

## THE MOVEMENT OF NEW LABOUR IMMIGRANT POPULATIONS TO RURAL AREAS: THE CASE OF LITHUANIAN NATIONALS IN IRELAND

## O MOVIMENTO DE NOVAS POPULAÇÕES DE TRABALHADORES IMIGRANTES PARA ÁREAS RURAIS: O CASO DOS LITUANOS NA IRLANDA

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### Resumo

A migração relacionada com o trabalho das economias em desenvolvimento está a aumentar a nível internacional, para satisfazer as necessidades de emprego das economias desenvolvidas. As novas populações imigrantes tendem a deslocar-se inicialmente para as grandes cidades, onde as oportunidades de emprego são maiores. O movimento posterior descendente na hierarquia urbana também está documentado. O recrutamento de mão-de-obra imigrante para atividades económicas primárias baseadas em zonas rurais também está a ser estabelecido a nível internacional, muitas vezes com autorizações de trabalho de duração variável. Recomenda-se que sejam realizadas mais pesquisas sobre a distribuição espacial do trabalho imigrante num conjunto mais amplo de países, a fim de contribuir para uma melhor compreensão do fenómeno, fornecer um melhor contexto para a investigação de estudos de caso e contribuir para a teoria. Este capítulo fornece uma análise quantitativa da distribuição dos imigrantes lituanos na Irlanda numa escala geográfica detalhada. Os lituanos têm livre acesso ao mercado de trabalho desde 1 de Maio de 2004, altura em que o seu país se tornou membro da União Europeia (UE). Os resultados ilustram associações com cidades e grandes vilas, mas também dispersão para locais de menor dimensão e áreas rurais.

**Palavras-chave:** migração laboral, lituanos, Irlanda rural.

### Abstract

Labour-related migration from developing economies is increasing internationally, to meet the employment demands of developed economies. New immigrant populations tend to move initially to large cities where employment opportunities are greatest. Later movement down the urban hierarchy is also documented. Recruitment of immigrant labour to rural-based primary economic activities is also becoming established internationally, often on work-permits of varying duration. It is recommended that further research should be conducted on the spatial distribution of immigrant labour in a wider range of countries to contribute to better understanding of the phenomenon, provide a better context for case study research and contribute to theory. This chapter provides a quantitative analysis of the distribution of Lithuanian immigrants in Ireland at a detailed geographical scale. Lithuanians have had free access to the labour market since 1<sup>st</sup> May 2004 when their country became a member of the European Union (EU). The results illustrate associations with cities and large towns but also dispersal to smaller size places and rural areas.

**Key words:** labour migration, Lithuanians, rural Ireland.

## 1- Introduction

The attraction of international migrants to fill deficits in the local labour supply in developed economies has increased in recent decades (de Haas et al., 2020). Such migrants often move initially to large 'gateway' cities where the demand for labour is greatest (Sassen, 1996). Recruitment of immigrant labour to rural-based economic activities such as agriculture and agricultural processing, horticulture and mining is also well-established internationally in countries like Canada, Greece, Portugal, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, often on work-permits of varying

duration (Argent & Tonts, 2015; Barcus & Simmons, 2013; Findlay & McCollum, 2013; Fonseca, 2008; Hoggart & Mendoza, 1999; Jentsch & Simard, 2009; Kasimis, 2008; Massey, 2008; Preibisch, 2007). Immigrants who move to large cities initially may later move down the urban hierarchy to smaller towns and villages (see e.g., Fonseca, 2008; McAreavey, 2017). Rye & Slettebak (2020) recommend that further research should be conducted on the spatial distribution of immigrant labour and changes over time in those distributions, in a wider range of countries and political contexts, to contribute to better understanding of the phenomenon internationally, provide greater context for case studies and contribute to theory. This chapter is designed to present evidence relating to Lithuanian immigrants in Ireland as a contribution to the literature.

The reported research is based on published and unpublished census of population data for Electoral Divisions (ED), which are the smallest areas for which comprehensive data are available in the Irish census of population. Lithuanian nationals are one of the two recent EU immigrant groups in Ireland for whom count data are available at ED level in the census of population since 2006 (the other group being Polish nationals). Their changing distribution is traced here with particular reference to the census years 2006, 2011 and 2016 using choropleth mapping. The distributions are analysed through application of the Hoover index (H) of population concentration and deconcentration and the Dissimilarity index (D) which permits the immigrant distributions to be compared with those of Irish nationals. These indexes permit more detailed understanding to be gained of a population's distribution than available from mapping alone. The relationship with key sectors of employment is discussed. Information relating to the employment of Lithuanians by ED is not available publicly from the census. Summary reports by the Central Statistics Office (CSO) indicate the main types of employment in which they are involved. These sources are used together with information relating to the location of the relevant types of employment in order to help explain the distribution patterns identified.

The chapter proceeds by presenting: (i) a brief introduction to the urban and rural distribution of immigrant labour internationally; (ii) the context in which Lithuanians immigrated to Ireland; (iii) the sources and the methodology used; (iv) the results; and (v) a summary discussion.

## **2- The urban-rural distribution of immigrant labour**

The attraction of large cities for labour immigrants is well-established because of the range of employment opportunities that are available to them, under both conditions of free movement and undocumented status. These opportunities include highly paid employment where skills and education are recognized but also lower paid and precarious employment (Sassen, 1996). Dispersion down the urban hierarchy takes place over time, often over several generations. Since the late 1990s direct movement and dispersal to small towns and rural areas has been documented widely (see Jentsch & Simard [2009] for an overview). The underlying influences are closely related with the restructuring of rural economies and improved levels of education and training among the indigenous young people. Primary agricultural production, forestry and mining activities and their processing have become increasingly industrialised. Employment has sometimes declined but in other cases, such as agriculture and the food sector, intensive manual activities have expanded (Findlay & McCollum, 2013; Rogaly,

2008). The types of employment that are available are no longer attractive to many of the increasingly educated young native population, who tend to move elsewhere, if opportunities arise (Kasimis, 2008; Rye & Scott, 2018). Sometimes, the immigrants play a role as secondary forms of labour, by compensating for local labour deficits, instead of capturing jobs from locals. The willingness of some immigrant labour to accept employment that may be below their skill levels and educational qualifications is attributed, inter alia, to the comparatively higher wage levels available in contrast with the area of origin and a desire to obtain experience of living in another country (de Haas et al., 2020). In Europe, immigrant labour from other European low wage economies has been identified as often moving to low paid and low skilled employment in building and construction, hospitality and tourism, agriculture, food processing, retail, health care, domestic work and manufacturing (Jentsch & Simard, 2009; McAreavey, 2017).

Large scale civic building and construction projects are frequently major sources of employment for migrant males and can involve health risks (Chan, Clarke & Dainty, 2010). Food processing activities may involve demanding unpleasant work in abattoirs, meat packing and fish processing facilities, for example (Rye & Scott, 2018). Seasonal labour demands in restaurants and hotels in tourist areas are frequently filled by both male and female migrant workers, and they may work unsocial hours that are not acceptable to local workers in retail establishments and cafés (Rye & Scott, 2018). Migrant female workers may find demanding employment in elderly care homes and as cleaners in private homes (Kasimis, 2008; Maher & Cawley, 2016; Walsh & O'Shea, 2010).

### **3- Labour immigration to Ireland**

Ireland has been known as a country of emigration dating back to a period of severe famine in the mid-nineteenth century. From the late 1990s, however, the state experienced one of the highest rates of economic growth among the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, associated with national and European Community (EC)/European Union (EU) investment and the attraction of overseas companies (Sweeney, 1999). The demand for labour grew rapidly in a range of sectors from the late 1990s beyond the capacity of the local market to fill and labour was recruited internationally (Quinn, 2010). From the late 1990s also, the citizens of eight former Soviet Bloc countries of Eastern and Central Europe, that were negotiating access to membership of the EU, were prioritized for Irish work permits (MacÉinrí & White, 2008). After their accession to membership on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2004, their citizens had immediate access to employment in Ireland (and in Sweden and the UK), and their numbers increased (Quinn, 2010). Unemployment was high in their own countries at this time because of economic restructuring associated with the transition from a socialist economy (Favell, 2008).

Central Statistics Office (CSO) summary reports reveal that the main sectors in which Lithuanians found employment in Ireland were building and construction (prior to the recession of 2008), manufacturing (which includes meat processing), wholesale and retail activities, hospitality, and business services (CSO, 2008, 30 & 34; CSO, 2017a). The rapidly growing agricultural production and agricultural processing sectors, which have particular geographical distributions, were of importance for

them and recruitment took place through agents in Lithuania. These include beef processing for export which expanded markedly during the late 1990s in small and medium sized towns throughout the country (Crowley, Walsh & Meredith, 2008; Maher & Cawley, 2016); and pig and poultry processing which are concentrated in county Cavan and county Monaghan, respectively, in the north midlands (Figure 1) (Crowley et al., 2008). During the 1980s, Ireland became an important producer of mushrooms for the domestic and export markets, initially based in small towns in county Monaghan and later being introduced in parts of the west and the south (Crowley et al., 2008). Growing demand from population growth contributed to the expansion of horticultural production in the northeast of Ireland, a traditional vegetable growing area for the Dublin market, and in the environs of other large cities and in parts of the northwest and the southeast (Crowley et al., 2008) (Figure 1). The rapidly expanding tourism sector in scenic rural areas, the expansion of restaurants and cafés and retail establishments in small as well as large settlements also provided employment, particularly for female immigrants (Wickam et al., 2008).



**Figure 1:** Irish counties  
Source: Tailte Éireann county outlines

The Irish construction sector collapsed in 2008, due to both national and international factors and was instrumental in causing the failure of the banking sector, leading to recession. The recession was identified as contributing to unemployment of 60% among migrant workers and some return migration took place to the countries of origin (Krings et al., 2011). Only a minor decline (-0.36%) took place in the Lithuanian population in Ireland, between 2011 and 2016, as the Irish economy recovered slowly from

recession (Table 1). Some return migration may have been replaced by new immigrants. Zaiceva and Zimmermann (2012) suggest that outmigration of Lithuanians from Ireland and a number of other countries, during recession and recovery, was due to a combination of return migration for economic, family and cultural reasons and movement to other countries where employment opportunities became available. Preliminary information from the 2022 census of population reveals continued and increased outmigration of Lithuanians from Ireland (their number declined by -14.7% between 2016 and 2022) (CSO, 2023). The Lithuanian economy recovered slowly following the recession of 2008 and more rapidly following the COVID-19 pandemic, which probably encouraged return during the census years 2016-2022, but has been affected very negatively by the war in Ukraine (OECD, 2022).

#### 4- Data sources and methods of analysis

The analysis conducted involved study of the distribution of Lithuanian nationals in Ireland between cities, towns and rural areas, choropleth mapping at a detailed ED level which enabled urban and rural differences to be disaggregated further and application of the H index (see Barcus & Simmons [2013]) and the D index (see Lichter & Johnson [2006]; and Rogerson & Plane [2013]). Attention then focused on 'rural' areas, as defined for the purposes of the study.

There are 3409 EDs in Ireland which include urban and rural areas. EDs vary in size from less than one Km<sup>2</sup> to more than 100 Km<sup>2</sup> and the populations vary from less than one hundred in some peripheral rural locations to several thousands in urban areas. Choropleth mapping was used to illustrate the density of Lithuanian nationals per 10km<sup>2</sup> by ED, for each of the three census years. This mapping permits urban and rural distributions to be identified visually. For reasons of space only the density map for 2016 is included here but the main patterns and trends over time are discussed. The H and D indexes were calculated for EDs for each census year. Because parts of the environs of urban EDs overlap adjoining rural EDs, further disaggregation of EDs was undertaken to attain a better understanding of trends in the more rural areas in 2016. Towns of 10000 population and over and their ED environs (at least 50% of whose population were part of the town) were removed from the data base manually using unpublished census data files, giving a total of 2810 'rural' EDs. The H and D were calculated for these EDs for 2016.

The H index measures the extent of concentration and deconcentration of a population in a region that is disaggregated into a set of subregions; EDs in this instance. The index can range of 0 to 100 with the larger values representing a higher degree of concentration. "The value of the index can be interpreted as the proportion of the total population that would need to be redistributed across subregions to achieve equal population densities in all subregions" (Rogerson & Plane, 2013: 99). A decrease in the value of the index over time would indicate that the population in question is becoming more dispersed and an increase would indicate greater concentration. The index is calculated as follows:

$$H_t = \frac{1}{2} \sum_{i=1}^n |p_{it} - a_i|$$

Where  $p_{it}$  and  $a_i$  denote subregion  $i$ 's percentage share of the total population at time  $t$  and its area, respectively, and where there are  $n$  subregions.

The D index measures the relative distribution of one population in relation to another across geographical areas (Lichter & Johnson, 2006). It is used here to measure dissimilarity between the distribution of the Lithuanian versus the Irish population. Like the H index, the value of D can range from 0 to 100. The value indicates the percentage of a minority population that would need to be redistributed to be similar in distribution to the majority comparator population. The index is expressed as follows:

$$D_t = \frac{1}{2} \sum_{i=1}^n |m_{it} - c_{it}|$$

Where  $m_{it}$  and  $c_{it}$  are the respective percentages of a minority migrant group (Lithuanian nationals) and the comparator population (Irish nationals) residing in an ED  $i$  at time  $t$ . If the minority population percentage ( $m_{it}$ ) and the comparator percentage are equal in all EDs then the index is equal to 0 meaning that they are distributed in the same percentages over all EDs and residential segregation is low (Lichter & Johnson, 2006). If the index equals 100 this means that segregation is high and 100 percent of the minority population would have to move to other EDs to be similarly distributed to the majority population. The D values serve to complement the information available from the H index.

## 5- Results

Lithuanian nationals were recorded for the first time in the Irish census of population in 2002. They numbered just over 2000 people, but an unknown amount of underreporting took place (Table 1). The major increase in numbers between 2002 and 2006 is therefore considered to be an overestimate, although large numbers of both groups moved to Ireland after 2004 (MacÉinrí & White, 2008).

**Table 1:** Ireland: Lithuanian nationals usually resident and present on census night

Population	2002	2006	2011	2016	% change		
					2002-06	2006-2011	2011-2016
State total	3744059	4172013	4525281	4689921	11.43	8.47	3.64
N of Lithuanians	2104	24628	36683	36552	1070.53	48.95	-0.36
Lithuanian as % of total population	0.05	0.60	0.81	0.78			

Sources: CSO (2003), Table B0439; CSO (2007), Table C0437; CSO (2017a), Table E2070.  
 Note: the population resident and present on census night is slightly less than the total population.

The number of Lithuanian nationals in Ireland grew by almost 50% between 2006 and 2011 and fell slightly between 2011 and 2016 (Table 1) when the rate of growth in the total population also eased, indicative of a slow recovery from recession. According to CSO reports, based on unpublished data, the percentage of Lithuanians under 20 years of age remained stable between 2006 and 2011, pointing to continued immigration in the earlier years at least (CSO, 2012a). The CSO reports show also that family



formation and the birth of children increased over time, indicative that some migrants at least were more than transient workers. Unemployment in Lithuania and the higher average wages available in Ireland are recognized as primary reasons for immigration to Ireland (Thaut, 2009), but a desire for personal freedom, experience of other cultures, higher education acquisition and improving English language competency were involved for some immigrants (Gilmartin et al., 2008).

## 6- The distribution of Lithuanian nationals, 2006-2016

Following the international evidence, Dublin City, the capital, and its suburbs and the other major cities of Cork, Limerick and Galway, and Waterford to a lesser extent, were the principal destinations for the Lithuanian immigrant workers and accounted for 34.7% of the total immigrant group in 2006 (Table 2). The percentage present exceeded the respective proportion of the native population in the capital area until 2016. Lithuanian nationals also moved to towns with a population of 10000 and over which contain county capitals and other large settlements (in Irish terms). The relative percentage of Lithuanians in towns with 5000-9999 population was double that of the Irish nationals in 2006, 2011 and 2016, suggesting the adoption of employment that may have been less attractive to nationals. Some of these towns are locations of meat processing facilities.

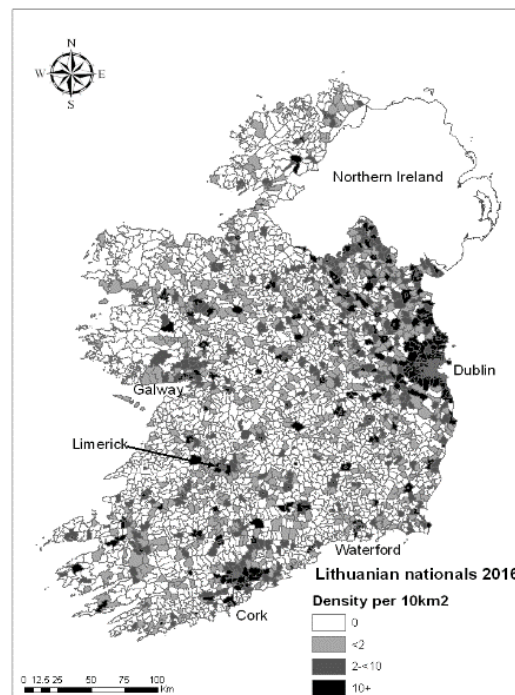
**Table 2:** Irish and Lithuanian nationals: % distribution between different town size groupings and rural areas.

	2006 (%)		2011 (%)		2016 (%)	
	Irish	Lithuanian	Irish	Lithuanian	Irish	Lithuanian
Dublin City and suburbs	23.52	26.70	22.89	24.89	23.25	22.72
Other cities and suburbs	9.15	8.00	8.90	7.84	8.84	7.25
Towns 10000 +	14.02	24.7	15.18	29.14	15.70	31.07
Towns 5000-9999	6.30	14.8	6.21	13.43	5.92	13.76
Towns 3000-4999	2.49	5.90				
Towns 1500-2999	2.94	5.60				
Rural areas <1500 population	41.57	14.30				
Towns 2000-4999			4.70	10.38	4.70	10.13
Towns 1500-1999			1.43	2.10	1.55	2.05
Towns 1000-1499			2.07	2.59	2.06	2.36
Towns 500-999			2.79	2.15	2.87	2.14
Towns <500			2.67	1.36	2.60	1.45
Remainder of country			33.20	6.13	32.50	6.80
Total number	3610498	24628	3927143	36683	4082513	36552

Sources: CSO (2007a), Table 39; CSO (2008), Table A2; CSO (2017b), Table E7004.

In 2006, Lithuanian nationals were less represented than Irish nationals, at an aggregate level, in places with less than 1500 population. Data for small towns for 2011 and 2016, however, illustrate movement of the immigrants to towns of 2000-4999 population. Low percentages and small numbers were also present in smaller places and in areas of open countryside. A number of factors probably contributed to the latter phenomenon: employment in retail and other services, as recovery from recession took place; family formation and the birth of children; and the cheaper cost of housing in such places because of excess supply following the building boom.

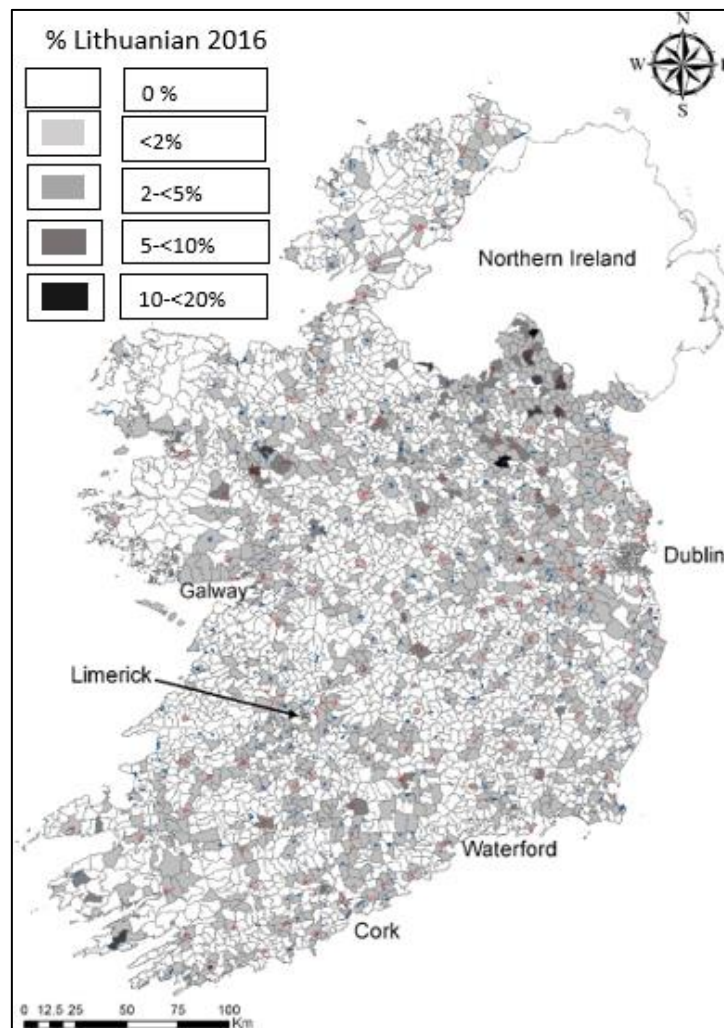
The distribution of the Lithuanian immigrants was mapped as a density per 10km<sup>2</sup> by ED for the three census years. Because of limitations of space only the density map for 2016 is presented and it illustrates the maximum spread of the population to date (Figure 2). The maps not included, as might be expected from Table 2, illustrate an association with cities, towns and adjoining rural areas. The densities decreased with distance from towns with a population of 10000 and over (the highest densities on the map). Evidence of increased movement into more rural areas was apparent but there were 1896 EDs where no Lithuanians were resident in 2016 (55.6% of the total). These areas coincide with upland environments along the northwest, west and south coasts and in county Wicklow south of Dublin, and in agricultural areas outside the influence of towns (Figure 1 and Figure 2).



**Figure 2:** Density distribution of Lithuanian nationals in Ireland, 2016, by Electoral Divisions.  
Source: CSO (2017b), Small Area Population Statistics.

The distribution of Lithuanian nationals by density shows a strong association with Dublin and the other main cities and with horticultural areas in north county Dublin and in county Louth, meat processing in counties Meath and Kildare and mushroom production and poultry processing in Monaghan and Cavan (Crowley et al., 2008) (Figure 1 and Figure 2). Higher densities elsewhere coincide with similar types of economic activities. The distribution of Lithuanians as a percentage of the total ED population further highlights their presence in counties Cavan and Monaghan and in EDs in county Mayo in western Ireland where meat processing and mushroom production take place (Figure 1 and Figure 3). More generally, Lithuanian nationals are present in medium size and small settlements in Ireland, as well as in larger towns and cities, reflecting their involvement in a wide range of retail services, manufacturing, health care, hospitality and catering, as documented in the CSO summary reports (Figure 3). However, they comprised less than 5% of the population in the majority of cases and exceeded 5% in only 19 EDs (Figure 3).





**Figure 3:** Distribution of Lithuanian nationals as % of total ED population in 2016  
Source: As Figure 2.

## 7- Measuring changing Lithuanian distributions, 2006-2016

The Lithuanian nationals remained concentrated in large cities and towns but moved to smaller Irish population size places over time and by 2016 were present in 44.4% of EDs which is notable given that they numbered 36552 persons and represented less than 1% of the total population (Tables 1 and 2). The H index permits their density distribution across areas to be measured in greater detail. H can be interpreted as the extent of deconcentration that would be necessary for a population to be evenly distributed between all areal units. The values are presented for two sets of EDs, all EDs (3409) and 'rural ED' (2810) not containing towns and their environs with populations in excess of 10000 people, in Table 3. The relevant values for the Irish population are included for comparative purposes.

**Table 3:** Hoover Index values of population concentration of Irish and Lithuanians by EDs, 2006, 2011, 2016.

Nationality	Electoral Districts (n=3409)	'Rural' Electoral Districts (n=2810)
2006		
Irish	53.70	
Lithuanian	84.6	
2011		
Irish	54.99	
Lithuanian	83.96	
2016		
Irish	55.83	35.23
Lithuanian	83.27	77.78

Sources: CSO, 2007b, 2012b, 2017b and unpublished tabulations.

The EDs include cities, towns and rural areas. The Irish and the Lithuanian populations were unevenly distributed between EDs in all three years (Table 3). The Irish population was less concentrated, as one would expect because approximately one-third of the total population continues to live in the open countryside. Nevertheless, the substantial proportion of the larger native population living in cities and large towns is apparent from the fact that more than 50% of the total would have had to move to be equally distributed between areas. Irish nationals moved towards larger centres over time, as the values illustrate. The greater concentration of the Lithuanian population in a smaller number of EDs is highlighted by the fact that more than 80% of them would have had to move to be similarly distributed between areas. Nevertheless, deconcentration of Lithuanians between EDs is apparent from the decline in the values between the three census years. However, at the level of the 2810 'rural' EDs, when cities and large towns are excluded, the H values reveal greater dispersal of Irish nationals among such areas but concentration of Lithuanian nationals in particular areas (Table 3).

The D index of dissimilarity indicates the percentage of a minority population that would have to be redistributed to be similarly distributed to the majority population (Irish nationals). It may be viewed as an index of segregation. The index values provide further insight into the H values which measure the distribution of each group separately by density. Lithuanians were more concentrated in particular towns and rural areas than were Irish nationals in all years (Table 4). At the scale of 3409 EDs, almost 50% of the immigrant group would have to be redistributed to be similarly distributed to the Irish nationals in 2006. The index values declined between the three census years as the Lithuanians moved to smaller places. When cities and towns and their environs with populations in excess of 10000 were excluded (the 2810 EDs in 2016), the index was higher than in the case of the 3409 EDs indicating relative concentration in particular rural EDs as compared with the more widely distributed Irish nationals.

**Table 4:** Index of Dissimilarity values for Irish and Lithuanian nationals by EDs, 2006, 2011, 2016

Nationality	Electoral Districts (n=3409)	'Rural' Electoral Districts (n=2810)
2006 Lithuanian vs. Irish	49.90	
2011 Lithuanian vs. Irish	48.46	
2016 Lithuanian vs. Irish	47.61	57.97

Sources: CSO, 2007b, 2012b, 2017b and unpublished tabulations.

The H values add precision in understanding the distribution of Lithuanian nationals in Ireland as depicted in the census tabulations and in the choropleth maps (Table 1, Figures 2 and 3). They highlight the marked concentration of Lithuanian nationals in particular urban and rural areas and provide further evidence of deconcentration over time to smaller places. The D values reveal that considerable disparities exist between the distribution of the immigrant group and Irish nationals within both urban and rural areas. Also, although Lithuanian nationals were present in almost 44% of EDs, they remained minorities in relation to Irish nationals, as noted above (Figure 3).

## 8- Summary discussion

This study was designed to contribute to the literature relating to international labour migration by documenting the experience of Lithuanian nationals in Ireland between 2006 and 2016. Broadly following research by Barcus & Simmons (2013), the distribution of the immigrants was measured from census data, using choropleth mapping and measures of concentration and dissimilarity at a detailed geographical scale.

Choropleth mapping of the densities and distributions of the Lithuanian nationals for 3409 EDs illustrate a strong association with cities and towns but also wider dispersion to smaller towns and rural areas which increased over time. The immigrants were absent from peripheral upland and agricultural areas where employment opportunities were limited. Lithuanians were closely associated with areas of intensive horticulture, poultry processing and mushroom production in the north midlands and the northeast of the country. Close associations with meat processing in large and medium size towns was apparent more widely and the wide distribution of the immigrants in small numbers is indicative of engagement in an extensive range of occupations in towns of varying sizes. Apart from the availability of employment, personal connections with family and friends may have been influential in their wider movement. The H index values confirmed a concentration of the immigrant group in both particular urban and particular rural areas and their movement to smaller places. The D values of dissimilarity served to illustrate the ethnic diversity that is taking place in EDs by comparing the immigrants with Irish

nationals. Nevertheless, Lithuanians remain minorities in most rural EDs. However, new links are being established between communities in Ireland and Lithuania as part of the new internationalisation of the labour market (Woods, 2007).

The findings from Ireland provide further evidence of the movement of immigrant labour to small towns and rural areas, as well as large cities, to meet local labour demands. Because of their membership of the EU, since the 1<sup>st</sup> May 2004, Lithuanians have had free access to the Irish labour market and therefore greater freedom of movement within Ireland than experienced by immigrant labour that is recruited on work permits of varying duration. This evidence points to the value of studying immigrant labour in different geographical and political contexts in contributing to knowledge relating to the phenomenon.

A fuller explanation of Lithuanian immigration to Ireland requires further detailed analysis at a localized scale to explore the dynamics of the employment and other factors that influenced their movement into smaller settlements, to supplement existing studies (e.g., by Acqueros-Fernández [2009] for the mushroom sector and Coakley & MacÉinrí [2009] for the meat processing sector in the south of Ireland). The CSO provides summary information on the main sectors in which Lithuanians are employed and the settlements where they are most numerous in Ireland. Published data are not available, however, for the distribution of Lithuanians by industrial sector in all EDs where they are resident and a detailed analysis was therefore not conducted. The reported study is limited also in the absence of information at an ED level relating to Lithuanian immigrants in Ireland during the years since 2016, at the time of writing. Summary information reveals a decline of almost 15% in Lithuanian nationals resident. A future project therefore is to update the study and identify the spatial distribution of decline. The integration of Lithuanian immigrants into Irish society and their experience of living here has been addressed in other studies (e.g., an early study by Feldman et al., 2008) but was beyond the remit of this study.

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