

# THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL TRUST FOR THE PREDICTION OF WELL-BEING OF LITHUANIANS AND LITHUANIAN EMIGRANTS

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**Abstract.** Objective. Recent studies have confirmed that social trust is one of the most important correlates of well-being in different populations and contexts. However, there is a lack of research on this relationship in the context of migration. Therefore, this study aimed to evaluate the importance of several social trust indicators for well-being of Lithuanians and Lithuanian emigrants and to compare this relationship in both groups taking into account their social and demographic characteristics. Methods. One thousand two hundred and nine Lithuanians (52.2 % Lithuanian emigrants; 19.9 % males) participated in the cross-sectional online survey on a voluntary basis. Emotional, social, and psychological well-being was measured using the short form of Mental Health Continuum Questionnaire (MHC-SF, Keyes, 2009). The sense of general trust in people and social trust in different governmental and public institutions was measured using 12 separate questions based on the European Social Survey. Results. Lithuanian emigrants reported higher trust in institutions and higher emotional, social, and psychological well-being; meanwhile, non-migrants had higher general trust in people compared to emigrants. Higher trust in various institutions was an important factor in the prediction of higher emotional, social, and psychological well-being of Lithuanian emigrants and of higher psychological well-being of Lithuanians who stayed in their home country. Emotional and social well-being of non-migrants was explained by higher general trust in people, higher trust in institutions and higher levels of family income. Social trust variables showed the highest predictive value in all regression models. Conclusion. Thus, social trust (especially trust in institutions) is an important predictor of well-being in Lithuanians and Lithuanian emigrants.

**Keywords:** trust in people; trust in institutions; emotional well-being; social well-being; psychological well-being; emigrants.

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## INTRODUCTION

The relationship between social trust and well-being is a relatively new topic in scientific literature. Nevertheless, over the past decade, social trust has been confirmed to be one of the most important positive correlates of well-being in different populations and contexts (Agampodi, Agampodi, Glozier, & Siribaddana, 2015; Algan & Cahuc, 2013; Hamilton, Helliwell, & Woolcock, 2016; Helliwell, Huang, & Wang, 2014, 2016b; Helliwell & Putnam, 2004; Helliwell & Wang, 2011; Hudson, 2006; Lucchini, Bella, & Crivelli, 2015; Mironova, 2015; Portela, Neira, & del Mar Salinas-Jiménez, 2013; Rodríguez-Pose & von Berlepsch, 2014), sometimes even more important than economic or financial wealth (Algan & Cahuc, 2013; Helliwell et al., 2016b; Helliwell & Wang, 2011; Ram, 2010). Moreover, Helliwell and colleagues (2011, 2014) as well as Rodríguez-Pose and von Berlepsch (2014) concluded that high social trust determines the rise in well-being at both individual and national levels, but not vice versa. Thus, it seems that such research results implicate a rather obvious conclusion for all governments and all policy makers: building up trust and stronger social ties in the communities would bring economic growth to the countries and personal happiness to their citizens. Still, this recommendation should be regarded with some caution. Firstly, the importance of social trust to well-being was found to be stronger and more important in high trust (Elgar et al., 2011; Helliwell et al., 2016b; Poortinga, 2006) and high income countries (Calvo, Zheng, Kumar, Olgiati, & Berkman, 2012; Ram, 2010; Yip et al., 2007), whereas in the countries of low income, higher income predicted well-being better than trust (Ram, 2010). Secondly, most of the studies reported in this article were conducted in the countries of Western Europe (e.g. Elgar et al., 2011; Lucchini et al., 2015; Poortinga, 2006), North and South America (e.g. Agampodi et al., 2015; Bjørnskov, 2008; Ram, 2010), or Asia (e.g. Meng & Chen, 2014; Yamaoka, 2008), while the research on social trust and well-being in Eastern European and especially in post-soviet countries is still lacking.

As social trust is a two-dimensional phenomenon that encompasses general trust in the people of the society where one lives and trust in various governmental, political or public institutions of the country (Helliwell et al., 2016b, 2016c; Mironova, 2015; Portela et al., 2013; Sarracino,

2010), usually post-soviet societies are described as less trusting both in people and local institutions (Algan & Cahuc, 2013; Bjørnskov, 2007; Mironova, 2015). The repressive communist regime in these countries ruined the fundamental organization of the society and later high rates of corruption, unstable development of economy and different societal transitions increased inequalities and continued disrupting peoples' trust in each other and their new governments after the regime collapsed (Bjørnskov, 2007; Woolfson, 2010). Authors report that income inequality is the most important factor for the decrease of social trust (Bjørnskov, 2007; Helliwell et al., 2016b; Ram, 2010; Rothstein & Uslaner, 2005), which is especially relevant to most Eastern European countries (Bjørnskov, 2007) and to Lithuania as a post-communist society. Taking into consideration that social trust is also culture dependent (Algan & Cahuc, 2013; Dinesen, 2011, 2012; Helliwell et al., 2016b, 2016c; Herreros & Criado, 2009; Hudson, 2006; Uslaner, 2008), the analysis of the specifics of the relationship between social trust and well-being in separate Eastern European countries becomes very important. Furthermore, developing economies in low or middle income countries are characterized by lower levels of well-being too (Ram, 2010).

Lithuanians report not only low levels of social trust (Algan & Cahuc, 2013; Bjørnskov, 2007; Sarvutyte & Streimikiene, 2010; Valickas & Justickis, 2004), but also satisfaction with life, which in Lithuania also remains very low compared to other neighbouring countries (Diener, Oishi, & Lucas, 2003; Helliwell, Huang, & Wang, 2015; *Measuring and Reporting on Europeans' Wellbeing, 2015*; Polgreen & Simpson, 2011; Second European Quality of Life Survey, 2010; Woolfson, 2010). To be sure, limited improvement in subjective well-being and some of the lowest welfare indicators in Europe are not in line with the country's rather successful economic development during the last decades (Rakauskienė & Lisauskaitė, 2015). Moreover, Helliwell and colleagues (2015) reported a decrease in subjective happiness which Lithuania underwent in 2012–2014 compared to 2005–2007, while an increase of subjective evaluation of life was observed in neighbouring countries with similar societal and economic conditions.

Lithuania has experienced very high rates of emigration – still the highest among all European countries (Ambrozaitienė, 2009; Ratha, Eigen-Zucchi, & Plaza, 2016; Sipavičienė, 2006; Sipavičienė & Stankūnienė,

2013). According to official statistics, approximately 940,000 Lithuanians have emigrated to live and/or work abroad since 1990, which constitutes up to 25.4 % of the country's total population in the 1990s (Sipavičienė & Stankūnienė, 2013). On average, 44,200 Lithuanians per year have declared their emigration during the last six years. Although it was expected that emigration would decrease after 2010, unfortunately the numbers are still on the rise: 36,600 people emigrated in 2014, followed by 44,500 in 2015, and 50,300 in 2016. The most popular destinations for emigration remain the same: 42–49 % of Lithuanian emigrants choose the United Kingdom, up to 15 % emigrate to Ireland, and approximately 5–7 % choose Norway or Germany as their destination countries (Migration Department of the Republic of Lithuania, 2017; Statistics Lithuania, 2017).

The high emigration rates cannot be explained only by economic factors and could also be seen as indicators of dissatisfaction with life in Lithuania. Migrants themselves declare the desire to improve their quality of life as the main reason for their migration as well (Frank, Hou, & Schellenberg, 2016; Groenewold, de Bruijn, & Bilsborrow, 2006; Ivlevs, 2015; Kalir, 2005; Kasnauskienė, 2006; Mara, & Landesmann, 2013; Massey et al., 2007). Additionally, migration is usually directed towards countries of higher prosperity and wealth. Recent studies have shown that emigrants are happier and report higher well-being after migration compared to their home populations (Fanninh, Haase, & O'Boyle, 2011; Frank et al., 2016; Helliwell, Bonikowska, & Shiplett, 2016a; *Measuring and Reporting on Europeans' Wellbeing*, 2015; Melzer, 2011; Nowok, Van Ham, Findlay, & Gayle, 2013; Stillman, Gibson, McKenzie, & Rohorua, 2015; Tabor & Milfont, 2011). This is especially valid for work migrants (Switek, 2016) and those who migrated from low or middle "happy" countries (Helliwell et al., 2016a). Meanwhile, the analysis of satisfaction with life scores between immigrants and host country populations revealed no differences (Frank et al., 2016; Helliwell et al., 2016a; Senik, 2014). In addition, host countries are usually characterized by higher social trust with higher support for fair and well-run governmental institutions, clearly functioning political or social systems, greater social support and ethnic diversity (Herrerros & Criado, 2009), which also creates the conditions for the increase in the emigrants' well-being. However, in that case it is difficult to explain the contradiction that migrants from low trust countries bring their mistrust to host societies (the migration footprint

effect for trust is about one-third that of the effect of local conditions; Dinesen, 2012; Helliwell et al., 2016c; Herreros & Criado, 2009) and consequently should not achieve higher well-being, when in actuality immigrants report the same levels of trust (Helliwell et al., 2016c) as well as an increase of well-being after migration. Of course, the trust in political and public institutions is mainly influenced by the quality of these institutions in the host country and the footprint effect in this case is not observed (Helliwell et al., 2016b, 2016c; Hudson 2006; Ivlevs, 2015; Portela et al., 2013). Still, this relationship between social trust and well-being remains unexplored in the context of migration. Thus, this study aimed to evaluate the importance of several social trust indicators for the well-being of Lithuanians and Lithuanian emigrants and to compare this relationship in both groups taking into account their social and demographic characteristics. Based on previous research we hypothesize that Lithuanian emigrants would report higher levels of well-being as well as higher institutional trust, meanwhile their general trust in people would be similar to the levels of general trust in Lithuania. On the other hand, the emigrants' general trust in people might be dependent on the duration of their residence in the host country with no differences for short term migration and higher trust for longer periods of living abroad. It is expected that both types of higher social trust together with higher income would predict higher well-being in Lithuanian emigrants and non-migrants.

The last issue that should be addressed in this article is the understanding of well-being. It has to be stated that different concepts such as happiness (e.g. Algan & Cahuc, 2013; Frank et al., 2016; Helliwell, et al., 2014; 2016b; Helliwell & Putnam, 2004; Hudson, 2006; Mota, Pereira, 2008; Nowok et al., 2013; Ram, 2010; Stillman et al., 2015), satisfaction with life (e.g. Elgar et al., 2011; Frank et al., 2016; Helliwell et al., 2016a, 2016b; Ivlevs, 2015; Lucchini et al., 2015; Mara & Landesmann, 2013; Mironova, 2015; Mota & Pereira, 2008; Ram, 2010), subjective well-being (e.g. Helliwell et al., 2016a; Nowok et al., 2013; Stillman et al., 2015; Yip et al., 2007) and sometimes even mental health (e.g. Agampodi et al., 2015; Elgar et al., 2011; Meng & Chen, 2014; Poortinga, 2006; Stillman et al., 2015; Yamaoka, 2008; Yip et al., 2007) were used synonymously as indicators of well-being in all studies reported above. Usually all these phenomena were measured using separate questions that represent

the cognitive and emotional evaluation of the individuals' overall satisfaction with their life (Diener, 2000; Diener et al., 2002; Frank et al., 2016). However, some studies report that well-being is a multidimensional construct (Keyes & Lopez, 2002; *Measuring and Reporting on Europeans' Wellbeing*, 2015). Thus in this study we employ the concept of Keyes and Lopez (2002) and measure three separate (although correlated; Linley, Maltby, Wood, Osborne, & Hurling, 2009; McDowell, 2010) aspects of well-being: (1) emotional well-being, which reflects positive affect, satisfaction with life as a whole, and feeling of interest; (2) social well-being, which covers positive attitude towards society, social acceptance and social contribution; and (3) psychological well-being, which refers to such dimensions as positive relations with others, purpose in life, self-acceptance, and personal growth. It is expected that trust in people and especially institutional trust would be more important for emotional and social well-being compared to psychological well-being regardless of individual experience of migration.

To summarize, the aim of this study was to evaluate the relationship between social trust and emotional, social, and psychological well-being in Lithuanian emigrants and non-migrants when controlling for socio-demographic characteristics. Three hypotheses are tested here: first, Lithuanian emigrants reported higher level of social trust (institutional and interpersonal) and well-being. Second, trust in institutions and people, together with the income, explain the higher levels of well-being in Lithuanian emigrants and non-migrants. Third, the role of trust in institutions and people will be more important for emotional and social well-being rather than for psychological well-being in both emigrant and non-migrant groups.

## **METHODS**

### **Sample and procedure**

One thousand two hundred and nine Lithuanians (aged from 18 till 70 years) participated in the cross-sectional self-reported online survey on a voluntary basis. The snowball method was used to invite respondents to participate in the study via social networks (e.g Facebook,

Twitter etc.) as well as invitation letters to the Registered Communities of Lithuanian emigrants in different countries.

The total sample consisted of 631 (52.2 %) Lithuanian emigrants and 578 (47.8 %) respondents living in Lithuania. Two hundred and forty males (mean age  $M = 33.11$  years,  $SD = 9.95$ ) and 969 females (mean age  $M = 34.42$  years,  $SD = 10.42$ ) participated in the study. However, the study sample is not representative compared to the population: according to Statistics Lithuania (2017), men constitutes 54.6 % of the Lithuanian emigrant population and 46 % of the population living in Lithuania, while only 20 % of the study sample were males. Furthermore, study participants might be younger compared to the population, as 57.8 % of the participants were aged from 18 to 34, while the same age group makes up less than 50 % of the country's population. Although the gender and age structure of the participants does not correspond to population indicators, no gender ( $\chi^2 = .253$ ,  $p = .615$ ) or age ( $t = -.707$ ,  $p = .432$ ) differences between the Lithuanian emigrants and non-migrants participating in the study were found. Thus, the conclusions about the links between study variables in both groups would be valid, but their generalisability would be limited.

Four hundred and forty-four (70.4 %) Lithuanian emigrants and 340 (59.0 %) non-migrants were married or had a partner ( $\chi^2 = 17.001$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Two hundred and eighty-two (45.1 %) emigrants and 208 (36.6 %) respondents in Lithuania had under-aged children ( $\chi^2 = 8.883$ ,  $p = .003$ ). Three hundred and ninety-one (62.0 %) Lithuanian emigrants and 436 (75.6 %) non-migrants reported university education ( $\chi^2 = 25.811$ ,  $p < .001$ ). 78.9 % of the respondents (503 emigrants and 450 non-emigrants;  $\chi^2 = 0.714$ ,  $p = .438$ ) indicated having a paid job.

Lithuanian emigrants reported living in 25 different countries; however, the largest number of them were from Norway (32.0 %), the UK (29.1 %), Denmark (7.5 %) and Ireland (5.6 %). It should be noted here that this distribution represents the principal migration destinations from Lithuania, but the participation from Norway is overrepresented in this sample (compared to 7 % of all Lithuanian emigrants) and participation from the United Kingdom is underrepresented (compared to 47 % of all Lithuanian emigrants) (Migration Department of the Republic of Lithuania, 2017; Statistics Lithuania, 2017). The duration of the

residence in a foreign country ranged from .5 to 24 years (mean length  $M = 6.00$  years,  $SD = 4.42$ ).

## Measures

The short form of Mental Health Continuum Questionnaire (MHC-SF, Keyes, 2009) was used to measure the well-being of the study participants. The Lithuanian translation of the instrument was adapted from the long version of the tool, which was translated into Lithuanian with the authors' permission (Tukanaitė, 2009). This is a self-reported questionnaire which consists of 14 items scored on a five-point Likert-type scale (ranging from 1 = "never" to 5 = "daily") that measure three components of well-being: emotional well-being (3 items; e.g. *"During the past month, how often did you feel interested in life?"*; Cronbach's alpha .824); social well-being (5 items; e.g. *"During the past month, how often did you feel that the way our society works made sense to you?"*; Cronbach's alpha .797); and psychological well-being (6 items; e.g. *"During the past month, how often did you feel that your life has a sense of direction or meaning to it?"*; Cronbach's alpha .883).

Sense of social trust was measured with 12 separate questions based on the European Social Survey. Three items were related to general trust in people (e.g. *"Most people can be trusted"*; Cronbach's alpha .875) and 9 items referred to trust in different governmental, political, and public institutions (Cronbach's alpha .887): parliament, politicians, police, neighbours, colleagues, legal, healthcare, and educational systems in the country of present residence. All items were scored on the scale from 0 = "I do not trust at all" to 10 = "I totally trust".

Higher scores of all scales reflect higher levels of well-being and trust.

Demographics included variables of gender, age, education level, family status (married/single), number of under-aged children, job status, family income, and duration of the residence in a foreign country.

## RESULTS

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test revealed that all scales differed significantly from normal distribution (value ranged from .076 to .173,



$p < .001$ ), but skewness and kurtosis values all ranged from  $-1$  to  $1$  (skewness value ranged from  $-.143$  to  $-.946$ , kurtosis value ranged from  $-.053$  to  $.897$ ) therefore parametric statistics was used for all analyses. Student's  $t$  test was used in order to compare scores of social trust and well-being between Lithuanian emigrants and those who stayed in Lithuania (see Table 1). Emigrants reported lower trust in people and higher trust in governmental and public institutions in the country of current residence compared to non-migrants. Moreover, Lithuanian emigrants indicated higher levels of emotional, social and psychological well-being than natives in Lithuania.

**Table 1.** Descriptive statistics and differences between Lithuanian emigrants and non-migrants in social trust and well-being.

Variables	Group	N	Mean	SD	t	p																																									
General trust in people	Emigrants	631	12.72	7.6	<b>-7.222</b>	<b>&lt; .001</b>																																									
	Non-migrants	576	15.61	6.3			Trust in institutions	Emigrants	628	60.27	17.5	<b>12.104</b>	<b>&lt; .001</b>	Non-migrants	575	49.13	14.4	Emotional well-being	Emigrants	620	11.75	2.2	<b>6.489</b>	<b>&lt; .001</b>	Non-migrants	567	10.87	2.4	Social well-being	Emigrants	620	16.28	4.6	<b>8.724</b>	<b>&lt; .001</b>	Non-migrants	567	14.02	4.4	Psychological well-being	Emigrants	620	23.69	4.7	<b>5.889</b>	<b>&lt; .001</b>	Non-migrants
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Afterwards, several linear regression analyses were conducted. All five regression models were significant ( $p < .001$ ) and explained from 3.5 % to 11.5 % of the tested variables' variance (see Table 2). The regression analyses revealed that the same differences in social trust and well-being between emigrants and those who stayed in Lithuania also remained significant when controlling for other socio-demographic variables. Additionally, some socio-demographic variables were found to be important to the explanation of these differences. Higher social trust in people was related to the fact of living in Lithuania, older age, having high education and higher level of family income; conversely, higher trust in institutions was explained only by being an emigrant and

higher levels of family income. Being an emigrant, along with having under-aged children and higher family income, were significant predictors for higher emotional well-being. Higher social well-being was related to older age and the same fact of being an emigrant and higher level of family income. The difference in psychological well-being was explained only by the place of current residence – the fact of being an emigrant.

As the duration of residence in the host country might be related to social trust or well-being of emigrants, the correlations between these variables were calculated. Contrary to the expectations, the results revealed no significant correlations between the years of emigration and general trust in people ( $r = .023, p = .630$ ), trust in governmental and public institutions ( $r = -.010, p = .828$ ), emotional ( $r = .042, p = .379$ ), social ( $r = .005, p = .911$ ) and psychological ( $r = .043, p = .364$ ) well-being.

**Table 2.** Linear regression models for predicting the differences between Lithuanian emigrants and non-migrants in social trust and well-being when controlling for socio-demographic variables.

Dependent variable	Trust		Well-being		
	In people $R^2 = .090^{**}$	In institutions $R^2 = .115^{**}$	Emotional $R^2 = .056^{**}$	Social $R^2 = .075^{**}$	Psychological $R^2 = .035^{**}$
Predictors	Beta	Beta	Beta	Beta	Beta
Group (non-migrants)	.227**	-.278**	-.085*	-.211**	-.141**
Gender (female)	.043	-.018	.043	.038	.054
Age	<b>.159**</b>	.029	.025	<b>.103**</b>	.050
Family status (single)	-.008	.027	-.050	.030	-.038
Under-aged children (yes)	-.010	.021	<b>.062*</b>	.000	.016
Education (high)	<b>.091**</b>	.012	-.046	.056	-.035
Having paid job (no)	.014	-.015	.015	-.006	-.004
Family income	<b>.100**</b>	<b>.094**</b>	<b>.125**</b>	<b>.085*</b>	.029

\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$

Finally, the importance of general trust in people and trust in various institutions for the well-being of the study participants was analysed, taking into account their social and demographic characteristics. The linear regression models of emotional well-being for Lithuanian emigrants and Lithuanian non-migrants were significant (respectively  $F = 4.157$ ;  $df = 10$ ;  $p < .001$  and  $F = 10.544$ ;  $df = 9$ ;  $p < .001$ ), but the explanation value of the models was not high (8.9 % and 14.9 % of variance respectively; see Table 3). Higher emotional well-being of emigrants was explained by higher trust in institutions and the fact of having under-aged children. The emotional well-being of non-migrants was related to higher trust in different institutions as well as greater general trust in people and higher family income.

The regression models for the prediction of social well-being revealed the highest explanation indicators (18.4 % for emigrants and 22.7 % for residents of Lithuania) and were significant too:  $F = 9.674$ ;  $df = 10$ ;  $p < .001$  and  $F = 17.570$ ;  $df = 9$ ;  $p < .001$ , respectively. Better social well-being of Lithuanian emigrants was found to be related to higher trust in governmental and public institutions and having a higher education. Greater trust in various institutions together with greater trust in people, older age and higher family income showed significant predictive value for the higher social well-being in the group of Lithuanian non-migrants (Table 3).

Higher trust in various governmental and public institutions was an important correlate of higher psychological well-being of Lithuanian emigrants ( $F = 2.651$ ;  $df = 10$ ;  $p = .004$ ) as well as non-migrants ( $F = 7.002$ ;  $df = 9$ ;  $p < .001$ ). Additionally, the fact of being married (or in relationship) and not having a higher education explained the better levels of psychological well-being of the participants who lived in Lithuania (Table 3). However, the explanation value of both models was the lowest (only 5.8 % of the variance for Lithuanian emigrants and 10.5 % of variance for Lithuanians who stayed in their country).

**Table 3.** Linear regression models for the explanation of social trust's to the well-being of Lithuanian emigrants and non-migrants.

Dependent variable	<i>Emotional well-being</i>		<i>Social well-being</i>		<i>Psychological well-being</i>	
	<i>Lithuanian emigrants</i> R <sup>2</sup> = .089**	<i>Non-migrants</i> R <sup>2</sup> = .149**	<i>Lithuanian emigrants</i> R <sup>2</sup> = .184**	<i>Non-migrants</i> R <sup>2</sup> = .227**	<i>Lithuanian emigrants</i> R <sup>2</sup> = .058**	<i>Non-migrants</i> R <sup>2</sup> = .105**
Predictors	Beta	Beta	Beta	Beta	Beta	Beta
General trust in people	-.005	<b>.160**</b>	-.064	<b>.202**</b>	-.015	.090
Trust in institutions	.242**	.172**	.400**	.282**	.215**	.181**
Gender (female)	.014	.035	.053	.005	.059	.048
Age	.047	-.027	.028	<b>.104*</b>	.016	.020
Family status (single)	-.079	-.089	.020	-.008	.020	<b>-.166**</b>
Under-aged children (yes)	<b>.117*</b>	-.006	.036	-.025	.092	-.050
Education (high)	-.032	-.080	<b>.160**</b>	-.036	.012	<b>-.123**</b>
Having a paid job (no)	.012	.007	-.028	-.016	.007	-.036
Family income	-.027	<b>.197**</b>	-.024	<b>.136**</b>	.001	.071
Duration of emigration	.009	–	.006	–	.031	–

\* p < .05; \*\* p < .01

## DISCUSSION

Studies on the impact of social capital and societal bonding in the community to the increase in subjective well-being have become of high interest in recent years and social trust was found to be one of the most important correlates in this relationship (Agampodi et al., 2015; Algan & Cahuc, 2013; Helliwell et al., 2016b; Helliwell & Wang, 2011; Ram, 2010; etc.). Thus, this study aimed to evaluate the importance of social trust to the emotional, social and psychological well-being of Lithuanians and Lithuanian emigrants and to compare this relationship in both groups,

since there is a lack of research on this relationship in the context of migration.

As expected, Lithuanian emigrants reported higher institutional trust; however, their general trust in people was lower compared to non-migrants. Contradictory to the hypothesis, the emigrants' general trust in people was not also linked to the duration of their residence in the host country. These results confirm the previous findings that trust in clearly functioning governmental or public institutions is more closely connected to the state policy towards its inhabitants and faster adaptation to different life circumstances than to general trust in people (Algan & Cahuc, 2013; Delhey & Newton, 2003, 2005; Helliwell et al., 2016b, 2016c; Hudson, 2006; Uslaner, 2008). Lithuanians have relatively low trust in governmental, political, or public institutions of their country (Sarvutyte & Streimikiene, 2010; Valickas & Justickis, 2004). The study also revealed lower institutional trust of non-migrants. In other words, the major problem of Lithuanian society is low trust at macro level, but not the trust in the closest social environment.

The unexpected difference in general trust in people by Lithuanian emigrants and non-migrants might be related to different conditions that those two groups are in. Research shows that those who belong to the majority of the country's population are more trusting of people (Delhey & Newton, 2005; Hooghe, Reeskens, Stolle, & Trappers, 2009), and migrants are the minority, which usually faces various challenges of adaptation to a new country such as higher isolation and non-acceptance of locals, lower involvement in the community or neighbourhood, lower quality and quantity of social networks (Fanning et al., 2011; Helliwell & Wang, 2011; Tinghog, Hemmingsson, & Lundberg, 2007). Furthermore, migrants usually have relatively low income compared to the locals (Bask, 2005; Denktas, Koopmans, Birnie, Foets, & Bonsel, 2009; Tinghog et al., 2007), and this feeling of inequality might even diminish their trust in people, as income inequality was found to be a very important factor for low social trust, especially in high income countries (Bjørnskov, 2007; Helliwell et al., 2016b; Ram, 2010; Rothstein & Uslaner, 2005). The importance of higher level of income for better general trust in people (as well as for trust in institutions) was also confirmed in this study.

This research confirmed the previous findings that Lithuanian emigrants report higher emotional, social, and psychological well-being

compared to those who stayed in Lithuania (Fanning et al., 2011; Frank et al., 2016; Helliwell et al., 2016a; *Measuring and Reporting on Europeans' Wellbeing*, 2015; Melzer, 2011; Nowok et al., 2013; Stillman et al., 2015; Switek, 2016; Tabor & Milfont, 2011); and these differences remain significant even after controlling for other socio-demographics. Indeed, emigrational status was the most important factor determining the differences in well-being between Lithuanian emigrants and non-migrants; however, higher level of family income was found to be the second important variable for greater well-being in both groups. Thus, these results confirm the idea that emigration (especially from low income countries) might help people to achieve higher well-being and better living conditions (Helliwell et al., 2016b; Melzer, 2011; Stillman et al., 2015; Switek, 2016). Unfortunately, the study design prevents from identifying whether the well-being of emigrants really increased after their migration or if the emigrants from Lithuania initially had higher levels of well-being and were more satisfied with their life (*Measuring and Reporting on Europeans' Wellbeing*, 2015). Taking into account the fact that migrants very often indicate the improvement of their well-being to be the most important reason for their migration (Frank et al., 2016; Groenewold et al., 2006; Ivlevs, 2015; Kalir, 2005; Kasnauskienė, 2006; Mara & Landesmann, 2013; Massey et al., 2007), it could be assumed that migrants might report high levels of well-being just to justify their migration (even regardless of their real-life circumstances). Nevertheless, these study results confirm the idea that Lithuanian emigrants have a more positive psychological portrait compared to those who stayed in Lithuania (Šeibokaitė, Endriulaitienė, & Markšaitytė, 2009a, 2009b).

Based on the literature review, it was hypothesized that greater general trust in people and trust in institutions together with higher income would predict better emotional, social, and perhaps psychological well-being in both Lithuanian emigrants and non-migrants. However, the results confirmed quite different and contradictory prediction models in both groups. Higher emotional (satisfaction with life as a whole), social (positive social acceptance and contribution to the society), and psychological (feelings of self-acceptance, personal growth) well-being of Lithuanian emigrants was predicted by greater trust in various governmental and public institutions, but not by general trust in people or income level. These results show that clearly functioning governmental,

political, or public institutions provide better social support to their users, people gain a better understanding of their responsibilities and opportunities, consequently, trust in these institutions increases, and this is the reason why emigrants start feeling better. Moreover, Lithuanian emigrants live in high-trust countries where the importance of other variables (except trust) for well-being decreases (Elgar et al., 2011; Helliwell et al., 2016b; Poortinga, 2006) and emigrants adopt the values and views of the host country.

As expected, higher emotional and social well-being of Lithuanians living in their home country was explained by higher trust in institutions, higher general trust in people and higher levels of family income. The results confirmed previous findings that income, not only social trust, is a very important variable for the explanation of well-being in low income countries (Agampodi et al., 2015; Helliwell et al., 2016b; Mota & Pereira, 2008; Ram, 2008; Yip et al., 2007). Additionally, locals probably expect more support from the entire society of their country as well as from the people around them, and consequently general trust in people is an important predictor of their well-being.

Higher psychological well-being of Lithuanian non-migrants was predicted by greater degree of trust in governmental and public institutions, by the family status of “having a partner or spouse”, and (unexpectedly) by lower levels of education. This means that people in Lithuania (especially those with high abilities and high expectations) see many institutional barriers to their self-actualization, goal achievement, and personal growth. Thus, regression analysis also confirmed lower trust in Lithuanian governmental, political, or public institutions and dissatisfaction with their malfunctioning (Sarvutyte & Streimikiene, 2010; Valicikas & Justickis, 2004).

Summarising study results, it can be concluded that social trust variables, especially high trust in governmental, political, or public institutions, were found to be the most important predictors of well-being among other study variables, while income was the second significant predictor of well-being (when income showed any relevance). However, it should be noted that predictive values of all models were quite low: 5.8 – 22.7 percent of well-being variance. Moreover, the models that predicted the well-being of Lithuanians who lived in their home country had slightly higher predictive value compared to those that explained

the well-being of Lithuanian emigrants. Thus, future research should include some other psychological variables that might be important to the relationship between social trust and well-being in the context of migration, especially personality traits (that might determine quite consistent differences in the evaluations of life circumstances) and work related variables (such as work related attitudes or satisfaction with work or an employer). Besides, these results might be limited because the study sample is not representative, especially as Lithuanian emigrants from Norway are overrepresented and emigrants from the UK are underrepresented compared to official statistics. Usually, Norway has the highest indicators of social trust and well-being among all countries in the EU and the world, and the United Kingdom is ranked in the 7-11 place in the same rankings (Algan & Cahuc, 2013; Helliwell et al., 2015; *Measuring and Reporting on Europeans' Wellbeing, 2015*). *Of course, this could have an impact on greater levels of social trust and well-being of the emigrants participating in the study. Still, this impact should not be very high, as both Norway and the UK belong to the same group of highest levels of either trust or well-being, whereas Lithuania is usually much lower in the same rankings. Thus, the results of this study represent the basic differences between Lithuanian emigrants and non-migrants, even though the generalization of these results for the population level is limited.*

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## SOCIALINIO PASITIKĖJIMO SVARBA LIETUVOJE BEI EMIGRACIJOJE GYVENANČIŲ ŽMONIŲ GEROVEI

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**Santrauka. Tyrimo tikslas.** Pastaruoju metu nustatyta, kad socialinis pasitikėjimas yra vienas svarbiausių veiksnių, formuojančių gerovę skirtingose populiacijose ir įvairiomis sąlygomis. Tačiau migracijos kontekste socialinio pasitikėjimo ir gerovės sąsajų tyrimų vis dar nepakanka. Šiuo tyrimu siekiama įvertinti skirtingų socialinio pasitikėjimo rodiklių svarbą Lietuvos gyventojų ir lietuvių emigrantų gerovei, atsižvelgiant į socialines ir demografines tiriamųjų charakteristikas. **Tyrimo metodai.** Tyrime dalyvavo 1209 lietuviai (52,2 % iš jų buvo lietuviai emigrantai; 19,9 % buvo vyrai), tiriamųjų apklausa vyko internetu. Emocinė, socialinė ir psichologinė gerovė matuota trumpąja psichikos sveikatos kontinuumo skale (MHC-SF, Keyes, 2009). Socialiniam pasitikėjimui žmonėmis ir pasitikėjimui institucijomis įvertinti, remiantis Europos socialiniu tyrimu, buvo pasirinkta 12 klausimų. **Rezultatai.** Emigracijoje gyvenantys lietuviai labiau pasitikėjo įvairiomis institucijomis, jų emocinė, socialinė ir psichologinė gerovė buvo aukštesnė nei likusių gyventi Lietuvoje, o pastarieji, lyginant su lietuviais emigrantais, nurodė stipresnę socialinį pasitikėjimą žmonėmis. Aukštesnė emocinė, socialinė ir psichologinė emigrantų gerovė, taip pat ir aukštesnė psichologinė Lietuvos

gyventojų gerovė buvo susijusi su stipresniu pasitikėjimu įvairiomis institucijomis. Aukštesnę emocinę ir socialinę Lietuvos gyventojų gerovę paaiškino stipresnis pasitikėjimas žmonėmis, stipresnis pasitikėjimas institucijomis ir didesnės šeimos pajamos. Visuose regresijos modeliuose socialinio pasitikėjimo rodiklių aiškinamoji vertė buvo didžiausia. **Išvada.** Socialinis pasitikėjimas (o ypač pasitikėjimas įvairiomis institucijomis) yra svarbus Lietuvos gyventojų ir emigrantų gerovės veiksnys.

**Reikšminiai žodžiai:** pasitikėjimas žmonėmis, pasitikėjimas institucijomis, emocinė gerovė, socialinė gerovė, psichologinė gerovė, emigrantai.

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