REFUGEES AS A SECURITY THREAT: CASE OF LITHUANIA

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Annotation. Refugee crises rose different debates and divided society in the European Union. Security is one of the main issue, connected with refugees in Europe. This paper presents results of quantitative study toward refugees among Lithuanian citizens in 2015. 535 respondents participated in this study. Stability of a country, crimes, social conflicts and terrorism were highlighted as the main possible security threats. Results revealed quite negative attitude toward refugees by Lithuanian citizens. It was highlighted that refugees could have negative impact of the EU unity, could increase terrorism and crimes. Statistical differences according to gender and age were highlighted. Moreover, respondents opinion about refugees became worse after terror act in Paris in 2015.

Keywords: refugees, refugee crises, threats, security threats, terrorism, Lithuania, European Union.

INTRODUCTION

Refugee migration is one the most controversial topic in politics in recent times especially in American and French, presidential elections, Brexit and the upcoming German elections. This has somehow deepened our understanding of the challenges and security threats migration poses. A lot of people especially politicians have declared refugee migration as a security threat even though in most cases these claims are not evidently proven to support their claims. Political opportunism use this context in their favour in recent years putting more fear and change in people's perceptions on refugee migration.

According to UN[1] figures, the number of migrants in 1990 was 154 million, 2000 was 175 million and in 2013 those figures went up to 232 million. Subsequently, those numbers

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[1] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, 2013. The number of international migrants worldwide reaches 232 million, Population Facts No. 2013/2. < http://esa.un.org/unmigration/documents/The_number_of_international_migrants.pdf > [Accessed:21 April. 2017]

went up in most European Union countries due to refugee influx from mostly war-tune countries mostly from North Africa and the Middle East. This has caused a lot of controversy and fear among citizens of Lithuania coupled with the recent terrorist attacks in France, Germany, Belgium, Russia, Egypt, etc.

Lithuania as a country is not so familiar with refugee and does now have an advanced support system for refugees, which makes it harder for Lithuania to accept and accommodate over 1105 refugees in two years imposed on them by the European Union. Immigrants are perceived as different in Europe because of their nationality, religious and cultural values2. These threats have huge leads to the current situation here in Lithuania and across many other European countries.

Due to the fear-mongering by these political opportunists, people tend to have mixed perceptions on refugees coming to their countries for various reasons triggered by an occurrence that force their beliefs to change or in some few cases remain the same.

The **aim** of the article is to present attitudes of Lithuanian citizens to refugees as a security threats.

Based on scientific literature review four groups of security threats were highlighted. Quantitative study evaluating **attitudes** toward refugees was conducted in Lithuania in 2015. The first section of the paper, presents theoretical background to highlight threats that lead to security concerns connected with immigrants. The second section gives us an understanding on instrument and **methodology** of the survey. Then general insights of empirical study on the threats felt by Lithuanian citizens are proposed and finally, conclusions are given.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND: THREATS THAT LEAD TO SECURITY CONCERNS

Mayda[3] presents two sets of threat factors: economic and non-economic ones. Research[4] has indicated that economic and cultural threats helped for understanding the opposition

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[2] McLaren, L. M. (2003). Anti-immigrant prejudice in Europe: Contact, threat perception, and preferences for the exclusion of migrants. Social Forces, 81(3), 909-936.

[3] Mayda, A. M. (2004). Who Is Against Immigration? A Cross-Country Investigation of Individual Attitudes toward Immigrants (No. 1115). Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA).

[4] Schweitzer, R., Perkoulidis, S., Krome, S., Ludlow, C. and Ryan, M. (2005). Attitudes towards refugees: The dark side of prejudice in Australia. Australian Journal of Psychology, 57(3), 170-179.

towards immigrants and refugees in Australia. Similar results were disclosed in Denmark[5] or in the Netherlands[6].

In addition, Bizman and Yinon[7] disclosed threats related to economic issues, physical or material wellbeing of locals. Economic and political power[8], competition between the locals and new comers over scarce resources such as land or jobs[9] [10] could be highlighted too. This is the type of threat felt by vast majority of Spanish, Italians, Portuguese and the Greeks as they felt their economies where hit harshly during the 2008 recession because of immigrant's economic factors. Due to the vast numbers of illegal immigrants and working in these countries without paying taxes or officially contributing economically but sending money back to their home countries over a long period somehow have impacted negatively on these economies. It is also easier for immigrants to get to these countries because of porous sea and land borders making it easier for immigrants and recently huge numbers of refugees. However, all those presented threats are not directly connected with security threats what is on prior of this paper. Therefore, we will continue with issues connected with security threats.

Local people see new comers as aggressive, dishonest or unintelligent[11]. Therefore, they could expect negative interactions with them and hold negative attitudes against immigrants. These stereotypes are often proven wrong and in most cases due to individual differences. Some of the most prominent are Muslim men would not allow their women to work[12] and would rather have them as housewife's which will have negative impact on the economy if they are to live presently in certain European countries[13]. Another stereotype that perceived Arab men are

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[5] Curşeu, P. L., Stoop, R. and Schalk, R. (2007). Prejudice toward immigrant workers among Dutch employees: Integrated threat theory revisited. European Journal of Social Psychology, 37(1), 125-140.

[6] González, K.V., Verkuyten, M., Weesie, J. and Poppe, E. (2008). Prejudice towards Muslims in the Netherlands: Testing integrated threat theory. British Journal of Social Psychology, 47(4), 667-685.

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[8] Stephan, W. G. and Stephan, C. W. (1996). Predicting prejudice. International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 20(3), 409-426.

[9] Jackson, J. (1993). Realistic group conflict theory: A review and evaluation of the theoretical and empirical literature. The Psychological Record, 43, 395–414.

[10] Fratesi, U.and Riggi, M.R. (2007). Does migration reduce regional disparities? The role of skill-selective flows. Review of Urban & Regional Development Studies.19 (1), 78–102.

[11] Esses, V. M., Haddock, G. and Zanna, M. P. (1993). Values, stereotypes and emotions as determinants of intergroup attitudes. In D. M. Mackie & D. L. Hamilton (Eds.), Affect, Cognition and Stereotyping: Interactive Processes in Group Perception, (pp. 137-166). Orlando, FL: Academic.

[12] Stephan, C. W., Stephan, W. G., Demitrakis, K. M., Yamada, A. M. and Clason, D. L. (2000). Women's attitudes toward men: An integrated threat theory approach. Psychology of Women Quarterly, 24(1), 63-73.

[13] Tausch, N., Hewstone, M. and Roy, R. (2009). The relationships between contact, status and prejudice: An integrated threat theory analysis of Hindu–Muslim relations in India. Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology,19(2), 83-94.

more violent against women due to cultural and religious doctrines practice within their communities for centuries also cause women expecting only negative results while dealing with people from these regions[14]. In many cause these stereotypes are true but lack scientific proof therefore, we believe people are different and could not be generalized based on few negative cases published in the media.

González et al.[15] disclosed fear and perceptions of threat could play an important role in generating prejudice towards new comers in general, and towards immigrants. In addition, Ciarniene and Kumpikaite[16] added that a multicultural society might be threatening to native-born citizens of receiving countries. In accordance to Hefti[17] This can cause resentment among the citizens, which can trigger social conflicts. In addition, some experts disclose inimical consequences for jobs, crime, taxes, cultural norms, schools or social harmony[18]. Moreover, other scientists speak about security and state survival[19]. Dealing with security threats means envisioning the strategies and the actors more suited to preserve stability.

These threats are mostly felt in countries that lack economic stability or in some cases the fear of cultural and religious differences play a good role in increasing the level of fear among citizens. This could be backed-up by the recent economic meltdown in 2008, which mostly affected Greece, Spain, Portugal and Italy. Most citizens in these countries blame immigrants of having significant economic impact on their countries economy over the years that resulted in such chaos. Even though this was not proven to be true, political opportunist used this in their favour at the same time leaving a negative legacy on how citizens in these countries felt about immigrants and refugees to a large extend. Since these threats are also supported by recent terror attacks mostly in Europe, other European countries felt these threats directly and fear for the worst in various countries.

Summarizing analysed scientific literature in this section threats of immigration were highlighted and presented in Figure 1.

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[14] Islam, M. R. and Jahjah, M. (2001). Predictors of young Australians' attitudes toward Aboriginals, Asians and Arabs. Social Behavior and Personality: an international journal, 29(6), 569-579.
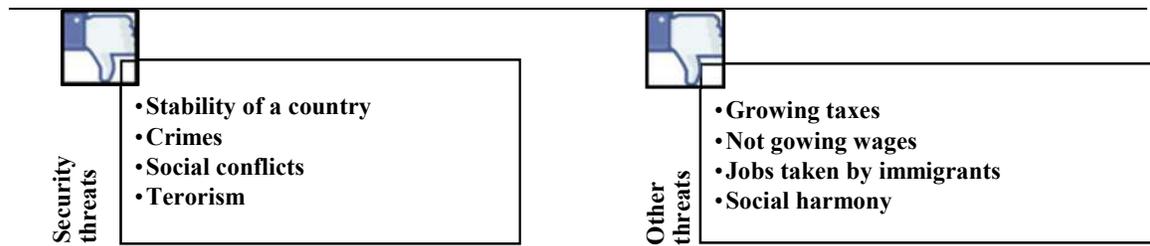
[15] González, K.V., Verkuyten, M., Weesie, J. and Poppe, E. (2008). Prejudice towards Muslims in the Netherlands: Testing integrated threat theory. British Journal of Social Psychology, 47(4), 667-685.

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[17] Hefti, A. M. (1997, September). Globalization and migration. In European Solidarity Conference on the Philippines: Responding to Globalization, Zurich, Switzerland (pp. 1-6).

[18] Simon, R. J. and Alexander, S. H. (1993). The ambivalent welcome: Print media, public opinion, and immigration. Praeger Publishers.

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Figure 1. The main groups of threats affected by immigration highlighted from scientific literature

METHODOLOGY OF THE SURVEY

Based on public comments and mixed feeling about refugees coming to Lithuania, a survey was carried out to access the extent of their perceptions. Research model based on scientific literature analysis, highlighted security threats groups (see Figure 1) and statements formulated based on media was constructed and presented in Figure 2.
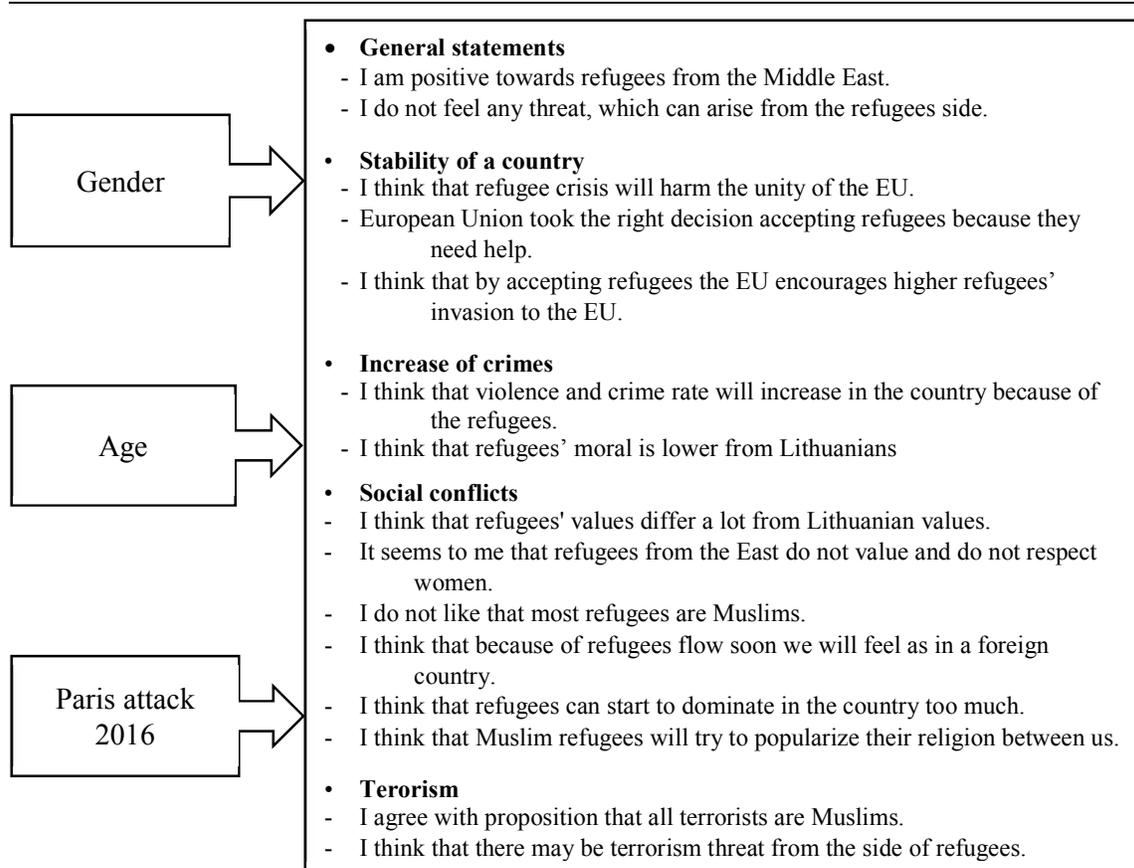
In order to get a representative sample with the margin of error 0.5 of 95 percent probability it was necessary to collect answers from at least 400 respondents (see equation 1[20]).

$$n \; = \; \frac{1}{\Delta^2 + \dfrac{1}{N}} \; ,$$ (1);

wherer　n – number of respondnets;
　　　　Δ – the margin of error (5%, probability 0,95);
　　　　N – general population (2.8 million of Lithuanian Citizen).

However, a total number of 532 citizens participated in the survey what gives us a representative data. Survey was conducted from 15th of October to 10th of December of 2015 in Lithuania. It was developed via Internet and paper questionnaires. The dependent variables are security threats and gender and age are control variables. In addition, Paris attack in 2015 was added as it happened on November 13th when conducting this study. 286 respondents filled questionnaires before Paris' terrorism acts and 249 – after those acts. 331 females and 193 males took part in the survey. 11 respondents did not indicate their gender. The youngest respondent was 13 years old and the oldest was 74 years old. The scare of 0 to 7 was used while 0 = "I do not have opinion", 1 = "totally disagree", and 7=" totally agree". SPSS software was used to analysed data. Comparison of means was used to highlight respondents' attitude to security threats. Spearman correlation analysis was explored to see connections among threats and control variables.
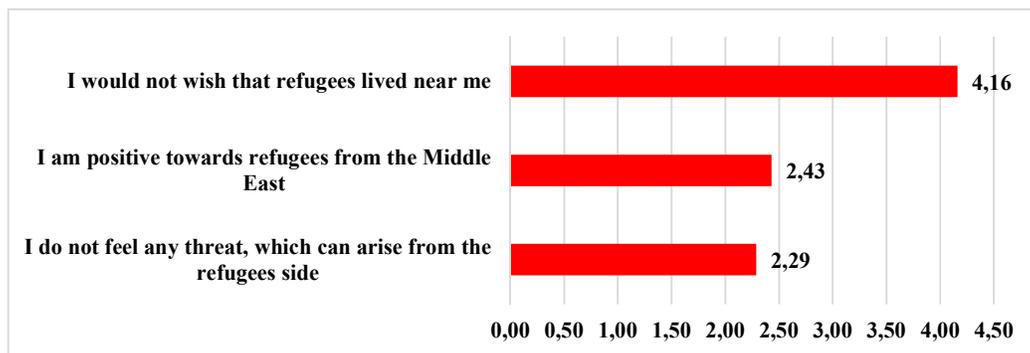
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[20] Korenev, J., Paniotto, V., & Jakovenko, J. (1986). Population Mass Inquests on the Basis of the State Post Service. Sotsiologicheskie Issledovaniya, (4), 115-118.

- **General statements**
  - I am positive towards refugees from the Middle East.
  - I do not feel any threat, which can arise from the refugees side.

- **Stability of a country**
  - I think that refugee crisis will harm the unity of the EU.
  - European Union took the right decision accepting refugees because they need help.
  - I think that by accepting refugees the EU encourages higher refugees' invasion to the EU.

- **Increase of crimes**
  - I think that violence and crime rate will increase in the country because of the refugees.
  - I think that refugees' moral is lower from Lithuanians

- **Social conflicts**
  - I think that refugees' values differ a lot from Lithuanian values.
  - It seems to me that refugees from the East do not value and do not respect women.
  - I do not like that most refugees are Muslims.
  - I think that because of refugees flow soon we will feel as in a foreign country.
  - I think that refugees can start to dominate in the country too much.
  - I think that Muslim refugees will try to popularize their religion between us.

- **Terorism**
  - I agree with proposition that all terrorists are Muslims.
  - I think that there may be terrorism threat from the side of refugees.

Gender

Age

Paris attack 2016

Figure 2. Research model of security threats forward refugees

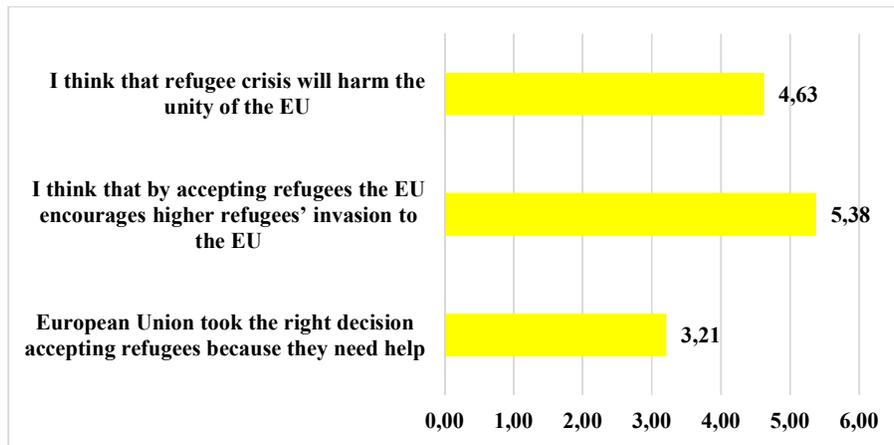## EMPIRICAL STUDY ON THE THREATS FELT BY LITHUANIAN CITIZENS

Firstly, general questions about refugees and feeling of threats were given. These answers demonstrate negative attitude of respondents forward refugees (see Figure 3). Respondents disagree that they do not feel any threat, which can arise from refugees (mean 2.29). They are not positive towards refugees (mean 2.43). In addition, majority of participants of the study would not like refugees living the next with them (mean 4.16).

I would not wish that refugees lived near me — 4,16

I am positive towards refugees from the Middle East — 2,43

I do not feel any threat, which can arise from the refugees side — 2,29

0,00 0,50 1,00 1,50 2,00 2,50 3,00 3,50 4,00 4,50

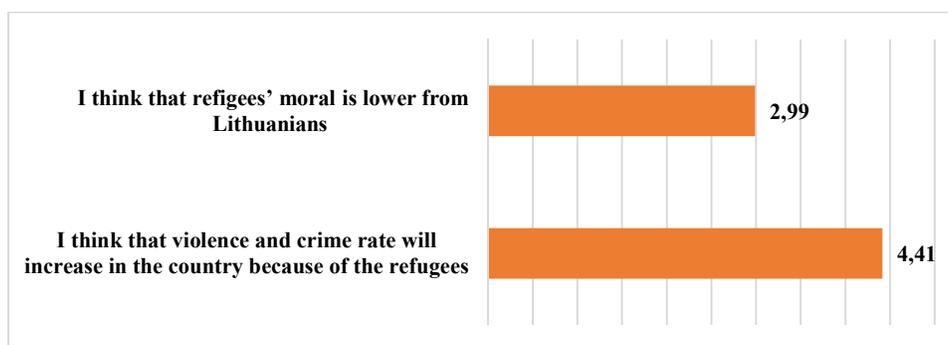**Figure 3.** General attitude to refugees, mean value

Stability of a country

Respondents' opinion about refugees influence on stability of the European Union was the next moment analysed in the study. Its results are presented in Figure 4. In accordance with these results, it was highlighted that respondents agree that by accepting refugees the EU encourages higher refugees' invasion. Moreover, mean of a statement "I think that refugee crisis will harm the unity of the EU" is a bit higher than average. Mean 3.21 shows lower than average evaluation showing quite critical respondents' opinion about decision to let refugees to enter the EU.

Figure 4. Respondents' opinion about refugees influence on stability of the European Union, mean value
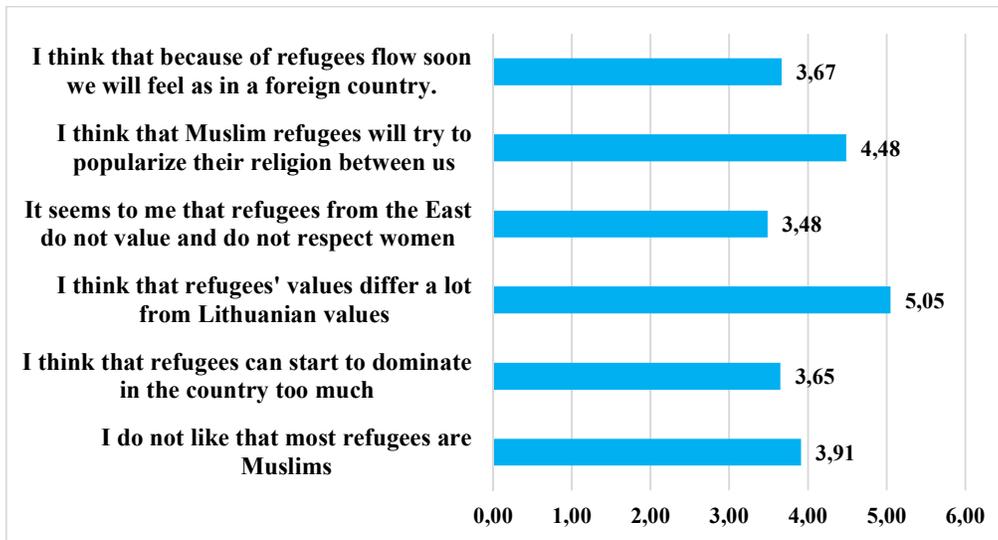
Increase of crimes

Figure 4 presents respondents' attitude toward refugees' moral and crime, and violence situation. Mean 2.99 demonstrates that respondents neither agree that moral of refugees is lower from Lithuanians. However, mean value of attitude to violence and crime increase because of the refugees is average (4.41).

Figure 5. Respondents' attitudes to morality of refugees and crime, mean value
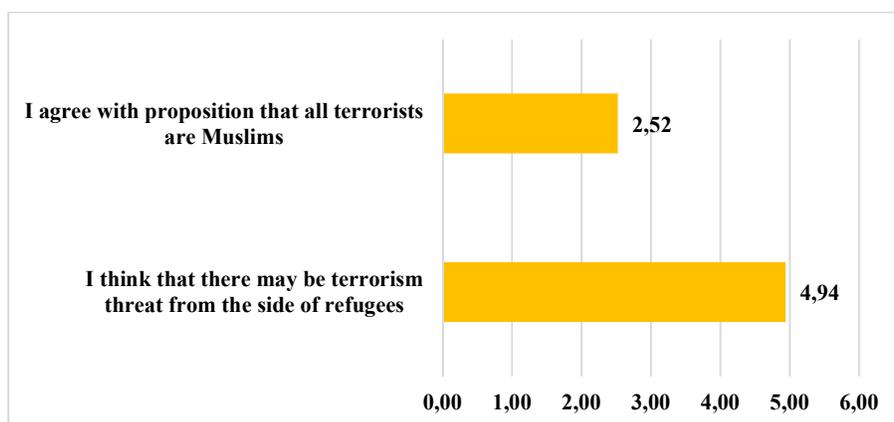
Social conflicts

The next group of security threats is connected with social conflicts may arise between locals and refugees (see Figure 4). The highest evaluation was given for the statement that refugees' values differ a lot from Lithuanian values. Average evaluation (4.48) for threat concerning that Muslim refugees will start to popularise their religion. Other threats were evaluated as not so important threats. However, mean values are higher than 3.48 in all cases.

Figure 6. Evaluation of social conflict factors, mean value

Terrorism

Finally, the threat connected with terrorism were evaluated (see Figure 6). Respondents mostly disagree with propositions that all terrorism are Muslims. These news are good toward Muslim people. However, evaluation about terrorism threat arising from refugees was evaluated almost by 5 (maximum evaluation 7). It means that this threat is really important and one of the most important.

Figure 7. Evaluation of terrorism threat, mean value

Comparison analysis according to control variables

Table 1 presents statements, which has statistical difference according to control variable "Paris attack". We could see that respondents more accepted propositions "I think that there may be terrorism threat from the side of refugees" and "I agree with proposition that all terrorists are Muslims" after terrorism acts in Paris in 2015. It was obvious that people could feel this way since those attacks were linked to religious extremism and the attacker was perceived to be an immigrant from Middle East fleeing war as a refugee. In addition, respondents started thinking more that refugee crisis will harm the unity of the EU. Two more statistical significant but very week relations were found. More people started to agree that refugees from the East do not value and do not respect women and more disagree that the European Union took the right decision accepting refugees because they need help

Table 1. General results of empirical study for in-group threats

Statements	Mean	Std. Dev.	Paris attack
I think that there may be terrorism threat from the side of refugees.	4.94	2.238	,152**
I agree with proposition that all terrorists are Muslims	2.52	2.399	,196**
It seems to me that refugees from the East do not value and do not respect women	3.47	2.444	,086*
European Union took the right decision accepting refugees because they need help	3.25	2.120	-,086*
I think that refugee crisis will harm the unity of the EU	4.57	2.245	,116**

Note: **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed),
*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Four statistical differences were highlighted in accordance with age (see Table 2).

Younger respondents agree more with the statements that refugees can start to dominate in the country too much and that because of refugees flow soon locals will start feeling as in a foreign country. In addition, younger respondents agree with proposition that all terrorists are Muslims more than older once. Moreover, older respondents are more positive towards refugees from the Middle East but they think that by accepting refugees the EU encourages higher refugees' invasion to the EU. However, it should be mentioned that all highlighted significant correlations are very week.

Table 2. General results of empirical study for in-group threats

Statements	Mean	Std. Dev.	Age
I think that refugees can start to dominate in the country too much	3.59	2.475	-,096**
I think that because of refugees flow soon we will feel as in a foreign country	3.65	2.455	-,140**
I agree with proposition that all terrorists are Muslims	2.52	2.399	-,111**
I am positive towards refugees from the Middle East	2.43	1.854	,090*
I think that by accepting refugees the EU encourages higher refugees' invasion to the EU	5.37	2.048	,103*

Note: **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed),
　　　* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Looking at differences according to gender (see Table 3), females agree more that refugees can start dominating in the country too much in comparison with males. At the same time men think that refugees' morality is lower than local people more than women. Moreover, more males do not feel any threat, which can arise from the refugees' side. It demonstrates that they are calmer and less stressed out in comparison with females. It also corresponds with the findings that females think that there may be terrorism threat from the side of refugees more than males. Moreover, more females do like a fact that most refugees are Muslims and this means that women are more threatened by people of other religion, especially of Muslims.

Table 3. General results of empirical study for in-group threats

Statements	Mean	Std. Dev.	Gender
I think that there may be terrorism threat from the side of refugees	4.94	2.238	,133**
I do not feel any threat, which can arise from the refugees side	2.31	1.922	-,145**
I think that refugees can start to dominate in the country too much	3.59	2.475	,106*
I think that refugees' morality is lower than Lithuanian	2.95	2.593	-,125**
I do not like that most refugees are Muslims	3.91	2.639	,085*

Note: **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed),
　　　*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

CONCLUSION

The conducted study shifted that Lithuanians highlighted terrorism and stability of the EU as the main threats of refugee crisis. These threats felt by Lithuanian respondents had a basis. The world faced with more terrorism acts, which were organized by immigrants and refugees. With recent terror attacks mostly in France, Germany, Russia, Sweden, Belgium, Turkey and the U.K. there is even more fear among citizens of Lithuania and that will obviously translate to more security threats on the side of refugees coming from Middle East. Moreover, refugee crises had an influence on Brexit decision in the U.K. and other European countries. Marine Le Pen, a leader of National Front with her ideas against immigrants and separation of France in the last step of presidential elections in France is not the only example in Europe. National parties take leading positions in many European countries and these issues harm the unity of the European Union a lot.

The results indicated general perceptions of Lithuanians on refugees with the most serious threat been that by accepting refugees the EU encourages higher refugees' invasion to the EU. Moreover, this threat looks to be real. Information sources[21] announce that number of immigrants increased in 2016 comparing to 2015, and it is higher in the same period in 2017 comparing with 2016.

Moreover, respondents are afraid that crimes and violence could increase because of refugees. It corresponds, with other findings those migrants often are seen as free-loaders or suspected of being criminals and statistics of Lithuania. For example in Lithuania, where were seen very high emigration rate crimes decreased by 15.4 percent comparing 2004 and 2011. Number of murders decreased from 345 until 211 by 39 percent. It is because together with qualified people criminals left country also.

Therefore, we could summarize that attitudes toward refugees are quite negative. In addition, there are several very important security threats, connected with refugees. This is an increased number of crimes and terrorism, what harms the unity of the EU and nonsatisfaction of citizens in different countries. Therefore, security of citizens should be a prior issue for the EU and its members' governments.

Limitations. Weak correlations were highlighted comparing threats according to control variables. It could be due because even general responses rate was 535, however sample of different control groups were lower. Moreover, longitudinal study would be useful to conduct

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[21] 2016 m. į Europą atvyko per 110 tūkst. migrantų. http://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/world/2016-m-i-europa-atvyko-per-110-tukst-migrantu.d?id=70493486

as answers could differ in comparison with 2015 as situation in the EU increase a lot. Generally, the majority of Europeans feel Muslims from the Middle East are more prompt to be religious extremist, which is while most terrorist are associated or linked to terror groups justifying their attack on religious beliefs. These threats are of high security concern due to recent terror attacks in Nice and Paris, Berlin, Brussel, Stockholm, London and Saint Petersburg.

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PABĖGĖLIAI KAIP GRĖSMĖ SAUGUMUI: LIETUVOS ATVEJIS

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Santrauka

Pabėgėlių krizė, prasidėjusi 2015 m. Europoje sukėlė didelius debatus ir suskaldė Europos sąjungos visuomenę. Buvo išsakyta daug skirtingų nuomonių apie pabėgėlius bei su jais susijusias grėsmes. Viena jų – saugumas. Šiame straipsnyje atskleidžiama Lietuvos piliečių nuomonė apie saugumą, susijusį su pabėgėliais. Remiantis mokslinės literatūros analize buvo išskirtos keturios saugumo faktorių grupės: šalies stabilumas, socialiniai konfliktai, nusikaltimai ir terorizmas. 335 respondentai dalyvavo kiekybiniame tyrime 2015m. rudenį. Rezultatai atskleidė gana neigiamą Lietuvos piliečių požiūrį į pabėgėlius. Tyrimo dalyviai išsakė savo nuomonę, kad atvertos sienos į ES dar labiau paskatins pabėgėlių srautus į Europą, o tai neigiamai paveiks ES vienybę. Terorizmo aktas Paryžiuje 2015 m. lapkričio 13d. dar labiau padidino respondentų nuomonę apie terorizmo grėsmę. Be to pastebėtina, jog moterys labiau neigiamai nusiteikę prieš pabėgėlius musulmonus, o daugiau vyrų neįžvelgia jokių grėsmių, kilsiančių iš pabėgėlių, lyginant jų atsakymus su moterų. Be to, jaunesni piliečiai išreiškė labiau neigiamą nuomonę apie pabėgėlių dominavimą ir musulmonų sąsajas su terorizmu.

Pagrindinės sąvokos: pabėgėliai, pabėgėlių krizė, grėsmės, saugumo grėsmės, terorizmas, Lietuva, Europos Sąjunga.

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