i.e. the further the “advance” of the country is from the extreme assimilation and ethnic enclave identity policy model, the more optimal is the convergence of the innovation potential and the open and multicultural context of a country.

The origination of innovation correlates to the cultural diversity in a positive way, i.e. a labour force which is culturally diverse determines the origination of innovation [21; 30]. For example, Stuen, Mobarak and Maskus [30], who investigated employees from overseas who were working at the universities of the USA, conclude that national diversity among scientists (not just being a foreigner per se) was the determinant factor in the increase in the amount of innovation. Richard Florida (2005) also favours these conclusions and suggests that cultural diversity is the most important factor which attracts the workers who belong to the “creative class” to a certain country or region. Novelty/innovation supplementation model means that the arrival of educated people to the country creates a flow of knowledge to certain sectors or areas as well as the adjacent sectors and areas in the country while the primary consequence of such flow of knowledge is innovation [14].

For instance, Hunt and Gauthier-Loiselle [14], who analysed the non-economic merits of migrants in the U.S., calculated that 26% of the USA scientists who received Nobel prizes in 1999-2000 were migrants (notwithstanding the fact that there were only 12% of immigrants in the General Register of Immigrants). These authors also calculated that when the number of immigrants who possess a higher education increases by 1%, the number of patented inventions for one resident of the USA increases by 6% on average. According to Hunt and Gauthier-Loiselle [14], the number of patents for one resident may increase due to the fact that the local scientists use the brought in knowledge of the immigrants and this constitutes a critical mass of specialists in a field of a certain area, while the flow of knowledge eventually contributes to the innovation of other secondary areas, e.g. management and enterprise [14].

Another migration and innovation model may be described as the mass immigration of highly-qualified personnel model.

This model states that mass immigration is regulated through visa programmes, whereas the continuous flow of immigrants is maintained by the “infrastructure of attraction”, i.e. the exceptional conditions that exist to study or conduct scientific research in that country. For instance, people who are exclusively talented in the fields of arts, science, education, business or sports; emeritus professors and researchers, heads and managing directors of international companies, representatives of professions that urge studies of a Doctoral or Master’s degree, or talented personnel in the fields of arts, science and business, as well as investors who create workplaces and whose investments are no less than 1 million dollars (this amount may be less if investments are being made in rural areas or in places suffering from high unemployment) and this investment creates no less than 10 new workplaces, are distinguished as the preference target groups to receive an employment-based immigrant visa of the USA (see also [17]).

Quite a number of authors take the aspect of infrastructure of attraction as a basis for their analysis of the input of students to the infrastructure of innovation. Chellaraj, Maskus and Mattoo, for example, have determined that the increased number of foreign students in the Master’s degree programmes of the universities of the U.S. formed a positive correlation to the increase of the number of registered patents and inventions [7]. Likewise, foreign students contribute very much to science production: e.g. if there is a 10% decrease in the number of foreign doctoral students in the universities of the USA, the number of journal articles in the fields of physical and engineering sciences and their citation level decreases by 5–6% [30]).

The model of creative class, which has been developed by Florida, is also worth mentioning [12]. This model suggests that the gathering of the personnel who have immense knowledge in a particular area in a certain country or region attracts other experts of similar thinking to that country or region.

In this way the concentration of human capital and synthesis of ideas create the cycle of innovation encouragement and economic growth. The critical mass of personnel of a particular field in a country acts as a magnet which attracts creative potential. In literature we may also find attempts to analyse the transfer of knowledge and innovation in respect of the qualitative aspect, i.e. to investigate mobility/migration as a culture of knowledge acquisition and display [37]. These processes may be analysed while adjusting distinct methodologies which focus more on qualitative categories as the qualitative aspect is the one which allows us to identify the methods and networks of people's interaction as well as the "being here" context. "Being here" may be described as the interaction of the global and local social (individual, ethnic, professional) identities in a particular place (country, workplace, transnational network). Here also the discourse of transnationalism arises when the local knowledge of the local communities experience the impact of transnationalism which determines the change of identities as well.

According to the human capital migration model, migration is a way for an individual to increase their human capital, and this changes both their attitude and view towards inter-human-interinstitutional relationships and relationships in general. Migration as an investment in human capital is paid back in the future to the individual(s) as well as to the society (OECD 2008). Moreover, migration functions as a "spiral of social mobility": moving out to move up [11]. In such cases researchers are more interested in exceptional cases, unique stories, structural boundaries and "thresholds" instead of the statistical "mathematics" of migration according to Favell [11].

Thus in the next section the analysis of "returning to Lithuania" experiences of the citizens of Lithuania who completed Bachelor's

or Master's studies abroad is presented, with the aim to answer the question on how the mobility/migration experience helps in developing human, social and cultural capital and how the returnees act as the agents of innovation in their country.

Post-return to Lithuania experiences of mobile lithuanian students: a qualitative case study

The informants of the qualitative case study were the young people born between the years 1983 and 1990 who had acquired their Bachelor's and/or Master's degree qualification abroad and returned to Lithuania: eight men and seven women; 7 of them had acquired only a Bachelor's degree, 7 – both a Bachelor's and a Master's degree, and 1 person had gained only a Master's degree from universities in Australia, Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the USA (quite often the Bachelor's studies took place in one country and the Master's studies in a different country). Twelve participants of the study completed social sciences, one – humanities, one – physical sciences, and one person had completed technology sciences.

The selection of the informants of the study took place over several stages. Since the general numbers of the return migration of the Lithuanian students to different cities and places of Lithuania are not known and there is no exact statistical information regarding the education level of those who return, participants of the programme "Kurk Lietuvai" („Create for Lithuania“) – 12 people in total – were selected for the survey while applying the criterion of the accessibility of informants (Creswell and Clark 2003). These people returned to Lithuania by using the young professionals' programme (JPP) "Kurk Lietuvai", which was administrated by the public institution "Investuok Lietuvoje" ("Invest in Lithuania"). This initiative is a professional development

programme in Lithuania, intended for the citizens of Lithuania who have completed higher education studies (Bachelor's and/or Master's) abroad, and gives the opportunity to acquire employment in the state institutions of Lithuania by means of a tender. The remaining four informants of the study were identified by the informants themselves who had already participated in the study. All 15 participants of the study worked in public state institutions (in addition one interview was carried out with a person who worked in private sector, nevertheless, due to the different particularity of this interview, it is not analysed in this article). 12 of the informants left Lithuania for studies after they had finished secondary school, 2 informants - when they were 14-16 years of age and 1 person - at 9 years of age (their departure was influenced by family circumstances - their parents/guardians left to work in another country or concluded a marriage with a citizen of another country: *"I was 10 years-old, so I guess there was no option"* 4Z).

In most cases the participants of the study had completed social sciences. The study is based on the methodological holistic approach making it possible to get out of the "study room" and into the "field" of the study (Shalinsky 2006) and spending no less than several months outside while performing interviews as well as participating in the informants' lives, registering any changes in their lives and formulating inductive theoretical insights while applying empirical data.

Thus, besides the common layers of analysis - the general context and analysis of the reasons for migration, this article focuses on **specific-institutional and cultural context**, e.g. the analysis of **employment relationships** of the public sector and their innovative behavior. The approach of Orfila-Sintes and Mattsson [23, p. 381; 24] was taken as a basis, in which it states that innovation is "something new and obviously better and that it can be new only

in the context of a separate company but not necessarily new in the entire sector or market". Further the essential insights of the study are presented.

The empirical analysis: are the best and brightest staying on to work?

The periods of life which were spent abroad while studying by the informants is not a significant enough reason to call their migration experience as migration in the classical sense: the interviews with them reveal that this experience is taken as especially valuable in acquiring new social capital (e.g. working in a definite sector; a worthwhile relationship with the specialists of a certain field) and social-cultural (life and daily routine in some certain cultural diversity) contexts, i.e. "culturalised" and "implanted knowledge" [37]), nonetheless informants do not consider departure to study as migration. For them departure is a certain part of a career path of the trajectory of vertical social mobility, which marks their identity with the features of a cosmopolitan and global lifestyle which is quite often juxtaposed to the Lithuanian cultural context, which is seen by the informants as unvaried and closed, but nevertheless predictable and culturally safe at the same time. For the informants, regardless of the country in which they live or have professional interests, the territory of the country does not coincide with community in the ethnic, political or professional sense. The informants look at the construction of their identity through a ternary prism: namely, where they lived and where they were earlier (what was their identity), where they are now and how identity is constructed right here, right now (in a short, average or longer period of time) and thirdly, where they will "move" further: *"[...] For me it is interesting to know the Lithuanian culture, and later I will be looking somewhere else, maybe in Lithuania, maybe in the Dominican Republic – I really liked it there [work and holidays of 3 months], no matter*

where” (1T had lived in the United Kingdom since the age of 16). It seems that the younger the informants were when they left Lithuania, the more they tend to express a transnational attitude, i.e. the more varied is the experience of mobility and the younger the person was when he/she left and if they succeeded better in studies, work activities or work/practice, placements in companies and the easier it was for them to adjust and to adapt, the less important for them is the place where they are living/working. Quite often the informants left with people accompanying them while to others departure was an experiment, a minor venture which could also be influenced by the impact/opinion of the surrounding people: *“when I learned that I had entered [the university] there was like “well, maybe I should go”[...] but there also were friends who [insisted] “let’s go”* 5P. The informants were not “the best and the cleverest” and claimed that they were not high achievers when they were schoolchildren. Likewise, the desire for specific knowledge of a certain field was not the most important reason to leave. For the informants, departure was more of an impetus for new social experiences due to their active character marked with the features of leadership, i.e. informants stress an active relation with environment, curiosity, interest in other cultures and the experience of previous trips (with family, for holidays, etc.) as strong factors in choosing to study abroad. The departure of a part of them was also determined by the social status of their parents and the economic capital of the family, though this was not the primary aspect for any of the informants.

Interhuman-interinstitutional relationships: work ethics and criticism of the “doing things national way”

Studying abroad and competition among students developed their self-discipline and, according to the informants, instilled “western-like” work ethics: *“I guess I wouldn’t be where I am now. [...] The ability to analyse,*

work in stressful [environment], and doing so independently” 3V. After returning to Lithuania, the developed work ethics for most of the returners turned out to be the most hurtful and ironic “encounter” with the subjective reality of the public sector of Lithuania: *“One thing I cannot get used to is the presence of heads. When you do not decide yourself, instead you have to agree with one, then another, tra ta ta ta ta... Abroad, if you get a task it is your responsibility as to how you will accomplish it; of course you may consult, ask, but the responsibility is yours”* 3V. It is important to notice that the criticism of the informants towards the “doing things national way” is quite frequent, ironic and playful. The informants try to understand them and to look for the underlying reasons that can ground such manifestations of Lithuanianness. For example, the following story became the object of long discussion among several informants:

“I watched a coach near Žaliejai lakes working with schoolchildren, some 10–15 years old adolescents. I can see they are preparing for a competition, so seriously. And we are sitting on a bench next to them. A child is sitting in a kayak, ready to row and he [says]: Hey, coach, how do I go, how and what should I do? Then the coach says to the child – but the child asked so nicely, wanted some piece of a good advice – remember only a piece of sh... can float, you are rowing”. This was the answer. You lose your self-confidence automatically. This is school...” 1T.

Regardless of the criticism, the informant tried to explain and understand why the coach acted the way he did. Other informant relates:

“A primary teacher talks to a child: “You, moron, how many times do I have to tell you [...]”. Just imagine – you are being traumatised for four years. And this is the primary [school], and later this all increases. [...] one man against the system is little able to do anything” 2G.

Such and similar observations are quite a repetitive topic, which the informants discuss in an informal environment. The thing which is interesting about this is that at the beginning

of communication the informants try to avoid examining these topics with “anyone”, but later after more inter-confidence has arisen, the informants eventually broach these subjects. Quite a number of informants have faced the insights of paternalism in the state institution where they worked: “if you are active and you want to do something, you are put down quickly: ‘Ah, you are young, don’t poke your nose in or we will make sure that you don’t poke your nose into other people’s business’” 6M. When talking about their first day at work the informants ironically notice the “coffee-sitters” disregard to privacy (e.g. some of the informants were made to feel decidedly unpleasant by the curiosity of their colleagues about their personal life – family and relatives), too familiar interaction, older or higher by rank employees treating others as younger, weaker, less understanding and knowing colleagues which need to be cared for. Quite a number of informants emphasise the paternalistic-like management attitude of higher employees towards the younger, as a nursling and incompetent, although frequently informants feel to have better educated social skills (ability to communicate, represent the organisation, constructive discussion, rely on scientific facts instead of opinions) and some special (especially foreign languages) competence:

“Maybe to her [manager] I do not seem authoritative, because I am much younger, but she feels free to do so, she is always dissatisfied about everything, everything is wrong, all [my] suggestions are bad [...]. “I still don’t like the mentality, [...] the underestimation of a person, even if they have achieved something, like, you are young, like get out of here” [...] 5P.

Another informant recounts:

“Speaking about respect for people, when being in one country not to be as a dog to a dog... I miss the warm communication, understanding and support for one another – this is what I miss most often, even in my workplace. You know, everywhere [in other countries as well] is

competence, but we [in Lithuania] show it right away, but somehow our body language shows, if you don’t like someone you may show it right away. As far as I noticed, in other countries you may understand it from the body language but it is not so much on display. More subtle, maybe everything is at some higher level. The processes [of all people] in the brain are the same “I don’t like that [person], I don’t like the other one” It could be that not showing this helps to improve the level of communication, maybe you don’t like your colleague, but you must try to start liking them at work, somehow. Or maybe this veiling is even better? Or possibly even the straightforward Lithuanian “I just don’t like you and that’s it” is good. You know, I don’t know which is actually better, but perhaps I am used to the other [Western-like way of communication] one more” 1T.

Quite often the informants described themselves as the “troublemakers” of the organisation or “irritants of bureaucracy”: they were blunt in expressing their opinion, had arguments to defend their position or opinion on one or another matter and so they often felt undesirable and unpopular. One informant says: “They are shaking me off, do not want me [...], because I asked an inconvenient question [while representatives of the controlling organisation were present]” 6M. On the other hand, instead of anger and entering into work conflicts, the informants try to find the reasons for the paternalistic style of management, i.e. they analyse and evaluate their experiences and encounters with the “heads”, and discuss them with those who share their opinion – friends, colleagues and so on. Nonetheless, observations on the national work style have a humoristic tone. The informants sneer and ridicule or sometimes even create caricatures of their managers. Frequent “minor incidents” at work (Bourdieu et al. 1993) are rallied, mocked at, wondered at and compared with experiences acquired in a foreign country. Almost all the informants stress and have noticed the

closeness of the public sector personnel, the automatic functioning and absence of interest in the activities of the entire organisation: *“You call [the organization] ask a question and the secretary replies “I don’t know anything about that” 2G. The informants are rather critical towards the competence of the personnel of the public sector: “What gets on my nerves the most, the first and foremost thing [...] there is no aptitude for what they do. It is dreadfully lacking [...] instead of sticking to [expert] recommendations, they go along with their personal opinion, there is no way to talk them round” 4Z. The workplace meetings and the personnel’s inter-discussions for quite a few of the informants seem as a real “feast” of social and objective incompetence:*

“Someone [from the employees while addressing the manager] accidentally said their name. And she [says]: I am not [name], I am the Director. I didn’t actually hear that, my colleague told me about it... but if this is the kind of stories spreading [in the organisation] about the manager? [...] and later, whether you want to or not, you have to respect this person... [...] Those meetings put me off my stroke for the whole week. The professionals gather together [says ironically]. You may call [them] as you want. We should be discussing relevant topics. [...] such nonsense becomes apparent, but to my mind we should be discussing and searching for some truth [...] It is so eerie. If you ask for some advice – you face the world as it was a hundred years ago [...]. And then I say to myself “really? Is this everything that you have got?” 2G.

The informants act straightforwardly and do not avoid sharp discussions, they make bold decisions regarding change in a job because they consider themselves more competitive in the Lithuanian job market when compared to the majority of other persons. Nevertheless, in summing up it is possible to state that regardless of the bureaucracy irritants that are experienced due to their style of behaviour and developed social skills, the informants eventually became the informal team leaders,

the “inspirators” and informal motivators of both the younger and their senior (managers) colleagues. Due to their emotional stability (clearly understandable tasks), self-discipline (responsibility, work ethics) and willingness to cooperate and collaborate they successfully “saved” (financial and time) the resources of the organisation. Thus, the new practices of work that they brought in eventually improved the working atmosphere and allowed a more effective employment of resources. After some time these practices became a “new standard” of work teams and were informally discussed (coffee-klatched) by the employees who had been working at the institution for a longer time.

Determinants of the plans of return migration

The plans regarding the returning of the informants are not clear; they do not think that they have returned once and for all:

“As when I went and worked in Turkey for 3 years and then returned to the UK, returning to Lithuania for me is a kind of placement” For me it is interesting to know the Lithuanian culture, and later I will be looking somewhere else, maybe in Lithuania, maybe in the Dominican Republic – I really liked it there [work and holidays of 3 months], no matter where” (1T had lived in the United Kingdom since the age of 16 while residing in Lithuania had plans to go to India, but moved to Slovakia in 2013).

Almost all informants stated that they were welcome and had job offers abroad: *“I know that one [financial] corporation in London will wait for me for one more year” (7R, left for London in 2013). Almost all of them also had job offers from Lithuanian employers: “many a time I was asked to work for them but I don’t know how it would be [in reality] if I went and said that I want to work with them” 8MD. Thus it is possible to conclude that job offers from Lithuanian employers were more declarative in comparison to job offers abroad and it turns out that the determinant factor for the informants to return to Lithuania was **faster social mobility:***

“I would be a tiny fish in a huge pond in New York, whereas here I can become a huge fish although the pond is quite small” 8MD; “If the economics here is of the size x, there it is of the size 20x, but the person of my age has much more to do here than in Australia” 4Z; In my opinion, if you are clever it is better to make your career here. [...] I’ve seen how hard it is to compete there [abroad] [...] unless you are a “target” [on a target list] of five [higher education institutions of England] for you to get [...] if we take the biggest banks, there are 250 people who get those biggest banks jobs. So you have a 1% [possibility] of getting there. And then I realised it is really hard to compete. Not exactly that hard but if you go and make your career, will you do it in a short time? You won’t do it in a short time. I think that here [in Lithuania] I can compete with the majority 7R; “I am average in England, in Lithuania I can quickly become a highflyer” 1T.

Likewise it is possible to state that the diploma/degree of a foreign university gives the informant more “life chances” in Lithuania and a competitive advantage in the Lithuanian labour market due to several reasons: (a) the acquired objective and social competences developed while studying; and (b) social inequality “thanks” to which education abroad acquire the status of uncommon, valuable and desirable goods in Lithuania: *“It is better to complete studies of anything abroad instead of being actually an exclusively talented student in Lithuania [...]” 2G.* Although the economic factors of returning should also be considered to be an important catalyst of returning, they were not the dominant ones (together with the economic factors, the informants also mentioned the non-economic reasons of returning):

“This question will be purely professional. I shall watch my income grow by 30% [...]. By another 30% – the kind of job that I get [...]. Even if I got 100 thousand dollars but had to sit in the corner and type – I would definitely not choose this option. A person

needs to have position, to make decisions. And maybe 30% would be consideration of the cultural thought, to live somewhere else” 4Z.

Some of the informants were “forced” to stay in Lithuania longer by personal circumstances: *“Love keeps me here [in Lithuania]. This is the biggest thing because, if we had taken the initial plan I would have worked in Lithuania until June and I would have left then back [to the European city] for work” 3V.*

In summing up, it is possible to claim that the dominant factors of returning are faster social mobility in Lithuania and a willingness to transfer the knowledge which has been acquired abroad to a subjectively, individually described “local” social field of Lithuania, where informants hope for subjectively comprehensible changes of innovations: *“I wanted to apply my knowledge. The system there only needs to be maintained, whereas in Lithuania the system still needs to be created. And I want to contribute to the creation of this welfare” 6M.*

Conclusions

The study on the young people who had acquired their education abroad revealed the exclusive complexity of the phenomenon of the highly-qualified personnel migration and confirmed that mobility in the 21st century is based on innovation, communication and culture [5], rather than affection to a particular territory. Analysis of the experiences of informants deals with the global lifestyle of the informants, the world with no borders and global consciousness [5]. Thus, departure and studying abroad for the informants is not emigration in its classical sense and therefore it is not a conclusive phenomenon. More likely it is **migration as a “social spiral”: moving out to move up** [11]. This analysis revealed several “hidden” social facts regarding the informants and a number of possible hypotheses for future studies on the sector of public administration in Lithuania.

The return of the informants is clearly innovative in nature, i.e. returning people challenge the pre-existing norms of the country of origin (in this case, Lithuania) as well as the ways of doing something and thinking [6]. Despite this, the **paternalistic style of management** which pierces organisations of the public sector is the aspect which prevents the transfer of new innovations; secondly, (a) the too high qualification of the informants or (b) their incapacity to apply their knowledge/competences, or (c) the immunity of the public sector to knowledge, or (d) all of these aspects together may act as a push factor or are an obstacle for the appropriate use and development of human capital of the returnees; and thirdly, a **diploma/degree of a foreign university gives the informants more “life chances” in Lithuania and a competitive advantage in the Lithuanian labour market** due to: (a) the acquired objective and social competences developed while studying; and (b) social inequality “thanks” to which education abroad acquires the status of uncommon, valuable and desirable good in Lithuania. Thus, it is possible to question if this is why the informants feel twice as privileged in Lithuania while at the same time the paternalistic style of management prevents them from using the privilege of human capital to its fullest and pushes them away from Lithuania? On the other hand, due to their “bureaucracy-

irritant” style of behaviour and developed social competences, quite frequently the informants eventually became the informal team leaders, the “inspirators” of both the younger and the senior (including managers) colleagues. Due to their emotional stability (clearly understandable tasks), self-discipline (responsibility, work ethics) and willingness to cooperate they also successfully “saved” the resources of the organisation and “broke” the paternalistic hierarchic structures, with certain exceptions. Thus, it is possible to state that the new practices of work that they brought in eventually improved the working atmosphere and allowed a more effective employment of organisational resources. After some time these practices became a “new standard” of polite behaviour of the other team members and “brought cultural innovation” to the public sector in a definite though very local field. Nevertheless, it is too early to talk about a massive *flow* of the “brought in” cultural *innovations* to all fields of the public sector as it requires a more significant returning to Lithuania of the people with higher education and a wider extent of the field research. Although the study presented was more exploratory in nature, hopefully, the insights that have been introduced may be valuable in the shaping of problems and hypotheses of new research on mobility/migration and knowledge transfer.

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