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**POLITICAL AND MEDIA FRAMING OF IRREGULAR MIGRATION
ACROSS LITHUANIA-BELARUS BORDER**

MASTER'S THESIS

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Summary: This thesis analyses political and media framing of irregular migration across Lithuania-Belarus border. The research aims to find out how politicians and media framed irregular migration when Lithuanian institutions had to manage increased flows of asylum seekers. The empirical data was gathered from selected articles on Lrt.lt, 15min.lt and Lrytas.lt news websites according to the set timeframes of 4 major events from 10 July 2021 to 28 December 2021. Based on the framing theory, three groups of frames were distinguished: restriction, cosmopolitan and solidarity. After coding the empirical data, unpreparedness and EU issue frames were identified.

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Introduction

During previous migration crisis in Europe in 2015, Lithuania was more of observer rather than active participant directly addressing emerging issues. In 2021, the situation was different when Lithuania, Latvia and Poland faced with increased flows of migration in their territories. The tension between Belarus and Lithuania escalated when the EU imposed sanctions on Minsk's regime in response to brutal actions against peaceful protesters following 2020 fraudulent presidential elections. Illegitimate leader of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko started to carry out previously announced threats to "flood EU with drugs and migrants"¹ as revenge for EU sanctions. Belarus began to actively invite migrants² from the Middle East and Africa and organized their passage to Lithuania and other neighboring countries.³

Lithuanian institutions had to find solutions how to manage increased flows of migration. Politicians presented their assessment of irregular migration and views on asylum seekers⁴. While media had to make decisions how to portray the irregular migration and shape public debate. Lithuanian authorities and media directly faced with migration which is a very sensitive topic.⁵ It can cause polarization in society, anti-immigrant rhetoric can encourage racial resentment and social intolerance. Authoritarian-populist parties tend to take advantage of existing threats about asylum seekers to gain their popularity. Migration was one of the causes of Brexit, ruling parties of Hungary and Poland built their support on strict migration policies,⁶ recently, far-right party won elections in Italy with the tough anti-immigrant campaign.⁷ Scholars found in their research that all successful populist parties mobilized support on the migration issue. Existing fears, negative attitudes towards migrants enable authoritarian-populist parties to campaign on these issues.⁸ Therefore, in the case of the increased irregular migration flows in Lithuania, communication and framing of asylum seekers have a significant influence on how the society will perceive migration,

¹ "Financial Times", "Belarus 'weaponising' illegal migration, Lithuania says", <<https://www.ft.com/content/0ad28032-6102-41a0-ad8d-b80460e52867>> [02-01-2022]

² "Migrant" is a person who moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons. In this Master thesis, the concept of migrant is explained using the inclusivist approach which considers "migrant" as an umbrella term covering all forms of movements including those who flee war and persecution. International Organization of Migration, "International migration law. Glossary on migration", 2019, 132, 133

³ Foreign Affairs, "How migrants got weaponized" < <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/belarus/how-migrants-got-weaponized>> [16-12-2022]

⁴ "Asylum seeker" is a person seeking international protection, whose claim has not been finally decided. Not every asylum seeker will be ultimately recognized as refugee, but every recognized refugee is initially an asylum seeker. International Organization of Migration, 14

⁵ Carnegie Europe, "Judy Asks: Is Migration Europe's Achilles Heel?" <<https://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/88486>> [26-12-2022]

⁶ Pippa Norris, Ronald Inglehart, "Cultural backlash: Trump, Brexit, and authoritarian populism", Cambridge University press, 2019, 9, 24

⁷ The New York Times, "Giorgia Meloni Wins Voting in Italy, in Breakthrough for Europe's Hard Right" <<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/25/world/europe/italy-meloni-prime-minister.html>> [27-12-2022]

⁸ Pippa Norris, Ronald Inglehart, 6

whether it will become a polarizing issue, increase political tensions and create favourable environment for authoritarian-populist parties.

Taking into account climate change, future crisis and conflicts in the world, the Europe, including Lithuania, could face with even higher flows of irregular migration. It is predicted that 1.2 billion people could be displaced globally by 2050 due to climate change and natural disasters.⁹ Prevailing attitudes on asylum seekers will have a considerable influence how difficult it will be to manage new issues related to migration depending on the acceptance of people from third countries. If anti-immigrant views prevail in society, political tensions and social unrest will likely be greater, integration of migrants and refugees¹⁰ more difficult.

It is important to note that Lithuania seeks to form an image of the county which strongly supports democracy and values-based policies. However, the chosen strategy to manage irregular migration poses an issue whether made decisions did not result in contradiction of these objectives. Political commentators and analysts emphasize that Belarus regime tries to test our institutions' capabilities in critical situations, deepen the polarization of society and create various tensions between different social groups. Institutions have a hard task in responding to security threats and public tension, at the same time there is a need to respect EU values and democratic principles.¹¹ The proper balance between security and human rights should be found to ensure proportionality and necessity of applied measures avoiding unjustified decisions that highly prioritize security over human rights or vice versa.

The existing views in society are very relevant for the response measures that will be chosen to deal with irregular migration. Politicians, policymakers and media play an important role in framing issues related with migration. The prevailing frames affect attitudes and behaviours of their audiences. Politicians receive more attention from media and have an opportunity to shape a public opinion, provide arguments and justify imposed policies. Politicians usually adopt frames that are used by other politicians, media and citizens. Frames that either of the group takes are also shaped by more long-standing practices of discursive othering. The influence is not only one-way as politicians or media take into account an opinion of the audience. Therefore, preferences of the audience have also an impact on positions of elites.¹² In the context of migration, the dominating interpretations are significant in a way a society and policymakers will respond to the increased flows of migrants. The survey of public attitudes which was conducted in September-October 2021

⁹ Institute for Economics and Peace, "Over one billion people at threat of being displaced by 2050 due to environmental change, conflict and civil unrest", 2020, 4

¹⁰ "Refugee" – a person who qualifies for the protection under the 1951 Convention or the 1967 Protocol. International Organization of Migration, 170

¹¹ „Mano teisės“, „Donatas Puslys apie migracijos krizę: Reikėtų galvoti, kaip priimti, integruoti, paruošti gyvenimui Lietuvoje“ <<https://manoteises.lt/straipsnis/donatas-puslys-apie-migracijos-krize-reiketu-galvoti-kaip-priimti-integruoti-paruoti-gyvenimui-lietuvoje/>> [18-06-2022]

¹² Chong, Dennis, and James N. Druckman, Framing theory." Annual review of political science 10.1, 2007, 109, 117

in Lithuania shows that social distance towards migrants has noticeably increased. 47% of Lithuanian residents who participated in the survey indicated that they would not like to live in the neighborhood with refugees (27% of respondents in 2020). 28% of respondents stated that they would not want to work in one workplace (in 2020 - 19 % of respondents) and 48 percent – that they would not want to rent housing to migrants (2020 - 27%).¹³ It is also observed that there was an increase of Lithuanian residents who have more negative than positive views on the influence of refugees on society and state. Even 85% participants of the survey tended to agree with the statement that refugees can increase the level of crime in Lithuania, while 82% that refugees can cause social unrest.¹⁴ In 2020 the attitude was less negative, 69% of participants tended to agree that refugees are linked with higher levels of crimes, 62% stated that refugees can cause social unrest.¹⁵ Authors of the survey make an assumption that the changes in views of Lithuanian residents could be influenced by the migration situation between Lithuanian-Belarus borders and the existing negative migration narrative in the public discourse. The survey indicates that Lithuanian residents usually do not form their opinions about immigrants based on personal experience, but on the basis of different media channels. More than two thirds of the survey respondents indicated that the information about citizens from third countries who applied for asylum, were granted asylum or arrived as irregular migrants was obtained from media.¹⁶ Previously conducted surveys also show the similar trend when negative attitudes towards refugees and Muslims increased in 2015 compared to previous years. The changes of attitudes were linked with the terrorist attacks in Europe, debates on the implementation of refugees' integration programme in Lithuania and the reaction to these events in the public sphere.¹⁷ Based on conducted surveys, the deterioration of negative attitudes towards asylum seekers was observed when the topic of migration was widely covered in the media. The recent irregular migrant flows from Belarus to Lithuania were the major topic related with migration in the Lithuanian media, therefore, presumably it has increased the negative attitude towards asylum seekers, which has already been highly negative.

Given the current situation, the highly negative attitude towards migrants is identified as **the thesis problem**. Relatively large number of Lithuanians obtain information about migration from the media which means that it is relevant to understand the political and media framing of the

¹³ „Lietuvos socialinių mokslų centro Sociologijos instituto Etninių tyrimų skyriaus ir VŠĮ ”Diversity development group” užsakymu atlikta 2021 metų visuomenės nuostatų apklausa“ <<http://www.ces.lt/wp-content/uploads/2010/02/Visuomenės-nuostatų-apklauso-rezultatai-2021.pdf>> [12-10-2022]

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ „Lietuvos socialinių tyrimų centro Etninių tyrimų instituto užsakymu atliktos visuomenės nuostatų apklausos 2020 m. rezultatai” <<http://www.ces.lt/wp-content/uploads/2010/02/Visuomenės-nuostatos-apklauso-rezultatai-20201.pdf>> [14-10-2022]

¹⁶ “Lietuvos socialinių mokslų centro Sociologijos instituto Etninių tyrimų skyriaus ir VŠĮ ”Diversity development group” užsakymu atlikta 2021 metų visuomenės nuostatų apklausa“, 2

¹⁷ Blažytė, Giedrė, Vilana Pilinkaitė Sotirovič, and Karolis Žibas, „Visuomenės nuostatos apie socialines ir etnines grupes Lietuvoje: nepakantumo ir socialinės distancijos stebėseną“, Lietuvos gyventojų grupių socialinė kaita, 2016, 112, 117

irregular migration. Politicians receive considerable attention from media, they are often quoted in articles. Politicians have the great reach of audience to present their views, describe the situation and justify decisions. In this way, policymakers contribute to the establishment of prevailing frames which make an impact on public attitudes. Politicians can frame the migration issue in different ways that could lead to specific strategies and response measures. Media seek to increase its popularity and ranking, therefore, journalists tend to highlight more the aspects that are relevant to readers but they can decide how events will be described, what sources to quote. Journalists have varying choices: to create content that is objective, ethical, write articles based on the principle of impartiality without promoting certain prejudices or to create intriguing, sensational content, spread fear, exaggerate threats and induce panic. While politicians can choose different communication messages, provide varying arguments why it is necessary to ensure national security or safeguard human rights. They can provoke fear, overemphasize threats, stigmatize, blame selected groups or communicate in a clear and concise manner, build trust, focus on facts and planned actions.¹⁸ In this regard, there are different ways how politicians can describe irregular migration and depict asylum seekers. The prevailing frames have wider implications on attitudes towards migration, rule of law, tolerance, acceptance of others, social tensions or polarization of society. In order to carry out the analysis of existing frames, **the main question of the master thesis** will be: how is the irregular migration framed by Lithuanian policymakers and media?

The identified research gap is important, as a more in-depth understanding of framing of irregular migration from Belarus to Lithuania will allow better assessing the main frames that have effect on attitudes towards migration. The framing analysis will provide some answers to the questions related with the prevailing assessment of the migration issue, logic and arguments behind the development of specific policies. Therefore, **the goal of this research** is to examine the political and media framing of irregular migration across Lithuania-Belarus border. The following **tasks** are set out in the thesis:

1. Formulate theoretical framework based on review of academic literature.
2. Gather empirical data (articles of major news portals in Lithuania) during four periods of time related to major events in managing irregular migration. Selected periods are distinguished in the methodology and described in the chapter 3.
3. Apply qualitative content analysis and selected theories to draw conclusions from gathered empirical data.
4. After coding of empirical data, identify the main frames of the irregular migration constructed by policymakers and media.

¹⁸ National Democratic Institute, “Crisis communication guide”, 2020, 2, 5

5. Provide the assessment of frames in the public discourse with regard to potential effects on people's views.

1. Theoretical framework

This section presents previous research on irregular migration, the instrumentalization of migrants and the case of increased migration flows across Lithuania-Belarus border. The main ideas and concepts of the framing theory will be provided. Based on prior studies, frames will be distinguished to analyse the empirical data.

1.1. Previous research

The poor response to migration crisis in 2015 prompted a number of political initiatives in the EU. Following disasters in the Mediterranean Sea, the European Council announced the European Agenda on Migration, which explicitly pledged to take actions “to prevent further loss of life at sea, fight the people smugglers and prevent illegal migration flows”.¹⁹ Migration policies as it evolved post-9/11 indicates that the focus shifted on security. Member States started “to lower their standards and become stricter towards the rights and freedoms of immigrants”. It is argued that security concerns such as terrorism, internal disturbances are primary causal factor promoting restrictive migration policies.²⁰ The shift towards more restrictive asylum policies is described as “Fortress Europe” which means that Member States are willing to impose stricter migration measures and policies.²¹

In the case of the Belarusian regime inflicted irregular flow of migrants, additional explanations are necessary to provide better understanding of migration processes. As irregular migration in Lithuania was not an ordinary one and migrants were used as a tool for political gains by Minsk regime, the concept of “weaponization” of migrants needs to be further analysed (this concept has been widely used by Lithuanian policymakers). Since the 1951 Refugee Convention came into force, it is estimated that there have been at least 75 attempts globally by state and non-state actors to use displaced people as political “weapons”. The main objectives were political, military and economical. In nearly three-quarters of these historical cases, the coercers achieved at least some of their articulated objectives, therefore, the unconventional instrument is highly effective to influence other countries and achieve wanted results.²² According to the data, the

¹⁹ Baldwin-Edwards, Martin, Brad K. Blitz, and Heaven Crawley, “The politics of evidence-based policy in Europe’s ‘migration crisis’”, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 45.12, 2019, 2144

²⁰ Luedtke, Adam, “Fortifying fortress Europe? The effect of September 11 on EU immigration policy”, Routledge, 2008, 132, 144

²¹ Thielemann, Eiko, “Beyond fortress Europe? How European cooperation strengthens refugee protection”, 2009, 1-3

²² Greenhill, Kelly M., “The Weaponisation of Migration.” *Connectivity Wars*, 2016, 77

majority of known targets of such coercion have been liberal democracies (70 percent). This distribution could be explained based on vulnerabilities of liberal democracies that face with conflicting imperatives. Such countries have normative and legal commitments to protect those who flee from persecution and ensure high human rights standards, while at the same time there are security aspect and many citizens in EU Member States are opposed to accepting displaced people, for a variety of economic, political, cultural reasons, or simply xenophobia.²³

In academic literature the example of using migrants as a political tool is provided in a case of former Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi who threatened to “turn Europe black” if the EU failed to meet his demands. During Gaddafi’s ruling period, he used migrants as a tool with varying degrees of success. Other occasion was when Ugandan leader Idi Amin expelled most Asians in 1972. It is known that about 50,000 of those expelled held British passports, therefore, these expulsions happened at the same time when Amin was demanding that the British halt their drawdown of military assistance to his country.²⁴ The recent case of politically incentivised sudden influx of migrants into another country was between the borders of Finland and Russia. Moscow was accused that the transfer of asylum seekers from Russia to Finland was an organized effort. In this way Russia wanted to destabilize the EU and its Member States, divide society, form an alliance with far-right parties and increase their popularity. The aim is to influence other countries that they would make concessions and would have more favourable position towards Russia.²⁵ The Kremlin’s regime was not successful in changing policy orientations of other EU Member States, but such actions caused significant challenges.

The successful example of using migration for political gains is the strategy used by Turkey. Since the 2015 migration crisis in Europe, The Turkish government many times exploited the vulnerability of European countries to migration flows. The Turkey’s authorities threatened to open its borders and stop controlling the movement of irregular migrants. In this way, the Turkish government has been able to negotiate significant financial and political benefits from the EU during past years.²⁶ The most recent attempt by Turkey to exploit migration flows was in winter 2020. At that time Turkish authorities announced that it will open the border with Greece. There have been reported that Turkey not only allowed the movement of irregular migrants but also encouraged and facilitated their transportation to Greek borders. State officials guided and instructed irregular migrants how to reach the border. These actions of Turkey’s president R. T. Erdogan can be described as an example how migration is instrumentalized to put pressure on the

²³ Ibid., 79

²⁴ Ibid., 77, 78

²⁵ Braghiroli, Stefano, and Andrey Makarychev, “Redefining Europe: Russia and the 2015 refugee crisis”, *Geopolitics* 23.4, 2018, 831,842

²⁶ Léonard, Sarah, and Christian Kaunert, “De-Centring the securitisation of Asylum and migration in the European Union: Securitisation, vulnerability and the role of Turkey”, *Geopolitics* 27.3, 2022, 729

EU that Member States would not oppose Turkey's military activities in Syria and provide more humanitarian funds.²⁷

The similar situation is on the Lithuania Belarus border, where the Russia is also involved in organizing irregular migration. Even though the topic is important and relevant, it is under researched in academic literature. In general, the question of using migrants as a tool to achieve political gains needs to be further analysed. Furthermore, the case of irregular migration in Lithuania is relatively new topic, therefore, only few studies or scientific articles have been made. Recently, the overview and analysis of Belarusian external relations and domestic policy was carried out in the policy paper which underlines that Lukashenko managed to receive a lot of international attention in provoking and escalating migrant crisis. In this sense, he created an opportunity to destabilize the situation in the EU and distract attention from brutal human rights violations and accusations of illegitimately taking power. However, the escalation of migrant crisis did not prevent the EU from imposing additional sanctions for Belarus.²⁸ The EU's stance on the Minsk regime has remained sufficiently strict.²⁹ The EU foreign ministers have managed to agree on criteria for sanctioning Belarus. It is observed that the EU is determined to gradually increase pressure rather than looking for other alternatives how to influence the regime.³⁰

Another published article focuses on the dynamics through which borders are produced and reproduced in this way contributing to the control of migration. Interviews with Lithuanian and Latvian state border guards were conducted in 2015. The research provides valuable insights, even though it does not represent the current events. The article concludes that “beyond functioning as self-ascribed guardians of Europe's “Eastern front”, state border guards ascribed their work a variety of meanings, ranging from geopolitical, to managerial and biopolitical”.³¹ There was found one conducted research by the non-governmental organization “Media4change” analysing how migrants are portrayed in the media. Based on the analysis of articles published in June, it was stated that anti-migrant phrases of politicians are repeated, asylum seekers themselves are rarely given a voice and the term “illegal migrant” is constantly used.³²

A review of literature shows that there is lack of studies, articles analysing the case of irregular migration in Lithuania. It is not clear what was the framing of irregular migration, whether institutions and media tried to balance their approach or some aspects were prioritized over others and why this practice was chosen as the most suitable.

²⁷ Ibid., 743-745

²⁸ Laurynas Jonavičius, “Baltarusijos tendencijos”, Rytų Europos Studijų Centras, 2021, 1, 2

²⁹ Ibid., 4

³⁰ Ibid, 4, 5

³¹ Lindberg, Annika, and Lisa Marie Borrelli, “All quiet on the ‘Eastern front’? Controlling transit migration in Latvia and Lithuania”, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 47.1, 2021, 319

³² Media4Change, “Migrantų vaizdavimo žiniasklaidoje krizė” <<https://www.media4change.co/lt/reactions/migrantu-vaizdavimo-ziniasklaidoje-krize/>> [27-12-2022]

1.2. Framing theory

In the research, the framing theory will be used, as it is one of the key theories to study irregular flows of migration, media coverage and existing understanding of an issue leading to specific actions. Framing theory is a tool to show how frames become embedded within and make themselves manifest in a text, or how framing influences thinking. By analysing frames, a researcher can assess how certain concepts are used in different ways and have different meaning that could be constructed in a coherent theory. It provides a possibility to illustrate a power of communicating text. Analysis of frames allows understanding a precise way in which influence over a human consciousness based on communication of information (such as a speech, utterance, news report) is transferred from one location to that consciousness.³³

One of the most famous framing theorists is Robert Entman who defines framing as “selecting and highlighting some facets of events or issues and making connections among them so as to promote a particular interpretation, evaluation, and solution”.³⁴ As mentioned above, framing has the power to structure thought and to shape how we think about public issues. To analyse the framing effect at least two of the following basic functions of the concept are included in a study: 1. Defining effects or conditions as problematic; 2. Identifying causes; 3. Conveying a moral judgment; 4. Endorsing remedies or improvements.³⁵ R. Entman highlights the two most relevant framing functions: the definition of problem which has often determining effect on the rest of the frame, and remedy function which directly promotes support or opposition to public policy.³⁶ Other two frames are related with diagnose of causes when the forces creating the problem are identified and moral judgements – the evaluation of causal agents and their effects.

Frames have at least four locations in the communication process: the communicator, the text, the receiver, and the culture. Communicators make conscious or unconscious framing effect in deciding what to communicate. They are guided by frames that organize their belief systems. Examples of frames in the text include present or absent keywords, the main phrases, stereotyped images, sources of information that form thematically reinforcing categories of facts and judgements. Communicator’s chosen frame and texts with framing effect may or may not guide receiver’s thinking and perception of an issue. The culture comprises of common frames that are present in the discourse and form thinking of most people in a social grouping.³⁷ The analysis of

³³ Entman, Robert M, “Framing: Towards clarification of a fractured paradigm”, *McQuail's reader in mass communication theory* 390, 1993, 51, 52

³⁴ Seethaler, Josef, et al., eds. *Selling War: The Role of the Mass Media in Hostile Conflicts from World War I to the “War on Terror”*, Intellect Books, 2013, 114

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Entman, Robert M., “Projections of power: Framing news, public opinion, and US foreign policy”, University of Chicago Press, 2004, 6

³⁷ Entman, Robert M, “Framing: Towards clarification of a fractured paradigm” 52, 53

political and media framing can be based on basic functions of frames and their locations. Provided tools allows examining empirical data in a clear and structure manner which minimises the risks of missing important details.

Frames distinguish information from the general discourse as the used concepts by a communicator are more noticeable, meaningful, or memorable to audiences. Well-designed frames increase the probability that “receivers will perceive the information, discern meaning and thus process it, and store it in memory”.³⁸ Communicators can make frames more embedded in society by their repetition or associate them with more culturally familiar symbols. Frames that are similar to receiver’s beliefs systems have more chances of getting support. Mentally stored clusters of ideas guide individuals’ processing of information and make easier to establish frames in society. However, the presence of frames does not guarantee that it will have an impact on audience thinking.³⁹ Different interactions between texts, definitions of problems and proposed remedies are important in the successful establishment of frames. These concepts will help to understand the prevailing frames that promote various interpretations of asylum seekers, form the logic of thinking embedded in society.

Frames based on previous migration theories will be used in order to analyse how media and policymakers communicated on irregular migration and to distinguish prevailing frames in the media. Instead of just criticising media frames on migrants, the focus will be on deeper, ontological framing that informs or legitimizes ways in which the “other” is portrayed and tools are applied in managing issues related with “otherness”. Many studies on media framing analyse how migrants are objectified and discriminated by prevailing frames in the existing discourse, but it is also important to have a broader understanding which argues that treatment of migrants and chosen policies are influenced by deeper values and ideational structures related to the ethical basis for immigration control.⁴⁰ Liberal theorists conceive society as a closed system where priority is given to community rather than to the notions of justice. Based on this, they argue that “closed borders are a necessary precondition for justice”.⁴¹ Cosmopolitans challenge this notion and claim that the principles of individualism, universality and generality are of key importance. They provide arguments for open borders, limited right of states to control migration.⁴² While the humanitarian logic highlights the host society’s duty to help and the welcoming approach, therefore, it calls for a humanitarian stance in the public discourse. Humanitarianism emphasizes open and fair asylum

³⁸ Ibid., 53

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Balabanova, Ekaterina, and Alex Balch, “Sending and receiving: The ethical framing of intra-EU migration in the European press”, *European Journal of Communication* 25.4, 2010, 383, 384

⁴¹ Ibid., 384

⁴² Ibid., 385

policy based on compassion and solidarity.⁴³ The existing debates form a typology of different groups of frames on migration.⁴⁴ Restriction frames consider the arrival of new migrants as causing different problems. The main solutions are related with restrictions on incoming migrants and strict rules getting permits to live in a country.⁴⁵ There are identified 5 frames that provide different arguments to justify restrictive migration measures.

The first frame is “domestic social justice” which emphasizes economic nationalism meaning that the higher living standards could be lowered for citizens of a state when borders for irregular migrants are remained open. According to this explanation, democratic self-governance usually makes just social arrangements with citizens and residents, while the flows of irregular migrants cause a conflict with the claims for equal rights.⁴⁶ Asylum seekers are considered as potential economic burden or economic migrants who migrate to seek better economic opportunities, therefore, these asylum seekers should not be admitted into the country.⁴⁷ Second – “cultural protectionist” distinguished as highlighting the importance of national identity. The main goal is to protect and maintain ethnic or national cultures. Proponents of restrictions argue that cultural change should be free instead of enforced one. The main problem is not related with preservation of existing culture but with the avoidance of externally enforced migration and significant cultural disruption.⁴⁸

The third frame in the restrictions group is “public security”. Major argument to close borders is legitimized by the great number of migrants who could pose a threat to national security, public order and social stability. It is stated that excessive levels of immigration can have major negative consequences for a host country. Other arguments are related with implications on safety, increase in crime and public unrest.⁴⁹ Policymakers try to securitize the issue to move it from “normal politics” and justify the need to impose restrictive security measures. Successful securitization proves that there is an imminent threat, legitimizes extraordinary measures and receives support from the audience.⁵⁰ A threat can be also linked with the culture and religion of migrants, especially those coming from Islamic countries. These migrants could be presented as a threat to Western civilisation, which shares values of freedom of expression, state-church and equal

⁴³ Greussing, Esther, and Hajo G. Boomgaarden, “Shifting the refugee narrative? An automated frame analysis of Europe’s 2015 refugee crisis”, *Journal of ethnic and migration studies* 43.11, 2017, 1756, 1757

⁴⁴ Balabanova, Ekaterina, and Alex Balch, 384

⁴⁵ Roggeband, Conny, and Rens Vliegthart, “Divergent framing: The public debate on migration in the Dutch parliament and media, 1995–2004”, *West European Politics* 30.3, 2007, 531

⁴⁶ Bader, Veit, “The ethics of immigration”, *Constellations* 12.3, 2005, 350, 351, 352

⁴⁷ Bansak, Kirk, Jens Hainmueller, and Dominik Hangartner, “How economic, humanitarian, and religious concerns shape European attitudes toward asylum seekers”, *Science* 354.6309, 2016, 218

⁴⁸ Badder, Veit, 351, 352

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* 348

⁵⁰ Stepka, Maciej, “Humanitarian Securitization of the 2015 “Migration Crisis”: Investigating Humanitarianism and Security in the EU Policy frames on operational Involvement in the Mediterranean”, *Migration policy in crisis*. Transnational Press London, 2018, 2

gender relations, tolerance towards each other.⁵¹ The framing of Muslim migrants as a threat leads to more restrictive policy measures that are usually highly influenced by media and politicians using this topic for their political gains.

The security frame will be complemented by the theory on the coercive engineered migration to widen the existing conceptions because the irregular migration into Lithuania from Belarus was different in nature and requires nuanced approach. When migrants are used as a foreign policy tool, to induce (or prevent) changes in political behaviour, the issue is portrayed as posing a threat to national security, therefore, policymakers put in place restrictive measures on migration in response to deliberate inducement or manipulation by a state or non-state actors. New policies and proactive responses are adopted to confront the dangers identified by policymakers.⁵²

The fourth frame is the “liberal constitutionalist” which stresses “well-defined and relatively stable rules of membership” in the democratic decision-making process. The need to preserve trust and democratic culture in society is one of the ways to legitimize closed borders. Decisions and policies of democratic institutions are based on trust from society of a state, therefore, it is argued that arriving immigrants cannot be trusted because they lack of common history of special relationships. Furthermore, communitarians claim that non-existing relation to traditions and even hostility to civic and democratic culture constitute a threat to a stable democratic governance.⁵³ The last frame is “priority for compatriots” explained as a duty to the national community when there are formed special obligations and prioritization for fellow citizens.⁵⁴ Values and cultures create special ties and obligations among the people who share those practices. The same bond could be created through common political history, disputes and internal conflicts. The political duty for compatriots arises through those civic relations.⁵⁵

Cosmopolitan views on immigration contradict arguments resulting from restriction frames and are frequently associated with the “open borders” approach. The main contradiction is that cosmopolitan perspective emphasizes universal nature of human. There are different cosmopolitan arguments but the appreciation of “other” connects all different perspectives.⁵⁶ These views can be also used as frames to identify cosmopolitan arguments which advocate less restrictive migration policy and more open borders. One of the perspectives is “universalist cosmopolitanism” based on universalist human rights including the right to free movement in and out of the country. Freedom of movement is considered as a basic moral right of persons because it is a vital prerequisite for other freedoms such as autonomy or personal self-determination. Freedom of movement provides a

⁵¹ Roggeband Conny, and Rens Vliegthart, 531

⁵² Greenhill, Kelly M., “Strategic engineered migration as a weapon of war”, *Civil Wars* 10.1, 2008, 7, 8, 18

⁵³ Badder, Veit, 348, 349

⁵⁴ Balabanova, Ekaterina, and Alex Balch, 385

⁵⁵ Bader, Veit, 346

⁵⁶ Balabanova, Ekaterina, and Alex Balch, 385

right to leave a country and a right to enter another country. This right is justified as necessity to escape oppressive, violent regimes that prosecute persons and pose serious threats to their life or freedom. The right to exit imposes certain obligations for states to process applications, assess papers, make return possible. However, there is no legal or “obsolete” right to enter and even the right to refuge, asylum, and family reunification is determined differently in individual countries.⁵⁷ International obligations set the main principles in managing migration. One of the most important principles is non-refoulement. The principle ensures that migrants should not be returned to a country where “they would face torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and other irreparable harm”. Non-refoulement is values-based principle which requires international cooperation and efforts from states to save lives. Each country should manage their borders in a secure and humane manner, allow migrants to stay by giving them temporary or permanent legal status if they cannot return to their home country.⁵⁸ Therefore, in managing migration, the comprehensive applications review is essential to guarantee decision making based on the principle of non-refoulement.

Other frame is called “consequentialism” which highlights the problems of inequality and poverty. In this view, migration could ensure total welfare of people, it has positive economic consequences globally and nationally. Cosmopolitans underline the indirect moral obligation to help victims if current policies towards global poverty and inequality are not effective. They argue that moral obligations to provide aid, reduce poverty, global inequality and increase redistribution are not met, therefore, the most developed countries should maintain more open borders.⁵⁹ The last frame of this group is described as “quotidian cosmopolitanism” which connects “globalization and increased immigration to a brighter, more cosmopolitan future”. For instance, one of positive migration impacts could be a result of enhanced multicultural social cohesion. This perspective focuses on identity formation that occurs through everyday quotidian, “banal” appreciation of the “other”.⁶⁰ From the cosmopolitans’ point of view, migration and mediation enables people from different social groups to develop post-national identities through daily, mundane practices. Everyday interaction with the “other” expands the self-centered mindset and encourages to change boundaries of “us” and “them”. Constant encounters with people of different nationalities create an opportunity to rethink how we deal with others over time.⁶¹

⁵⁷ Bader, Veit, 337, 338

⁵⁸ Barszcz, Natalia, “Exercising Shared Competence on the EU’s External Borders of Poland, Latvia, and Lithuania Amidst the Recently Increased Irregular Migration on the Border with Belarus”, *Amsterdam Review of European Affairs* 1, 2022, 93

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* 341-343

⁶⁰ Balabanova, Ekaterina, and Alex Balch, 385

⁶¹ Corpus Ong, Jonathan, “The cosmopolitan continuum: Locating cosmopolitanism in media and cultural studies”, *Media, Culture & Society* 31.3, 2009, 459, 460

In the academic literature, humanitarian frames are widely used in order to give a wider perspective of different views. It focuses on the conditions how migrants are treated when they enter host country. Specific events are highlighted in the context of migration, such as uncontrollable crowds gathering at the borders, overburdened reception centers with dire humanitarian conditions, people suffering and deaths. This type of framing emphasizes that migration issues are humanitarian crisis.⁶² Solidarity is one of key elements in defining the humanitarian stance. The conception of solidarity has different definitions, some of those definitions have already been covered by cosmopolitan frames, other definitions would not be the most suitable to analyse irregular migration in Lithuania because of their narrow scope. Therefore, emotional reflexive solidarity is used to define the concept and widen the scope of frames. This conception of solidarity is “centered on mutual understanding, sympathy, and empathy”.⁶³ Considering the solidarity with migrants, it includes compassion and humanitarian narratives to save lives, protect others and at least ensure them basic needs. Solidarity is closely linked with hospitality and the engagement with others who are in very difficult circumstances. The identification with those who are in dire conditions is prevalent and encourages to provide support and help those in need. As a result, this frame is based on compassionate feeling that drives our actions accordingly.⁶⁴ The solidarity frame promotes more open borders and less restrictive migration policies as compassion and empathy with migrants create sense of duty to act in a socially responsible manner.

The second frame of this group is “victimization” which highlights the difficult and dangerous situation of arriving migrants. They are portrayed as in need of help because the current circumstances make them victims who cannot alter their situation by taking individual actions. The focus is on the background of migrants, living conditions and aiming to call for the humanitarian approach in migration policy related to legal and moral obligations. Victimization refers to personalized developing events linked to the human-interest frame. In this context, migrants are depicted as passive victims of circumstances for which they are not responsible.⁶⁵ It is equally important to include the framing of socially vulnerable groups while analysing irregular migration. Researchers emphasize the interconnections between gender, migration, violence and insecurity. Different reasons to leave the country of origin, migration control measures, the process of transit and entry into another country “create varying types of insecurity and violence for men and women, depending on their varying social and economic positions and the relations of power between

⁶² Stepka Maciej, 1, 2

⁶³ Bauder, Harald, and Lorelle Juffs, “‘Solidarity’ in the migration and refugee literature: analysis of a concept”, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 46.1, 2020, 50

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 55, 56

⁶⁵ Greussing Esther, Hajo G. Boomgaarden 1751, 1757

them”.⁶⁶ The journey can cause insecurities for vulnerable groups, dangers that may arise during the process of transit or due to the lack of proper facilities in reception centres.⁶⁷ The gender issue should be reflected in the analysis to assess the attention given to this topic.

The summary of identified frames is presented in the table:

Table No. 1

Type of frame	Description
Restriction frames	
Domestic social justice	Immigration should be controlled to deliver the best possible economic, social and welfare conditions for citizens.
Cultural protectionist	The need to control migration in order to protect national culture and identity.
Public security	Uncontrolled immigration poses a threat to national security, public order and social stability. Migrants could be used as a political tool to achieve changes in political behaviour, therefore, exceptional policies should be applied.
Liberal constitutionalist	Restrictions are necessary to keep democratic functioning of the state.
Priority for compatriots	Special relationships or obligations associated to the nation-state oblige to prioritize fellow citizens.
Cosmopolitan frames	
Universalist cosmopolitanism (human rights)	The limited right of a state to control migration because of existing universal human rights, particularly the principle of non-refoulement.
Consequentialism (welfare)	More open migration policy is necessary as a means to maximize total welfare.
Quotidian cosmopolitanism (social interactions)	Everyday social interactions encourage people to rethink their attitudes towards “others”. The change of thinking results in more positive

⁶⁶ Freedman, Jane, “Engendering security at the borders of Europe: women migrants and the Mediterranean ‘crisis’”, *Journal of Refugee Studies* 29.4, 2016, 569

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 580

	views on how we perceive people from other backgrounds.
Humanitarian frames	
Solidarity	Compassion and empathy with migrants create a sense of responsibility that leads to more open borders and less restrictive migration policy.
Victimization	Migrants are victims of difficult circumstances, therefore humanitarian stance is needed in dealing with migration.

Adapted from: E. Balabanova and A. Balch, C. Roggeband and R. Vliegthart, K. M. Greenhill, M. Stepka, H. Bauder and L. Juffs, E. Greussing and H. G. Boomgaarden

Restriction, cosmopolitan and humanitarian frames will serve as a tool to group, structure and identify different narratives in gathered empirical data. Framing theory will prevent from missing prevailing discourses in explaining chosen communication by politicians and media on irregular migration. The research will not be limited to the frames provided in the theory, therefore, further methodological aspects on identifying new frames and subframes will be covered in the next section.

2. Methodology

The qualitative content analysis will be applied to answer the research question. Researchers consider content analysis as a flexible tool for analysing data.⁶⁸ The specific type of content analysis depends on theoretical choices and specific field that will be analysed. Qualitative content analysis research is based on the characteristics of language as communication, with a focus on content or context meaning of the text. The main objective of content analysis is “to provide knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon under study”.⁶⁹ Qualitative content analysis is defined as a research method to conduct the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns.⁷⁰ It is an approach of empirical, systematic, controlled analysis of texts within the context of communication. The method is used to “develop carefully specified categories that are revised and refined in an interactive, feedback-loop process to ensure credibility and usefulness”.⁷¹ This approach will provide clear tools

⁶⁸ Hsieh, Hsiu-Fang, and Sarah E. Shannon, “Three approaches to qualitative content analysis”, *Qualitative health research* 15.9, 2005, 1227

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 1228

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ Lamont, Christopher, and Mieczyslaw P. Boduszynski, “Research methods in politics and international relations”, 2020, 116

to structure and analyze empirical data. The method was chosen because it allows examining large amounts of non-numerical data, tease out causal stories, challenge taken for granted ideas and bring to the table new ideas and perspectives.⁷² There are several important steps that should be taken to conduct the content analysis: first, it is necessary to select the sample that will be analysed, then define the categories applied in the research, outline and implement the coding process, finally, analyse the results of coding. Existing theories will be used prior to the analysis of data. As analysis proceeds, additional codes will be developed, and the initial coding scheme will be revised and refined. In this approach existing theories can be extended or refined.⁷³ The method is quite flexible and allows using categories derived from the theory and newly developed categories during the coding process.

The directed qualitative content analysis will be used as a deductive approach to analyse empirical data. Quite often the research subject has existing theory or prior research about a phenomenon that is incomplete or lacks further description and explanations. In this case directed content analysis could be used. It is categorized as deductive application of theory structuring general design and analysis of research. The directed content analysis allows a researcher to validate or extend conceptually a theoretical framework or theory. The method is valuable in providing predictions about the variables of interest or the relationships between them that help to determine the initial coding scheme or relationships between codes. This is a more structured way when existing theory or prior research is used before a researcher starts to identify key concepts or variables as initial coding categories.⁷⁴ The directed content analysis has the second strategy which is based on a decision to start coding immediately with the predetermined codes. Data that cannot be coded is identified and reviewed afterwards to assess if it represents a new category or a subcategory of an existing code. Analysing empirical data without coding may increase trustworthiness and ensure that all potential occurrences of a phenomena are distinguished. If the theory is well-designed and does not bias the identification of relevant text, then coding can begin immediately.⁷⁵

By using the direct content analysis method, the research process is based on clear design and structure stemming from existing theory and codes, while possible limitations due to already constructed codes are reduced by reviewing empirical data again and defining new codes and categories.

The empirical data is narrowed down to **four major events** that are selected from the start of irregular migration:

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Hsieh, Hsiu-Fang, and Sarah E. Shannon, 1281

⁷⁵ Ibid., 1282

1. Amendments to the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Legal Status of Aliens No. XIV-506 (13 July 2021). The main amendments: detention of migrants for up to six months, no right of appeal for rejected asylum-seekers, the asylum application procedure was shortened to 10 days;
2. The decision to pushback asylum seekers (3 August 2021);
3. The announcement of the state of emergency in the Lithuania-Belarus border regions for the first time in the history of independent Lithuania (9 November 2022);
4. Amendments to the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Legal Status of Aliens No. XIV-816 (23 December 2021). The detention of asylum seekers for up to a year.

The limitation of research period will help to reduce amount of data and avoid selective choice of sources. These events are one of the most significant decisions made by policymakers and it has a considerable impact on migration policy in Lithuania. Empirical data were gathered **three days before and three days after the selected event**.⁷⁶ During these defined 4 periods, policymakers had to explain and justify their decisions or express disagreement if they opposed to the development of new policies. Media had to frame public debates by choosing sources, presenting and assessing events. This approach will provide a clear method to collect the empirical data and to analyse it, according to R. Entman identified functions: how politicians and media describe the irregular migration and related actors, to whom the responsibility is assigned, what kind of moral judgements are provided, what solutions and policies are suggested to solve the issue of the increased number of irregular migrants.

According to the survey conducted in 2021, the five most popular news websites are delfi.lt, lrytas.lt, 15min.lt, tv3.lt, lrt.lt.⁷⁷ The websites delfi.lt, 15min.lt and tv3.lt do not provide an opportunity to filter out articles according to the set time periods. Therefore, instead of delfi.lt and tv3.lt the website lrt.lt was included into the research as this website has an option that allows entering identified time periods into the search. The website 15min.lt was also included into the research because it provides a possibility to conduct the search according to the selected topic “migrants from Belarus” and shows the date “news earlier than (...)”. Taking into account search functionalities of websites, the articles from 15min.lt, lrytas.lt and lrt.lt were used as empirical data in the research. The following keywords were used to conduct a search on the lrytas.lt and lrt.lt websites: migration crisis, refugees, illegal migrants, asylum seekers. Selected news websites provide comprehensive information on the main events in Lithuania, therefore, the topic of irregular

⁷⁶ Except the period in December, which was prolonged by two days because of Christmas public holidays and the low number of articles.

⁷⁷ “Gemius”, “2021 m. audituojamų svetainių TOP10” <<https://www.gemius.lt/interneto-ziniasklaidos-naujienos/id-2021-m-audituojamu-svetainiu-top10.html>> [18-06-2022]

migration is widely discussed and different statements of politicians, policymakers, experts are included in articles.

Statements of political leaders in Lithuania will be reviewed: Ingrida Šimonytė, Prime Minister, Gitanas Nausėda, President, Agnė Bilotaitė, Minister of Internal Affairs, Gabrielius Landsbergis, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Arvydas Anušauskas, Minister of Defence, Laurynas Kaščiūnas, Chairman of National Security and Defence Committee, Tomas Vytautas Raskevičius, Chairman of Human Rights Committee. I. Šimonytė is the head of the Government, therefore, she has the greatest influence on decision making. Ministers G. Landsbergis, A. Bilotaitė, A. Anušauskas are heads of institutions that have to directly deal with migration issues and make important policy choices. G. Nausėda is the most popular politician on duty, his expressed criticism is widely covered in news websites. Also, the president can act as an arbiter, veto decisions that are not in line with his position. L. Kasčiūnas is chairman of the committee that debates and prepares draft laws and other legal acts on national defence, state security, civil security, state border protection, the committee considers and submit proposals on the national public and state defense policy.⁷⁸ T. V. Raskevičius chairs the committee that has the main goal to ensure the fundamental human rights enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania and the Treaty on European Union and established by other international obligations.⁷⁹ The statements of other vocal opposition politicians will be analysed. Furthermore, to have a broader understanding of existing frames, statements of experts, NGOs, activists and asylum seekers will be included in the analysis.

Articles were selected from the set timeframes according to the 4 major events: **from 10 July 2021 (the first event) to 28 December 2021 (the last event)**. This approach prevented from selective bias. As there are many articles on increased flows of asylum seekers, the selection from different timeframes will allow focusing on how asylum seekers were framed and this method will prevent from missing relevant details. The total number of selected articles is 366. In the case when the same articles were reprinted from news agencies BNS and ELTA, an article from only one news website was included. Articles which presented general information, statistical data about flows without any quotes were also excluded from the empirical data.

The research limitation might arise in gathering data only from articles in media leaving behind more detailed explanations that were not covered publicly. In this case, views of policymakers and society will not be fully represented in the research, and it will reduce the credibility of the methodology. The clear methodology of data collection will help to minimize risks in analysing existing frames. It is important to note that publicly available data and statements in the

⁷⁸ Lietuvos Respublikos Seimas, “Nacionalinio saugumo ir gynybos komitetas” <https://www.lrs.lt/sip/portal.show?p_r=38504&p_k=1> [18-06-2022]

⁷⁹ Lietuvos Respublikos Seimas, “Žmogaus teisių komitetas“ <https://www.lrs.lt/sip/portal.show?p_r=38511&p_k=1> [18-06-2022]

media are important source of information because political leaders have to convince society that their decisions are necessary and should be implemented. Another significant problem is the high volumes of data related with the research question. The research should be clearly structured and justified to ensure that the data was selected objectively and without prejudice. There is a probability that part of important information will not be included but the broad variety of sources and different time frames will help to avoid issues related with the reliability of the research.

3. A brief description of the selected events

On 13 July 2022, Lithuanian authorities adopted amendments to the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Legal Status of Aliens (No. XIV-506). The changes were significant as the maximum 28 days stay at mandatory accommodation places have been prolonged to 6 months in case of martial law, state of emergency, or emergency due to a mass influx of asylum seekers' applications.⁸⁰ The judicial review was not envisioned in the law, therefore, asylum seekers lost their right of appeal to challenge unfavourable rulings of lower courts. 10 days period was set to assess application procedures during mentioned circumstances with no exception for unaccompanied minors and survivors of torture, rape or other forms of serious physical or sexual violence.⁸¹ Adopted amendments laid down rules that asylum applications would be examined using a fast-track procedure, with appeals being decided by the Migration Department and the decisions of the courts of first instance being final and not subject to appeal at higher-instance courts.⁸² As irregular crossings continued, these amendments were not final in the review of national rules.

In August Lithuania made a decision to pushback migrants as the number of irregularly crossed migrants reached 4000 thousand. Later, the similar decision was made by Latvia and Poland when countries passed a law that allows border guards to refuse accepting asylum applications.⁸³ On 9 November 2021, the Parliament declared a state of emergency in border regions with Belarus. This legal regime came into effect for the first time since restored independence of Lithuania. The decision was made after hundreds of asylum seekers tried to cross the border from Belarus to

⁸⁰ Lietuvos Respublikos įstatymo „Dėl užsieniečių teisinės padėties“ Nr. IX-2206 5, 71, 76, 77, 79, 113, 131, 136, 138, 139, 140 straipsnių pakeitimo ir Įstatymo papildymo IX-1 skyriumi įstatymas, *TAR*, 2021 m. liepos 13 d. Nr. XIV-506 Vilnius

⁸¹ UNHCR legal observations on the amendments to the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Legal Status of Aliens (No XIV-506)

⁸² “Liberties”, “Lithuania's Response to the Migrant Crisis: Milling About in Confusion, Curtailing Human Rights, and Building a Wall”, <<https://www.liberties.eu/en/stories/lithuania-migrant-crisis/43723> > [03-01-2022]

⁸³ “Picum”, “Lithuania: pushbacks, arbitrary detention and restriction to asylum” <<https://picum.org/lithuania-borders-migrants-2021/>> [29-10-2022]

Poland leading to clashes with Polish security forces.⁸⁴ On 23 December 2021, legislators adopted other major amendments (No. XIV-816) to the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Legal Status of Aliens allowing the detention of migrants for up to a year. During wartime, a state of emergency, or an extreme situation declared by the government illegally arrived person can be detained for six months. If the asylum is rejected or migrants fail to apply for asylum, the movement can be restricted for another six months. New amendments provide a right to get a temporary residence permit (initially for a year) if the authorities' decision to expel foreign nationals, who arrived in Lithuania during a state of emergency, is not implemented within five years.⁸⁵

4. The general overview of frames

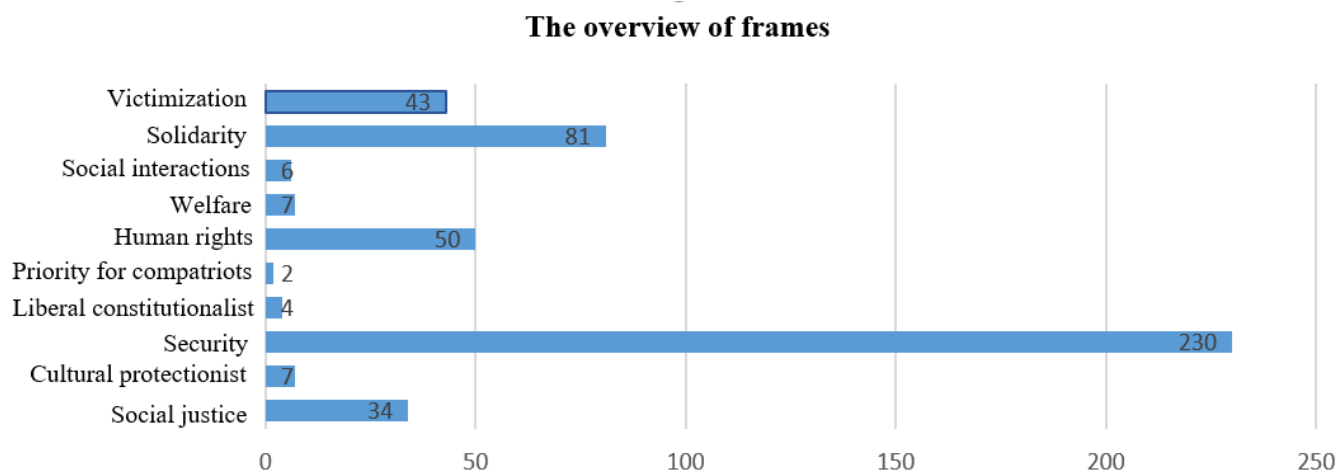
The security frame was the most common frame in the selected articles. In total, there were 230 articles in which the security frame was identified. It shows that the security issue was very significant and widely discussed in the media. The second most popular frame was the solidarity frame with 81 articles, presenting opposing arguments to the group of restriction frames. The third – universal cosmopolitanism (human rights), 50 articles. The victimization frame was the fourth most common frame with 43 articles. The fifth – domestic social justice frame, 34 articles, followed by the cultural protectionist frame and the consequentialism (welfare) frame with 7 articles. The quotidian cosmopolitanism (social interactions) – 6 articles, liberal constitutionalist – 4 articles, priority for compatriots – 2 articles. The group of restriction frames account for 277 articles, while the groups of cosmopolitan and humanitarian frames account for 187 articles. The sufficiently larger number of articles promoted more stringent restrictions in managing increased migration flows. It is important to note that in the selected article could be found more than one frame. 21 Articles were identified as neutral, not meeting the criteria of distinguished frames and 4 functions set in Entman's theory. In the selected time period when the State of Emergency was declared, the highest number of articles (119) was found. Even though the situation near Lithuanian-Belarus border was not very intense compared to summer period, large groups of asylum seekers attempted to cross Belarus-Polish border and made camps in that area, there were clashes with asylum seekers and Polish border guards. There was the highest number of security frames (87) in this period. While the lowest number of articles (40) was during the Christmas period, when politicians prolonged the detention of asylum seekers up to a year. In this period, the solidarity frame was

⁸⁴ LRT, "Lithuania declares state of emergency on border with Belarus" <<https://www.lrt.lt/en/news-in-english/19/1537044/lithuania-declares-state-of-emergency-on-border-with-belarus>> [17-12-2022]

⁸⁵ LRT, "Lithuanian parliament allows restricting migrants' movement for up to a year", <<https://www.lrt.lt/en/news-in-english/19/1570850/lithuanian-parliament-allows-restricting-migrants-movement-for-up-to-a-year>> [03-01-2022]

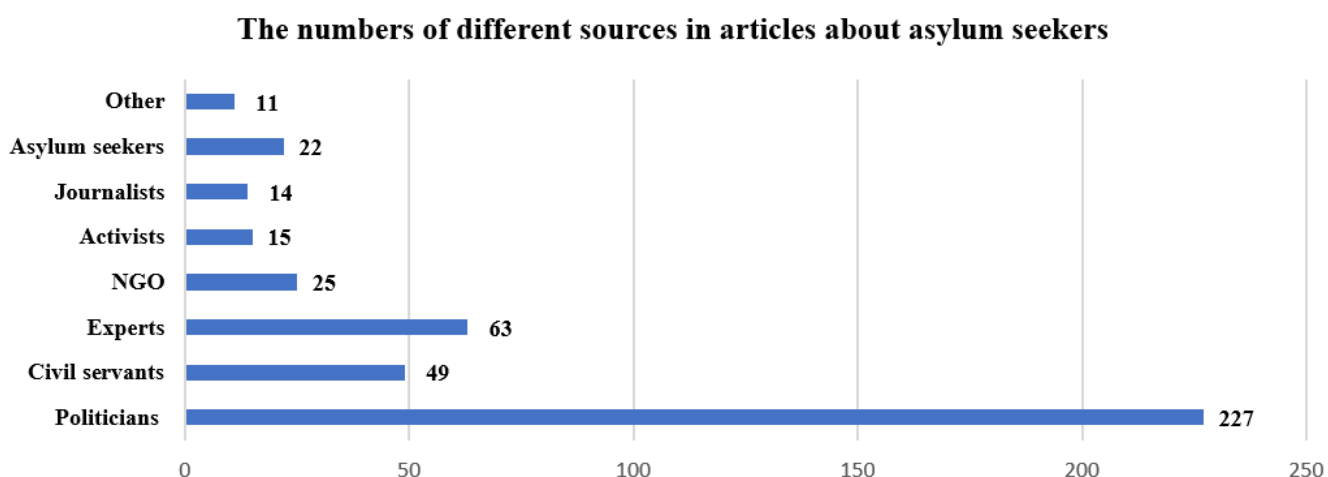
widely seen in selected articles (identified in 16 articles). There was a small difference from the security frame which was identified in 19 articles and the number was higher only by 3 articles.

Figure No. 1



Considering the numbers of different sources in articles about irregular migration, politicians were the most quoted and interviewed group (articles of politicians in the comments section were also counted). In total, the number is 227 which consists 62% of all articles. While asylum seekers were interviewed in 22 articles. This is a low number consisting only 6% of all articles. The second most quoted group is experts (professors, researchers, lawyers, legal and human rights experts) with the number of 63, 17% of all articles. Civil servants – interviewed 49 times, 13% of all articles, NGOs – 25 times, 6%, Activists (usually protesters opposing the Government’s policy on asylum seekers or protesters being against accepting asylum seekers) – 15 times, 4%. Journalists (quoted by other journalists or authors of articles in the comments section) – 14 times, 4%. Other – (interviewed people who live near the border or close the detention centers) – 11 times, 3%. The high number of interviewed politicians show that they had many opportunities to present their views on asylum seekers and their policy measures, while asylum seekers themselves, NGOs, experts were significantly less interviewed. As a result, these groups had less influence on dominating frames.

Figure No. 2



5. Restriction frames

In this section, the results of the analysis of 5 restriction frames are presented. The security frame is analysed in more detail due to the high number of articles in which the security frame was identified. Additional subsections of the security frame were distinguished to present the main findings of the research.

5.1. Security frame

The security frame prevails in the media discourse where increased flows of migration are linked with the threat to national security. Politicians and policymakers emphasize the security issue and discuss next steps how to solve the problem. Security framing is clearly linked with practical solutions that would minimize the threat, while other frames are less expressed in statements of policymakers. The analysis of the media framing shows that the security issue dominates in the discourse, while there is a higher variety of different frames compared to political framing. Politicians and policymakers frame the issue as a security threat which is linked with methods of hybrid warfare.

Politicians describe irregular migration as hybrid attack and threat to national security. They blame the Belarus regime for a politically motivated instrumentalization of migrants:

It is clear that we are facing a special challenge today, which is difficult to view as anything other than a hybrid attack. In the context of the beginning of large-scale military exercise “Zapad”

in the neighbourhood, we must take these actions extremely seriously and we must view them as a threat to Lithuania's national security. (I. Šimonytė)⁸⁶

The need for united and quick response measures were emphasized by top officials. They mentioned that Lithuania should protect its borders from new security threats posed by the Belarus because of the foreign policy of Lithuania:

The task of the responsible institutions at the moment is to immediately take domestic and international policy measures adequate to the situation in order to protect Lithuanian border and prevent the influx of illegal migrants. Due to its values-based foreign policy, Lithuania is experiencing a hybrid attack, we are faced with an attempt to exploit the democratic system for the evil purposes of the Belarusian regime (G. Nausėda).⁸⁷

There are prevailing explanations in the media that values based foreign policy, actively expressed support from Lithuania for Belarusian opposition is the reason why Lukashenko started a “hybrid attack”. The upcoming “Zapad” military exercise is also frequently discussed topic to show increasing security risks and possible escalation:

This hybrid aggression can be developed, exploited and even become the basis for a new type of threat in the context of the large-scale “Zapad” military exercise (...) (L. Kasčiūnas).⁸⁸

After identifying the scale of security risks related with irregular migrant flows and accusing Belarus of luring migrants to the border, politicians justified the need to shorten asylum application procedures to ten days, restrict the free movement of migrants who crossed the border on the territory of Lithuania and limit the right to appeal by emphasizing the threat:

This is not an ordinary migration crisis. These are purposefully carried out acts of hybrid aggression against Lithuania. (...) Illegal migrants are not actual asylum seekers. As our practice indicates, these individuals are A. Lukashenko's tool, which is used against Lithuania, and we will react adequately (A. Bilotaitė).⁸⁹

The situation is described as a hybrid aggression which Lithuania cannot tolerate and needs response measures. The statement generalises that all migrants do not seek asylum status, their intentions are different. The term “hybrid aggression” is a clear indication that Lithuania deals with a serious security problem. As regards conflicts between states, the word “aggression” is usually

⁸⁶ LRT, “ Iš tribūnos Seime – Šimonytės pareiškimas: Lietuva netaps koridoriumi į kitas Europos Sąjungos šalis“ <<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1449726/is-tribunos-seime-simonytes-pareiskimas-lietuva-netaps-koridoriumi-i-kitas-europos-sajungos-salis>>

⁸⁷ Lrytas, “Griebiasi papildomų priemonių: į pasienį su Baltarusija siunčiama daugiau karių, iškils 3 metrų tvora“ <<https://www.lrytas.lt/lietuvosdiena/aktualijos/2021/07/12/news/po-valstybes-gynimo-tarybos-posedzio-a-bilotaites-zinia-i-pasieni-jau-siunciama-daugiau-kariu-20063805>>

⁸⁸ Lrytas, “Seime – rezoliucija, kuria siūloma paskelbti hibridinę agresiją prieš Lietuvą“ <<https://www.lrytas.lt/lietuvosdiena/aktualijos/2021/07/12/news/seime-rezoliucija-kuria-siuloma-paskelbti-hibridine-agresija-pries-lietuva-20060848>>

⁸⁹ Lrytas, “Griežtėja sąlygos į Lietuvą plūstantiems migrantams: skubos tvarka priimtose diskusijas sukėlusios pataisos“ <<https://www.lrytas.lt/lietuvosdiena/aktualijos/2021/07/13/news/seimui-imantis-neteisetu-migrantu-teisiu-ribojimo-a-bilotaites-raginimas-turime-pasiusti-aiskia-zinute-20072870>>

used to refer to military actions. In the media discourse, the term of “hybrid aggression” was used by politicians. The Parliament of Lithuania adopted the resolution “On countering hybrid aggression” which states:

*Unfriendly countries are carrying out hybrid aggression against Lithuania by organizing the flow of foreigners from third countries illegally crossing the border of Lithuania, which poses a threat to the constitutional and social order.*⁹⁰

After the indication of threat in the resolution, it is proposed to use the Lithuanian army to strengthen the protection of the state border, prosecute organizers of “illegal migration flows”, treat the foreigners who do not have identity documents as “potential active participants in the ongoing hybrid attack”⁹¹. Migrants are considered not only as a tool to pose a threat to public security, but also as a possible active participants of Belarus organized activity. The resolution does not take into account that migrants could have been lured, deceived and exploited by the Belarus regime which organized extensive advertisement campaign promising the easy passage to the European Union.

In the media, more commonly used terms are “hybrid attack”, “hybrid threat” which also send a strong message of the security problem. The Minister of Foreign Affairs G. Landsbergis in his statements sought to distinguish previous migration crisis and the Lithuanian-Belarus migration crisis as different in nature:

*Lithuania is currently facing a phenomenon that is not a normal migrant crisis. We are experiencing a hybrid attack. (...) These are not people who run away from war, plague and famine. Some of them are students who studied in Belarus with long-term visas in completely safe conditions. Now their studies are terminated, they are being sent under mandatory procedure as a weapon against Lithuania. We have to counter the attack that is aimed at Lithuania.*⁹²

The members of the Government tried to frame the issue as not being similar to previous migration crisis in Europe and requiring a different approach. It was necessary for Lithuania to convince allies and other countries that Belarus actively invites migrants and organizes their passage through the Lithuanian-Belarus border. However, the information is presented in a simplified way assuming that no migrant qualifies for refugee status. They are depicted as a weapon against Lithuania which must resist the attack. Many similar statements ignore migrants as persons who are in a dire situation. The term “hybrid attack” allows easily to convince that this is not an ordinary migration crisis but without further explanations migrants are not seen as affected persons by political goals of the Belarus regime.

⁹⁰ 15min, “Seimas išaugusią neteisėtą migraciją pripažino hibridine agresija”

<<https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/seimas-isaugusia-neteiseta-migracija-pripazino-hibridine-agresija-56-1534596?copied&copied>>

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² 15min, “G.Landsbergis: rengiant įstatymo pataisas dėl migracijos buvo ieškota kompromisų”

<<https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/g-landsbergis-rengiant-istatymo-pataisas-del-migracijos-buvo-ieskota-kompromisu-56-1534418?copied&copied>>

5.1.1. War rhetoric

The war rhetoric further diverts attention from migrants as persons. Politicians and media communicate in way that the threat is highly emphasized, panic inducing elements are used. Instead of focusing on facts, planned actions, the chosen wording incites fear, sends a message that Lithuania is preparing for the fight. The statements underline strong response measures to the extreme situation which is described by the repeated mentioning of the term of hybrid war:

Amendments to legal acts are necessary and important because a hybrid war is being waged against Lithuania. The situation is extreme. (...) This is not a normal migration, this is not a normal migration route, this is a hybrid war against us, so the response must be adequate (A. Bilotaitė).⁹³

Other politicians compare migrants with “little green men”, the concept refers to unmarked armed soldiers who create unrest, occupy territories of other countries, incite the population. The term came into use when Russian troops without their country marks occupied Crimea and Eastern part of Ukraine in 2014.⁹⁴ Associations with these “little green men” are being made in Lithuanian media:

It is necessary to say frankly that these people, illegal migrants, have become the so-called “little green men” of A. Lukashenko's regime, because they participate in this hybrid attack. Maybe without knowing it, but they are there nonetheless (A. Anušauskas).⁹⁵

The Lrytas.lt headline “Anušauskas: illegal migrants in Lithuania – the “little green men” of A. Lukashenka’s regime”⁹⁶ makes a direct comparison and creates an impression that migrants are these “little green men” posing a serious threat to society. Politicians also tend to use the word “war” without linking it with hybrid activities:

In war like in war (kare kaip kare – in Lithuanian). If someone started a war against you, first you need to defend yourself. That is what the Government is doing. (...) Our response must be clear: a hybrid war against Lithuania is a war against the entire West. Not only Lithuania, which

⁹³ 15min, A.Bilotaitė: dalis migrantų sutinka grįžti į kilmės šalį, todėl procesai turi spartėti <<https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/a-bilotaite-dalis-migrantu-sutinka-grizti-i-kilmes-salis-todel-procesai-turi-sparteti-56-1533948?copied&copied>>

⁹⁴ Foreign Policy Research Institute, “How, why and when Russia will deploy little green men – and why the US cannot” <<https://www.fpri.org/article/2016/03/how-why-and-when-russia-will-deploy-little-green-men-and-why-the-us-cannot/>> [19-10-2022]

⁹⁵ Lrytas, „Ministras A. Anušauskas: 99 proc. atvykėlių – ekonominiai migrantai, nenorintys likti Lietuvoje” <<https://www.lrytas.lt/lietuvosdiena/aktualijos/2021/07/12/news/ministras-a-anusauskas-99-proc-atvykeliu-ekonominiai-migrantai-nenorintys-likti-lietuvoje-20067326>>

⁹⁶ Lrytas, „A. Anušauskas: nelegalūs migrantai Lietuvoje – A. Lukašenkos režimo žalieji žmogeliukai“ <<https://tv.lrytas.lt/laidos/24-7/2021/07/11/news/a-anusauskas-nelegalus-migrantai-lietuvoje-a-lukasenos-rezimo-zalieji-zmogeliukai-20046998/>>

may be seen as small, weak, insignificant, and alone to someone in Minsk or Moscow, will respond to such a war, but the entire West will respond (A. Kubilius).⁹⁷

War rhetoric is popular in the opinion section where political figures, former officials, experts can share their views about the migration crisis. There are links made with war activities and assumptions that terrorist attacks are inevitable:

A terrorist attack would strongly affect Lithuanian society. In wartime, no matter that it is called a hybrid, such an operation cannot be ruled out from the attacking side. (...) War is war, Batka will say. Frankly, he is already fighting not only for political survival, but also for physical survival. (...) Lithuania will have to deal with various terrorist attacks, which have been carried out and are still being carried out in Western countries but have not reached Lithuania (M. Laurinkus).⁹⁸

Various metaphors, strong, persuasive words, references to war are used in order to highlight the existing threat. There are provided suggestions to “internationally recognize Belarus’ aggression against Lithuania”,⁹⁹ the organized migration by the Lukashenko’s regime is described as “a tool of hybrid war”¹⁰⁰ and emphasized that Belarus “carries out an act of hybrid aggression against Lithuania”.¹⁰¹ Even top EU officials started to use similar frames as Lithuanian politicians did in describing the current situation. After the meeting with Lithuania’s Prime Minister Ingrida Šimonytė, the Commissioner for home affairs Ylva Johansson stated:

What we are facing is an aggressive act from the Lukashenko regime. It’s one that is designed to provoke. (...) And it’s not primarily a migration crisis. This is an act of aggression that is aimed to provoke.¹⁰²

These messages make irregular migration as a security issue which allows mobilising state’s resources and taking necessary response measures. However, war rhetoric not only convinces the public that the increased migration flows are facilitated by Belarus but also it incites fear of migrants depicted as a weapon or tool to cause social unrest. The media does not properly ensure its

⁹⁷ LRT, „Andrius Kubilius. Kare kaip kare“ <<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/pozicija/679/1449783/andrius-kubilius-kare-kaip-kare>>

⁹⁸ Lrytas, „Mečys Laurinkus. Lietuvai reikia pasiruošti netikėčiausiems A. Lukašenkos sprendimams ir diversinėms teroristinėms atakoms“ <<https://www.lrytas.lt/lietuvosdiena/aktualijos/2021/07/11/news/mecys-laurinkus-lietuvai-reikia-pasiruosti-netikeciausiems-a-lukasenkos-sprendimams-ir-diversinem-teroristinem-atakoms-20045533>>

⁹⁹ 15min, “R.Juknevičienė, A.Kubilius: Migrantų krizė Lietuvoje – hibridinis Lukašenkos karas“ <<https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/r-jukneviciene-a-kubilius-migrantu-krize-lietuvoje-hibridinis-lukasenkos-karas-56-1536490?copied&copied>>

¹⁰⁰ 15min, “Šešelinė Vyriausybė tiesia pagalbos ranką: pristato 10 būdų, kaip kovoti su neteisėta migracija“ <<https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/seseline-vyriausybe-tiesia-pagalbos-ranka-pristato-10-budu-kaip-kovoti-su-neteiseta-migracija-56-1545606?copied>>

¹⁰¹ LRT, “Bilotaitė: vertintume visas pastangas ES lygmeniu užmegzti dialogą dėl readmisijos su trečiosiomis šalimis” <<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/pasaulyje/6/1451742/bilotaite-vertintume-visas-pastangas-es-lygmeniu-uzmegzti-dialoga-del-readmisijos-su-treciosiomis-salimis>>

¹⁰² LRT, “Lietuvoje viešinti EK narė Johansson: tai nėra vien migracijos krizė, tai yra agresijos veiksmas” <<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1461070/lietuvoje-viesinti-ek-nare-johansson-tai-nera-vien-migracijos-krize-tai-yra-agresijos-veiksmas>>

role in providing more contextual information about asylum seekers. There are cases when journalists themselves label events as war. For instance, the topic “called it as war” was chosen to describe the Parliament’s resolution “On countering hybrid aggression”, although the word “war” was not used in the resolution.¹⁰³ Some articles draw attention that the concepts of war or aggression are used without proper understanding of their true meaning. Therefore, the concepts do not reflect the real situation because hybrid aggression, hybrid war are more linked to conventional military actions. According to the former chairman of the Constitutional Court D. Žalimas, Lithuania does not use armed defence against aggression and there is little reason to “throw around” such concepts which are matter of attraction but not measures Lithuania takes to respond to the increased migration flows.¹⁰⁴ In the media it is also argued that war rhetoric, chosen concepts allow more freely interpreting EU and international human rights law. Politicians provide national security arguments and emphasize to European partners that this is not a humanitarian crisis but the organized arrival of migrants by the Belarus regime, thus migrants should not necessarily be considered as asylum seekers. In the comments section, journalists assess the chosen ways of communication and raise questions about inappropriate speech:

The current talk of hybrid war and aggression may seem excessive: if there is aggression and war, how do we wage war? (V. Bartasevičius)¹⁰⁵

These reflections on how politicians and policymakers communicate with the public are relatively minor in the general discourse about irregular migration. The security issues and response measures are the most prevalent discussion topics in the newsfeed. It is important to note that public debates about the usage of military, the declaration of extreme situation or state of emergency were widely covered in the media. State border guards expressed support to declare the state of emergency that would ease their work because of “complicated situation at the state border” and possibility to “limit the access of various persons to the border zone”.¹⁰⁶ Politicians also discussed whether it is necessary to declare state of emergency. The President G. Nausėda argued that amended laws will “enable soldiers to stop illegal migration in the current extreme situation”, therefore, there is no need to declare the state of emergency.¹⁰⁷ Similar views had the Speaker of the

¹⁰³ Lrytas, “Į Lietuvą takus pramynusiems nelegalams – ir įstatymų tvora”

<<https://www.lrytas.lt/lietuvosdiena/aktualijos/2021/07/15/news/i-lietuva-takus-pramynusiems-nelegalams-ir-istatymu-tvora-20093716>>

¹⁰⁴ LRT, “Žalimas reakciją į migrantų krizę vadina „parodomąja“: kalbama apie hibridinius karus, bet VGT susirinko tik šiandien” <<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1449556/zalimas-reakcija-i-migrantu-krize-vadina-parodomaja-kalbama-apie-hibridinius-karus-bet-vgt-susirinko-tik-siandien>>

¹⁰⁵ Lrytas, “Valdas Bartasevičius. Europietiško testas Lietuvai

<<https://www.lrytas.lt/lietuvosdiena/aktualijos/2021/07/13/news/valdas-bartasevicius-europietiskumo-testas-lietuvai-20072259>>

¹⁰⁶ 15min, “VSAT vadas: nepaprastoji padėtis ribotų galimybes patekti prie sienos migrantų pervežėjams”

<<https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/vsat-vadas-nepaprastoji-padetis-ribotu-galimybes-patekti-prie-sienos-migrantu-pervezejams-56-1544634?copied>>

¹⁰⁷ Lrytas, “G. Nausėda prakalbo apie naujus įgaliojimus kariams, kariuomenė pasiruošusi bet kokiems scenarijams”

Parliament V. Čmilytė-Nielsen. According to her, in the current circumstances, the state of emergency declared by the Government is sufficient:

*I consider that there is no need to rush. This is an opportunity we have, but today, I think the emergency situation we have is enough. (...) In the session of the Seimas, we intend to consider changes that would give the military more powers. They are available in emergency situations.*¹⁰⁸

Taking into account the ongoing talks about the state of emergency, martial law, the society could easily notice the ongoing discussions about increased security risks in the public debate. War rhetoric even more strengthened the existing fears and made people more anxious about newly arrived asylum seekers.

5.1.2. Illegality

The conducted search according to selected keywords shows that the highest number of articles were found under the keyword of illegal migrants. The “unlawful” and “illegal” crossings of migrants are widely mentioned in the media presuming the illegality of migrants. In several articles (mainly Lrytas.lt) migrants are called “illegals” using the term which clearly indicates that all those persons violated laws and unlawfully crossed the border. For instance, Lrytas.lt published articles with the headlines which emphasize illegality: “Under the mask of the illegals entering Lithuania, there are various faces”,¹⁰⁹ “For the illegals who made their way through Lithuania – the fence of laws”.¹¹⁰ General statements are made such as “gathered more than 3,000 illegals who crossed the border between Belarus and Lithuania”.¹¹¹ The journalists many times used the word “illegals” in their questions for interviewers or writing sub-themes. In the article of 15min.lt, the invitation to the protest organized by the „Movement of families“ is quoted:

*It is clear that the EU's global plan is being carried out, occupying national governments with African illegals, which are opposed only by countries such as Poland, Hungary, Slovakia.*¹¹²

<<https://www.lrytas.lt/lietuvosdiena/aktualijos/2021/08/03/news/g-nauseda-kariams-pasienyje-bus-suteikiami-papildomi-igaliojimai-20310273>>

¹⁰⁸ LRT, “Čmilytė-Nielsen remia migrantų apgrežimo politiką, nors išvelgia rizikų”

<<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1462378/cmilyte-nielsen-remia-migrantu-apgrezimo-politika-nors-izvelgia-riziku>>

¹⁰⁹ Lrytas, “Po į Lietuvą besiveržiančių nelegalų kauke – įvairiausi veidai“

<<https://www.lrytas.lt/lietuvosdiena/aktualijos/2021/07/16/news/po-i-lietuva-besiverzianciu-nelegalu-kauke-apsisaukeliu-veidas-20093712>>

¹¹⁰ Lrytas, “Į Lietuvą takus pramynusiems nelegalams – ir įstatymų tvora”

¹¹¹ Lrytas, “Vytautas Bruveris. Valdžios viršūnėse – tragikomiškas šurmulyš

<<https://www.lrytas.lt/lietuvosdiena/aktualijos/2021/07/31/news/vytautas-bruveris-valdzios-virsunesese-tragikomiskas-surmulyš-20276248>>

¹¹² 15min, “„Maršistai“ surengė dar vieną protestą: nepaliksime mūsų sienų atvirų”

<<https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/marsistai-surenge-dar-viena-protesta-nepaliksime-musu-sienu-atviru-56-1533448?copied>>

This wording makes migrants illegal as persons but not for their illegal crossing of the border which also might be legal in the future if migrant gets a refugee status. Previously mentioned war rhetoric, the constant usage of terms such as hybrid attack, hybrid threat overshadow migrants as persons, humans. They are usually described as participants of hybrid warfare, guns, weapons, tools, instruments of Belarus regime to achieve political goals and destabilise neighbouring countries. However, such terminology, without contextual information about the difficult situation they found themselves in, refers to migrants simply as objects, threat to society. Politicians often used these metaphors to describe the current situation:

These are not people fleeing the war in Syria. It is a hybrid, so to speak, political weapon that is used to change European politics (G. Ladsbergis).¹¹³ We fully understand that Lukashenko's regime uses this as a weapon against Lithuania (...) (A. Bilotaitė).¹¹⁴ We condemn the Lukashenko regime for turning illegal migration into a weapon aimed at the EU and its individual member states (The joint statement of Lithuanian and Polish Prime Ministers.)¹¹⁵

Even though the words “instrument”, “tool”, “flows” are more neutral, their usage in a specific context similarly contributes to making migrants just as an object causing threat:

The decision to turn back migrants, it seems to me, leads to a qualitatively new situation – Lukashenka risks suffocating from the flows that he himself initiated. (...) It is a pushed, coercive, flow transformed into an instrument of hybrid aggression (E. Gentvilas).¹¹⁶

These statements indicate that migrants are not considered as people who may be vulnerable and face with dire conditions as with the newly introduced pushbacks policy the Lukashenko's regime will “suffocate” from migrants now. In this way, people are hidden under those catchy metaphors, for instance, it said that regime chose migrants:

(...) as a kind of leverage, a tool, a living battering ram to attack independent and free Lithuania. These people are not the challenge. A regime that chose to use these people as tools is a challenge (G. Nausėda).¹¹⁷

¹¹³ LRT, “Landsbergio interviu „Politico“: Lukašenka derasi su Afrikos šalimis dėl naujų kelionių krypčių”
<<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/pasaulyje/6/1462515/landsbergio-interviu-politico-lukasenka-derasi-su-afrikos-salimis-del-nauju-kelioniu-krypciu>>

¹¹⁴ 15min, “A. Bilotaitė: Lietuva dar nekontroliuoja situacijos pasienyje”
<<https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/frontex-i-lietuva-siuncia-daugiau-pajegumu-es-pazadejo-10-12-mln-euru-parama-56-1537186?copied>>

¹¹⁵ LRT, “Lenkija reiškia paramą Lietuvą, kartu sieks griežto atsako Lukašenkos režimui”
<<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/pasaulyje/6/1464535/lenkija-reiskia-parama-lietuva-kartu-sieks-griezto-atsako-lukasenos-rezimui>>

¹¹⁶ Lrytas, “E. Gentvilas: sprendimas apgręžti migrantus veda prie to, kad A. Lukašenka gali pats jais paspringti”
<<https://www.lrytas.lt/lietuvosdiena/aktualijos/2021/08/05/news/e-gentvilas-sprendimas-apgrezti-migrantus-veda-prie-to-kad-a-lukasenka-gali-pats-jais-paspringti-20331720>>

¹¹⁷ LRT, “Nausėda Medininkuose: iššūkis, kurį privalome atlaikyti, – Minsko režimas, ne migrantai”
<<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1460496/nauseda-medininkuose-issukis-kuri-privalome-atlaikyti-minsko-rezimas-ne-migrantai>>

There is stated that regime uses migrants and they are not a challenge but despite that chosen wording depicts them just as a mean to cause that challenge. Migrants are depersonalized by using disrespectful words, by being named as abstract groups of people:

It's the same situation across the border – looking for our weak spots to bring in new “batches” of illegal migrants, basically deceiving those people (A. Anušauskas).¹¹⁸ The flow or conveyor of illegal border-crossers does not decrease (...) (M. Sinkevičius, Mayor).¹¹⁹

The usage of words such as batches, conveyor portrays migrants as goods or commodities. This rhetoric dehumanizes asylum seekers and makes harder for readers to empathize with them. Even more problematic speaking is when politicians use terms which directly link migrants with serious threat to society:

I think that Lukashenko's hints about armed jihadists, that such people can go to Lithuania, is also one of the factors for applying such measures (L. Kasčiūnas).¹²⁰ People from distant countries are thrown across the border like mines or bombs to attack the sovereignty of a neighbouring country (R. Juknevičienė).¹²¹

The concepts like jihadists, bombs are very noticeable and memorable. In this way migrants are not only dehumanized but also shown as a dangerous group of people being sent to destabilize the country and pose risks to national security. It is equally important to note that irregular migration increases security risks, however the communication should be considered carefully to avoid inciting fear in society and encouraging negative views towards migrants. Similar, reckless rhetoric can be seen in opinion articles:

Could it be that the bomb of illegal migrants thrown across the border by Belarusian dictator A. Lukashenko did not fall into such a fertile soil of quarrels? (...) In any case, even without the dictator's threats, it has long been clear that the outbreak of refugees or even criminal actors across the border of Belarus is only a matter of time (V. Bruveris).¹²²

Not only politicians, but also experts, journalists directly link migrants with a threat and terrorist activities. The main difference from the political communication is that the criminality

¹¹⁸ LRT, “Anušauskas: Latvija veikiausiai yra Baltarusijos atsarginis variantas neteisėtai migracijai organizuoti” <<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1451890/anusauskas-latvija-veikiausiai-yra-baltarusijos-atsarginis-variantas-neteisetai-migracijai-organizuoti>>

¹¹⁹ 15min, “Savivalda aiškinsis, kokie valdžios planai dėl migrantų apgyvendinimo” <<https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/savivalda-aiskintis-kokie-valdzios-planai-del-migrantu-apyvendinimo-56-1544664?copied>>

¹²⁰ LRT, “Ministrės sprendimas leido pasieniečiams naudoti psichinę ir fizinę prievartą prieš neteisėtus migrantus” <<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1461893/ministres-sprendimas-leido-pasienieciams-naudoti-psichine-ir-fizine-prievarta-pries-neteisetus-migrantus>>

¹²¹ 15min, “G.Landsbergis Briuselyje pateiks siūlymą dėl naujų sankcijų Baltarusijai” <<https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/g-landsbergis-briuselyje-pateiks-siulyma-del-nauju-sankciju-baltarusijai-56-1533636?copied&copied>>

¹²² Lrytas, Vytautas Bruveris. Absurdiško paveikslo štrichai: G. Nausėdai linkstant radikalių veikėjų link A. Lukašenka trina rankomis“ <<https://www.lrytas.lt/lietuvsdiena/aktualijos/2021/07/10/news/vytautas-bruveris-absurdisko-paveikslo-strichai-g-nausedai-linkstant-radikaliu-veikeju-link-a-lukasenka-trina-rankomis-20041607>>

aspect is more widely spread in the general media discourse compared to published statements of politicians. There are articles in which migrants are associated with ISIS fighters¹²³, possible criminals who could “start stealing and being violent”¹²⁴, possible crimes of migrants are mentioned in the headlines: “On the outskirts of Vilnius – fear of migrants: locals collected signatures because they are afraid of crimes”. In this article, it is stated that the accommodation of migrants will significantly worsen the criminogenic situation in the city, “as the practice of foreign countries shows, such relocation significantly increases the number of crimes”.¹²⁵ Other articles portray similar narratives, for instance, Lithuanians are interviewed about their previous encounters with migrants while working in Norwegian migrant camps:

*They behaved rudely. I'm not against people of other nations, but a cad is a cad in any nation. (...) They stole: if everyone is given one boiled egg, just turn away and someone will aim to steal more eggs. It doesn't matter that there won't be any left for others.*¹²⁶

These statements shape stereotypical thinking and promote generalization that majority of migrants behave in the same way. Scholars argue that negative information more strongly influences people's evaluations than comparably positive information, therefore, negative traits are given greater weight in overall evaluations than positive traits.¹²⁷ Taking into account this negativity bias, such framing has an impact on views in society. When articles portray migrants as uncontrollable, claim that they are not subject to anyone,¹²⁸ provided information form or strengthen existing prejudice.

Negative views can be seen from locals who protested against the accommodation of migrants in their neighbourhood. They expressed feelings of fear and concerns about the worsening security situation, protests were organized near the border¹²⁹ and the Parliament¹³⁰. The

¹²³ LRT, “Signataras Januška apie užsienio politiką: negalime būti visiškai nuoseklūs, vertybės irgi turi savo ribą” <https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/pasaulyje/6/1461359/signataras-januska-apie-uzsienio-politika-negalime-buti-visiskai-nuoseklus-vertybes-irgi-turi-savo-riba>

¹²⁴ Lrytas, “Arūnas Karaliūnas. Kas Kaune įvyks greičiau: žygiuos LGBT+ rėmėjai ar iškilis nelegalių migrantų miestelis?” <https://www.lrytas.lt/lietuvsdiena/aktualijos/2021/07/11/news/arunas-karaliunas-kas-kaune-ivyks-greiciau-zygiuos-lgbt-remejai-ar-iskils-nelegaliu-migrantu-miestelis--20032356>

¹²⁵ 15min, “Vilniaus pakraštys – baimė dėl migrantų: rinko parašus, nes bijo nusikaltimų” <https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/vilniaus-pakrasty-baime-del-migrantu-rinko-parasus-nes-bijo-nusikaltimu-56-1537436?copied&copied>

¹²⁶ Lrytas, “Migrantų stovykloje dirbęs lietuvis: jie įsitikinę, kad Europa jiems privalo duoti” <https://www.lrytas.lt/lietuvsdiena/aktualijos/2021/08/04/news/migrantu-stovykloje-dirbes-lietuvis-jie-isitikine-kad-europa-jiems-privalo-duoti-20312888>

¹²⁷ Ito, Tiffany A., et al. "Negative information weighs more heavily on the brain: the negativity bias in evaluative categorizations." *Journal of personality and social psychology* 75.4, 1998, 887

¹²⁸ Lrytas, “Neteisėtų migrantų stovykloje Norvegijoje dirbę lietuviai: jie nepavaldūs niekam” <https://www.lrytas.lt/lietuvsdiena/aktualijos/2021/08/03/news/nelegaliu-migrantu-stovykloje-norvegijoje-dirbe-lietuviai-jie-nepavaldus-niekam-20301818>

¹²⁹ LRT, “„Šeimų maršas“ protestuotojai surengė akciją pasienyje prieš migrantų atvykimą” <https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1448724/seimu-marso-protestuotojai-surenge-akcija-pasienyje-pries-migrantu-atvykima>

¹³⁰ 15min, “Apie trys dešimtys žmonių prie Seimo reikalauja neišleisti migrantų”

Government was struggling to find proper location to accommodate asylum seekers and avoid resistance from people. Municipalities tended to support local residents by expressing disagreement to the establishment of centers for settling migrants. Members of the Council argued that their prime concern is the safety of residents.¹³¹ Articles wrote that locals are scared, fear the escape of migrants, rebellion or riots, raised concerns about response forces being far away from them:

And the response forces are really far from us. Places for the centers should be chosen closer to the forces. (...) People are scared, the mood is really very bad in this regard. Everyone is worried about security, especially since there are many examples from abroad where bad things happened. It's no secret to anyone, there will be no miracles with us either (A. Paliukėnas, elder).¹³²

It is important to note that statements of interviewees about negative practice, examples and experience from abroad are included in the articles. These messages presume that Lithuania will face with similar negative consequences, described by the abstract term “bad things” which could have wide range of meaning from increased crime to terrorist attacks. Negative connotations about asylum seekers are spread when media cover protests against irregular migration. One of the media’s tasks is to ensure pluralism and different views, however, it should avoid creating prejudice by better assessing the general news flow. There are more articles depicting migrants in a negative context during analysed periods. The coverage of various protests contributes to anti-immigrant views, as media provide relatively less positive news. For example, journalists report what protesters wrote on their posters: “no – to the invasion of the Lithuanian state”, “for illegal migrants – the status of criminals”, “asylum applications should not be accepted”. In their interviews, they suggested tough decisions to jail migrants for illegal border crossings and then deport them. Protesters stated that “it is not necessary to shoot, there are many tools, starting with the water cannon”.¹³³ These statements have clear sentiments of rejection and hostility to people on the basis of their ethnicity, race, nationality and religion. While threat narratives are widespread in the media, there are attempts (it will be discussed in other sections) to denounce generalist claims about criminality or violent behaviour of migrants. Politicians try to convince people that their security will be ensured by enhance protection measures, however political leaders do not talk about

<<https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/apie-trys-desimtys-zmoniu-prie-seimo-reikalauja-neisileisti-migrantu-56-1534402?copied&copied> >

¹³¹ 15min, “Šalčininkų rajono valdžia priešinosi migrantų apgyvendinimui Dieveniškėse“

<<https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/salcininku-rajono-valdzia-priesinasi-migrantu-apgyvendinimui-dieveniskese-56-1535708?copied&copied> >

¹³² Lrytas, “Ministerija dairosi naujos teritorijos migrantams, vietos gyventojai – sutrikę: stebuklų nebus”

<<https://www.lrytas.lt/lietuvosdiena/aktualijos/2021/08/04/news/ministerija-dairosi-naujos-teritorijos-migrantams-vietos-gyventojai-sutrike-stebuklu-nebus-20322258> >

¹³³ LRT, “Apie trys dešimtys žmonių prie Seimo reikalauja neįsileisti migrantų”

<<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1449777/apie-trys-desimtys-zmoniu-prie-seimo-reikalauja-neisileisti-migrantu> >

acceptance of others, exaggerated and unjustified fear of migrants causing social unrest. The main message is that institutions will take necessary measures to ensure protection.

On a general note, political and media communication causes dehumanizing effect on migrants who are forgotten as persons because they are frequently compared to objects posing a threat to the state, considered as “illegals”. In this way asylum seekers and refugees disappear in the discourse full of war rhetoric and security concerns. Linking the arrival of migrants with an increased criminal activity, violence, uncontrolled behaviour encourages their exclusion from a community as prevailing public debate makes them harder to accept, treat in dignity and feel empathy.

5.1.3. Deterrence

After defining irregular migration and making moral judgements, other step is finding and suggesting proper response and policy measures to solve arising issues. Politicians decided to apply deterrence policy which has the main aim to deter migrants from making their way to Lithuania. They justified strict migration policy by arguing that the country faces with emergency situation and increased security risks, therefore, restrictions on freedom of movement and simplification of procedures are necessary to avoid manipulation:

If we do not want the transit road through Lithuania to open, what is also important for Westerners, who are the target of illegal migrants, we need to increase the awareness in Europe that restricting freedom of movement is a normal practice to deter migration. (L. Kasčiūnas).¹³⁴

The restriction of freedom of movement is provided as a solution to discourage further irregular migrant flows. Top officials highlighted that the existing legislation should be reviewed to simplify, speed up asylum application procedures, that the right to be accepted is not unconditional:

(...) It seems that the right of a person to cross the border and find himself in another country is unconditional. I regret, but this is not the case, there are very clear grounds, principles according to which people must be accepted, but from those requests that were submitted for asylum, you are probably aware that the absolute minority found grounds to satisfy them. (I. Šimonytė).¹³⁵

The highest-ranking officials had similar views to new amendments restricting rights of asylum seekers. At beginning the President of Lithuania G. Nausėda emphasized that restrictions of

¹³⁴ Lrytas, “Du Seimo komitetai siūlo ES lygiu labiau riboti neteisėtų migrantų teises“
<<https://www.lrytas.lt/lietuvosdiena/aktualijos/2021/07/14/news/du-seimo-komitetai-siulo-es-lygiu-labiau-riboti-neteisetu-migrantu-teises-20088250>>

¹³⁵ LRT, “Premjerė dėl migrantų sulaikymo termino: žmogaus teisė kirsti sieną nėra besąlygiška”
<<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1569001/premjere-del-migrantu-sulaikymo-termino-zmogaus-teise-kirsti-siena-nera-besalygiska>>

human rights should be proportional, Parliament need to correct shortcomings in near future, but the President did not veto amendments and later on did not express criticism on pushback policy or other amendments. G. Nausėda noted that tensions will not subside, therefore, it necessary to discuss further actions:

*I think that both the changes in migrants' application procedures and these pushback functions that we have started to implement are not directed primarily at those migrants who have already entered Lithuania. This is a signal to other migrants, potential migrants who may find themselves near our border, or near the borders of other EU countries in the future.*¹³⁶

The Speaker V. Čmilytė-Nielsen expressed awareness of NGOs' critic, mentioned parliamentary control and monitoring how legal acts are implemented. On possible human rights violations she commented that Lithuania is facing an unprecedented threat:

*Unfortunately, our enemies, in this case unfriendly regimes, do not play by the rules, and we must find ways to respond to this threat, keeping in mind respect for our commitments to the EU, interests of the people of Lithuania, and security of the state.*¹³⁷

The Speaker's statements are more balanced without exaggerated and alarming tone. V. Čmilytė-Nielsen put emphasis on unfriendly regimes which do not comply with international laws but as other politicians she was in support of deterrence policy. After the adoption of first amendments and pushback policy, additional amendments adopted on 23rd of December received less attention compared to public debate during other analysed time periods. Possible explanation is that additional amendments were discussed during Christmas period and migration policy changes were actively debated in Summer. Even though, migration policy changes were significant as the Parliament prolonged detention period of asylum seekers from six months to one year, the media did not encourage public debate on this topic.

In few articles politicians provided similar arguments as previously that "the aim is to make Lithuania an unattractive country for illegal migrants, as well as to prevent them from leaving the accommodation centers freely to Western Europe"¹³⁸. According to policymakers, the current deterrence policy should be continued because "the situation can change very quickly", migrants from Poland and Latvian borders could be transported to Lithuanian border¹³⁹, the "hybrid attack

¹³⁶ 15min, "Prezidentas G.Nausėda – apie naują planą dėl tvoros, Minsko provokaciją ir sankcijas nesiskiepijantiems" <<https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/prezidentas-g-nauseda-apie-nauja-plana-tvora-minsko-provokacija-ir-sankcijas-nesiskiepijantiems-56-1545160?copied&copied>>

¹³⁷ LRT, "Čmilytė-Nielsen: dalis kritikos įstatymų pataisoms dėl migrantų yra pagrįsta" <<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1449749/cmilyte-nielsen-dalis-kritikos-istatymu-pataisoms-del-migrantu-yra-pagrirsta>>

¹³⁸ 15min, "Neteisėtų migrantų judėjimas galės būti apribotas dar pusmečiui" <<https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/neteisetu-migrantu-judejimas-gales-buti-apribotas-dar-pusmeciu-56-1618564?copied>>

¹³⁹ Lrytas, "A. Anušauskas: nors spaudimas prie Lietuvos-Baltarusijos sienos sumažėjęs, rizika dar išlieka"

continues”, situation near the borders of neighbouring countries is getting worse and “there is aggressive behaviour of the Russian Federation”.¹⁴⁰ They noted that “policy of deterrence and pushbacks is working”, as the numbers of new attempts to cross the border are minimal, therefore, it would be a mistake to announce that Lithuania opens the border, as the statistic would probably go back to hundreds or thousands.¹⁴¹ While Parliamentarians in coalition or opposition were not actively criticising deterrence policy on the basis of human rights violations, vulnerability and solidarity aspects. Only when the Parliament was deciding to extend the detention of migrants up to a year, one of the coalition partners Freedom Party did not support amendments and expressed criticism because of not including judicial review in the detention process.¹⁴² Opposition groups of the Parliament mainly criticised the Government for being too slow on taking migration control measures, for lack of coordination, poor communication with municipalities and locals.¹⁴³ Social democrats expressed some concerns on human rights violations, chosen communication methods. Their group also voted against extending detention of migrants up to a year. One of the most vocal critic of the Government policies was the Member of the Parliament V. Bakas. Opposing statements will be further discussed in other sections.

As a general note, it is important to mention that Members of the Government talked about the need to impose deterrence policy, apply strict migration control measures at close borders for asylum seekers in order to prevent potential migrants from arriving to Lithuania:

As Lithuania is closing its borders, it is not only an unreachable Europe, but even death at the hands of a dictator. The only truly safe way to Europe is only the legal way (G. Landsbergis).¹⁴⁴ Persons who intentionally try to cross the state border in prohibited places must be considered as persons who intend to commit a criminal activity – illegal crossing of the state border (A. Bilotaitė).¹⁴⁵

<<https://www.lrytas.lt/lietuvosdiena/aktualijos/2021/12/28/news/a-anusauskas-nors-spaudimas-prie-lietuvos-baltarusijos-sienos-sumazejes-rizika-dar-islieka-21881478>>

¹⁴⁰ Lrytas, “Lietuva nesiruošia vykdyti neteisėtiems migrantams palankių „Frontex“ siūlymų: neatmeta, kad misija gali būti stabdoma” <<https://www.lrytas.lt/lietuvosdiena/aktualijos/2021/12/28/news/po-neteisėtiems-migrantams-palankiu-frontex-rekomendaciju-lietuvos-atkirtis-pasiulymas-yra-nesvarstyti-21881480>>

¹⁴¹ 15min, “VRM: „Frontex“ rekomendacijos nėra privalomos, Lietuva nuspręs, kiek jų laikytis” <<https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/vrm-frontex-rekomendacijos-nera-privalomos-lietuva-nuspres-kiek-ju-laikytis-56-1620066?copied>>

¹⁴² 15min, “Laisvės frakcija nepitaria siūlymui tęsti migrantų sulaikymą 12 mėnesių be teismo sprendimo” <<https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/laisves-frakcija-nepitaria-siulymui-testi-migrantu-sulaikyma-12-menesiu-be-teismo-sprendimo-56-1617874?copied&copied>>

¹⁴³ LRT, “Skvernelis: tarp konservatorių yra žmonių, galinčių sėkmingiau valdyti migrantų krizę” <<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1462520/skvernelis-tarp-konservatoriu-yra-zmoniu-galinciu-sekmingiau-valdyti-migrantu-krize>>

¹⁴⁴ Lrytas, “G. Landsbergis kreipėsi į migrantus: tai galima mirtis diktatoriaus rankose” <<https://www.lrytas.lt/lietuvosdiena/aktualijos/2021/08/06/news/g-landsbergis-kreipesi-i-migrantus-tai-galima-mirtis-diktatoriaus-rankose-20339374>>

¹⁴⁵ LRT, “VRM sprendimas – pasieniečiai nebeįeis neteisėtą migrantų, prieglobsčio prašyti turės pasienio punkte ar ambasadoje” <<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1461514/vrm-sprendimas-pasienieciai-nebeileis-neteisetu-migrantu-prieglobscio-prasyti-tures-pasienio-punkte-ar-ambasadoje>>

Deterrence messages for migrants were communicated in more detailed way, emphasizing illegal actions, criminal activity and possible consequences. While deterrence measures on other participants in the process of instrumentalizing migration were expressed in more abstract way by mentioning sanctions on the Belarus regime, airline companies and tourist agencies.¹⁴⁶ Politicians were more inclined to deter and blame migrants for their crossings the border illegally. There were statements emphasizing the role of Belarus government in deceiving migrants, organising and facilitating their passage to Lithuania but less attention was given to condemn and accuse other participants of this process such as smugglers, airline companies and tourist agencies which were involved in luring and transporting migrants. They were usually described using general terms like criminal network, criminals.¹⁴⁷ Migrants and refugees became the main target group of deterrence policy which encouraged to treat them as serious threat and send intimidating messages. It was necessary to inform migrants about the campaign of lies carried out by the Lukashenko regime but chosen way of speaking should have been better considered to avoid focusing too heavily on the aspect of illegality, naming migrants as accomplices in crime. Politicians and media could put more emphasis on explaining and reminding that migrants were used for political and profit purposes.

In general, the media creates pluralistic debate where different opinions on policies are provided. Both arguments in favour and arguments against proposed measures are included. Exceptional is the period in December which lacks public debate on new amendments. The focus was on decisions of European Court of Human rights, disputes between NGOs and institutions regarding the role of NGOs and their involvement in providing support for asylum seekers. The overall assessment of 4 periods shows that there was a tendency to frame chosen policies as a tool to prevent Lithuania becoming a transit corridor, road, yard, the country with uncontrolled and unprotected borders. Politicians and policymakers were actively stating that “Lithuania will not become a transition yard for migrants”,¹⁴⁸ there is a need “to ensure control of our border”¹⁴⁹ and avoid paving the road “with roses for illegal migration”¹⁵⁰. In their statements politicians wanted to

¹⁴⁶ Lrytas, “Irako avialinijos pradeda skrydžius į Minską iš dar trijų miestų: bilietai jau išpirkti mėnesiams į priekį“ <<https://www.lrytas.lt/pasaulis/ivykiai/2021/08/02/news/irako-avialinijos-pradeda-skrydziaus-i-minska-is-dar-triju-miestu-bilietai-jau-ispirkti-menesiams-i-prieki-20295922>>

¹⁴⁷ LRT, “Šimonytė: kartais atrodo, kad prezidentas įsitikinęs, jog viskas, kas gera, vyksta dėl jo, o viskas, kas prasta, – dėl Vyriausybės” <<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1451794/simonyte-kartais-atrodo-kad-prezidentas-isitikines-jog-viskas-kas-gera-vyksta-del-jo-o-viskas-kas-prasta-del-vyriausybes>>

¹⁴⁸ LRT, “Pabėgėlių srautų epizodas gali būti integruotas į pratybų „Zapad“ scenarijų“ <<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1448735/pabegeliu-srautu-epizodas-gali-buti-integruotas-i-pratybu-zapad-scenariju>>

¹⁴⁹ Lrytas, “A. Armonaitė teigia nenorinti karantinai bausti pasiskiepijusių, bet turi perspėjimą” <<https://www.lrytas.lt/lietuvosdiena/aktualijos/2021/08/02/news/a-armonaite-teigia-nenorinti-karantinai-bausti-pasiskiepijusiu-bet-turi-perspejima-20292864>>

¹⁵⁰ 15min, “Ministrė: nepaprastoji padėtis leisti riboti judėjimą pasienyje, ryši migrantų stovyklose“ <<https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/ministre-nepaprastoji-padėtis-leistu-riboti-judejima-pasienyje-rysi-migrantu-stovyklose-56-1594048?copied>>

emphasize the necessity to apply deterrence measures in order to prevent Lithuania from becoming a weak link for migrants to reach Europe:

Lithuania will not be a weak link in the route of illegal trafficking of migrants (I. Šimonytė).¹⁵¹ (...) The decision was made to take maximally strict measures to protect our border, to maximally ensure that illegal migrants do not enter the Republic of Lithuania (I. Bilotaitė).¹⁵² Lithuania will not be a new transit road and there will be no greenhouse conditions here, and the countries of origin must learn that (L. Kasčiūnas).¹⁵³

It was important for policymakers do not create favourable conditions for asylum seekers, otherwise Lithuanian institutions could not stop irregular flows of migrants and the country would become an attractive route, according to them. Politicians wanted to ensure for partner countries that Lithuania is a reliable, responsible state which will put all efforts to avoid migrants arriving to their borders:

Lithuania is neither a corridor nor a road to the EU: Sweden, Germany or other countries (I. Šimonytė).¹⁵⁴ In this case, we have to impose regulations respecting human rights, but on the other hand, without making a transit yard for us (G. Nausėda).¹⁵⁵

The aim was to show Lithuania as a trusted partner being able to control the situation without causing too much burden on other countries. In general, the protection of borders was related with sovereignty in the sense that the country which does not able to control its borders, cannot be considered as fully independent. Policymakers argued that the protection of borders and the control over who crosses the borders are guarantors of statehood:

(...) The country would become a transit yard, if it would not control who comes to the country, who leaves. No country can lose border control, because to some extent it would be a loss of statehood (G. Mišutis, State Border Guard Service).¹⁵⁶

¹⁵¹ Lrytas, “I. Šimonytė atsakė į kritiką dėl priimamų migrantų: žmogus nėra kamuolys, kurį būtų galima spardyti per valstybių sienas“

<<https://www.lrytas.lt/lietuvosdiena/aktualijos/2021/07/13/news/i-simonyte-atsake-i-kritika-del-priimamu-migrantu-zmogus-nera-kamuolys-kuri-butu-galima-spardyti-per-valstybiu-sienas-20073346>>

¹⁵² LRT, “Bilotaitė teigia, kad pareigūnai galės apgėžti neteisėtus migrantus: bus suteikti įgaliojimai užtikrinti šių žmonių nepatekimą į Lietuvą”, <<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1461518/bilotaite-teigia-kad-pareigunai-gales-apgezti-neteisetus-migrantus-bus-suteikti-igaliojimai-uztikrinti-siu-zmoniu-nepatekima-i-lietuva>>

¹⁵³ Lrytas, “Griebiasi papildomų priemonių: į pasienį su Baltarusija siunčiama daugiau karių, iškils 3 metrų tvora” <<https://www.lrytas.lt/lietuvosdiena/aktualijos/2021/07/12/news/po-valstybes-gynimo-tarybos-posedzio-a-bilotaites-zinia-i-pasieni-jau-siunciamo-daugiau-kariu-20063805>>

¹⁵⁴ 15min, “I.Šimonytė: Graikijos patirtis valdant migrantų krizę Lietuvai yra naudinga ir svarbi” <<https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/i-simonyte-graikijos-patirtis-valdant-migrantu-krize-lietuvai-yra-naudinga-ir-svarbi-56-1535840?copied&copied>>

¹⁵⁵ Lrytas, “G. Nausėda: galime tik graužtis nagus, kad nepasirūpinome savo sienos kontrole per pastaruosius 10 metų” <<https://www.lrytas.lt/lietuvosdiena/aktualijos/2021/07/14/news/g-nauseda-galime-tik-grauztis-nagus-kad-nepasirupinome-savo-sienos-kontrole-per-pastaruosius-10-metu-20085994>>

¹⁵⁶ LRT, “LRT trumpai. Sieną kerta migrantai – kodėl Lietuva negali jų tiesiog apgėžti, paleisti arba siųsti atgal?” <<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1460161/lrt-trumpai-siena-kerta-migrantai-kodel-lietuva-negali-ju-tiesiog-apgezti-paleisti-arba-siusti-atgal>>

The deterrence policy and strict migration control measures are described as necessary to avoid Lithuania becoming a transit yard because otherwise the country is not able to ensure protection of its borders and guarantee the criteria of statehood. These arguments provide justification to impose firm deterrence policy on migrants in order to ensure statehood and security but there are also other approaches to deal with increased flows of migration that sovereign country can choose without undermining its statehood and security risks. Policymakers framed deterrence measures towards asylum seekers based on security and threat concerns. The aspects of criminal activities and illegality of asylum seekers were highlighted, however less attention was given to note that migrants were deceived and used for political gains by Belarus regime.

5.2. Liberal constitutionalist frame

The media analysis shows that the liberal constitutionalist frame cannot be distinguished from security frame and analysed separately. Most of framing based on liberal constitutionalist arguments does not meet the criteria of 4 functions set in the Entman theory. There were found only few articles mentioning that highly increased flows of migration could disrupt the constitutional order. This argumentation was linked with the aspect of security, however, aspects such as the impact of arrival of migrants on democratic and civic culture, elections, trust in institutions were not discussed in defined time periods. Few articles mentioned that Lithuania and other neighbouring countries will defend their border as well as “the right to freely and democratically decide the affairs of the country without giving in to external blackmail and pressure”.¹⁵⁷ These statements were made in relation to the events when large groups of migrants tried to cross Polish border. It was argued that the current situation meets the criteria to announce the state of emergency because the situation on the border of Lithuania “poses a threat to both social stability and even the constitutional order”.¹⁵⁸ In this context, liberal constitutionalist arguments are based on security grounds that justify the need to take extraordinary measures during current circumstances.

5.3. Cultural protectionist frame

Only few articles framed asylum seekers by using cultural protectionist arguments. Most of cultural protectionist frames were in the category of media framing. Politicians did not use this frame, only L. Kasčiūnas several times mentioned that border guards defend “Lithuanian border and

¹⁵⁷ 15min, “Migrantų krizės akivaizdoje – premjerės kreipimasis: turime išlikti susitelkę, budrūs ir tvirti”
<<https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/migrantu-krizes-akivaizdoje-premjerės-kreipimasis-turime-islikti-susitelke-budrus-ir-tvirti-56-1595296?copied>>

¹⁵⁸ LRT, “Žalimas: nepaprastą padėtį reikėjo įvesti seniai, padėtis pasienyje yra gana kritinė”
<<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1536565/zalimas-nepaprastaja-padeti-reikejo-ivesti-seniai-padetis-pasienyje-yra-gana-kritine>>

European civilization”¹⁵⁹ Other people, usually activists, protesters, talked about asylum seekers as “trampling on the sacred land of Lithuania”¹⁶⁰, having different customs, forming parallel societies which will not integrate. They expressed threat that if there is a massive migration flow, Lithuanian nation could become a minority as it was during Soviet times in Latvia or Kazakhstan.¹⁶¹ Some residents started to organize voluntary patrol squads to help border guards in protecting the border. They explained that if a large group of people walks with bags and these people have non-Lithuanian features, it is obvious that they are suspects and patrol squads have to call border guards. In this case, people with non-Lithuanian features are considered as potential suspects, the legal status is based on appearance. Anthropologist Ieva Jusionytė argues that residents form patrol squads because they see a threat and do not believe in institutions being able to deal with these problems. According to the anthropologist, experiences from other countries show that patrol squads can cause danger to migrants, take illegal measures against them.¹⁶² In general, this frame was not popular, but it could be one of concerns in society. Surveys, interviews with residents would provide more answers about existing views.

5.4. Priority for compatriots frame

Two statements of politicians were found with the frame of priority for compatriots which emphasizes that because of special relation and obligations to nation-state the priority should be given to citizens. The opposition Member of the Parliament V. Fiodorovas stated that resolution on hybrid aggression does not mention the residents of Lithuania, he asked where “illegals” will be put in Lithuania or those who will arrive. According to V. Fiodorovas, migration “will directly affect our people”.¹⁶³ Another politician A. Ažubalis underlined that every state primarily takes care of the security of citizens and its borders.¹⁶⁴ Much more arguments were based on the state’s social contract with citizens who will be deprived from limited state resources, will receive less public good that are already insufficient. These arguments will be discussed in another chapter.

¹⁵⁹ LRT, “Kasčiūnas: nenoriu, kad nevyriausybinės organizacijos ir žmogaus teisių gynėjai taptų neteisėtos migracijos draugais ir skatintojais“ <<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1464226/kasciunas-nenoriu-kad-neyviausybinės-organizacijos-ir-zmogaus-teisiu-gynejai-taptu-neteisėtos-migracijos-draugais-ir-skatintojais>>

¹⁶⁰ 15min, „Maršistai“ surengė dar vieną protestą: nepaliksime mūsų sienų atvirų“

¹⁶¹ LRT, “Apie trys dešimtys žmonių prie Seimo reikalauja neįsileisti migrantų“

¹⁶² LRT, “Ažiotazas dėl pasienyje patruliuojančių civilių: organizatoriai neigia ryšius su kraštutine dešine, ekspertė įspėja, kad galima prieiti iki linčo teismo“ <<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1537534/aziotazas-del-pasienyje-patruliuojanciu-civiliu-organizatoriai-neigia-rysius-su-kraštutine-desine-eksperte-ispeja-kad-galima-prieiti-iki-linco-teismo>>

¹⁶³ 15min, “Viktoras Fiodorovas: Lietuvos žmonėms reikia atsakymų, ne skambių rezoliucijų“ <<https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/nuomones/viktoras-fiodorovas-lietuvos-zmonems-reikia-atsakymu-ne-skambiu-rezoliuciju-18-1534470?copied&copied>>

¹⁶⁴ LRT, “Valstybė save išisvarinėja į kampa“ – teisininkas aštriai kritikuoja politikus dėl sprendimo iki metų suvaržyti migrantų judėjimą“ <<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1572059/valstybe-save-isisvarineja-i-kampa-teisininkas-astriai-kritikuoja-politikus-del-sprendimo-iki-metu-suvarzyti-migrantu-judejima>>

5.5. Social justice frame

Both political and media framing of asylum seekers were based on the social justice frame. There were general claims that most of migrants do not run away from dangers or prosecution, they are economic migrants who try to reach rich western countries. By providing such arguments, interviewers justified measures on the restriction of migrants' rights because they are economic migrants seeking to use generous social welfare systems in Europe, searching for better life. The cost of taking care of migrants was also emphasized in relation to the need prioritizing the well-being of Lithuanians. Several articles highlighted that increased migration flows could significantly reduce public spending to other relevant areas.

Politicians were vocal in emphasizing that the majority of migrants left their country for economic reasons. A. Anušauskas presumed that 99% out of the one and a half thousand “illegal migrants” detained this year are economic migrants who do not want to stay in Lithuania. He further noted that asylum is not granted to economic migrants but only to those who are in real danger in their home countries.¹⁶⁵ According to V. Čmilytė-Nielsen, these are not people who are running away from war, from health risks, therefore an absolute minority will receive asylum.¹⁶⁶ I. Šimonytė justified amendments on migration laws allowing to examine asylum applications more quickly because “99% of the current flow are economic migrants. It's obvious, but 1% have grounds to request political asylum”.¹⁶⁷ L. Kasčiūnas argued why the six-month detention law was adopted:

*Without it, the deterrence system would not work, as illegal migrants would be given an opportunity to continue traveling to Germany, France or other places of their final destination.*¹⁶⁸

In media framing, arguments about the main goal of migrants to reach prosperous Western countries were also popular. It was noted that the goal of migrants is not any safe country but only Germany or Scandinavia.¹⁶⁹ In addition to these statements, the aspect of financial costs was widely mentioned. Interviewers stated that migrants need to be taken care of at the expense of taxpayers,¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁵ Lrytas, “Ministras A. Anušauskas: 99 proc. atvykėlių – ekonominiai migrantai, nenorintys likti Lietuvoje”

¹⁶⁶ LRT, “Čmilytė-Nielsen apie migrantų krizę: privalome užtikrinti žmogaus teises, tačiau turėtume nedaryti perteklinių dalykų” <<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1450231/cmilyte-nielsen-apie-migrantu-krize-privalome-uztikrinti-zmogaus-teises-taciau-turetume-nedaryti-pertekliniu-dalyku>>

¹⁶⁷ LRT, “Žalimas reakciją į migrantų krizę vadina „parodomąja“: kalbama apie hibridinius karus, bet VGT susirinko tik šiandien” <<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1449556/zalimas-reakcija-i-migrantu-krize-vadina-parodomaja-kalbama-apie-hibridinius-karus-bet-vgt-susirinko-tik-siandien>>

¹⁶⁸ 15min “Iš Pabradės – į Vilniaus viešbutį: teismai veria duris migrantams į laisvę” <<https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/is-pabrades-i-vilniaus-viesbuti-teismai-veria-duris-migrantams-i-laisve-56-1592908?copied&copied>>

¹⁶⁹ Lrytas, “Pasieniečių profsąjunga: „Europos politikai užsižaidė su migracijos politika““ <<https://www.lrytas.lt/lietuvosdiena/aktualijos/2021/11/10/news/pasienieciu-profsajunga-europos-politikai-uzsizaide-su-migracijos-politika--21350826>>

¹⁷⁰ Lrytas, “Arūnas Karaliūnas. Kas Kaune įvyks greičiau: žygiuos LGBT+ rėmėjai ar iškils nelegalių migrantų miestelis?”

social sector will face with great burden,¹⁷¹ the care of migrants will require more resources than financing Ministries of Defence and Internal Affairs,¹⁷² migrants require better living conditions than one third of Lithuanians have.¹⁷³ Some statements make general assessments about residents having restricted access to immediate medical assistance because migrants call an ambulance without serious reasons, for example, to relieve the pain from a mosquito bite.¹⁷⁴ These stereotypes promote the negative attitude towards migrants who will worsen living conditions for Lithuanians, who just want to use the benefits of the social system.

There were articles highlighting the status of migrants who do not meet the formed criteria of being a refugee. Migrants depicted as having expensive mobile phones, not coming to Belarus “with empty pockets” because they can afford going to shopping malls, restaurants, buying costly tourist visas.¹⁷⁵ A. Bilotaitė speaking about the cases when courts gave permission for migrants to move from detention centers and live in the place of their choice, assumed that migrants are not refugees because they have:

*(...) really considerable financial resources and are able to obtain the services of a lawyer, rent apartments, hotels.*¹⁷⁶

These statements show the narrow understanding of criteria determining the status of a refugee. It is considered that refugees are poor, running from failed and war-torn states where people face with famine. However, the definition of a refugee is wider, includes people who are prosecuted because of their race, political, religious beliefs, membership of particular social group. People being forced to leave their homes usually take all their belongings with themselves, therefore, arguments about their well financial status, expensive phones form the prejudice of migrants only seeking economic benefits. The aim of searching for better living conditions is widely criticised by politicians and media.

¹⁷¹ Lrytas, “Įvertino ES paramą krizės akivaizdoje: nebūtinai problema bus išspręsta taip, kaip norėtų Lietuva“ <<https://www.lrytas.lt/lietuvosdiena/aktualijos/2021/08/03/news/ivertino-es-parama-krizes-akivaizdoje-nebutinai-problema-bus-isspresta-taip-kaip-noretu-lietuva-20298323>>

¹⁷² LRT, “Viceministrė apie biudžeto išlaidas migrantams: iš kažko atimti neplanuojame, yra valstybės rezervas“ <<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1461235/viceministre-apie-biudzeto-islaidas-migrantams-is-kazko-atimti-neplanuojame-yra-valstybes-rezervas>>

¹⁷³ LRT, “Ramunė Sotvarė-Šemetienė. Kaip atspėti beprotybę?” <<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/nuomones/3/1540376/ramune-sotvare-šemetiene-kaip-atspeti-beprotybe>>

¹⁷⁴ Lrytas, “Dėl užimtumo gyventojams trūksta medicinos pagalbos: migrantai greitąją kviečia net dėl uodo įkandimo” <<https://tv.lrytas.lt/zinios/lietuvos-diena/2021/08/04/news/ryskeja-migrantu-apgyvendinimo-padariniai-savivaldybese-trinka-skubios-medicinos-pagalbos-paslaugu-teikimas-20322566>>

¹⁷⁵ Lrytas, “Užkardos vadas – apie patalpų dalijimąsi su migrantais, radinius kuprinėse ir vedlių istorijas” <<https://www.lrytas.lt/lietuvosdiena/aktualijos/2021/08/05/news/uzkardos-vadas-apie-patalpu-dalijimasi-su-migrantais-radinius-kuprinese-ir-vedliu-istorijas-20325558>>

¹⁷⁶ LRT, “Liubajėvas apie migrantų galimybę skusti sulaikymą: anksti kalbėti apie teismų praktiką” <<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1536541/liubajevass-apie-migrantu-galimybe-skusti-sulaikyma-anksti-kalbeti-apie-teismu-praktika>>

6. Cosmopolitan frames

The universalist cosmopolitan frame was quite often used as one of opposing frames to imposed restrictions on migrants arguing that human rights of migrants should be protected. This frame was popular both in political and media framing. While consequentialism and quotidian cosmopolitanism were much less common, usually found in the category of media framing.

6.1. Universal cosmopolitanism (human rights)

The most criticism received two amendments to the Law on the Legal Status of Aliens and the decision to pushback migrants and refugees. The announcement of state of emergency was not criticized but there were several statements about the need to ensure migrants' rights, allow the access of humanitarian organizations to the border region. NGOs raised concerns about the amendments which "violate basic human rights, contradict international obligations of Lithuania and may harm Lithuania's reputation and democracy in the country".¹⁷⁷ The restriction of movement was highly criticized by NGOs, experts and some politicians. NGOs noted that people were detained without a court decision, the right to information, services of interpreters, social workers and legal assistance from the United Nations and other NGOs was severely restricted.¹⁷⁸ Experts called amendments as anti-constitutional because of mass detention of migrants for unlimited time (during the extreme situation), restricted right of appeal to the court if asylum application is rejected.¹⁷⁹ The detention of asylum seekers without a court decision was described as the biggest violation¹⁸⁰, the imprisonment of asylum seekers,¹⁸¹ extending the detention to 12 months was considered as a double violation, the failure to meet proportionality test.¹⁸² On the decision to pushback migrants and refugees, experts expressed criticism that the collective

¹⁷⁷ LRT, "Prezidentą ragina vetuoti pataisas dėl migrantų judėjimo ribojimo: „gali padaryti žalą Lietuvos reputacijai““
<<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1571921/prezidenta-ragina-vetuoti-pataisas-del-migrantu-judejimo-ribojimo-gali-padaryti-zala-lietuvos-reputacijai>>

¹⁷⁸ 15min, "Kritika Užsieniečių teisinės padėties įstatymo pataisoms: sulaikytieji taps beteisiais įkaitais"
<<https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/sukritikavo-uzsienieciu-teisines-padeties-istatymo-pataisas-sulaikytieji-taps-beteisiais-situacijos-ikaitais-56-1534024?copied&copied>>

¹⁷⁹ 15min, "D.Žalimas: prieš neteisėtą migraciją – tušti šūkių ir antikonstitucinės priemonės“
<<https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/komentarai/dainius-zalimas-pries-neteiseta-migracija-tusti-sukiai-ir-antikonstitucines-priemones-500-1533690?copied&copied>>

¹⁸⁰ LRT, "Pirmiausia, judėjimo ribojimas be teismo sprendimo – didžiausias pažeidimas"
<<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1450188/valdzios-sprendimai-del-migrantu-neramina-visuomenininkus-tampa-tradicija-ivesti-ekstremalias-situacijas-ir-riboti-zmogaus-teises>>

¹⁸¹ LRT, "Indrė Balčaitė. Apie neapykantą migrantams ir pabėgėliams: spygliuotos tvoros įkalins mus pačius"
<<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/nuomones/3/1449431/indre-balcaite-apie-neapykanta-migrantams-ir-pabegeliams-spygliuotos-tvoros-ikalins-mus-pacius>>

¹⁸² LRT, "„Valstybė save išsivarinėja į kampa“ – teisininkas aštriai kritikuoja politikus dėl sprendimo iki metų suvaržyti migrantų judėjimą"

pushbacks of migrants, without assessing the individual circumstances of each person, is prohibited under international law,¹⁸³ contradict the principles of human rights:

Increasingly justifying this hybrid attack, we violate human rights as if migrants were not human beings with their own problems (D. Pūras, director of human rights monitoring institute).¹⁸⁴

Some politicians also argued that the collective pushbacks do not take into account individual circumstances and do not meet the principle of non-refoulement, therefore, it is important to leave the opportunity to apply for asylum:

When you turn a person at the border, in the middle of the forest, you are not able to assess the individual circumstances or his motives, why he crosses the border (T. Raskevičius)¹⁸⁵

In general, the Freedom party and the Social Democratic party were the most vocal in raising the issue of human rights, in opposing to some decisions compared to other political movements. For example, both parties did not support the amendments to extend the detention of asylum seekers to 12 months. It was stated that the detention, without individually assessing the validity, necessity and proportionality of such decision by judicial process, is a gross violation of human rights,¹⁸⁶ the need to identify different categories of migrants and distinguish refugees, economic or climate migrants was emphasized.¹⁸⁷ The Member of the Parliament V. Bakas could be single out as one of the loudest critics of the Government dealing with increased migration flows. He was the only one politician who abstained in voting for the first amendments in July. At that time, politician argued that amendments fundamentally contradict the constitutional doctrine, deprive a right of a person to apply to the court.¹⁸⁸ Other parties and parliamentarians were not very active in drawing attention to the issue of human rights. V. Čmilytė-Nielsen, I. Šimonytė tried to speak in more balanced way, emphasized the need to ensure security and keep at least basic human rights. While experts, NGOs were more vocal in criticising the decisions of the Government.

¹⁸³ LRT, “Sprendimas apgęžti migrantus profesorei kelia abejonių – gali kilti daugiau neramumų, gali tekti aiškintis teismuos” <<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1461808/sprendimas-apgęzti-migrantus-profesorei-kelia-abejoniu-gali-kilti-daugiau-neramumu-gali-tekti-aiskintis-teismuose>>

¹⁸⁴ LRT, “Pūras apie migrantų neįsileidimą į šalį: Lietuva pradeda lygiuotis į tą pačią Baltarusiją ar Rusiją” <<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1461965/puras-apie-migrantu-neisileidima-i-sali-lietuva-pradeda-lygiuotis-i-ta-pacia-baltarusija-ar-rusija>>

¹⁸⁵ 15min, “Migrantų grąžinimas gali kirstis su tarptautine teise, bet alternatyvų nematyti” <<https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/migrantu-grazinimas-gali-kirstis-su-tarptautine-teise-bet-alternatyvu-nematyti-56-1544242?copied&copied>>

¹⁸⁶ 15min, “Laisvės frakcija nepritaria siūlymui tęsti migrantų sulaikymą 12 mėnesių be teismo sprendimo”

¹⁸⁷ LRT, “Socialdemokratai apie migrantų krizę: reikia susitelkti, o ne bauginti visuomenę” <<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1449391/socialdemokratai-apie-migrantu-krize-reikia-susitelkti-o-ne-bauginti-visuomene>>

¹⁸⁸ LRT, “Bilotaitė: specialiosios tarnybos indikuoja apie galimus dar didesnius migrantų srautus” <<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1449879/bilotaite-specialiosios-tarnybos-indikuoja-apie-galimus-dar-didesnius-migrantu-srautus>>

6.2. Consequentialism (welfare)

The main arguments of consequentialism frame are based on the right of migrants to seek welfare and better life, the positive aspect of migration not only for migrants but also for receiving country. Several articles provided these arguments underlining that everyone has a right to happiness because all people are the citizens of one world. According to these statements migrants “deserve a better life, no matter what religion they profess, what language they speak and what color their skin is.”¹⁸⁹ One interviewed migrant said that he just wants a normal life, it does not matter which European country will grant an asylum, he will go to that country.¹⁹⁰ Few articles remind of Lithuanians leaving their home country because they search for better life, for greater economic well-being or emigrate from Lithuania as the weather is too cold for them.¹⁹¹

In general, articles mention constant traveling of people, some of them runaway from war or poverty, others search for decent and meaningful life. Other provided arguments consider migration as primarily a positive process for both sides: migrants and receiving country. It states that there are many examples where “migrants and refugees have made a strong contribution to the successful development of the host country”.¹⁹² In the case of Lithuania, the immigration is linked with the solution to solve the problems of population decline and aging.¹⁹³ The need is emphasized to discuss and assess the future migration policy including issues related with the demographic and labour market situation of Lithuania, the challenges of further growth. Experts associated migration with economic and other benefits for host country but also noted the aspects of integration, coexistence of different cultures, exploitation of social tensions by actors inside and outside the country.¹⁹⁴ In contrast to the social justice frame, the search for better life is not condemned but considered as a normal process, as an opportunity for people to find a safe place where they could ensure decent living conditions. It provides a different perspective in which migration is seen as a positive outcome.

¹⁸⁹ Lrytas, “Pabėgėlius smerkiantiems lietuviams priminė liūdną tiesą: „Egoizmo šaknys gilios“ <<https://www.lrytas.lt/bendraukime/man-rupi/2021/07/11/news/pabegelius-smerkiantiems-lietuviams-primine-liudna-tiesa-egoizmo-saknys-gilios--20049418>>

¹⁹⁰ Lrytas, “Gyvenimas stovyklavietės gyventojų akimis: baimė mirti žiemą nuo šalčio ir nenoras likti neturtingoje šalyje“ <<https://www.lrytas.lt/lietuvsdiena/aktualijos/2021/08/06/news/gyvenimas-stovyklavietes-gyventoju-akimis-baime-mirti-ziema-nuo-salcio-ir-nenoras-likti-neturtingoje-salyje-20344558>>

¹⁹¹ LRT, “Algimantas Černiauskas. Pabėgėlis. Ant Lietuvos slenkščio” <<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/nuomones/3/1571674/algimantas-cerniauskas-pabegelis-ant-lietuvos-slenkscio>>

¹⁹² LRT, “Dainius Pūras. Migracijos krizė kaip Lietuvos galimybė” <<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/nuomones/3/1462531/dainius-puras-migracijos-krize-kaip-lietuvos-galimybe>>

¹⁹³ LRT, “Svajūnas Plungė. Hibridinis ginklas ar galimybė turėti pensiją?” <<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/pozicija/679/1458800/svajunas-plunge-hibridinis-ginklas-ar-galimybe-tureti-pensija>>

¹⁹⁴ 15min, “Ramūnas Vilpišauskas: Imigracija tęsis ir po šios krizės, metas tam ruoštis” <<https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/komentarai/ramunas-vilpisauskas-imigracija-tesis-ir-po-sios-krizes-metas-tam-ruostis-500-1543658?copied&copied>>

6.3. Quotidian cosmopolitanism (social interactions)

The quotidian cosmopolitanism frame focuses on mundane and casual social interactions between migrants and residents. This social interaction creates more open, welcoming and accepting society. Similar narratives can be found in few articles which argue that more frequent, direct contacts between local residents and newcomers are important in forming a positive attitude towards foreigners,¹⁹⁵ most of people who had contacts with migrants describe it as a positive experience.¹⁹⁶ Local communities are encouraged accepting migrants, working with them and getting to know better each other as these experiences help to learn important lessons and overcome challenges. In this way municipalities become more open, therefore, efforts must be made to accommodate even few people – a family or two in order to promote social interactions.¹⁹⁷ It was noted that “people are most afraid of what they do not know. Lithuanians are most afraid of homosexuals and migrants”.¹⁹⁸ According to the NGO representative A. Dudutytė, people who encounter refugees do not have fears, but those who have not encountered them probably have the most fears and negative attitudes. The provided explanation is that the majority of people who had social interactions with refugees tend to have positive views because they see that the fears expressed in public are usually distorted, people read articles on media, comments on social platforms which promote these negative attitudes.¹⁹⁹ This frame provides arguments stressing the importance of integration, positive impact of social interactions, however, only few articles discussed these issues.

7. Humanitarian frames

Both solidarity and victimization frames were found in selected articles. The solidarity frame was much more actively seen in articles where NGOs and activists were interviewed. In the Christmas period the church became very active urging for more solidarity with migrants and

¹⁹⁵ LRT, “Požiūris į imigrantus Europoje ir Lietuvoje: kas lemia pozityvesnes nuostatas?”

<<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1529222/poziuris-i-imigrantus-europoje-ir-lietuvoje-kas-lemia-pozityvesnes-nuostatas>>

¹⁹⁶ LRT, “Kinta norvegų požiūris į imigrantus: nežiūri kaip į grėsmę ir mano, kad darbo sąlygos turi būti kaip vietiniams“ <<https://www.lrt.lt/lituanica/aktualijos/751/1571699/kinta-norvegu-pozioris-i-imigrantus-neziuri-kaip-i-gresme-ir-mano-kad-darbo-salygos-turi-buti-kaip-vietiniams>>

¹⁹⁷ LRT, “Ekspertės apie atvykstančius migrantus: dauguma nori į Vakarų Europą, nes ten gyvena jų šeimos ir rėmėjai“ <<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/pasaulyje/6/1449968/ekspertes-apie-atvykstancius-migrantus-dauguma-nori-i-vakaru-europa-nes-ten-gyvena-ju-seimos-ir-remejai>>

¹⁹⁸ Lrytas, “Pabėgėlius smerkiantiems lietuviams priminė liūdną tiesą: „Egoizmo šaknys gilios“

¹⁹⁹ 15min, “Caritas atstovė: lietuvių netoleranciją migrantams pajus ir gavę prieglobstį” <<https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/lietuva-netolerantiska-migrantams-nepasitenkinima-pajus-ir-gave-prieglobsti-56-1543628?copied&copied>>

refugees.²⁰⁰ While the victimization frame was equally spread in statements of politicians and in other media content. In general, humanitarian aspects have not been ignored but security issues overshadowed solidarity and victimization frames in the public discourse.²⁰¹

7.1. Solidarity frame

Politicians occasionally included the solidarity issues in their speeches to confirm that Lithuania acts in solidarity spirit, humanitarian aspects are taken into account and efforts are made to ease the current situation of asylum seekers. According to the speaker of Seimas V. Čmilytė-Nielsen, Lithuania has very clear obligations and will always accept refugees who are fleeing war, who are escaping from the risks to their health,²⁰² the state of emergency cannot overshadow humanity.²⁰³ Foreign Minister G. Landsbergis spoke about the opening of humanitarian corridor from the border to Grodno that people could go back to their homes.²⁰⁴ Prime Minister I. Šimonytė stated that Lithuania is not a country which does not understand the sufferings of people fleeing persecution:

*Hundreds of journalists, civil society activists and ordinary people have found refuge in Lithuania, who were targeted by regimes trying to forcefully deal with those who have different opinions.*²⁰⁵

Few politicians more vocally raised the importance of solidarity for migrants and refugees who have already arrived in Lithuania. They talked about necessary actions to ensure basic needs of asylum seekers and preserve humanitarian approach. The politician T. Raskevičius suggested building humanitarian aid centres, drew attention to the dire conditions of asylum seekers who are unarmed people and became hostages of the Belarus regime. According to him, what separates us from this dictatorial regime is that “we are not saying that a person is less important than the interests of the state”.²⁰⁶ Another politician D. Šakalinienė urged do not forget humanity because

²⁰⁰ Lrytas, “Kūčių išvakarėse kunigas Ričardas Doveika kreipiasi į susiskaldžiusią tautą: „Mus jungia daug daugiau negu skiria“ <<https://www.lrytas.lt/zmones/tv-antena/2021/12/23/news/kuciu-iskvakarese-kunigas-ricardas-doveika-kreipiasi-i-susiskaldziusia-tauta-mus-jungia-daug-daugiau-negu-skiria-21840850>>

²⁰¹ LRT, “Bilotaitė įvardijo, ką duotų nepaprastoji padėtis: uždarytų sieną su Baltarusija, ribotų migrantų komunikaciją“

²⁰² 15min, “V.Čmilytė-Nielsen pataisoms dėl migrantų teisių žada griežtą kontrolę“ <<https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/v-cmilyte-nielsen-pataisoms-del-migrantu-teisiu-zada-griezta-kontrolę-56-1534920?copied&copied>>

²⁰³ LRT, “Po istorinio balsavimo Seimo pirmininkė džiaugiasi vienybe ir kerta Lukašenkai: jis sąjungininkų neturi, tik šeimininką” <<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1537660/po-istorinio-balsavimo-seimo-pirmininke-dziaugiasi-vienybe-ir-kerta-lukasenkai-jis-sajungininku-neturi-tik-seimininka>>

²⁰⁴ 15min, “G.Landsbergis: Lietuvos siekis JT Saugumo Taryboje – humanitarinio koridoriaus sudarymas” <<https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/g-landsbergis-lietuvos-siekis-jt-saugumo-taryboje-humanitarinio-koridoriaus-sudarymas-56-1595588?copied&copied>>

²⁰⁵ Lrytas, “I. Šimonytė atsakė į kritiką dėl priimamų migrantų: žmogus nėra kamuolys, kurį būtų galima spardyti per valstybių sienas”

²⁰⁶ Lrytas, “Iš Baltarusijos režimo galima tikėtis bet ko: šturmo scenarijus gali pasikartoti ir Lietuvoje“

Lukashenko regime engages in people smuggling, misleads migrants, drags them into their traps and puts them in a dire situation.²⁰⁷ While V. Bakas called for allowing the main humanitarian organizations to enter the border area when the state of emergency was announced and ensuring the provision of humanitarian aid for migrants, including for those who are pushed away from the border. Politicians raised the issue of migrants lacking information and not being able to contact even international organizations.²⁰⁸

In comparison with political framing, NGOs and activists showed more empathy in their statements. They actively urged to help asylum seekers and ensure decent living standards, talked about their suffering and in detail described extremely difficult circumstances of asylum seekers. According to the NGOs, a roof over your head, hygiene products, water, food and the most necessary medical assistance are not luxuries that Lithuania cannot provide.²⁰⁹ The importance of humanitarian aid and the preparedness for winter season were often mentioned by NGOs. They emphasized that the cold season is approaching, therefore, it is important to take care of asylum seekers properly. In their view, as state does not provide all necessary services, the role of NGOs is to fill this gap.²¹⁰ Activists, volunteers who provided assistance to migrants talked about migrants spending winter nights in the forest without sleeping bags, tents or warm clothes. They highlighted their actions in providing warm food, necessary items for survival.²¹¹ The church also raised concerns about the treatment of migrants, priests became very active in urging for more solidarity with asylum seekers during the Christmas period. The archbishop G. Grušas criticized for keeping people in prison-like conditions for months:

*Christmas is almost here, let's show our humanity and let's not make the situation of refugees intolerable with adopted laws.*²¹²

<https://www.lrytas.lt/lietuvosdiena/aktualijos/2021/11/10/news/neatmeta-kad-migrantu-sturmo-scenarijus-gali-pasikartoti-ir-lietuvoje-21344596>

²⁰⁷ LRT, "Migrantų klausimas kaitina aistras: protestą išvadino grėsme nacionaliniam saugumui, aktyvistai įsitikinę, kad dabartinė situacija – tik pradžia" <https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1536499/migrantu-klausimas-kaitina-aistras-protesta-issvadino-gresme-nacionaliniam-saugumui-aktyvistai-isitikine-kad-dabartine-situacija-tik-pradzia>

²⁰⁸ 15min, „Migracijos krizė: nuo vidurnakčio dalyje Lietuvos įsigalios nepaprastoji padėtis“ <https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/seimas-emesi-spresti-ar-del-migrantu-krizes-pasienyje-ivesti-nepaprastaja-padeti-56-1594464?copied&copied>

²⁰⁹ 15min, "Raudonojo Kryžiaus atstovė: retorika apie migrantų keliamą grėsmę atsisuks prieš valdžią" <https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/raudonojo-kryziaus-atstove-retorika-apie-migrantu-keliama-gresme-atsisuks-pries-valdzia-55-1535116?copied&copied>

²¹⁰ LRT, "Tarptautinis Raudonasis Kryžius Lietuvai skyrė 280 tūkst. eurų migrantų krizei suvaldyti" <https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1464133/tarptautinis-raudonasis-kryzius-lietuvai-skyre-280-tukst-euru-migrantu-krizei-suvaldyti>

²¹¹ 15min, "EŽTT apsaugą gavę migrantai po penkių šaltų parų miške naktį praleis užkardoje" <https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/ezt-ineleido-is-lietuvos-issstumti-keturiu-migrantu-miske-jie-praleido-kelias-dienas-56-1618084?copied&copied>

²¹² 15min, "P. Auštrevičius apie keliafrontį Baltarusijos spaudimą: susidursime su dar dviem grėsmėmis" <https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/p-austrevicius-apie-keliafronti-baltarusijos-spaudima-susidursime-su-dar-dviem-gresmemis-56-1619994?copied&copied>

Activists sought to point out that asylum seekers are not criminals and increased migration flows must be solved on a geopolitical level, not by pushing frozen people back and forth.²¹³ In their statements, activists quite often mention the possible deaths of migrants, if necessary humanitarian aid is not provided by institutions and NGOs. According to the researcher G. Blažytė, pushbacks are illegal and do not comply with international standards, therefore, such procedure should not remain as “it is very cold and windy, any person simply cannot be and stay outside in such conditions”.²¹⁴ NGOs, experts talked about basic humanity, the situations when children and families are pushed back. Human rights expert V. Valentinavičius stated that the pushback procedure will force people to live in forests, they will be returned to Belarus which is not a safe country.²¹⁵ Experts stressed that people who have negative views towards migrants should see them as humans but not as an abstraction. According to them, it is normal for healthy people to behave abnormally in an abnormal situation, especially when people are detained, put behind the fence and crowded in those detention centers. Migrants and refugees look like threats to residents because they see asylum seekers with blurred faces on the media,²¹⁶ the migration is depicted as abstraction, asylum seekers are described as tools and items. In the public discourse, there were a small number of articles discussing how migrants should be depicted and encouraging to look at migrants and refugees from the solidarity perspective.

Articles in which migrants were interviewed showed how they see the situation, asylum seekers described the main reasons why they decided to reach Europe, talked about their living conditions in detention centers. Such articles brought an opportunity for asylum seekers to explain their decisions and promoted greater solidarity. However, interviews with migrants were not a common practice, relatively low number of articles quoted asylum seekers in observed periods. Interviews showed that reasons of migrants and refugees why they decided to reach European countries differ significantly. Some migrants and refugees stated that they did not come for prison, they run from dangers and came for freedom:

*We are all running from something. No one is happy about that. Some were threatened with death, others were attacked in their homes. No one wants to leave their families.*²¹⁷ *I am very happy*

²¹³ LRT, “Protestuojantieji dėl migracijos politikos ragina valdžią keisti veiksmus: „Agne, o tu ar gerai miegi?“ <<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1536007/protestuojantieji-del-migracijos-politikos-ragina-valdzia-keisti-veiksmus-agne-o-tu-ar-gerai-miegi>>

²¹⁴ LRT, “Prie Vyriausybės – visuomenininkų protestas dėl migrantų apgrėžimo politikos: esame prieš tai, kad mūsų pasienis taptų kapinynu” <<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1535894/prie-vyriausybes-visuomenininku-protestas-del-migrantu-apgrezimo-politikos-esame-pries-tai-kad-musu-pasienis-taptu-kapinynu>>

²¹⁵ 15min, “Migrantų grąžinimas gali kirstis su tarptautine teise, bet alternatyvų nematyti”

²¹⁶ 15min, “„Caritas“ atstovė: lietuvių netoleranciją migrantams pajus ir gavę prieglobstį”

²¹⁷ Lrytas, “Gyvenimas stovyklavietės gyventojų akimis: baimė mirti žiemą nuo šalčio ir nenoras likti neturtingoje šalyje“

*that my family and I are here. Being a refugee is not good, no one wants to live in a foreign country, but as long as a person is forced to do so, there is no other choice (Fredsav).*²¹⁸

Other asylum seekers explained that they emigrated to have better living conditions:

*We wanted to go to Europe for a better life. I don't want to stay here. I want to go to another country, have a job, a better life (Malic).*²¹⁹ *There is no life in my country: no food, no water, that is why I and thousands of my brothers chose this path to try to enter the European Union. Me, my mother and my brothers hope that our country in Europe is Germany, that's where we want to go (Amir).*²²⁰

Other migrants expressed criticism how they were treated, described in what conditions they live, what difficulties faced with:

*People are unable to connect with their loved ones, therefore their mental health deteriorates (Rian).*²²¹ *It is very difficult for me. I gave a lot of money, I want a better, normal life. I arrived in Lithuania, and I cannot even take a shower. I do not know why I am here. I asked the officials, they do not answer me. I do not know what is going on (Amad).*²²² *We told them that we want to return to Minsk, we do not want to continue this journey (but Belarusian officials answered to them) It is impossible for you to return to Minsk. Only to Poland (Youssef Atallah)*²²³

Migrants and refugees noted that Belarusian soldiers pushed migrants and helped them to cross the border, gave them wire scissors and forced migrants to cut the fence. Considering the living conditions in Lithuanian detention centres, information vacuum was highlighted by asylum seekers, NGOs, experts and few politicians. Migrants and refugees were afraid to drink tap water as they lacked information on the quality of water in Lithuania, asylum seekers did not know what further decision on their status will be, could not contact relatives as Lithuanian institutions restricted the usage of mobile phones justifying these measures due to the coordination of protests in different centres and the border region, attempts of smugglers and relatives to transport asylum

²¹⁸ LRT, "Jautri Lietuvoje gyvenančių pabėgėlių žinutė: nesame grėsmė, pagalbos prašome ne pinigais, o šypsena" <<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1447377/jautri-lietuvoje-gyvenanciu-pabegeliu-zinute-nesame-gresme-pagalbos-prasome-ne-pinigais-o-sypsena>>

²¹⁹ LRT, "Dalis neteisėtų migrantų tvirtina nori likti Lietuvoje: bėgome nuo Lukašenkos diktatūros ir rasizmo" <<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1450987/dalis-neteisetu-migrantu-tvirtina-nori-likti-lietuvoje-begome-nuo-lukasenkos-diktaturos-ir-rasizmo>>

²²⁰ 15min, "Migrantų krizė: pasienyje įstrigęs irakietis teigia, kad baltarusių pareigūnai verčia eiti į Lenkiją" <<https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/pasaulis/migrantu-krize-pasienyje-istriges-irakietis-teigia-kad-baltarusiu-pareigunai-vercia-eiti-i-lenkija-57-1594984?copied&copied>>

²²¹ LRT, "Izoliacija ir informacijos vakuumas: Lietuvos migrantų centruose bręsta problemos" <<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1460317/izoliacija-ir-informacijos-vakuumas-lietuvos-migrantu-centruose-bresta-problemos>>

²²² Lrytas, "Gyvenimas stovyklavietės gyventojų akimis: baimė mirti žiemą nuo šalčio ir nenoras likti neturtingoje šalyje"

²²³ LRT, "„Į Minską jūs negrįšite“: migrantai papasakojo, kaip Baltarusijos pareigūnai juos stumia per sieną" <<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/pasaulyje/6/1539375/i-minska-jus-negrisite-migrantai-papasakojo-kaip-baltarusijos-pareigunai-juos-stumia-per-siena>>

seekers to other countries. As in the public discourse, the security aspect was highly prioritized without making more flexible, balanced decisions.

Asylum seekers were concerned how they can sleep in perforated tents, asked to change the camp as it will be cold in coming days. Migrants and refugees complained about living conditions, broken doors, windows, lack of hygiene products, clothes, beds and blankets.²²⁴ Only few women seeking asylum were interviewed, in one article they stated that they feel unsafe in shared showers, their privacy is not guaranteed because shower cabins are covered only with curtains and do not have doors which can be locked from the inside.²²⁵ These issues show that gender balance is very important but in the selected periods it was not ensured. In general, interviews of migrants are of a great value as such articles show different stories and perspectives, allow to hear a position of asylum seekers and promote solidarity if articles are written without bias.

7.2. Victimization frame

The victimization issue was raised by both politicians and media in drawing attention to the vulnerable groups which need special treatment and protection. However, politicians had a narrow understanding of what is a vulnerable person. They usually referred to minors and women, talked about professional officials who take into account vulnerable groups when applying the pushback policy. While media provided broader explanation of vulnerable groups, included more examples, interviewed NGOs, experts who expressed concerns about the risks and possible dangers for vulnerable groups, urged to ensure proper protection, accept vulnerable persons in Lithuania.

Politicians did not ignore the aspect of vulnerability, in some statements they described migrants as victims. Media also played a role by asking politicians questions related with vulnerability, whether Migration Department will be able to properly assess asylum applications taking into account that there are about 40% vulnerable persons. Some politicians answered to such questions by focusing on hybrid attack, others, for example V. Č. Nielsen said that all exceptions will be provided to vulnerable groups, they will get necessary medical and other assistance as large amount of asylum seekers are women and children.²²⁶ There were statements where politicians described migrants and refugees as victims or draw attention to their extremely difficult situation. According to A. Anušauskas, asylum seekers have less knowledge about the geopolitical context

²²⁴ Lrytas, “Kol gyventojai protestuotoja prieš migrantų apgyvendinimą, šie skundžiasi: miegame prie tualetų“ <<https://www.lrytas.lt/lietuvosdiena/aktualijos/2021/08/02/news/kol-gyventojai-protestuotoja-pries-migrantu-apyvendinima-sie-skundziasi-miegame-prie-tualetu-20293974>>

²²⁵ LRT, “Ataskaita: migrantų centrai perpildyti, nėra privatumo, o vandenį vaikams šildo saulės spinduliais” <<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1461937/ataskaita-migrantu-centrai-perpildyti-nera-privatumo-o-vandeni-vaikams-sildo-saules-spinduliais>>

²²⁶ LRT, “Čmilytė-Nielsen apie migrantų krizę: privalome užtikrinti žmogaus teises, tačiau turėtume nedaryti perteklinių dalykų”

and fall into Lukashenko's trap from which it is difficult to get out.²²⁷ R. Raskevičius pointed out to the -10 or -15 degrees temperature outside which makes all people vulnerable. He called to start thinking how to avoid a humanitarian tragedy in the border area because "it may be that we will be sitting at the Christmas table and people will die in the forest".²²⁸ Some politicians such as A. Bilotaitė, L. Kasčiūnas noted that border officials are professionals who will definitely take into account different situations related with vulnerable groups – women and children.²²⁹

The Frontex prepared the report which contradicted the statements of politicians. In the report, it was concluded: the system for identifying vulnerable persons does not work in Lithuania. According to the Frontex, it is especially worrying that among the migrants being turned back there may be seriously ill people, parents with small children, senior citizens, pregnant women, victims of human trafficking.²³⁰ The Vice-Minister of Internal Affairs A. Abramavičius in response to the Frontex report, reminded that Lithuania faces with a hybrid attack, announced the State of Emergency and the pushback policy is working. On the Frontex's recommendation to allow all minors to enter the country, he commented that Lithuania cannot accept everyone because such decision would only encourage greater migration and not discourage it.²³¹ According to the officer G. Miškutis, border guards assess whether asylum seekers need medical help, food or something else, however, if every group with minors was allowed into Lithuania the Belarusian regime would immediately form such groups of minors.²³² The deterrence policy was very strict because not all persons from vulnerable groups were allowed entering Lithuania. International standards were lowered down by including additional criteria to determine who can be accepted.

The politician T. Tomilinas argued that the advice of humanitarian organizations would be additional eyes because "tired official eyes not always can see" who is a vulnerable person.²³³ Experts also pointed out a heavy burden and high responsibility for officers who need to separate vulnerable groups just from quick and initial assessment.²³⁴ In general, media framing provided different examples of vulnerable groups in contrast to politicians who usually distinguished women

²²⁷ LRT, "Anušauskas: pasienyje statoma tvora neapsunkins galimybių į Lietuvą patekti Baltarusijos opozicionieriams" <<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1451159/anusauskas-pasienyje-statoma-tvora-neapsunkins-galimybiu-i-lietuva-patekti-baltarusijos-opozicionieriams>>

²²⁸ Lrytas, "Iš Baltarusijos režimo galima tikėtis bet ko: šturmo scenarijus gali pasikartoti ir Lietuvoje"

²²⁹ LRT, "Bilotaitė teigia, kad pareigūnai galės apgėžti neteisėtus migrantus: bus suteikti įgaliojimai užtikrinti šių žmonių nepatekimą į Lietuvą"

²³⁰ LRT, "Abramavičius: jei vykdytume „Frontex“ biuro rekomendaciją, tai būtų atvirų sienų politika, kuri šiuo metu nėra galima" <<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1571866/abramavicius-jei-vykdytume-frontex-biuro-rekomendacija-tai-butu-atviru-sienu-politika-kuri-siuo-metu-nera-galima>>

²³¹ 15min, "VRM: „Frontex“ rekomendacijos nėra privalomos, Lietuva nuspręs, kiek jų laikytis"

²³² LRT, "Advokatas sukritikavo migrantų vaikų atstūmimą: tai yra dvigubas pažeidimas"

²³³ LRT, "Pasienyje su Baltarusija aptikta irakiečių šeima su 4 vaikais: ieškoti vyko Seimo narys Tomilinas, suteikus pagalbą, šeima išlydėta atgal į Baltarusiją" <<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1535940/pasienyje-su-baltarusija-aptikta-irakieciu-seima-su-4-vaikais-ieskoti-vyko-seimo-narys-tomilinas-suteikus-pagalba-seima-islydeta-atgal-i-baltarusija>>

²³⁴ LRT, "Pūras apie migrantų neišleidimą į šalį: Lietuva pradeda lygiuotis į tą pačią Baltarusiją ar Rusiją"

and children. The included definition in one article explains: “a vulnerable person is a person with special needs, for example, a minor, a disabled person, a person over 75 years old, a pregnant woman, a single parent raising minor children, a person with mental and behavioural disorders, a victim of human trafficking or a person who has been tortured, raped or suffered other severe psychological, physical or sexual violence”.²³⁵ NGOs also provided more detailed examples of vulnerable persons who can have serious health problems such as cerebral palsy, cancer, diabetes.²³⁶ In their statements, the pushback policy was criticized as it could make vulnerable persons insecure, pose risks of violence and health related issues.²³⁷ The detention of minors, pregnant women and other vulnerable persons without access to social services raised serious concerns for NGOs. They pointed out:

*Young children and pregnant women are locked up for almost a month without the possibility to leave the buildings. In some places of detention centres, unaccompanied minors are left unattended and accommodated in rooms without separating boys and girls (K. Meidė, Red Cross).*²³⁸

In some articles migrants and refugees were depicted as victims who faced with violence and extremely difficult situations. Interviewed asylum seekers told their stories:

*The Belarusian soldiers ran after us and beat everyone who could not run fast enough with sticks. After chasing us for about 200 meters, the soldiers turned around and we remained in the buffer zone in the woods. Families were separated. People who were bitten by dogs bled.*²³⁹ *The Belarusian militia, border guards came, followed and stopped us, then tripped us. A Belarusian soldier nearby kicked me in the face. I lost consciousness, broke my nose and jaw (Jusef Atalah).*²⁴⁰

Articles depicting sufferings of migrants and refugees bring a different perspective where they can share painful stories and show how they become victims of the Belarus regime organized migration. The victimization frame complements highly securitized public discourse by including humanitarian aspect which encourage readers to reconsider their prejudice against asylum seekers.

²³⁵ LRT, “Advokatas sukritikavo migrantų vaikų atstūmimą: tai yra dvigubas pažeidimas“

²³⁶ LRT, “Migrantų sveikatos problemos gula ant savivaldos ir medikų pečių: nusiskundimų visa puokštė, o suteikiant pagalbą pasipila iššūkiai” <<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1460166/migrantu-sveikatos-problemos-gula-ant-savivaldos-ir-mediku-peciu-nusiskundimu-visa-puokste-o-suteikiant-pagalba-pasipila-issukiai>>

²³⁷ LRT, “Nevyriausybininkai ragina nepriimti įstatymo pakeitimų, kurie „iškeltų grėsmes“ migrantams” <<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1449352/nevyriausybininkai-ragina-nepriimti-istatymo-pakeitimu-kurie-iskeltu-gresmes-migrantams>>

²³⁸ 15min, “Kritika Užsieniečių teisinės padėties įstatymo pataisoms: sulaikytieji taps beteisiais įkaitais”

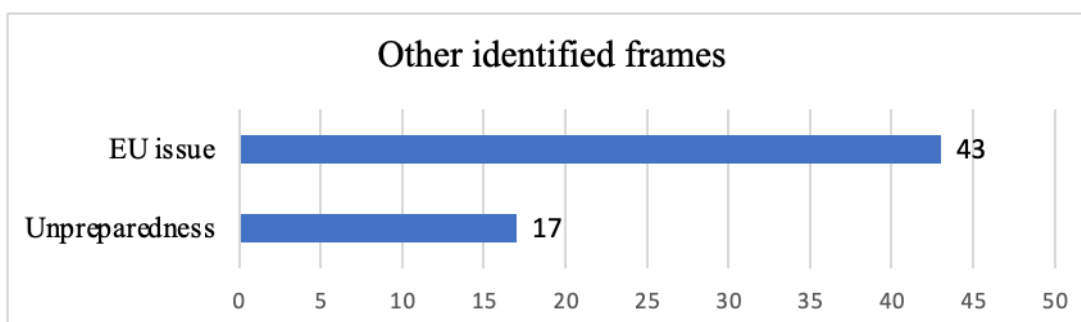
²³⁹ LRT, “„Amnesty International“: Baltarusijos pareigūnai kankina migrantus” <<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/pasulyje/6/1568456/amnesty-international-baltarusijos-pareigunai-kankina-migrantus>>

²⁴⁰ LRT, “Migrantų liudijimai apie baltarusių pareigūnus: spyrė į veidą, praradau sąmonę – sulaužė nosį, žandikaulį” <<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/pasulyje/6/1539558/migrantu-liudijimai-apie-baltarusiu-pareigunus-spyre-i-veida-praradau-samone-sulauze-nosi-zandikauli>>

8. Other identified frames

After coding the empirical data according to the frames based on previous theories and studies, the data was analysed again without using these frames. After the conducted analysis, two frames were identified: unpreparedness frame and EU issue frame. The unpreparedness frame was identified in 17 articles, while the EU issue frame in 43 articles. Mainly, politicians raised the question of unpreparedness to respond to the increased flows of migration and underlined that irregular migration is the issue of the EU.

Figure No. 3



8.1. Unpreparedness frame

Politicians talking about the problematic and difficult management of increased migration flows, pointed out that Lithuanian institutions were not prepared in responding to irregular migration. According to the policymakers, there were organized many trainings and simulations, but it did not help to ensure proper preparation. I. Šimonytė stated that in 2016-2017 Lithuania undertook training during which it was prepared to respond to 40 thousand influx of migrants, however, these efforts did not gave results

Now we have 1.7 thousand of people who have illegally crossed the Lithuanian border in recent months, it seems that we are quite lost. Apparently, this proves again that we put a lot of emphasis on preparation on paper, but when paper becomes reality, it turns out that there is not so much value from that preparation.²⁴¹

Other politicians also raised the issue of unpreparedness that expectations do not meet reality. According to A. Anušauskas, everything looked prefect during the training: there was the involvement of the municipalities, the use of their resources and active involvement but the practical response is completely different. Taking into account these arguments, politicians justify

²⁴¹ 15min, "I.Šimonytė: ruošėmės atremti 40 tūkst. migrantų antplūdį, o dabar esame pasimete"

the necessity of imposing restrictions to reduce tensions.²⁴² They expressed regret that the fence across Lithuania-Belarus border was not built earlier. A. Bilotaitė pointed out to previous made mistakes when Lithuanian institutions in 30 years have not done anything to build a fence, and now those decisions need to be made very quickly.²⁴³ G. Nausėda emphasized that what we have not done in the last 10 years, we will not do in one month:

*Now we can only bite our nails that we did not take care of the control of our border in the last 10 years, although it was clear which country we live next to.*²⁴⁴

Politicians in opposition raised similar arguments related to unpreparedness but they also criticized the Government for the poor management of irregular migration. S. Skvernelis argued that the Government is completely unprepared, distracted, fails to take timely decisions, lacks proper communication with the public and raises tensions within the country when it comes to local communities.²⁴⁵ According to D. Šakalinienė, Lithuania was not prepared for such an influx of irregular migrants as it is facing today, therefore, the decision to tighten the protection of the border with Belarus was inevitable.²⁴⁶ As well as ruling parties, the opposition drew attention to the need to strengthen border control and impose stricter restrictions because of the incapability of managing irregular migration. While few experts highlighted the structural problems in solving issues related to increased migration flows. They noted that the cooperation between national and regional institutions faced significant difficulties, there was poor communication, lack of resources and expertise in examining asylum requests.²⁴⁷ The unpreparedness was framed as a false belief of policymakers that Lithuanian institutions were ready to respond to increased migration flows. Politicians justified the need to impose strict migration policy measures because of inability to swiftly respond to the influx of migrants and refugees. These arguments were used as an excuse to lower human rights standards and protection of asylum seekers.

8.2. EU issue frame

Key decisions makers were vocal in framing irregular migration as an EU issue. They discussed about common EU solutions on return procedures of migrants, negotiations with third countries from which migrants are arriving to Europe. G. Lansbergis actively expressed his opinion

²⁴² LRT, “Žalimas reakciją į migrantų krizę vadina „parodomąja“: kalbama apie hibridinius karus, bet VGT susirinko tik šiandien”

²⁴³ LRT, “Bilotaitė teigia, kad pareigūnai galės apgęžti neteisėtus migrantus: bus suteikti įgaliojimai užtikrinti šių žmonių nepatekimą į Lietuvą“

²⁴⁴ Lrytas, “G. Nausėda: galime tik graužtis nagus, kad nepasirūpinome savo sienos kontrole per pastaruosius 10 metų”

²⁴⁵ LRT, “Skvernelis: tarp konservatorių yra žmonių, galinčių sėkmingiau valdyti migrantų krizę”

²⁴⁶ LRT, “Opozicijos atstovai apie Vyriausybės sprendimą stiprinti pasienio saugumą: tai padaryti buvo galima labai seniai” <<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1462219/opozicijos-atstovai-apie-vyriausybes-sprendima-stiprinti-pasienio-sauguma-tai-padaryti-buvo-galima-labai-seniai>>

²⁴⁷ 15min, “Ramūnas Vilpišauskas: Imigracija tęsis ir po šios krizės, metas tam ruoštis”

on joint EU actions. Foreign Affairs Minister identified the main political goals of the Lukashenko's regime to make pressure on Lithuania and the European Union to change its policy on Belarus.²⁴⁸ After identifying causes, G. Landsbergis concludes:

*This is not an attack only against Lithuania, Poland or Latvia. This is an attack on the EU and the entire community of democratic countries.*²⁴⁹

Other top officials provided similar arguments and sought to convince partners that irregular migration is EU matter. According to I. Šimonytė, this situation cannot be seen as a bilateral issue, it is a challenge for the entire European Union. Prime Minister was glad that Lithuania is not left alone to solve the problem of irregular migration, which is an EU problem.²⁵⁰ G. Nausėda made statements framing the Lithuania-Belarus border as EU external border which protection is a matter of the entire EU. The President of Lithuania talked about common European response to irregular migration that should be swift.²⁵¹ A. Bilotaitė thanked the EU and Member States for support and efforts at EU level to establish a dialogue on readmission with third countries. The Minister of Internal Affairs as other officials framed the irregular migration as EU issue:

*This is an attack against Lithuania and against the EU Member States and the entire Western democratic world.*²⁵²

Politicians often mentioned in their statements that the EU should be concerned about the increased migration flows which are the problem of entire block, therefore, joint response is needed to protect EU external border. By framing irregular migration as EU issue, politicians sought to actively involve other Member States and EU institutions in addressing increased migration flows and providing necessary support for Lithuania.

Conclusion

This Master's thesis aimed to find out how politicians and media framed irregular migration across Lithuania-Belarus border. The empirical data was analyzed based on three groups of frames: restriction, cosmopolitan and humanitarian. After reviewing coded data again, two new frames were distinguished: unpreparedness and EU issue frames. During the selected time periods, the security frame prevailed in media discourse where irregular migration was linked with the threat to national

²⁴⁸ LRT, "Landsbergis Turkijos transliuotojui: turime suprasti, kad Minsko režimas nusiteikęs eiti labai toli, klausimas – kaip reaguosime?" <<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/pasaulyje/6/1452503/landsbergis-turkijos-transliuotojui-turime-suprasti-kad-minsko-rezimas-nusiteikes-eiti-labai-toli-klausimas-kaip-reaguosime>>

²⁴⁹ LRT, "Landsbergis Paryžiuje: situacija pasienyje su Baltarusija reikalauja griežto bendro atsako" <<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/pasaulyje/6/1538044/landsbergis-paryziuje-situacija-pasienyje-su-baltarusija-reikalauja-griezto-bendro-atsako>>

²⁵⁰ LRT, "Lietuvoje viešinti EK narė Johansson: tai nėra vien migracijos krizė, tai yra agresijos veiksmai"

²⁵¹ 15min, "G.Nausėda sako gavęs Ch.Michelio patikinimą, kad ES Iraką spaus per vizų politiką" <<https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/g-nauseda-isorines-sienos-apsauga-visos-es-reikalas-reakcija-turi-buti-greita-56-1544308>>

²⁵² LRT, "Bilotaitė: vertintume visas pastangas ES lygmeniu užmegzti dialogą dėl readmisijos su trečiosiomis šalimis"

security. The sufficiently larger number of articles promoted more stringent restrictions in managing increased migration flows. Nevertheless, frames such as solidarity, human rights, victimization and social justice were quite common, showing that there was a pluralistic debate in media.

Increased migration flows were described as not an ordinary crisis. Belarus regime was blamed for politically motivated instrumentalization of migrants. Terms such as hybrid attack, hybrid threat, hybrid war, hybrid aggression were commonly used. It allowed easily to convince national and international audience that this is not an ordinary migration crisis and requires different approach. The military exercise “Zapad” was also frequently discussed topic to show increasing security risks and possible escalation.

It was necessary for politicians to convince Lithuanian residents and Western partners that Belarus actively invites migrants and organizes their passage across Lithuania-Belarus border. However, to justify strict migration policy, the information was presented in a simplified way assuming that only a few migrants qualify for a refugee status. The war rhetoric further diverted attention from migrants as persons because politicians and media highly emphasized the existing threat, used panic inducing elements in their rhetoric. Instead of focusing on facts, planned actions, political and media framing incited fear and sent a message that Lithuania is preparing for the fight. Migrants and refugees were compared to “little green men”, politicians and media tend to use the word “war” without linking it with hybrid warfare. Various metaphors, noticeable and memorable words, references to war and possible terrorist attacks were used in order to highlight the existing threat. The research findings suggest that chosen wording strengthens the prevailing fears and makes people more anxious about newly arrived asylum seekers.

The terms “illegals”, “illegal migrants” were common in describing migrants and refugees. It indicates that all those persons violated laws and unlawfully crossed the border, notwithstanding the fact that the crossing might be legal when asylum seeker gets a refugee status. Furthermore, the constant usage of terms such as hybrid attack, hybrid threat without contextual information overshadows migrants as humans. They are usually described as participants of hybrid warfare, guns, weapons, tools, instruments of Belarus regime to achieve political goals and destabilize neighbouring countries. Migrants are considered as a threat to society, assumptions are made about possible “armed jihadists”, they are compared to “mines” or “bombs”, portrayed as goods or commodities. The criminality aspect was more widely spread in the general media discourse, where asylum seekers are associated with “ISIS fighters”, possible criminals who could increase the number of crimes. Prejudices and generalization are promoted that majority of migrants behave in the same way. This rhetoric causes dehumanizing effect when asylum seekers are not considered as persons but portrayed as an abstraction or associated with the threat.

Key decision-makers talked about the need to impose deterrence policy in order to prevent potential migrants from arriving to Lithuania. It was important for policymakers do not create favorable conditions for asylum seekers, they argued that deterrence policy is working. There was a tendency to frame chosen policies as a tool to prevent Lithuania becoming a “transit corridor”, the country with uncontrolled and unprotected borders. The protection of borders was related with sovereignty: the country which does not able to control its borders, cannot be considered as fully independent. Politicians presented their aim to ensure partner countries that Lithuania is a reliable, responsible state which will put all efforts to avoid migrants arriving to their borders.

The prevailing security frame distinguishes the case of irregular migration in Lithuania from other migration crisis when economic, social justice, cultural frames were widespread in the media. In general, there were some articles that described asylum seekers as economic migrants who try to reach rich western countries. The aim of searching for better living conditions is widely criticised by politicians and media. Only few articles considered migration as a normal process, creating positive outcomes not only for migrants but also for receiving country. There were few articles stressing the importance of integration, positive impact of social interactions. Experts and NGOs more vocally criticized amendments as violating human rights, showed more empathy in their statements. They urged to help asylum seekers, ensure decent living standards, talked about their suffering and extremely difficult circumstances. Interviews with asylum seekers showed different stories and perspectives, allowed to hear a position of asylum seekers and promoted solidarity. The victimization issue was raised by both politicians and media in drawing attention to the vulnerable groups. When politicians discussed about vulnerable groups, they usually referred only to minors and women. Such framing shows a narrow understanding of a vulnerable person.

Mostly politicians raised the issue of unpreparedness that Lithuanian institutions are not prepared to manage increased migration flows, therefore strict migration policy is necessary. Irregular migration was also framed as the EU issue by politicians. They highlighted that increased migration flows are the problem of the EU and Member States, therefore joint actions should be taken.

Politicians were the most quoted and interviewed group, therefore, they had many opportunities to present their views on irregular migration, frame asylum seekers and propose policy measures. While asylum seekers themselves, NGOs, experts were significantly less interviewed. As a result, these groups had less influence on dominating frames. The analysis of political and media framing shows that the security issue was widely discussed by different interviewed groups.

The conducted research contributed to more in depth understanding of irregular migration framing in Lithuania. It can be noted that highly securitized rhetoric and association of migrants

with the threat potentially promoted negative views towards migrants and refugees. Presumably, such framing encouraged polarization in society, increased political tensions and promoted favourable conditions for populist-authoritarian parties. Further studies could focus on analysing the effect of framing leading to negative attitudes towards asylum seekers in society. Interviews with politicians, quantitative analysis would allow deepening the knowledge about existing perceptions and causal effects.

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Summary

In 2021, Lithuania faced with irregular migration across the border with Belarus when Alexander Lukashenko's regime started organising crossings of asylum seekers from the Middle East and Africa to Lithuania and other neighbouring countries. In response to this situation, politicians had to present their assessment of irregular migration and views on asylum seekers, while media had to make decisions how to portray irregular migration and shape public debate. Communication and framing of asylum seekers have a significant influence how the society will perceive migration, whether it will become a polarizing issue, increase political tensions and create favourable environment for authoritarian-populist parties.

Recently conducted surveys show highly negative attitude of Lithuanians towards migrants and refugees. More than two thirds of Lithuanians obtain information about migration from the media, therefore, it is relevant to find out how politicians and media framed irregular migration when Lithuanian institutions had to manage increased flows of migration. To answer the research question, the framing theory was used. Frames select and highlight some facets of events or issues, promote a particular interpretation, evaluation, and solution. Frames distinguish information from the general discourse as the used concepts by a communicator are more noticeable, meaningful, or memorable to audiences.

The qualitative content analysis was applied to analyse the empirical data. It was gathered from selected articles on LRT.lt, 15min.lt and Lrytas.lt news websites according to the set timeframes of 4 major events from 10 July 2021 to 28 December 2021. The total number of selected articles is 366. Based on the framing theory, three groups of frames were distinguished: restriction, cosmopolitan and solidarity. Restriction frames consider the arrival of new migrants as causing different problems. The provided arguments are related with the need to impose strict restrictions on incoming migrants and strict rules getting permits to live in a country. Cosmopolitan frames claim that the universal human rights, principles of non-refoulment, individualism and generality are of key importance. They provide arguments for open borders and limited right of states to control migration. Humanitarian frames stress the host society's duty to help and the welcoming approach, therefore, it calls for a humanitarian stance in the public discourse. Humanitarianism emphasizes open and fair asylum policy based on compassion and solidarity. After coding the empirical data, two new frames were identified: unpreparedness and EU issue frame.

The security frame prevails in the media discourse where increased migration flows are linked with the threat to national security. A sufficiently larger number of articles promoted more stringent restrictions in managing increased migration flows. Politicians were the most quoted and interviewed group, therefore, they had many opportunities to present their views on irregular

migration, frame asylum seekers and propose policy measures. While asylum seekers themselves, NGOs, experts were significantly less interviewed. As a result, these groups had less influence on dominating frames. Migrants and refugees are not portrayed as persons because of the highly securitized rhetoric and association of asylum seekers with a threat to society. They were described as participants of hybrid warfare, possible criminals, goods or tools. This rhetoric causes dehumanizing effect when asylum seekers are not considered as persons but portrayed as an abstraction or associated with a threat. The research findings suggest that such framing potentially promoted negative views towards migrants and refugees.

Santrauka

2021 metais Lietuva susidūrė su nereguliaria migracija per sieną su Baltarusija, kai Aleksandro Lukašenkos režimas pradėjo organizuoti prieglobsčio prašytojų iš Artimųjų Rytų ir Afrikos pervežimą į Lietuvą ir kitas kaimynines šalis. Reaguodami į atsiradusią nereguliarią migraciją, politikai turėjo pateikti situacijos vertinimą ir savo nuomonę apie prieglobsčio prašytojus, o žiniasklaida turėjo priimti sprendimus, kaip informuoti apie nereguliarią migraciją ir nušviesti viešas diskusijas. Komunikacija ir prieglobsčio prašytojų rėminimas turi didelę įtaką, koks bus formuojamas visuomenės požiūris į migraciją, ar ji taps visuomenę poliarizuojančia problema, didins politinę įtampą ir sukurs palankią aplinką autoritarinėms-populistinėms partijoms.

Neseniai atliktos apklausos rodo itin neigiamą lietuvių požiūrį į migrantus ir pabėgėlius. Daugiau nei du trečdaliai Lietuvos gyventojų informaciją apie migraciją gauna iš žiniasklaidos, todėl svarbu išsiaiškinti, kaip politikai ir žiniasklaida rėmino nereguliarią migraciją. Siekiant atsakyti į iškeltą tyrimo klausimą, buvo naudojama rėminimo teorija. Rėmai išskiria ir pabrėžia tam tikrus įvykių ar problemų aspektus, skatina konkrečią tų įvykių interpretaciją, formuoja vertinimą ir daro įtaką sprendimų priėmimui. Rėmai išskiria specifinę informaciją iš bendro diskurso dėl komunikatoriaus vartojamų terminų ir sąvokų, kurios auditorijai yra labiau pastebimos, įsimenamos ar prasmingesnės.

Empiriniams duomenims analizuoti buvo taikoma kokybinė turinio analizė. Empiriniai duomenys gauti iš atrinktų straipsnių LRT.lt, 15min.lt, Lrytas.lt naujienų portaluose pagal nustatytus 4 laikotarpius, kurie buvo išskirti atsižvelgiant į svarbiausius įvykius nuo 2021 metų liepos 10 d. iki 2021 metų gruodžio 28 d. Iš viso atrinkit 366 straipsniai. Pagal rėminimo teoriją buvo išskirtos trys rėmų grupės: apribojimų, kosmopolitinių ir solidarumo rėmų. Apribojimų rėmuose teigiama, kad migrantų atvykimas į šalį sukelia skirtingas problemas. Pateikiami argumentai dėl griežtesnių apribojimų nereguliariai atvykstantiems migrantams ir pabėgėliams reikalingumo bei sugriežtintos leidimų išdavimo gyventi šalyje tvarkos. Kosmopolitiniai rėmai

pabrėžia visuotinių žmogaus teisių, negražinimo, individualizmo, lygybės prieš įstatymą principų svarbą. Šie rėmai pateikia argumentus dėl atvirų sienų politikos ir ribotos valstybių teisės kontroliuoti migraciją. Humanitariniai rėmai akcentuoja valstybės pareigą padėti prieglobsčio prašytojams ir jų priėmimą į visuomenę, todėl viešajame diskurse raginama elgtis humaniškai su migrantais ir pabėgėliais. Humanitarizmas pabrėžia atvirą ir teisingą prieglobsčio politiką, pagrįstą užuojauta ir solidarumu. Atlikus duomenų kodavimą pagal suformuotus rėmus, buvo išskirti 2 nauji rėmai: nepasiruošimo ir ES problemos rėmas.

Žiniasklaidos diskurse vyrauja saugumo rėmas, kuris išaugusius migracijos srautus sieja su grėsme nacionaliniam saugumui. Pastebimai didesnis straipsnių skaičius skatino griežtesnius apribojimus valdant padidėjusius migracijos srautus. Politikai buvo daugiausiai cituojama grupė, iš kurios žurnalistai dažniausiai ėmė interviu, todėl jie turėjo daug galimybių išsakyti savo nuomonę apie nereguliarią migraciją, formuoti rėmus apie prieglobsčio prašytojus ir pateikti siūlymus dėl politikos formavimo. Tuo tarpu patys prieglobsčio prašytojai, NVO atstovai, ekspertai buvo cituojami žymiai mažiau, todėl šios grupės turėjo mažesnę įtaką dominuojantiems rėmams. Dėl labai saugumizuotos retorikos ir daromos tiesioginės sąsajos prieglobsčio prašytojų su grėsme visuomenei migrantai ir pabėgėliai nebuvo vaizduojami kaip žmonės. Prieglobsčio prašytojai buvo apibūdinami kaip hibridinio karo dalyviai, galimi nusikaltėliai, prekės ar įrankiai. Ši retorika sukelia nužmoginimo efektą, kai prieglobsčio prašytojai nėra laikomi žmonėmis, o vaizduojami kaip abstrakcija arba siejami su grėsme. Tyrimo rezultatai rodo, kad toks rėminimas potencialiai skatino neigiamą požiūrį į migrantus ir pabėgėlius.