Global Talent Flow as ‘Musical Chairs’

Driving Forces of Young Talents:
An Examination of Italy and Lithuania
Abstract

This Master thesis examines the impact of the individual driving forces of young highly educated talents from Italy and Lithuania to apply for a job abroad after the graduation. By investigating the motivations and influences during this decision-making process, we clarify the role of different impulses on the individual’s decision to become part of the phenomenon known as the global talent flow. Within this study, we obtain the actor’s view, while we use an inductive approach to put the construction of meaning of the participants in the center of our study. This aim of our qualitative study is further strengthened by the use of semi-structured interviews and the usage of the phenomenology approach. The data is analyzed and interpreted according to the emerged themes and linked back to the existing theory on ‘migration’, the ‘Push-Pull-Mooring’ paradigm, the ‘gravity’ model, and the knowledge flow according to ‘brain gain’, 'brain drain’, and ‘brain circulation’. This study highlights the variety of facets which are of importance to the individuals within the decision-making process of the non-rational phenomenon of the global talent flow. Although the main motivation - the opportunity to grow - is shared among all participants, a clear distinction can be made between the ‘professional’ and the ‘personal’ growth. Furthermore, our study reveals the direct influence of initiatives taken by the European Union (EU), such as the ERASMUS+ Programme on the mobility of young talents and the impact of possible unforeseen side effects such as the ‘brain drain’ in some of the member countries of the EU. Our findings contribute another layer to the understanding of the driving forces of tomorrow’s mobile workforce to apply for a job abroad. This comprehension is fundamental to policymakers, companies, the society at larger, and the young talents themselves, as it becomes crucial to attract this ‘brain’ to secure long-term development of all stakeholders of the global talent flow within the EU.

Key words

Global Talent Flow; Driving Forces; Migration; Push-Pull-Mooring; Gravity Model; Brain Drain; Brain Gain; Brain Circulation; Mobile Workforce; ERASMUS+ Programme
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<td>CV</td>
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<td>e.g.</td>
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<td>ERASMUS+</td>
<td>European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students</td>
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<td>et al.</td>
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<td>etc.</td>
<td>et cetera - and the rest</td>
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<td>EU</td>
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<td>GTM</td>
<td>Global Talent Management</td>
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<td>MNE</td>
<td>Multinational Enterprises</td>
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<td>Ph.D.</td>
<td>Philosophiae doctor - Doctor of Philosophy (Highest academic university degree)</td>
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<td>PPM</td>
<td>Push-Pull-Mooring</td>
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<td>US</td>
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1 Introduction: Global Talent Flow

“In recent decades migration has been taking place amidst increasing global economic, political, and social integration, which has been accompanied by the greater speed and ease of international transportation and communication.”

(Tsuda 1999, p. 1)

We live in a time where global economy has increased radically in recent years (Beechler & Woodward 2009) and boundaries between countries, especially in the European Union (EU), have almost disappeared. Due to the exponential rise of development in communication, dynamics of international interactions and transportation, migration has become less costly and risky (Bansal, Taylor & James 2005; Tsuda 1999). Working abroad and migrating to another country but still heading ‘home’ occasionally by car, train, and airplane was never easier and cheaper than it is now. One consequence of this tendency is the global talent flow, the phenomenon where highly educated people tend to work, move or migrate globally, almost without any restrictions.

1.1 Background

“The world is endowed with a vast wealth of human talent.”

(World Economic Forum 2017, p. V)

In this period of ‘Globalization’, competitive advantage becomes more and more important. Information technology spreads new trends within short periods, innovations become faster alive, and today's companies operate across borders and previous boundaries. Consequently, human capital is the key factor for competitiveness, development, and growth (Straubhaar 2000; World Economic Forum 2017). To compete with others, companies and countries have to manage their human capital actively to maintain the hope of gaining and sustaining a strong position (Schuler, Jackson & Tarique 2011a). These activities, most likely realized by Multinational Enterprises (MNE), can broadly be described as Global Talent Management (GTM). The GTM of the MNEs consists typically of three components: (1) attraction, (2) development, and (3) retention of individuals with high levels of human capital (Tarique & Schuler 2010) to manage the workforce in a global context. Reasons for MNEs to set up these GTM structures are, for instance, the inadequate distribution of talents between areas-of-supply and areas-of-demand for talent (Schuler, Jackson & Tarique 2011a). This existing imbalance between supply and demand is further boosted by the differing availability of
resources like technology, human and financial capital, and knowledge (Kerr et al. 2016). Thus, high economic developed countries tend to have a competitive advantage to attract talented people. This misfit can be seen from a local, regional, national, or even international perspective and thus is of particular interest to a wide variety of stakeholders.

Shortages or surpluses of highly educated people within an industry, an area, a state or even across borders - are only a few of the influencing facts which in sum create a phenomenon called global talent flow. This flow is built by highly educated people, which through migration, support or fight the manifestation of this imbalance. This global talent flow has to be understood as a flexible, global network, which is directly influenced by the decisions of companies, governments, and individuals (Khilji, Tarique & Schuler 2015). Subsequently, companies and governments try to fight the imbalance between talent supply and talent demand by reducing the hurdles for those talented ones, who are seen as capable to alleviate the shortage of talent. Thus, well-educated people can move and change their place of activity easily (Schuler, Jackson & Tarique 2011b).

Companies face the decision to develop talented people themselves or look at the market and attract these talented people through recruiters. By designing programs to attract and develop the specialized workforce, companies can develop talented people with a unique set of skills, which will accurately meet their needs (Schuler, Jackson & Tarique 2011a). This approach aims to fight the shortage of well-educated, talented people. A further aspect, which plays a role in the global talent flow, are direct investments by foreign companies. By creating jobs for well-educated people, while already facing a local shortage of exactly those, the companies pour further oil into the fire of local talent shortage (Beechler & Woodward 2009).

Moreover, not only the approaches of the companies differ on how to attract talented people within the framework of global talent flow, also the strategies followed by governments. For example, Taiwan (Leng 2002), Singapore (Koh 2003), New Zealand (Jackson et al. 2005), China (Zweig & Robertson 2006), Germany, and Singapore (Khilji, Tarique & Schuler 2015) set up different initiatives to attract skilled workforce. Thereby, Germany, USA, Canada, and other developed countries try to attract talented people by the use of immigration policies. Besides, emerging countries mainly focus on returning skilled and well-educated Diasporas. Other states (e.g. Singapore), in turn, invest an enormous amount of money in education and attempt to keep their talents home countries (Khilji, Tarique & Schuler 2015). However, the tendency of some governments to lower immigration barriers increases the global competition for talented people even further (Beechler & Woodward 2009). Apart from the overall conditions for the talent flow, the basic rights, especially for women, play a crucial role in the
stream of talent (Naghsh, Nejad & Young 2014). This stream originates in several countries of origin and tends to flow only to a few countries of destination (Kerr et al. 2016). Besides, some problems of the global talent flow are homemade by some governments. The educational system within a country or economic area has to be designed in a way that ensures the development of the specialized workforce, which consequently meets the needs of the companies. Due to an inflexible education system, governments often develop talents, which do not fit the changed requirements and demands of the market (Beechler & Woodward 2009). This misfit can result in an increased shortage of talented people in a specific area of business on the one hand side, and well-educated people, which are unable to find a job on the other hand.

In our preparations for this Master thesis, we observed that this phenomenon could not be totally described from a rational point of view. One might think that talented people from countries with a surplus of talent will migrate to countries with a shortage of talent to equalize the misbalance. Meaning that there is a possibility for an global equilibrium in the distribution of talented people. Instead, during our research, we found studies about both, nations with a surplus of young talented people such as Italy (Biondo et al. 2012) and countries with a shortage of young talented people such as Lithuania (Kazlauskienė & Rinkevičius 2006). Both of these countries lose their high educated people, nevertheless no rational equalization of surplus and shortage is occurring. Consequently, the examples of Lithuania and Italy show that the global talent flow might be not a matter of distribution. It seems that the migration steam is not directed to fight any shortages. This makes the talent flow to a global phenomenon, which can lead to negative impacts on some of the affected countries. Therefore, we were wondering what it is, that motivates high educated people to leave their home country and become an active part of the global talent flow, by moving to another country to start working in a different environment.

By taking the example of Italy first, Biondo et al. (2012) found that the main reasons for highly educated people to leave Italy are: (1) to achieve opportunities which could not be found in Italy; (2) that international institutions will provide more prestige in the personal CV; (3) that their professional application will be enhanced by the foreign research environment; (4) that their knowledge gain increased depth as a result of working in a more stimulating environment, and (5) high increases in personal salary and economic conditions. Overall most of the participants showed little or no propensity to return to Italy since the situation in the host countries was perceived to be better than in the home country. Once these people were attracted by the host countries, the propensity for them to return to Italy decreased over the
timespan. The weak structural conditions of the labor market in Italy influence and support this decision even further (Biondo et al. 2012). The flow of migrants which chose Italy as a country of destination is relatively smaller (Stark, Helmenstein & Prskawetz 1997) - not considering the stream of refugees. Hence, Italy loses high talented people. This, from a rational perspective makes sense, as due to a surplus of highly talented people, those talents have to find a job abroad. However, not all highly educated people leave the country. What are the reasons for these people to stay in the home country instead of fighting the shortage elsewhere by for example moving to Lithuania, as there is a shortage of those talented people? Additionally, why do Lithuanians leave their country if there is a national shortage of those talents?

Based on a tremendous decrease in population of Lithuania after the dissolution of the Soviet Union (World Bank 2018), especially of young and well-educated people, Kazlauskienė and Rinkėvičius (2006) investigated the migration motivations in Lithuania. Although the participants in the study were not living in bad situations before the departure, the motivation to leave the country remains high. Contradictory to public belief; bad socio-economic circumstances are not a sufficient reason for the participants to move (Kazlauskienė & Rinkėvičius 2006). The primary goal to leave the country was to improve the current situation through: (1) work-related issues, (2) study abroad, and (3) family reunions. The primary motivations to achieve these goals are based on cultural, inner life, and socialization factors. Surprisingly factors like professional realization and economic and financial conditions were ranked lower among the participants. The average satisfaction with all these factors increased significantly after the move to another country (Kazlauskienė & Rinkėvičius 2006). Consequently, it seems that people, who are interested in leaving the country, are not driven by the bad situation in the home country, which 'pushes' them away but are motivated by the expectations of the situation in the host country, which would 'pull' them towards them. To take this thought one-step further; Kazlauskienė and Rinkėvičius (2006) stated that people and especially well-educated labor would move, as long as the subjectively perceived opportunities in the host country are more prominent than in the home country.

Obviously, the global talent flow - as the name already labels - is a global phenomenon. However, within our Master thesis, we decided to focus on the EU only. Due to regulations, it is easy to work in and migrate to another country within the EU. The two chosen studies represent the different outgrowths of the phenomenon of the global talent flow within the EU. The numbers for Italy and Lithuania underline the impact of the migration of the population to another EU country. In 1990 approximately 340,000 Lithuanians were living outside of
Lithuania. Thereby 78% of them had their residence in another European country. By 2017, the total number of Lithuanians living outside their home country increased to ca. 600,000 - whereby 89% lived in another European country (United Nations 2017). Taking the example of Italy, in 2017 approx. 3 million Italians were living outside of Italy. In contrast to the high percentage of Lithuanians residing outside of Lithuania, only 58% of Italians chose another European country as their new home. In comparison, in 1990 about 3.5 million Italians lived outside of their home country, which at that time accounted for only 48% choosing another European country as their country of destination. Hence, the number of Italians living in another country decreased while the percentage, selecting another EU country to live increased. While Lithuanians are more likely to emigrate to another European country, many Italians emigrate to South and North America (41% in 1990 and 31% in 2017) (United Nations 2017). This high percentage of Italians emigrating to South and North America coincides with their emigration history. Between 1861 and 1985 more than 13 million Italians emigrated towards South and North America as a result of wars and better job opportunities (Del Boca & Venturini 2005). Consequently, large numbers of Italians follow their relatives and Italian communities in North and South America.

However, the large number of Lithuanians and Italians moving to other European countries is based on the legal framework of the EU. Every citizen of the EU, who holds a valid passport, is allowed to work without a working permit, in any other EU country. Only Croatia is an exception to this agreement until 2020 (European Union 2018a). Furthermore, every citizen of the EU has the right to migrate to any EU country, in which he or she finds a job. Additionally, individuals who have worked for at least one year in the host country are allowed to stay in the host country, even if they lose the job. This regulation is valid for as long as European citizens are registered as a job seeker or are retired (European Union 2018b). Within Europe, it is easy, fast, and not too expensive to travel to different countries by car, train or airplane. This gives people the opportunity to work and live abroad but still visit their family and friends in their home country. Consequently, people can find a job in another country of the EU but still have their family back in their home country, as it is possible to go ‘home‘ over the weekend within a few hours. Furthermore, EU citizens are entitled the same assistance (e.g. employment services), benefits (e.g. healthcare, family support) and treatment (e.g. access of housing) as citizens of that host country (European Union 2018a).

Additional to law regulations, the EU facilitates the global talent flow even more through education programs as for example the ERASMUS+ Programme. With the ERASMUS+
Programme, the EU helps European countries to improve and modernize their education circumstances (faculties, staff, equipment, etc.). This leads to more attraction of national and international students. Additionally, the ERASMUS+ Programme encourages students, who are enrolled in a European University, to study or work (through internships) abroad in another European country. Students are provided with financial support (up to 12 months) and easy transferability of course achievements to their home university due to the Bologna Process. In 2016, approximately 725,000 European students took advantage of the ERASMUS+ Programme by studying and living abroad in one of the others EU countries (European Commission 2017a). We see those students, due to their university education, as the highly talented people of tomorrow. These people, who already studied abroad, are already an active part of the global talent flow like we are.

2 Research Topic: Global Talent Flow as ‘Musical Chairs’

When we think more precisely about the phenomenon of global talent flow and in particular, about the example of a talent surplus in Italy and a talent shortage in Lithuania, we were reminded of a game most of us played when we were young - ‘Musical Chairs’ also known as ‘Trip to Jerusalem’. The setting of this game is simple; the only things needed are music, a non-constraining number of players, and chairs positioned in a circle (one fewer than involved players - seating surface faces the outside). By playing ‘Musical Chairs’, players have to run around the chairs, while the music plays. Whenever the music stops, every player has to sit down on one of the chairs. The one who fails to get a chair has to leave the game. One of the chairs will be removed after every round before the music starts again. This chair removal continues until the last chair is taken by one of the remaining two players. The player, who gets the last chair, wins the game.

Applying this metaphor to our topic, we see countries, which seek to attract young talented people, through offering ‘chairs’. Additionally, talented people are the ‘players’, who are looking for a place to work and settle down. The movements of the player, while the music plays, embodies the flow of talent within the global talent flow. Additionally, the music itself represents the driving forces of the talented people within the framework of the global talent flow as ‘Musical Chairs’. Moreover, due to the fact that there are always fewer ‘chairs’ as active ‘players’, ‘Musical Chairs’ is played with a continuous competition for the ‘chairs’. This competition is even increasing over time and the pressure on the player to find a ‘chair’ seems to rise as well. This being transferred to the phenomenon under investigation, the
countries, which try to attract young talents are facing more and more competition. Consequently, there are ‘winners’ and ‘losers’ within the global talent flow. Implying that there are fewer countries where young talented people are moving to.

While the rules of ‘Musical Chairs’, when to sit down, are obvious - even to young children - the driving forces of the talented people seem to be by far more complicated. Why do so many players, no matter if the game ‘Musical Chairs’ is played on a micro level in the kindergarten, or at the macro level on a global scale, try to sit down on the same ‘chair’ - representing migration streams to only a few countries? What is the music - the driving forces - that either motivate people to leave their ‘chair’ behind to find a new one - representing the migration to another country - or encourages them to stay in their ‘chair’ - staying in the home country, although there are opportunities elsewhere? To apply this metaphor to the examples mentioned above; we are questioning ourselves, why talented people from countries such as Italy with a surplus of talented people do not migrate to countries where there exists a shortage of these people such as Lithuania. This seems like a non-rational, macroeconomic phenomenon, as well-educated people do not fight the imbalance. This aspect of the global talent flow phenomenon, where people do not fight the imbalance is further influenced by barriers to migrate to certain host countries, for instance missing language skills, or personal reasons.

2.1 Research Issue and Purpose

Within the research area of the global talent flow, a plethora of research in terms of managing a workforce within a global context (e.g. Tarique & Schuler 2010) and the motivations for or against an international career (e.g. Carr, Inkson & Thorn 2005; Orahood, Kruze & Pearson 2004) has been undertaken. Besides, many studies are conducted worldwide about driving forces for students to study overseas. For example, Agarwal & Winkler (1985) discovered driving forces for students to study in the United States of America. McMahon (1992), on the other hand, examined driving forces of students from developing countries, which decided to study abroad in developed countries and Lam, Ariffin & Ahmad (2011) found driving forces for international students to study in Malaysia. Moreover, Mazzol, Kemp, and Savery (1997) discovered an important framework to understand what influences students’ motivation for or against the selection of a host country. Furthermore, different environmental and personal factors define the number and nature of options and the respondents of an individual (Orahood, Kruze & Pearson 2004). Thus, every student is facing numerous opportunities about their career decision. The focus of the existing research was mainly set on the
motivations of the students to study abroad. None of the research was focused on the driving forces for the students to apply for an overseas job after an educational experience in a foreign country. Thus, the motivations of these people are a white spot within the research.

Within this Master thesis, we focus on this research gap, by focusing on this particular target group of students, who already went abroad. We are aware of the fact that driving forces of young talents who study abroad might differ from students who never studied abroad. We think that our target group is of particular interest as “... students who have studied abroad are more open to internationalizing their careers” (Orahood, Kruze & Pearson 2004, p. 127). Those people tend to be more open-minded, have better language skills, and feel more self-confident. They are either less afraid to leave their home country, as they did it already, or are more likely to remain abroad after their studies overseas (Orahood, Kruze & Pearson 2004; Wiers-Jenssen 2008).

Furthermore, we chose international European students as focus for our Master thesis as the movement between countries within Europe could be influenced by initiatives taken by the EU, such as the ERASMUS+ Programme. More precisely, the EU tries to encourage the global talent flow with the aim to enhance multilingualism, equity and inclusion, by supporting the possibilities of students to go abroad (European Commission 2017b). As the number of participants of the ERASMUS+ Programme is increasing over the last years, the efforts of the European commission might be seen as a success (European Commission 2017a).

Nevertheless, initiatives such as the ERASMUS+ Programme can have unforeseen consequences and might support people’s decision to work abroad after their studies. It might be the case that students, through these initiatives, become motivated to emigrate from their home country, even though there is a local shortage of young talents. More specifically, based on our examples of Italy (Biondo et al. 2012) and Lithuania (Kazlauskienė & Rinkevičius 2006), we focus on those two countries within this study, as it seems that they are an excellent example of the complexity of the global talent flow. In both countries, young talented people are leaving, but the situation within the countries are different - a surplus of young talent in Italy (Biondo et al. 2012) and a shortage of young talented people in Lithuania (Kazlauskienė & Rinkevičius 2006). Hence, if young talented people leave their home country, they probably have different personal and general reasons. Meaning that the phenomenon of the global talent flow cannot be explained by macroeconomic rationality and therefore needs further investigation. Consequently, within this Master thesis, we research, what the personal conditions of the phenomenon of global talent flow are. Furthermore, we clarify the role of different stakeholders within this framework. Overall, little light has been shed on driving
forces of students to apply for a job abroad within the context of the global talent flow. Hence, we focus on the young talented people from Lithuania and Italy, and their perspective towards this phenomenon. Thereby, for our Master thesis, ‘talent’ does not describe an innateness ability to be good in something nor is ‘young’ a description of a certain age group. By using the term ‘young talents’, we define well-educated university students who studied abroad for a part of their studies or their whole university degree. Moreover, we do not differentiate between international Bachelor’s, Master’s, and Ph.D. students. The purpose of this Master thesis is to gain a deeper understanding of the driving forces of these young talents to apply for an overseas job after an educational experience in a foreign country.

2.2 Research Relevance

It appears that scientific research until now, mainly focused on the driving forces of students concerning their choice of a study destination. Within the migration literature, qualitative studies of driving forces to work and live abroad are mostly uncharted. The existing studies were focused on quantitative findings as the example of Biondo et al. (2012) shows. Within their quantitative study about highly educated people leaving Italy, Biondo et al. (2012) found out that 95.7% of participants leave the country because of a lack of opportunities in Italy. However, we want to find out, what ‘opportunities’ for high-educated young talents means. How are ‘opportunities’ seen and interpreted from the perspective of young talented people from Italy? Such an analysis is only possible by applying a qualitative research approach. The same applies to Lithuania. Kazlauskienė and Rinkevičius (2006) discovered, work-related issues as the main goal for high-educated people to leave their home country Lithuania, to improve their current situation. Again, what are ‘work-related-issues’ in particular? What do young talents from Lithuania associate as ‘work-related-issues”? Consequently, our Master thesis contributes a qualitative investigation to the already existing quantitative research studies and findings of the driving forces of young talents. To gain a deeper understanding of underlying motivations, reasons, and opinions of young talents for applying for a job abroad. This is important as the global talent flow cannot be analyzed and explained by macroeconomic rationality. Thereby it is crucial for us to examine future employees - current students - who already studied abroad as they are more likely to apply for a job overseas (Orahood, Kruze & Pearson 2004).

A further aspect, why we focus on these future employees are the potentially added values, these students gained through their experiences in a host country. Research claims, that international students increased interpersonal skills during their stay abroad. These skills are
the essential qualification for employers for selecting a candidate (Orahood, Kruze & Pearson 2004). As human capital is the key driver for future development and growth (Straubhaar 2000; World Economic Forum 2017), governments, companies and the society at large can use our qualitative results to develop an environment, which helps to slow down this tendency of well-educated people leaving the home country. This new knowledge can help to fight a local or national shortage or surplus of talented people. Thereby, the importance of our study is even strengthened by our choice to investigate employees of tomorrow - young talents who are about to finish their studies. As we are active players ourselves within this network, we are personally affected by the development, which makes this phenomenon and its consequences of particular interest to us. We argue that our subject of study contributes to a more profound understanding of the driving forces of young talents. Hence, this topic is current, vital, and contentious.

2.3 Research Question

During our reflection about our driving forces and the motivation to leave our previous environments behind, followed by a research gap about the driving forces to apply for a job abroad for young talented people, the following research topic flourished: ‘Global Talent Flow as ‘Musical Chairs’ - Driving Forces of Young Talents: An Examination of Italy and Lithuania’. Within our Master thesis, we want to gain and contribute a better understanding and distinction of the different individual influencing factors for or against the participation of this phenomenon. To be more precise, the following research question is investigated in this Master thesis:

What influences and motivates young talented people during their decision for or against migration in the framework of the global talent flow?

This research questions merges different topics for us. While the ‘influences’ embody the external impacts to us, we see the ‘motivations’ as something subjectively perceived and pronounced. Hence, we focus on both, external and internal driving forces. Furthermore, we see both, ‘influences’ and ‘motivations’ as directly connected to the ‘decision’-making process and build the foundation for or against the participation of migration. For us all these actions are directly interconnected, building and influencing the phenomenon of global talent flow. We are not only aiming to answer this exciting research question, but we also provide answers and interesting insides to our sub-questions:
I. What holds young talented people back from migration?

II. How are the driving forces and decisions influenced by other stakeholders within the concept of global talent flow?

We research these exciting and appealing questions through the examples of Italy and Lithuania. Those driving forces seem to be individually influenced by emotions, personal interest, and individual understanding and evaluation of the own situation. This makes the decision-making process within the global talent flow to a non-rational macroeconomic phenomenon, in which ‘soft’ facts are decisive. We see these questions as some of the most important ones in today's society as the countries are more and more merging and the mobile workforce within the EU is crucial to maintain the strong position in the international competition. Furthermore, we are interested in the possible differences of driving forces of other young talents in comparison to our own ones, which are already slightly different although our backgrounds are, at least from a broader perspective, somewhat similar. If the differences between our motivations are already that distinct, the differences between the young talents, participating in our study must be even greater.

2.4 Who are We

We are Jonas Hörstel and Patrick Jäger, and together we are the authors of this Master thesis. The following lines found their way into this Master theses to give, the reader, a better understanding of our work and our frames of references. We would like to introduce ourselves on a very personal level, to ensure that our perspectives and understandings within this piece of work are reasonable and clear.

My name is Jonas, and I grew up in Hamburg, Germany. By the age of sixteen, I decided to move abroad for eight months, packed my suitcase, and left my comfortable environment behind and went to Tauranga, New Zealand, where I studied at the Tauranga Boys College. The education was based on discipline, strongly focused on achievements, and the environment was truly international with several foreign professors and other international students. The following chapter of my life was characterized by my German Abitur and my participation at the technology competition ‘F1 in Schools’, where I was able to represent Germany in a collaborative team, consisting of two Germans and four US Americans, at the world championships in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. While my Bachelor’s degree - ‘Marketing and Technical Business Administration’ - in Hamburg, I made use of the semester breaks by
travelling the world to dive into different cultures to broaden my understanding of different cultural perceptions and behaviors. These international experiences and my wish to study at a high academic level within an international community led me to my application for the Master’s program ‘Leadership and Management in International Contexts’ in Kalmar, Sweden, where I met Patrick.

I, Patrick, grew up in Stuttgart, Germany. After I finished my Abitur, I decided to study ‘Business Science’ at the University of Konstanz. During this Bachelor’s degree, I used my semester breaks mainly for traveling across Europe. Additionally, I took the opportunity, given by the ERASMUS+ Programme, and studied abroad for one academic year in Cardiff, Wales. My intention to gain cross-cultural understanding drove me to go for another semester abroad (supported by the ERASMUS+ Programme again) in Sweden during my two years ‘Business’ Master’s in Augsburg, Germany. Which I then, extended to a full academic year in Kalmar, Sweden to complete the one-year Master’s program ‘Leadership and Management in International Context’.

Within the preparation for our Master’s studies, both of us decided to study abroad. Although we share the same decision to move to Sweden, the driving forces in the background were slightly different. Jonas was mainly attracted by the opportunity to finish his Master’s studies within one year, while it would take him two years to do a Master’s degree in Germany. Another motivation was to study abroad again, within an international environment and a similar culture to Germany. Patrick was mainly motivated by the opportunity to study within a multicultural Master’s program to gain cross-cultural understanding in a country abroad which is ‘similar’ to his home country, Germany. Hence our motivations differed, but our primary drive to study abroad to develop cross-cultural intelligence was congruent. These driving forces were motivation enough for us to leave our previous environments behind. Through this decision, we became an active part of the global talent flow, which became a topic of interest to us. One influence, which enhanced our interest, is our involvement in the Erasmus Student Network (ESN) section Kalmar. The ESN is set up for international students that study abroad to settle down in the host country and to build bridges between international students within the EU to enhance the cross-cultural understanding and building of one European identity. Within our section in Kalmar, Patrick, is a Mentor Coordinator, and responsible for the mentor program, designed for welcoming incoming international students upon their arrival. Jonas is the Vice President and in charge of the organization and communication within the network on a national as well as international level, and the external communication with other student networks.
We are sure that, the reader, has now a better understanding of our motives for this work and thus can follow us on our way to map a white spot within the phenomenon of the global talent flow.

3 Literature Review

The following chapter of our Master thesis presents some of the already existing studies and models on the driving forces of migrating people. We see these as most important for our understanding of the phenomenon of the global talent flow. The different sub-chapters share a profound literature review on the topics which directly, according to our point of view, influence young talented people during their decision-making process for or against migration.

3.1 Migration

By studying the driving forces to apply for a job and live abroad (migrate), it is necessary to define migration first. According to Boyle, Halfacree, and Robinson (1998), the term migration describes “... the movement of a person (a migrant) between two places for a certain period of time” (p. 34). This movement can take place when an administrative boundary within the same country or across countries is crossed (Bansal, Taylor & James 2005). Additionally, Lee (1966) stated that a “migration tends to take place largely within well-defined streams” (p. 54). Furthermore, migration can be distinguished in two different types; (1) voluntary - where people can (more) freely decide where and for how long they want to migrate - and (2) non-voluntary migration (refugees) based on famine, war or persecution (Bansal, Taylor & James 2005).

However, Boyle, Halfacree, and Robinson (1998) stated even if it is impossible to define an appropriate duration of time to consider a movement - across an administrative border - as migration, it is essential to have some permanence to differentiate it from business trips and holidays. Based on the personal driving forces; “migration can be considered a freedom of choice and it also is an expected result of globalization” (Kline 2003, p. 110). For our study, we describe the decision of young talents apply for a job abroad and the willingness to move to another country as voluntary migration from one country to another. Whereby migration is a result of an interaction between different driving forces of both ends, the home country and the host country (Mejia, Pizurki & Royston 1979). This decision to migrate to a host country
is strongly influenced by the individual expected opportunities to optimize the individual situation (Sonis 1980).

3.1.1 Push-Pull-Mooring

Within the migration literature, the most common framework to describe migration streams is the ‘push-pull’ paradigm by Bogue (1969; 1977), including the ‘mooring’ variables added later by Lee (1966) and Moon (1995). The roots of this model reach back to the 19th century when Ravenstein (1885) laid the foundation by researching on ‘push’ and ‘pull’ components of migration. More precisely, this ‘push-pull’ paradigm defines different external negative ‘push’ and positive ‘pull’ forces during an individual migration process and thus was the main model for migration studies (Bansal, Taylor & James 2005). On the one hand, negative forces exist in the home country, which ‘push’ (encourage) individuals to leave the home country (Bansal, Taylor & James 2005; Boyle, Halfacree & Robinson 1998; Hsieh et al. 2012). Natural catastrophes (earthquakes, floods, epidemics, etc.), oppressive treatments (religion, politics or ethics) and absence of opportunities (marriage, high unemployment rates, etc.) are only a few of the examples given by Bogue (1969) that ‘push’ people away from their home country. Consequently, ‘push’ forces are usual attributes of the place of origin, which are assumed to have a damaging impact on life (Moon 1995). On the other hand, there are positive forces at the host country, which ‘pull’ (attract) humans towards it (Bansal, Taylor & James 2005). These factors usually represent qualities of distant places, which attract individuals. Characteristics, which are not linked to an individual such as security and better opportunities (income, education, etc.) (Bansal, Taylor & James 2005; Hsieh et al. 2012) are good examples for ‘pull’ forces. Thus, the ‘push’, as well as the ‘pull’ forces, are based on different political, legal, economic, social, educational, and cultural natures (Kline 2003).

However, as we can see with our example of Italy (Biondo et al. 2012) and Lithuania (Kazlauskienė & Rinkevičius 2006), those ‘push' and 'pull’ forces can be perceived differently by individuals, even if they are not directly linked to them. This individual perception of the driving forces must be the reason, why some people stay in their home countries, while others leave. The examples of Lithuania and Italy show, that even if many talented people leave, many people, exposed to the same ‘push’ and ‘pull’ forces stay in their home country. This indicates that ‘pull’ and ‘push’ forces are not objective, and part of an only rational decision because in that case, some countries would lose all, and not only some, of their citizens. Therefore, Lee (1966) claimed that it is necessary to add an individual, subjective perception of those driving forces to the objective macro analysis. According to Lee (1966) a decision to
move (migrate) is mainly based on someone’s evaluation of the situation (‘push’ and ‘pull’ forces). Meaning, that a migration decision could include personal anxiety, moving cost, and family attachment. Consequently, ‘intervening obstacles’ were added to the push-pull model by Lee (1966). Those social and personal ‘intervening obstacles’, do not only hold people in their home country, but also facilitate individuals to move to another country. Moon (1995) labeled those factors later as ‘mooring’ forces. ‘Mooring’ forces according to Moon (1995) include all cultural, social, and personal variables of someone’s decision to migrate or not. Hence, a person might not move from one place to another even when ‘push’ and ‘pull’ forces are powerful. This behavior can be explained by the individual's own personal contextual or situational constraints (Bansal, Taylor & James 2005).

These different but strongly connected models and explanations led to the ‘Push-Pull-Mooring’ (PPM) framework of migration. Within this framework personal ‘mooring’ forces, along with macro ‘push’ and ‘pull’ forces, interact and either facilitate people to move to another country or hold them to their home country (Bansal, Taylor & James 2005). Consequently, we dig deeper into the ‘mooring’ forces and add a subjective layer of Lithuanian and Italian understanding to the already existing studies. To sum this chapter up, we want to use the words of Bansal, Taylor and James (2005):

“To predict migration, one must therefore examine the migrants’ perceptions of variables at the origin that might act to push them away (push variables), perceptions of variables at the destination that might act to draw migrants toward it (pull variables), and perceptions of person-specific variables that act either to facilitate or to hamper the migration decision (mooring variables).”

(Bansal, Taylor & James 2005, p. 98)

3.1.2 Gravity Model

Another model which is today used for the examination of migration streams is the gravity model, set up by Isaac Newton. This model consists of three variables of the distance, the mass, and the gravity of the system itself. The gravity of a system is constant, while the distance stands in negative correlation to the force, and the mass stands in positive correlation to it (Verlinde 2011). Applying this well-studied model to migration, the mass represents the size of the country, specifically the number of people living in that country. The distance between the different involved masses - country populations - can conservatively be measured by the strict geographical distance (Bove & Elia 2017). Another way to measure this distance is the distance between the culture of the country of origin to the country of destination. This
measurement is more connected to the individual and subjectively perceived distance and thus hard to generalize. Since the gravity itself is constant in this interpretation, as it is a closed system, it is unnecessary to pay close attention to this variable. By applying these general rules of the model to the global migration streams within the framework of the global talent flow and the topic of this Master thesis, some findings become visible. The migrant self is driven by the equation of the cost of the migration versus the expected benefit of it (Anderson 2011). The increase in the population of the affected countries has a direct impact on the people, who are willing to migrate. Hence the global migration is going to increase even further, according to the population forecasts of the upcoming years (United Nations 2015). Another aspect is the cultural difference. The more similar home country and host country are, the more people are willing to migrate (Ramos & Surinach 2017). Through the increase of diversity, based on constant migration, cultures will become more and more alike (Bove & Elia 2017) and consequently, decrease the cultural distance, which usually holds people back from migration. Thus, the future migration is most likely to increase further.

3.1.3 Clash of Cultures

A further perspective which has to be taken into account in this discussion is the perception of the incomers towards the culture. These people are often stressed by the clash of cultures, between the culture in the home country and the culture in the host country. People feel forced to decide between two different ways of living and will often find a compromise, which can lead to the feeling of not being home in neither of the cultures (Carr, Inkson & Thorn 2005). However, not only the perspective of the immigrants towards the host country has to be taken into account. The view of the people already living in the host country towards incomers is essential. Within the recent years' political parties are gaining votes with anti-immigration programs in many countries, all over the world (Schneider, Barsoux & Stahl 2014). This inner attitude of the population became, for example, visible in 2014 when the public of Switzerland voted for an overall limit for foreign workers within Swiss companies.

This being said, it becomes visible, how the attitude of both sides, migrants, and locals are strongly influencing the success of migration. The driving forces are not only dependent on the inner view, but also on the society of the host country. However, not just the community but also the clash on a personal level has to be taken into account. The migrants are strongly influenced by the norms and behaviors of the culture of the home country. By leaving the home country and arriving in the host country, the value set needs to be adjusted to the local culture. Being in the position, where a different culture is playing a role in the understanding
of specific situations, the migrant self is often facing difficulties to establish a sense of own identity. Thus, the cultural differences between two countries are playing a crucial role, which also can be seen in the application of the model of gravity.

3.2 Driving Forces of Young Talents to Study Abroad

A review of the existing literature shows that motivational factors of students for selecting their host university have already broadly investigated. Within this literature review, we consider the PPM framework. More precisely, we evaluate and categorize existing findings (driving forces) into ‘push’, ‘pull’ and ‘mooring’ forces, starting with driving forces for students to study abroad. Agarwal & Winkler (1985) discovered already in the 1980s ‘push’ and ‘pull’ forces such as costs, expected benefits, education opportunities (home and host country) and per capita income (home country) as principal drivers for international students to study in the United States of America. McMahon (1992), on the other hand, examined driving forces of students from developing countries, which decided to study abroad in developed countries. She found out that ‘push’ forces including a lack of educational opportunities, economic wealth and involvement within the world economy of the home country force students to study abroad. On the other side, ‘pull’ forces such as political interest, scholarships, cultural links, public amenities, and infrastructure of the host country encouraged them to study abroad.

Also, Mazzarol, Kemp, and Savery (1997) examined driving forces of international students to study in Australia. Thereby the researcher discovered personal recommendations, costs, climate and environment of the host country geographic proximity, social links (friends and family), and knowledge about the host country as six main factors, which can influence the selection of a host country for students. “These six ‘pull’ forces are an important framework for understanding the influences that motivate a student’s selection of a host country” (Mazzarol & Sautar 2002, p. 83). However, the authors take no individual understanding or interpretation of those driving forces in consideration. For example, by combining Mazzarol, Kemp, and Savery (1997) findings with the PPM framework, factors such as geographic proximity and social links, it becomes clear that personal interpretation of these factors might play a crucial role in the decision-making process. This makes it interesting for us, to consider those driving forces for our research study. It might be that those ‘push’, ‘pull’ and ‘mooring’ forces influence students from Italy and Lithuania to apply for a job abroad as well.

Moreover, Lam, Ariffin and Ahmad (2011), studied driving forces of students from all over the world for choosing Malaysia as their host country to study. Thereby, the researcher
discovered that the main motivations for international students to study abroad in Malaysia are the ‘pull’ forces of the academic quality of the institution and the job prospect after studying abroad. Furthermore,

“… principal factors of selecting a host country include per capita income in the home country, cost of education between home and host countries, education opportunities in the home country and expected benefits of studying abroad.”

(Lam, Ariffin & Ahmad 2011, p. 65)

Further key drivers were similar to Mazzarol, Kemp, and Savery (1997) findings, ‘push’ forces, for instance an absence of access to higher education within their own country. In addition, ‘pull’ forces, for example, colonial or historical links between home and the host country, geographic proximity, commonality of a language, and the availability of technology and science programs played an important role (Lam, Ariffin & Ahmad 2011; Mazzarol & Sautar 2002). Still, even if some of those findings take ‘mooring’ forces (e.g. social links) into consideration - additional to ‘push’ and ‘pull’ - all those findings are based on quantitative studies. Comparatively, only little examination has been done on a qualitative investigation about students driving forces for a university education abroad. Jongyoung (2011) for instance considers personal interpretation by using interviews to analyze South Korean students’ motivation to study and pursue a degree abroad in the United States of America. He discovered that the main driving force for South Korean students is the ‘pull’ forces of positional competition. Getting a university degree overseas helps students to find a better job in South Korea after their study and influences their social class. Nevertheless, by selecting a study destination, the decision process itself is more individual, based on at least three different stages (Mazzarol & Sautar 2002; Lam, Ariffin & Ahmad 2011). Firstly, a student decides, influenced by ‘push’ forces to study abroad instead of nationally. Secondly, a student chooses a host country based on several ‘pull’ forces, which make the country relatively attractive. Thirdly, a student decides within a host country a particular institution grounded on institutional ‘pull’ forces such as reputation, academically and research quality and marketing efforts (Mazzarol 1998). Decisions are thereby influenced by someone’s expectations. Summarizing the previous findings; multi-country studies suggest that educational institutions and host governments must be aware of this decision-making procedure, to attract international students (Mazzarol & Sautar 2002).

In terms of migrating to another country to work abroad, are all motivations for or against an international career based on the manifestation of five ‘push’, ‘pull’ and ‘mooring’ driving
forces; (1) economical, (2) political, (3) cultural, (4) family, and (5) career situation (Carr, Inkson & Thorn 2005). In general, people's decision for this type of migration is based on the individual possible career opportunities, personal values, interests, and skills (Orahood, Kruze & Pearson 2004). It is important to underline that all these findings are based on quantitative research, which can be interpreted differently.

“As the level of study abroad participation of business and management student’s increases, it is increasingly important to examine if, and how, studying abroad affects business students’ career choices and aspirations.”

(Orahood, Kruze & Pearson 2004, p. 118)

Within a study at the Indiana University in the United States of America, Orahood, Kruze & Pearson (2004) discovered that 96% of the participated students were affected by their study abroad regarding their career plans. Additional 58% were even actively looking for jobs in foreign countries. By studying abroad, people develop their language skills, improve their cultural awareness and understanding, and gain confidence to work abroad.

When we interpret these developments in the framework of PPM, studying abroad can create or strengthen countries ‘pull’ and ‘push’ forces for people to migrate. In a contribution to those quantitative findings, only a little qualitative research has been carried out regarding the driving forces of people to apply for a job abroad. By using a qualitative approach Christofi & Thompson (2006) discovered, that another important influence factor for people to apply for a job overseas could be disillusion after a sojourn abroad. The procedure of returning home after studying abroad and the resulting individual problems should not be underestimated (Christofi & Thompson 2006). Additionally, Christofi & Thompson (2007) examined people’s personal experiences, after they had studied abroad for longer than three years; the longer people stay in a host country, the more they adjust to their host country. This can make it difficult for them to migrate back to their home country after living abroad. Such a disillusion is based on a cultural comparison between the home country and host country in the areas of conflict and peace, idealization and reality, freedom and restrictions, and comfort (Christofi & Thompson 2007). Consequently, this aspect of the adjustment to the host country and a possible disillusion by returning home has to be taken into account, when analyzing the driving forces of students who want to apply for a job abroad.
3.3 The Global Flow of Knowledge

Within the following part of our Master thesis, we put different forms of knowledge flow in the focus of our observation. This is crucial, to understand the impact of the talent flow from a micro and macro perspective. Additionally, we share not only the positive but also the critical consequences of the phenomenon of the global talent flow. Hence, we draw a picture of the outgrows, which illustrates the versatile complexity of this phenomenon.

3.3.1 Brain Drain

By analyzing motivations of people and in particular highly talented international students from Italy and Lithuania who want to apply for a job abroad, it is necessary to understand the different effects those migration streams can cause. Thereby, the term ‘brain drain’ describes the general emigration of highly skilled labor. Although the term is often used and subject to many studies, it is not precisely defined (Kazlauskienė & Rinkevičius 2006). The roots of this expression go back to the 1950s when this term described the immigration of, especially scientists from the former Soviet Union, United Kingdom, and Canada to the United States of America, based on strong ‘push’ and ‘pull’ forces (Rapoport 2004). The ‘brain’ category includes a wide variety of highly educated people with academic degrees to well-trained skilled workers (Iredale 1999; Korner 1998). Due to our examination of the migration of highly talented international students from Lithuania and Italy, our study mainly focuses on ‘brain drain’. The case studies of Italy and Lithuania show, for example, different kinds of ‘brain drain’. While Italy loses especially highly educated people with a university degree (Biondo et al. 2012), Lithuania loses these people as well as well-trained skilled workers (Kazlauskienė & Rinkevičius 2006). The tendency of countries, to lose these people is further accelerated by the rapidly growing international demand for highly skilled and well-educated workforce. This can be described by an increase of the strength of the ‘pull’ forces.

Moreover, ‘brain drain’ is in general strongly one-sided from less developed countries to more developed countries (Wiers-Jenssen 2008). This increased during the recent years even further. The demographic change and the aging society of most developed countries is a further aspect, which plays a role in the ‘brain drain’. Companies and Governments from those try to attract (‘pull’) high educated foreigners since local talents cannot replace the number of highly skilled and well-educated people, who retired. Thus, people from other countries - most likely from less developed ones - have to fill this gap, which speeds up the ‘brain drain’ even further (Baruch, Budhwar & Khatri 2007; Djajic, Michael & Vinogradova 2012; Kazlauskienė & Rinkevičius 2006). This migration wave causes a net loss of human
capital in the home country (Straubhaar 2000). Accordingly, less developed countries become a victim of ‘brain drain’ (Docquier et al. 2016; Rapoport 2004). These people, who are willing to move to close the gap between needed people and people leaving the home country, seek for an improvement of the own lifestyle and are driven by new career choices (Baruch, Budhwar & Khatri 2007). Through this further increase in human capital, the developed countries will continue to grow even stronger, while the less developed ones lose, through the loss of human capital, the chance to catch up or at least keep the developmental distance to the developed countries (Straubhaar 2000).

3.3.2 Brain Gain

The ‘brain gain’ is the flipside of the ‘brain drain’, well-educated and highly skilled workforce enters a country and starts to work in that county, using the individual knowledge to the full potential. Thus, the economy and the society at large of the host country are benefiting from the new migrants (Oyelere 2011; Lien & Wang 2005).

Another aspect, which leads to a ‘brain gain’, is the return of skilled people who left the home country previously and return at a later stage. Through these returns, knowledge is brought to the home country, which can support the local development (Stark, Helmenstein & Prskawetz 1997). It is reasonable to say, that the 'brain gain' of a country is achievable through different approaches. One approach is to attract ('pull') talented people from other countries. These people can either be foreigners or own citizens, who previously left the country to start working or studying abroad. Another way to ensure the development is to gain the ‘brain’ internally, meaning to educated people according to the needs of the local labor market (Straubhaar 2000). Even if we know that there exist personal ‘mooring’ forces, setting this in our framework of PPM, a country can try to influence ‘push’ forces directly, and ‘pull’ forces indirectly. This can be carried out by, for example, job guarantees, better education or salaries. No matter on which basis local 'brain' is gained, the gain will directly influence the human capital of a country. Human capital is the key driver for future development. Thus, ‘brain gain’ is crucial to the government to ensure future growth (Lien & Wang 2005; Straubhaar 2000).

3.3.3 Brain Circulation

From the beginnings of the 1990’s, the term ‘brain circulation’ started to draw a more holistic picture on the phenomenon of the global talent flow, slowly replacing the strict distinction between ‘brain drain’ and ‘brain gain’. Thus, adding shades of grey between the strict differentiation of ‘losing’ and ‘winning’ countries of these migration flows of highly educated
and well-skilled people (Jöns 2009). Depending on the perspective and the level of observation, macro or micro level, the term of ‘brain circulation’ can be used in different situational constellations. Whereby it always describes the mutual flow of well-educated and highly skilled people. One situation in which the phrase ‘brain circulation’ is used, is when the amount of incoming talent is equal to the outgoes of talent of one country. The net balance of these flows is balanced, although, the individuals, embodying the ‘brain’, are continually changing. Through this continuous self-renewal and change, knowledge spillovers are happening, which then lead to new innovational potential (Saxenian 2002). Thus, the human capital of the participating countries is increasing, without nations being exploited by others (Straubhaar 2000). However, as we could see on the example of Lithuania, the global talent flow and migration, in general, is not a rational phenomenon; the amount of emigrating talented people is much higher as the number of people immigrating.

Another way of ‘brain circulation’, more visible from the macro perspective, is the potential return of people, who left the home country in the wake of the ‘brain drain’ and return after a period abroad (Saxenian 2004). These returnees often take advantage of high-level opportunities through the use of the newly gained knowledge (Johnson & Regets 1998). A third way in which the term is used is a situation, in which people leave their home country, to work or study abroad, return after a period but remain anchored in the former home country. Often, these people own dual citizenships and commute between the two countries, obtaining networks and businesses in both countries (Tung 2008). All these varied interpretations of the phrase have one thing in common, which is represented in the phrase itself. The ‘brain’ is in constant circulation and thus has to be seen as flexible rather than fixed. However, not only the ‘brain’ has to be seen as flexible, but also the components of the PPM model, the ‘push’, ‘pull’, and ‘mooring’ forces are never stable over time. Countries, which have strong ‘push’ or ‘pull’ forces, leading to specific migration streams, might not have the same after some years. This development can be based on political or economic reasons.

All these different applications of the phrase ‘brain circulation’ are determined by various aspects and variables but share the positive connotation of chances rather than only brutal exploitation. However, the imbalance, between developing and developed countries is likely to remain. Hence, it is crucial to underline, that the developed countries are still in the position of power. To stop this ‘modern colonialism’, a significant improvement of the socioeconomic and socio-political development in the developing countries, especially in Africa, is needed. This improvement is the only way to stop the massive outflow of well-educated and highly
skilled people and provide a fair chance of development to these heavily hemorrhaging countries (Teferra 2005).

3.3.4 **Brain Waste**

To make these definitions of ‘brain drain’, ‘brain gain’, and ‘brain circulation’ holistic, the term ‘brain waste’ needs to be defined as a situation, where talent is not used. In particular, highly skilled people work in positions for low skilled or unskilled, and thus cannot apply the full depth of their knowledge (Kazlauskiene & Rinkevicius 2006). These highly skilled and well-educated people are not able to apply the specifically developed knowledge anymore, and thus the skills fall into oblivion (Lofters et al. 2014). This ‘waste’ of ‘brain’ throughout the under placement of talent can be based on the underutilization of the educational degree from the home country of the migrant. This underutilization happens, but more often the problem of ‘brain waste’ is caused by the lousy transferability of the skill set of the migrant to the needs of the labor market of the host country (Mattoo, Neagu & Ozden 2008). The value of the education and thus the value of the individual human capital is strongly determined by its origin and will most likely decrease by migration across borders since it is imperfectly portable (Friedberg 2000). Due to our focus on international students from Lithuania and Italy who study abroad in Europe, we do not explicitly face the problem of ‘brain waste’ within our study. However, as it could be seen by existing findings mentioned above, perusing an international educational degree is one of the driving forces to study abroad.

4 **Methodology**

This part of our Master thesis is dedicated to the topic of methodology. Methodology describes different approaches, views, and perspectives, which can be used separately, or together, to create new knowledge. The overall aim is to leave the previous boundaries of knowledge behind and gain a new understanding of the surroundings or the actions currently happening around One (Arbnor & Bjerke 2009). Before we start to investigate and reason, why we decided to take the path we took, we want to give the reader a summary of how we understand the terms of methodology and how we define the boundaries of knowledge.

4.1 **Basic Assumptions**

As Arbnor and Bjerke (2009) describe, everyone has underlying assumptions about the surrounding world. These assumptions are the basis for the daily sensemaking of every person in the perceived environment (Weick 1995). Situations are read and interpreted not from an
objective point of view, but from the individual point of view, which is formed through previous learning, education, and social norms (Gustavsson 2007; Lindgren & Packendorff 2009). Although two people could have enjoyed the same education in a similar environment, the ‘reading’ of a particular situation might be slightly different, although the basic assumptions in the background are most likely alike. These basic assumptions are deeply anchored in the personal mindset (Gill 2004; Lindgren & Packendorff 2009). On the one hand, these assumptions are needed to make unconscious decisions. On the other hand, these assumptions are blinding us, as we connect the current situation to the learning of a previous situation and thus do not consider the moment by itself without any partisan (Arnbor & Bjerke 2009).

As these individual assumptions are so deeply anchored, it is hard to change them, and if it is possible at all, it requires an extended period, or a shocking incident, which leads the person to reflect upon their own assumptions in a critical way (Arnbor & Bjerke 2009; Gustavsson 2007). One of the significant downsides of basic assumptions is the blocking character of them. Complicated situations are only seen from the perspective which is reasonable according to the own frames of references and thus blocking or at least hindering our understanding of a complicated situation. This prejudging happens especially in cases, where it would be required to leave the previous point of view behind to gain a new impartial understanding (Arnbor & Bjerke 2009; Lindgren & Packendorff 2009). As every one of us carries these assumptions, even research has to be questioned critically, due to the possible assumptions of the researcher. This being said, the struggle about the credibility of significant proportions of research becomes visible. Basic assumptions become the guidelines for researchers and analyses are most likely be designed according to the assumptions of those involved (Gustavsson 2007; Morgan & Smircich 1980). Hence, most research is focused on potential problems of a specific group of people, who are involved or affected by subjectively perceived imbalances, which could lead to problems (Arnbor & Bjerke 2009).

There are no objective problems in the world around us. We are the ones, who see problems and create the problems ourselves (Arnbor & Bjerke 2009). Hence, it is crucial for the researcher to argue for the reasons, why this sequence of events is of particular interest and worth investigation not only for him- or herself, but also for the society at large. The researcher is in charge to give a clear description of the labyrinth which the studies aims for to solve and reveal before the actual research can take place to provide a fair chance of being understood (Arnbor & Bjerke 2009). As we are the researchers of this topic, we try our best, to bring our insides, as well as our understanding across on this topic. Most researchers never
leave the operational level and thus find, what is, according to their frames of references, an appropriate solution or answer to the research question. These findings are most likely in the field of the already provable (Arbnor & Bjerke 2009).

Hence, often the data collection is designed according to the basic assumptions, and studies face the danger of becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy (Arbnor & Bjerke 2009). This circular logic of a large extent of the researcher hinders to gain a more profound understanding of the research issue. Following this argumentation; the common belief of the ‘right’ way to collect data in a particular situation is a widely spread fallacy (Arbnor & Bjerke 2009; Lindgren & Packendorff 2009). The decision for, or against a methodological approach has to be based on the reasoning of the researcher’s personal understanding of the boundaries of knowledge, which need to be pushed a bit further. Within the following part of our Master thesis, we briefly introduce different approaches and provide profound reasoning for our choices of methodology.

4.1.1 Our Awareness of the own Limitations

Coming back to the previous mentioned dangers and obstacles every researcher's faces, Arbnor and Bjerke (2009) relate the topic of methodology to the personal traits of entrepreneurs. The qualities and characteristics of entrepreneurial people enable them to question the status quo and the conventional way of thinking. These people trust their gut feeling and see through the ‘taken for granted clichés’ to establish new perspectives (Arbnor & Bjerke 2009). Our declared aim of this Master thesis is to try to behave exactly like these people. We try to leave our underlying assumptions at the door, to be able to see things, connections, and patterns in a way we usually would never see them. We question ourselves throughout the entire process of this Master thesis to make sure we are not falling back into previous patterns of thoughts, to be able to bring a new inside to the overall topic. To ensure the readability and the precise mapping through the labyrinth we see, we spend a lot of effort on explicit descriptions of our understanding within each of the chapters. Throughout this approach, we want to take the reader by the hand and show in detail, all our perceptions and findings.

4.2 Methodological Views

The methodological view of a researcher towards the research issue can be distinguished among the three views of the ‘analytical view’, the ‘system view’, and the ‘actors view’ (Arbnor & Bjerke 2009).
Within the framework of the ‘analytical view’, the researcher is focused on the causality between different facts and their influence on a phenomenon with the overall aim to find explanations. The facts, which are considered to be valid for these explanations, can be both, subjective and objective, without any distinction of their validity. Not only single facts are investigated, more often the combination of different facts build the foundation for explanations. The researcher usually sets up hypotheses within this framework of the ‘analytical view’, which are then either verified or falsified. This characteristic of the ‘analytical approach’ is widely spread, but not a necessity. The criticism of this approach is mainly focused on the reduced complexity of the displayed situation within an explanation. Furthermore, the consideration of subjective opinions and facts is another point of criticism since these are difficult to prove and do not have to be related to ‘hard facts’ (Arnbör & Bjerke 2009).

The ‘system view’ tries to display the holistic situation with all the facts and influences which are out there. All these influences are connected to each other through a web. Thus, the case becomes somewhat complicated; all changes, even though they are minor nature, affect the entity within the system through connections between all stakeholders of the system. These systems are either closed or open to interact with other systems. One of the underlying assumptions within this concept is the existence of universal patterns, behaviors, and properties, which can be understood and then be applied to different contexts. Through this approach, researchers hope to reveal an understanding of a complex phenomenon and the way, entire organizations function. This approach is widely criticized, due to its complexity and the permanent interdependence of the different stakeholders within this system, which are hard to display and thus to take into consideration. The perception of the system is linked to the frames of references of the researcher and hence will most likely not be able to provide a holistic view of all relations within the system (Arnbör & Bjerke 2009).

Within the framework of the ‘actors view’, the researcher sees oneself in a constant, ongoing flow of development of reality, taking an active role. The reality is seen in constant change, characterized by chaos, but at the same time stable, and socially constructed. The author is not allowed to stand outside of this situation because this would be strange to the situation and thus the situation itself would be influenced. Taken for granted assumptions are seen as obstacles of possible understandings. Thus, the reasoning within the ‘actors view’ can sometimes be seen as artistic and unrealistic. The researcher takes an active role as co-author and shapes and influences this development by themselves, aiming for the creation of intellectual and challenging texts, in which the reader can actively participate while reading.
This kind of study is characterized by abundant descriptions, which aim to provide the reader with a deep understanding of the person, including personal motives, behind the text. In this framework, ambiguity is not only desired but also essential to the creator of knowledge (Arbnor & Bjerke 2009).

4.2.1 Our Choice of the ‘Actors View’

Due to the complexity and our understanding of our role in the phenomenon under investigation, we follow the ‘actors view’. While the researcher within the ‘system view’ and the ‘analytical view’ focuses on the causal relations, the researcher using ‘actors view’ puts the understanding and meaning of a topic in focus. To put this into different words; only within the ‘actors view’, the individual meaning and understanding build the foundation of an overall understanding (Arbnor & Bjerke 2009). We believe that the social reality is not objective and thus we do not want to put our understanding of the driving forces in the focus of this thesis. We are investigating the perception of other participants of the global talent flow and want to grasp their understanding. We do not see people as objects who can be studied; we see people as active designers of the socially constructed environment. These people create the individual environment through interactions with others. Hence the environment is seen rather intersubjective than objective.

Our role in this study is ambivalent. On the one side, we act as observers, who are able to gain an overview and connect the dots from a macro perspective. To achieve this, we step back from the practical to a more conceptual view to make sense of the meanings the participants bring across. As observers, we increase the dissociative distance to the participants to gain the required overview. On the other side, we take the role of actors ourselves to look at the phenomenon of global talent flow through the glasses of our participants. We see the participants - young talents from Italy and Lithuania - as active, reflective, and creative individuals who can only be understood through a relation between them and us. This relationship has to be built on honesty to enable us to become part of the intersubjective exchange of the perception of the global talent flow. Only these participants can provide us with answers to the unknown. Their perception of the phenomenon is directly connected to the environment in which they grew up and thus potentially fundamentally different to our understanding. Hence, we are dependent on their individual understandings. We know what we do not know, and therefore we can ask questions about the unknown driving forces of these students. We want to talk about the actions of the participants, rather than their behavior, to underline that we see the participants as active designers of the particular
environment. Thus, our role within this thesis changes over time to be able to gain a deeper understanding, which is built on the different perspectives of those affected. We try to make sense of the phenomenon from the point of view of the other actors.

We believe that the environment around us is constructed throughout our perception of, and influence on it. Within this thesis, we follow the idea of Arbnor and Bjerke (2009) that an honest and open dialogue is the basis for understanding each other. Hence, it is crucial for us to develop a way of these honest conversations. One possible obstacle could be based on language barriers. Language, in general, is socially constructed and connects people and neither the interviewees nor we are native English speakers, which could end in some misunderstandings. At the same time, we are aware that this way of having a dialogue is the only possible way in the circumstances of our thesis. Hence, we do not focus any further on this potential hurdle. The language itself has exciting parallelism to the perception of a phenomenon. As a language has different dialects, the individual understandings of a phenomenon can be seen as dialects as well. The core of a language or a phenomenon might be the same, but due to the different angle from which a phenomenon is looked at, or what influenced the development of the particular language, there might be some minor or even major differences. These deviations are reason enough for us to try to include several different dialects of the phenomenon of global talent flow within this study. We are aware that these can lead to controversial realities of the same facts. According to Arbnor and Bjerke (2009), even facts are, due to the different circumstances under which they were perceived, variable. The reality around us is multifaceted, and there is more than one perception of what is going on.

To sum this up; only through interpretation, action, and reflection, we can connect these different dots and dialects to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon of global talent flow from the perspective of our interviewees. We are confident to say that our understanding of the 'actors view' leads us to fruitful results, which are able to deliver answers to our research questions.

4.3 Inductive Approach

Research, in general, can be seen as a circular action. The circle starts with facts of the empirical world, which are then - through induction - lifted to the theoretical world, where theories are built. These theories lead - through deduction - to forecasts, which are still only valid in the theoretical world. Moreover, forecasts are then being tested in the empirical world through verification, resulting in new facts. These new facts build the starting point of the
same sequence repeatedly. A third strategy apart from induction and deduction is the abduction. The abductive tactic starts with facts as well as the inductive one but takes already existing theoretical knowledge into consideration while building new theory and knowledge. These new theories are then being tested, and the newly gained knowledge is used to adjust the theory to make it more specific. This circular testing and developing of new theories continues until the newly developed theory, or model is verified several times, meaning that the researcher goes back and forth. Hence, abduction combines the theoretical and the empirical world and has to be understood as an alternation between these two approaches (Arbnor & Bjerke 2009).

Within this Master thesis, we were inspired by the inductive approach but not in its most fundamental way. The fundamental way would require a theory development in which the researcher has no prejudgment or any existing knowledge about any theories while gathering the data. One approach to do so goes back to Glaser and Strauss (1976), who introduced the methodological approach for grounded theory. However, the assumption that a researcher can develop theories without the consideration of any already existing theoretical knowledge is unrealistic for us. Even if it were feasible, it would require a very long and intense process of developing theories from scratch. Although we introduce our theoretical pre-understanding in the first chapter of this thesis, we are not testing any hypothesis. Furthermore, we are not going back and forth between the empirical and the theoretical world. We are gathering data with the aim to lift the findings to the theoretical, conceptual level and thus we see our approach as an inductive one.

4.4 Data Collection

The data collection in the empirical world can be distinguished between the qualitative and the quantitative approach. The following sub-chapter is formulated to give a short impression of our understanding of the differentiation of these different approaches. By using the quantitative approach, the researcher sees the world as external and the own role as independently. The science is value-free, and the researcher can focus on the facts and is able to simplify complex phenomenon by testing these on causality and fundamental laws (Arbnor & Bjerke 2009). This is mostly done by taking large samples and the numeric measurement of variables and their interdependence to each other (Bell 2014). The main strength of this approach is based on the large sample size, which is used to formulate generalized assumptions. Thus, this approach is often considered for policy decisions. Another advantage is based on the fast and economical use and evaluation of the collected data. On the other side
of the medal, the quantitative approach holds several weaknesses. Due to its characteristic of testing fundamental laws and causality, the focus of this approach is firmly laying on things which happened in the past and thus are just limited suitable for future predictions (Arbnor & Bjerke 2009). Through the somewhat restricted response options of the participants, which are needed, to make the data usable for calculations, this approach gathers inflexible data. This inflexibility sometimes leads to artificial explanations and thus will most likely not be able to leave the boundaries of the already imaginable. Hence, it is complicated to develop or generate new theories within the quantitative approach (Amaratunga et al. 2002).

Within the framework of the qualitative approach, the world is mostly seen as socially constructed, subjective, and the observer him- or herself is a part of the situation. The researcher is driven by the human interest in the situation and tries to understand what is happening in that particular situation (Amaratunga et al. 2002). By using different methods and multiple views, the situation is tried to be understood in depth (Bell 2014). Through this deeper understanding, new ideas and theories can be developed. The main strength of this profound understanding is connected to the broad coverage of different perspectives, from which a situation is looked at. As the collected data is more natural, due to its different facets, it can build the basis for an understanding of people’s meaning (Amaratunga et al. 2002). Another strong side of this approach is the time perspective. Change processes can be seen and accompanied by this approach. Consequently, changes, which only become visible over time, can be highlighted. Through the use of this time perspective, topics can be adjusted to new findings, issues, and ideas. Hence, this approach is a lot more flexible and does not narrow down the complexity of situations. The downside of this approach is characterized by the complex, long-running and expensive data collection. The duration and therefore the resources needed are also hard to plan and predict since there is usually not a defined endpoint of research. As the data is interpreted and analysed, the interpretation of the same answers might be different, and thus it is hard to tell if the explanation is adequate. This is also the basis for criticism towards the qualitative approach and often the reason, why policymakers may only give low credibility to the findings of this research method (Amaratunga et al. 2002).

4.4.1 Our Choice for the Qualitative Approach
Amaratunga et al. (2002), claim that the distinction between these two approaches is not commonly defined and thus it is sometimes hard to draw a clear line even though the literature agreed on the fundamental distinction. As Descombe (2014) describes, there are no
right or wrong choices when it comes to the approach, which is being used by the researcher, as long as the reasoning is profound and transparent.

Within our Master thesis, we strongly emphasize the qualitative research, which suits to underline the different, individual layers of the phenomenon of the global talent flow. The existing studies, focusing on Lithuania and Italy, were quantitatively based and built the starting point for our research. Only through these studies, our interest in Italy and Lithuania was caught, and thus we are grateful for the existing research on this exciting topic. At the same time, these quantitative studies left us with further questions. As the weaknesses of one approach can be compensated by a combination with another method (Amaratunga et al. 2002; Arbnor & Bjerke 2009; Bryman 2006), we want to contribute another layer to the existing knowledge on the phenomenon of the global talent flow. We see this phenomenon as complex, and the driving forces in the background of our interviewees are most likely be individual and different to each other. With this study, we want to highlight and investigate the deeply anchored reasons of young talents to move and work abroad, to present a more profound understanding of this part of the global talent flow. Within our Master thesis, we focus on a small number of participants, to make sure we can use all the input of these young talents and their probably intricate opinions on this topic. Only if we let the participants express their true inner perception completely, we can gain an understanding. Another advantage is the open structure of our qualitative approach, as we can make sure that the answers do not have to be squeezed into a pre-given structure, which might not be suitable for all possible answers. We want to hand over the word to the young talents of Italy and Lithuania to let their voices be heard since we see these people as active actors within the phenomenon of the global talent flow and not only passive impersonators of a fixed environment. Furthermore, we want to find out what we do not know. Thus, it is crucial to give this room to the young talents rather than limiting the topics to our preunderstanding. By being open to new input, we can shift our boundaries of knowledge a bit further. Another strong reason for us to follow the qualitative approach is the possibility to compare different perceptions in detail and not only through the pre-formed patterns of a survey. Thus, we strongly see the advantages of the qualitative approach as prevalent since we would like to see the reality from the point of view of the actors and understand it from their perspective. To do that, we have to be sensitive about what the participants say and let them speak to us, and to the reader of this thesis.
4.4.2 Primary Data

The qualitative data can be collected in a wide range of different approaches. These approaches can be distinguished into two main categories. On the one hand, data from previous studies is reused, which is called secondary data (Hox & Boeije 2005). Based on these weaknesses of possible incompatibility, a possible lack of trustworthiness, and our aspiration for this Master thesis, the use of existing data was rejected by us. A further aspect, which has to be mentioned at this place, is the little existence of studies within the field of our research. Thus, the reuse of already collected data on the practical level was no option, since our research topic is focused on a white spot on the map of research on global talent flow.

On the other hand, researchers collect data from scratch (Hox & Boeije 2005). This newly collected data is called primary data. Hence, the data is perfectly compatible with the research topic and question, which is studied by the researcher. This perfect fit is a strong argument for us to use primary data. Additionally, the other weakness of the secondary dataset, the trustworthiness, is eliminated, as no third party is involved in the primary data gathering. Furthermore, we believe that we can gain a better understanding of the data through our own gathering, as we are actively engaged in the process. The downside of this approach is the number of resources, which is needed for the data collection.

Overall, the primary data collection can be distinguished among the ‘observation’, ‘experiment’, and ‘interview’ approach. Thereby, the levels of interaction between the researcher and the object of research, varies (Arbnor & Bjerke 2009). Within the concept of ‘observation’, a further distinction between ‘direct’ and ‘indirect’ has to be made. On the one hand, ‘indirect observation’ happens when the researcher listens or views any recording. On the other hand, ‘direct observation’ happens, when the researcher sees the situations as a whole and is part of it. It is essential to underline that it is complicated to realize the situation as a whole within the ‘observation’ (Arbnor & Bjerke 2009). The collected data is strongly dependent on the skills, the competence, and the training of the observer (Polkinghorne 2005).

The second approach, which is widely used in terms of primary qualitative data collection, is an ‘experiment’. In this construct, the researcher sets up situations in a laboratory, which are similar to each other and then changes one or more of the variables of this closed system to measure the impact of this adjustment (Hox & Boeije 2005). Through this approach, the strength and influence of the individual variable become visible (Arbnor & Bjerke 2009).

The third primary level technique for collecting data are ‘interviews’, which are the most common way to gather qualitative data (Polkinghorne 2005). These ‘interviews’ can be set up
as face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews, mail questionnaire, or group questionnaires. ‘Interviews’ are used to gather individual opinions, perceptions, and attitudes as well as background information (Harrell & Bradley 2009; Hox & Boeije 2005). These questions can be structured, semi-structured, or even unstructured depending on the aim of the researcher (Arbnor & Bjerke 2009; Harrell & Bradley 2009). The less structured the interview is constructed, the more the interviewer allows the interviewee to express the own inner assumption or opinion on a topic (Harrell & Bradley 2009). The variety of the questions can also reach from closed questions with a simple ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer, to complete open questions where the answer itself is difficult to predict (Newman 2014).

4.4.3 Semi-Structures Interviews

Within this Master thesis, we collected the needed data through semi-structured face-to-face interviews with open questions via video telecommunication. We think that we need a slight structure for the interviews, to get answers, which are connected to our topic and thus deliver responses, which are helpful in the scope of this Master thesis. More precisely, our questions were open to allow the interviewees to express their full understanding. We conducted ten interviews in total with equal weight between Lithuanians and Italians (Appendix B: Interview participants). We are confident that these people represent a variety of different perspectives towards and within the global talent flow. At the same time, we are aware that this number was most likely not able to reach a high level of saturation. The aim of saturation would have reduced the time we could spend on each interview and thus would have decreased the depth of the given perspectives. Hence, we decided to focus on a smaller number of participants with a high depth rather than a high saturation with this study. It can be said, that our target group was structured and sharply limited. However, according to Polkinghorne (2005), our study became more focused on understanding, describing and clarifying the actual experiences, by limiting it and selecting participants, who embody specific criteria, which are connected to our topic. In this case, we talk about young talents, who were already an active part of the global talent flow.

Moreover, we decided to focus on face-to-face interviews via video telecommunication to conduct our interviews. We believe that the gestures and mimic are an essential part of the communication and thus of the language. To connect with the interviewees and create an atmosphere, which enabled us to have an open dialogue with the selected young talents, this part of the communication was essential to us. This assumption of the importance of body language is further supported by Newman (2014) and Novick (2008). Besides, we wanted to
see the reaction of the participants to our questions to be ensured, that our issue is thoroughly understood. Another way of reasoning was shown by Sturges and Hanrahan (2004) who argue that people talk more openly in their natural environment, especially in cases of sensitive topics. We believe that the individual driving forces of the interviewees are personal and thus an atmosphere and environment, which is familiar to the young talents is beneficial to the depth of the answers.

Since both of these approaches have strong sides, we decided to conduct the interviews through a combination of both. Through the face-to-face interviews, which are held via video telecommunication, the participant could stay in the familiar environment, while we could make use of the advantages of a traditional face-to-face interview. Another, more practical related fact, which we had to take into account, was the dispersed location, where the partaking young talents lived. Our research groups are Lithuanian and Italian students who studied abroad in Europe, and thus we were not able to set up actual face-to-face interviews. The time, which would have been spent, would have exceeded the scope of this thesis. Nevertheless, we are aware of the fact, that another method, such as mail questionnaire could have revealed different understandings or possible answers to our research question.

### 4.4.4 Our Interview Process

We selected all our interview partners according to our definition of the target group, meaning that all of them were still enrolled in their study program in the home country and spent between four and eleven months studying in another European country. The age range of the participating young talents reached from 19 to 27 years. We reached our participants through the ESN, in particular, the networks in Lithuania and Italy. To ensure as many different dialects of the phenomenon of global talent flow as possible, we included a variety of people with varying university backgrounds. All participants were citizens of either Italy or Lithuania.

We provided only very little information to the participants in advance, to be sure, that possible explanations of us would not influence the answers and assumptions of these young talents. Our interview was divided into two independent, but still connected parts. After a brief introduction of ourselves to the interviewees and a few minutes of small talk, in which we asked the participants if it is ok if we tape the conversation, the interview started. We got the confirmation of all participants to record the interview, which helped us during the interview, to focus on the actual conversation rather than on taking notes. Due to these tapes, we were able to listen to the answers of the young talents several times in case of unclear
answers. Furthermore, we transcribed all the interviews at a later stage, which we think is the most transparent way of a qualitative data collection. Additionally, this enabled us to make use of the content in full depth during the analyzes. Furthermore, we conducted all the interviews in English to make sure that translations would not influence our research and to be able to provide the transcripts upon request within a short timeframe. We structured our interview questions, which can be found in Appendix A, in a way, which enabled us to have a regular, natural dialogue with our selected interviewees. We avoided naming specific topics, but through the way we structured the questions we were able to lead the conversation indirectly to the main topics of our study, leaving the room for topics, we were not aware of. Overall, the questions were broad and left enough space for the participants to express themselves fully. The initial questions were often followed by follow-up questions, which were aiming for more in-depth understanding and reasoning of the young talents.

The first part of the interview aimed to gain a better understanding of their previous experience abroad and general background information. Meaning, we handed over the voice to the interviewee to let the young talents express, their experiences on a very general level. Through this, the interviewee became the active part of the conversation, and we were able to put their understanding in the core of the conversation. The questions were then continuously narrowed down to questions on the individual understanding of, e.g. ‘opportunities’ as we assumed that the understanding of this expression reveals a lot about the driving forces. The second part of our semi-structured interviews aimed for the motivations to work abroad in the future. While one of us was in charge of the conversation and thus became an actor himself, the other one would obtain the role of the observer. The observer was able to keep a certain distance to make sure that all the questions were answered, and the answers were clear. The one of us, who was in the position of the observer, would pass notes, whenever another question or a follow-up question on a topic was needed, to the interviewer. We did this in a way, which was not visible for the interviewees, to not stop or influence the flow of the conversation. Overall, the interviews took between 20 and 45 minutes, depending on the detailedness of the descriptions of the young talents.

4.5 Phenomenology

In the next step of our Master thesis, we analyzed the data of the interviews. We used the phenomenology approach within the ‘actors view’ as a guideline for our interpretation of the data gathered by us. For us, the phenomenology goes perfectly hand in hand with the ‘actors view’ since both put the meaning of individuals words and languages in the center of
understanding and focus on the authentic experiences of participants, who experienced a phenomenon. Furthermore, the interpretation of the individual perceived environment of a phenomenon builds the core in both approaches. Besides, both approaches are aiming to create a new, more vibrant understanding of individuals and put a strong focus on the differences rather than the similarities (Arbnor & Bjerke 2009; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2016).

The content analyses of qualitative data are usually following three major steps. In the first step, the data is prepared. During this data preparation, the focus lays on the achievement of interoperability of the different data files. In the second step, the data is cut down into meaningful segments, which are then, in a third step put together according to newly build overall themes. These themes are then interpreted, discussed and, if possible, put into relation to each other (Creswell 2012) to build the basis for subjective interpretations (Hsieh & Shannon 2005).

Within our research, we followed this broad description of the procedure to collect and make use of the qualitative data. In our first step, we let the young talents express their overall experiences through the interviews. We then transcribed all the taped conversations in detail to be sure that we do not miss any of the information, which were available. During the process of the transcription, we focused on the pure content of the statements. To support the readability for the following steps, we created transcribed summaries by sometimes rearranging the structure of the sentences to bring it in line with the English Grammar or cutting very long sentences into two independent statements. We are aware that this behavior, might influence the meaning of the actual statement, and that it can be seen as the first step of our interpretation (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2016). Nevertheless, we believe that this minor adjustment was needed, to prepare the gathered data for the next steps. This step was followed by reading and rereading the transcripts to immerse ourselves in the different perceptions and to get a more detailed overview, of the various aspects, which could be found in our gathered data. Through this immersion, we were able to see strong statements of the young talents, which describe different facets of the overall phenomenon of the global talent flow. Through this reduction to the statements and decision, of what is meaningful and what is not, we were able to reduce the complexity and scope of the data tremendously. We are aware that we might have overseen some details in our choice, but we were acting according to the best of our abilities. We tried to focus on those statements, which seemed most suitable for us to add another layer of understanding to the overall phenomenon of the global talent flow. All of these statements were then equally weighted by us to build the foundation for the set-up of
broader themes in which the different facets of the same sub-phenomenon were represented. This can be seen in the following chapter, where we use the voice of the interviewed young talents to discuss ‘what’ was experienced and ‘how’ was it experienced within this phenomenon. This part builds the core of our Master thesis and the base for a better understanding of the different driving forces of young talents. To link this discussion back to the ‘actors view’, our role is again ambivalent. In this discussion part, we were both, the actor that uses the glasses of the young talents to give meaning to their statements, as well as the observer, who can connect the different statements on a superior level to draw an integrated picture of the phenomenon.

5 Driving Forces of Young Talents

In this part of the Master thesis, we hand over the voice to the participants of our study. We immerse ourselves in the personal understanding and perception of the young talents towards the phenomenon of the global talent flow. Hence, it is crucial to use the wording of the young talents as a starting point of a profound understanding. Our role in this part is the one of the mediator and moderator between the different dialects and perception of the sub-topics. The following themes, common patterns, and topics of interest became visible throughout our immersion.

5.1 The Voice of Young Talents from Italy

Beginning with the voice of young talents from Italy, the following sub-chapters describe the themes, which appeared through the interview process. By clustering the answers according to these topics, we are able to underline the multifaceted nature of the driving forces.

5.1.1 Opportunities and Labor Market

The theme of opportunities and labor market refers to where the participants see themselves living and working in the long-term future. Within our interviews, we got a vast variety of answers. On the one side, young talents - such as Elisabetta - definitely see themselves in Italy:

“Yes, I will come back to Italy, I am sure about it. When I think about having a family, I am sure it will be in Italy, my family is here and that is where I want to be. However, I am young; I want to do whatever I want. I want to leave for a period of time and find a job abroad - even a simple job, I do not mind. One day when I think it is the moment to settle down, I know I will come back to Italy if I am abroad.”
On the other side, Sarah sees her long-term future from another point of view: “If I have a good job abroad, good opportunities, and I am able to pay rent, why should I come back? ... if I have something somewhere else, I would not come back”. Furthermore, Olga made it clear to leave Italy 100% after her graduation: “I definitely do not see myself in Italy”.

One main influence for young talents from Italy came across very clearly; the situation of the labor market, expressed by multiple interviewees; “In Italy, there are simply no jobs” (Sarah) or “It is a matter of finding a place to work.” (Fabio). Furthermore, by the decision to move and work abroad, almost all Italian participants are influenced by the opportunities offered by other countries. Fabio for instance, emphasized his decision to go abroad in the following sentence: “I want to go abroad to Germany because I know that my field of study is much more rewarded there, than in Italy”. Therefore, it is important to underline that every Italian interviewee had an individual perception of ‘opportunities’. Some of the Italian participants are only interested in professional, job-related opportunities - others are also or mainly focused on personal opportunities. Taking the example of Fabio, for him, additional to his professional opportunities abroad, opportunities also mean, “… to be immersed in different cultures and languages in order to learn faster than without it”. Elisabetta went one-step further and explained her understanding of opportunities with her interpretation of moving abroad:

“Abroad, as a concept is something that would give me all opportunities - professional and personal. If I cannot do something in Italy, I know I can do it somewhere else in the world.”

However, Elisabetta, also highlighted another fact of the concept of abroad, the fact, that she and in her opinion, many people use the option of going abroad to “… run away” from difficulties and problems in the home country - “If I want to avoid something in Italy, I go abroad and avoid it.” Maria expressed herself more on a personal level:

“I like to live in a multicultural environment … to discover something new - cultures and languages. Living abroad will give me this opportunity.”

5.1.2 Languages, Europe, and ERASMUS+ Programmes’ Influences

The second theme, which appeared within our study, is the influence of languages on the decision process of moving and working abroad. Additionally, by choosing a host country, it emerged that young talents from Italy are influenced by the ERASMUS+ Programme. It appeared that all of the Italian participants are interested in an international career. Almost all
of the Italian participants went abroad through the ERASMUS+ Programme. The financial expenses, which were connected to this decision, were an important issue to the young talents during their studies. The financial pressure was somewhat decreased through the support of the EU during their decision process. Nevertheless, the financial aspect was highly discussed between the participants and their parents to make sure the semester abroad was feasible. Furthermore, it appeared that students, by studying abroad, changed their perception about working abroad. To use the voice of the participants: “I am thinking about a more internationalized career as before” (Elisabetta). Moreover, Maria even highlighted that in particular; the ERASMUS+ Programme influenced her decision to move and work abroad but stay in Europe: “I want to work in Germany, influenced by the fact that I did my semester abroad there”. Additionally, Elisabetta mentioned that:

“I did not see myself working abroad, I just wanted to study abroad and then come back to Italy and live there for the rest of my life. Now [the thought of] living in Italy for the rest of my life gives me a bad feeling”.

Olga summarized the impact of her stay abroad with the following metaphor:

“If you have a cake, which looks delightful, you take one slice and it tastes delicious. You simply fall in love with this cake and you know you still have all the rest of the cake. The one slice of the cake was my exchange abroad. Now, there are all the other parts of the cake - I really want to know and explore more of the cake.”

Another interesting point that occurred during the interviews is that it seems that Italian students do not have one or two favorite countries of destination in Europe. Elisabetta, for example, used the opportunity given by the ERASMUS+ Programme and studied in Lithuania; she explained her decision with the following statement:

“Many people from Italy go abroad to Spain, France, UK, Germany, or other countries in western Europe but I never heard about anybody who went to Lithuania. I wanted to discover a part of Europe I did not know before.”

It turned out that for young Italian talents, the ability to speak multiple languages is very important for their decision-making process of moving and working abroad. Almost all Italian interviewees came up with the topic of languages. For example, Fabio, on the one hand, mentioned: “I want to speak as many languages as possible.” Sarah on the other side stated: “It was my first choice to go to Portugal to learn Portuguese; even though I did not know anything about Portugal” and Elisabetta, said, “I want to go to Great Britain because I want
to improve my English.” Taking the example of Elisabetta, surprisingly, even if English is the native languages of many countries globally, she focused only on Great Britain, Europe. The focus of the Italian students on the European countries can be explained by the transferability of the certificates. Furthermore, the similarity between the culture of the host and the home country was mentioned, which was seen crucial to avoid a culture shock. While Elisabetta, on the one hand, was worried that she could face difficulties with her “… theoretical Italian university degree, without any practices …” in a country other than Italy, Sara, for instance, highlighted that: “Our diploma is valid in every country in Europe.” Additionally, Fabio made it clear that the main reason for his focus on Europe is the culture: “I love Europe, I do not feel like going to the US, Asia or Africa. It [their culture] is too different.”

5.1.3 Moving Abroad: A Place to Grow

The third theme which appeared throughout our immersion in the perceptions of young talents from Italy was, that moving abroad led to personal growth. Fabio underlined with his words that moving abroad did not only change his perception of other countries, it “… broadened my [his] mind and changed my [his] perspectives in general”. Sarah stated that changing perspectives and one’s personality becomes a part of going abroad:

“Every time when you come back from a journey - a week or a year - ... to your own country, you are a different person because you faced your fear in another country”

Remarkably, almost all of the young Italian talents highlighted that one of the main motivations to move and work abroad was and still is the possibility to grow personally. This personal growth is strongly connected with the personal opportunities. For example, Elisabetta is motivated the most to move and work abroad by the chance to challenge herself out of her comfort zone.

“I want to be more out of my comfort zone; ... this is where I can do my best. This is where I can find out things about me that I do not know if I stay in my comfort zone.”

Furthermore, Elisabetta clarified herself with the words: “It is about, knowing myself more, having more self-confidence and be more independent.” Additionally, many of the young talents from Italy underlined, that their decision to move and work abroad is linked to the feeling of being ‘... free’. Simultaneously, the most difficult part of the decision of moving abroad is “to leave the comfort zone” (Elisabetta) and to start a new life elsewhere. This difficulty is mainly based on the strong family relationships that all Italian participants in this study have. This strong connection was well expressed by Elisabetta:
“... the moment when I’m telling people that I am leaving, when I have to find a house, job, and friends ... that is the most difficult part and would be the biggest barrier for me.”

5.1.4 Influence of the Family

When we were talking about the decision-making process for or against an international career, different influences became visible. One of these major topics was the importance of others, such as family members, friends, and other social groups of the young talents. Therefore, another theme, which emerged was the influence of the family on the decision-making process of young talents from Italy to move and work abroad. All of the young talents underlined that similar to the decision to study abroad, the decision to migrate to another country was taken by themselves and that parents or friends were not directly involved in the process. Fabio, for instance, underlined his decision-making process to go abroad with the following words: “It was just me, I decided what I want to do ... to follow my passions”.

Nevertheless, the young talents from Italy perceived different reactions, especially from their parents, as they revealed the plan to move abroad. As an example, Sarah’s mother supported the idea of her daughter straight away, as she had positive experiences of traveling and living abroad herself. On the other hand, Elisabetta already knew before the inclusion of her parents, that her dad would not agree with her plan to move abroad: “He would tell me that I cannot do something like that, to convince me not to do it”. The circle of people, whose opinion was conducted during the decision-making process, also included the friends of the young talents. Maria, for example, described the situation as the following; “… many of my friends told me ... it is a good experience ... so they convinced me”. Furthermore, Maria underlined the important influence of friends as she stated: “… friends helped me to take this decision to go abroad.” In contrast, in the group of Sara's friends, no one went abroad already. Additionally, the social group within the university seemed to have an impact on the decision. Olga, for example, described her group of friends from the university as “international”. This description was shared with Maria, who described her social group as “… in my university, there are many people who go abroad”. On the other hand, in Olga's peer group, she was “… one of a few ...” who went abroad. It appeared that people who already took the decision to study in another city are more open to moving abroad for a certain amount of time. This was highlighted by the words of Elisabetta:

“The people who I have grown up with, have always lived here in the same little village and have never known anything else. The group of friends I made in High
School and University is quite international. There are some who study or studied already abroad, some who want to do it, and some who know they want to work abroad in the future.”

Another important pattern, which emerged within the theme of ‘family’, was that all Italian participants would stay in Italy or come back to Italy if the family would need them. Elisabetta, for example, said: “I would stay in Italy for my family” and Olga, stated:

“I will come back straight to Italy if something happens with my family, otherwise, I will be somewhere else.”

5.1.5 Perception of Culture

The last theme, which appeared during our interviews with young Italian talents, was the importance of culture. Once again, we obtained a large variety of answers of how participants changed their perception of the home country by studying abroad. This resulted in different motivations to move abroad in the future. Using the voice of Elisabetta:

“There was a big difference by coming back; I realized how much I have changed by this experience. I wanted to be more in contact with other countries and cultures.”

Additional to the changed perspective towards foreign cultures, almost all Italian interviewees stated that they perceived the home culture differently after their stay abroad. Such statement seemed mainly based on the newly created comparison. Our interviewees started to compare their home country with the country they have studied in:

“Once I came back to Italy, it was not to find something new about the Italian culture... it was just to recognize advantages and disadvantages. Something, I never did before.” (Olga)

Thereby, dependent on the host country, all Italian participants had different perceptions of what is ‘good’ in Italy and what was ‘better’ in the country they stayed and studied in. Overall, most of the answers were related to “... the way people live” (Sarah) and connected to the happiness of people. Elisabetta described it with the following statement:

“I discovered that Italian people are more open-minded and that many stereotypes about Italians are actually true. I discovered that we are also very friendly people. When I left Italy, I thought we have only bad things, when I came back, I discovered that we actually have something good.”
In contradiction to Elisabetta, Olga, for example, realized:

“\[When \text{ I came back to Italy, I saw all people are stressed \ldots and not as happy as people in Sweden but I also realized disadvantages for Sweden.}\]\]”

Furthermore, Sarah realized that there are not many differences to other countries: “\[For me, Portugal and Spain are pretty much the same as Italy.\]\]” Interestingly, for almost all Italian participants culture was one of the main influences during the decision-making process of moving and working abroad. The answers could not be clearer. For example, Fabio mentioned: “\[I love Italy because of its culture, wherever you go in Italy, you can see history and culture, it is wonderful.\]\]” Furthermore, Sarah made her opinion very clear: “\[If the culture would be more valued, maybe I would stay in Italy and this would be the main reason to come back.\]\]”

5.2 The Voice of Young Talents from Lithuania

Similar to the previous sub-chapters, we make use of the Lithuanian voice in this part of our Master thesis. By introducing the most discussed topics and the various perception of these, we can underline the versatile nature of the driving forces of the young Lithuanian talents.

5.2.1 Influence of the Family and Friends

All Lithuanian participants of our study underlined that the final decision to move abroad was made by themselves but influenced by a large variety of factors. The time frame of the preparations was different. While Juste already planned to leave the country during her time in the high school:

“I really just wanted to get away ... away from my country, parents, home and so on."

Saule stated:

“I just really wanted to go to a foreign country because that was something I wanted to do all of my life.”

The influence of the social groups and family also differed. Greta, for example, underlined, that “... they [the parents] didn’t have much influence.” Nevertheless, the input of the parents had a supportive character. Some of the young talents were also influenced by the experiences of siblings. For example, Danieles’ brother, who already went abroad said: “Definitely go, you will have a lot of fun.” In addition, the brother of Raidas influenced him a lot, as he already studied in Switzerland and found an internship straight after his studies which was seen by Raidas as confirmation of the practicability his own plans.
Within the decision-making process, not only the inner part of the family was of importance to the young talents, but also the group of friends and classmates from the university played a crucial role. On the one side, Saule, for example, confronted her friends with her plans to move abroad, and got “... no, no, you will stay in Lithuania and continue your studies” as a reaction, although “many students from my [Saules] last school are abroad”, and “to be honest, most of my [Saules] former classmates went abroad.” On the other side, Raidas described the inner attitude of his friends towards a stay abroad as open: “Many people go and study abroad, so I have many friends who study abroad.” This statement was supported by Daniele, “… from my friends it is common [to go abroad]” as well as from Greta:

“... there [at her university] are a lot of people, who study abroad, who go for at least one semester.”

Furthermore, Greta added: “At least two third of my class left to study or live somewhere else.” All these friends and family members, who already went abroad, had different influences on the choice of the host country. On the one hand, one friend of Saule already studied in Austria and was a big influencing factor for her to decide to move to Austria. The same influence can be seen on the decision of Raidas, who more or less followed the example of his brother.

On the other hand, Juste stated: “... whenever I go somewhere abroad, I try to make sure that I do not know any people.”

Moreover, family and friends were not only seen as important influencing factors for the decision to move abroad, they were also mentioned as a reason to return to the home country. Saule stated: “... if I knew they need me, I would go back.” The influence of the friends and family was not only mentioned for special occasions (Christmas Birthday etc.), it is also about the general “... feeling of missing home ...” Saule claimed. Raidas stood in line with Saule, but had a more rational point of view, as he stated “... you do not think about this [family and friends] a lot when you focus on your career.” Greta’s statement on this topic was further evidence of the importance of this influencing group as “… personal relationship and the family means a lot to me” and would influence her decision to live abroad.

5.2.2 Opportunities and Labor Market

The motivations of young Lithuanian talents to move abroad were also varied. For his semester abroad, Raidas was attracted by the “... good reputation and a good university as well ...” as the broader and larger markets in Germany, which offer “... better opportunities
Raidas described the decision to study and to work abroad almost as a necessity:

“... if you want to achieve something in your life, if you want to earn more, if you want to gain more experiences [you have to go abroad]. All these factors sum up [during the decision-making process]...”

Furthermore, he stated more precisely:

“There are plenty of reasons for that [to apply for a job abroad]. For example, one of the reasons is that the opportunities are better, the [German] market is larger. If you have to work with some sort of a project, the project is on a larger scale, more experiences, the wages are of course higher...”

“... It [an opportunity] is a chance to realize your [the] full potential during a long period - on a professional level ... it would also mean something like developing, yourself on a personal level. You meet other people, other cultures; you have to experiences and talk to them. I see my future there [German market]”

Saule on the other side underlined that people who go abroad, “... would have more perspectives or more chances afterward”. This first assumption was further underlined in the following statement:

“... the biggest motivation [to work abroad] - I would say - is that you get much more valuable experiences, while working abroad, than in Lithuania. Bigger countries are more economically and financially stronger; they can allow themselves to have large laboritories or they can allow the workers and students to make contacts with different companies from different countries - like networking. You see the situation in the world when you get the opportunity to meet other people and work on the international ground.”

For Saule international opportunities are “...contacts, personal growing, and experiences; learning and focusing on the corporate world.” Greta was more influenced by word of mouth, as she heard “... a lot of good things about it [the programs and experiences abroad].” A further different motivation to go abroad was the one of Juste, who was unable to “... find anything I [she] wanted to study in my [her] country.” Furthermore, she had concerns that a degree from Lithuania “... was not good enough.” Another important impact
for her was “... to start living independently...” and “... the strong will to see something else than my home, to leave my parents, and be free.”

Besides, Juste sees the low salaries as another major influence, which pushes people out of the country to work abroad. However, not only the financial situation is important to her:

“... [the decision to work abroad] is also very related to my personality, that I really like travel and be abroad. ... abroad is where I feel more comfortable ... I think if you get challenged, you act differently, and you are more open to the experiences...”

This point was also mentioned by Daniele who “... would choose to work abroad, also because of the higher payment.” Not only the salaries are an important influence for Daniele, but also the “... boost of my [her] career” and “... to get some different experiences and knowledge.” Daniele sees opportunities in this context as the chance for “... developing and improving in a personal way. To get better, to express yourself.” Furthermore, she sees these chances as given in Germany and thus will focus her applications on the German market: “... it [Germany] is not so far away ... the economic situation is good in Germany.” This statement goes hand in hand with Greta’s perceptions, as she sees the decision to move abroad “... mainly as CV boost and to get experience which is bigger than the one I [she] would get in Lithuania.” Greta described the job situation in Lithuania as the following:

“As far as I have experienced it, you have a lot of options. My home university is constantly posting job offers of internship offers. So, you do have a lot of opportunities, but you have a lot more if you already have some international experiences.”

The flow of young Lithuanian talent was and still is mainly flowing to other European countries. Raidas, for example, described the situation as the following:

“... when it comes to studying after school, people go abroad. The majority - I guess around 80% - go to Great Britain. ... there are long traditions, everyone knows someone who studies there. It is just following the same circle, over and over again. However, there are also some people who go to Poland, France, Netherlands ... “

This focus on western Europe was supported by Daniele: “... most friends study in the EU.” Greta added further evidence to this as her friends went “... mostly to the EU...” in particular France and Great Britain. Juste was not only attracted by the country itself, moreover by the culture of western Europe, or to say it in her words: “I really wanted to experience the western European culture...”
Another common pattern of answers and reasoning was connected to the language. During the decision-making process to study abroad, Daniele focused on Italy since “… I [she] studied Italian on my own before.” Raidas was attracted by the opportunity to develop his level of German during the period of stay. This was crucial to him, as he sees his future in the German-speaking market. The importance of language was supported by Saule, who claimed: “You have to learn the language of the country you are going to live in or want to find a job.” This statement was also expressed by Juste, as she “… wanted to improve my [her] language.” Saule also underlined that the people of the host country showed understanding for her mistakes;

“… people are people, and they understand that you are not fluent and maybe cannot express yourself as good as they can.”

5.2.3 Perception of Culture

Another common pattern which merged during the interviews was the comparison between Lithuania and the host country. All the participants were surprised, how friendly the citizens of other nations were. Greta was surprised that Swedish people were “… very friendly and helpful.” Saule, for example, “… found out that people are much politer than in Lithuania.” Furthermore, she perceived, that “… the people [in Lithuania] are not happy and do not enjoy the life …” This point was also picked up by Juste, who fell - based on the missing regulations and structure in her home country - in love with the structure and the living standards of the host country. To use the quote of Juste in this context:

“… I think I fell in love with the culture, with the German culture. It is hard to explain, what exactly, but I feel good within it [the culture]. I feel like one of them, even though I do not speak the language well.”

Saule described the culture in her country as the following: “It is the country itself [I miss]… but not the way of living.” Raidas stood in line as he compared Lithuania with his host country Germany and summed it up as the following: “In my opinion, it [the German system] is far better.” Furthermore, he realized, that he sometimes unconsciously started to compare the way things are in his home country to the way how they would be in his former host country. Greta mentioned a different facet of the unconscious comparison as she got “… the feeling you are somewhere in the world. A feeling of everything is reachable and accessible.”
This unconscious comparison was also mentioned by Daniele but led to a different reaction: “I used to say that we have a really bad situation here in Lithuania - everything is bad. However, it is not a perfect world outside of Lithuania.”

5.2.4 Future Plan

These different points of view led to varying assumptions of the young Lithuanian talents when it came to the point of a possible return to the home country in the long-term. Saule, for example, expressed her plans to return to Lithuania in the following statement: “I still want to gain some experiences before I come back to Lithuania.” This period of experience will most likely be followed by a return to Lithuania:

“I would love to work in Lithuania because I think the whole gloomy atmosphere and situation will maybe be reduced by then.”

However, this drive to return is strongly dependent on the development of her future. The following describes on how many unexpected influences the decision-making process is based on: “... if I [she] would have a position, I [she] cannot refuse somewhere abroad, or meet someone, get married, and start a family abroad...” The statement of Daniele underlined further the impact of these people and how an international career can be influenced by personal attachments:

“... I can live on my own and transfer myself to another place. However, it [the time abroad] also showed me how much I missed my friends and family. I cannot stay for long.”

Daniele still plans an international career but wants to return to her home country to bring “... knowledge from abroad back to Lithuania. I [she] want[s] to contribute somehow to Lithuania's future development.” The plans of Raidas are similar to the ones of Saule and Daniele, as he plans

“... to live abroad for ten to fifteen years to gain experiences, save up some capital, invest money in stocks, and some of the money in Lithuania ... [to build] a foundation and then go back.”

Furthermore, Raidas saw this behavior as common in his generation as “the majority will not stay [in the host country] for the rest of their lives - maybe for five or ten years.” Greta, for example, does not have a particular plan of where to settle down, as she makes this strongly dependent on “... personal reasons ...” In comparison to the personal planning of Saule,
Daniele, and Raidas, Juste does not want to return home: “At the moment I really do not think about going home.” This tendency was further supported by Daniele, who said about her group of friends:

“Sadly, most of my friends, especially those who are already studying abroad, they are not planning to come back.”

6 Discussion

Overall, the young talents of our study provided us with a wide range of perspectives and answers. We found different themes of driving forces from young talents. However, it is impossible to make general statements based on a qualitative study. Thus, the following remarks are based on the young Italian and Lithuanian talents, who participated in our research. Thereby, we first present our understanding of the influences and motivations of the young talents from Italy and Lithuania separately. In the following step, we compare and discuss our findings of the driving forces of the young talents from Lithuania and Italy, with the theory we introduced in our literature review.

In our study participants from Italy are mainly interested in an international career within a multicultural environment. As it emerged from the interviewees, this is due to different individual reasons. One significant influence is the ‘push’ force of a difficult labor market within Italy. Many of the young Italian talents of our study are worried to find a job within their home country and underlined that opportunities on a professional level are better abroad. Therefore, we see some of the Italian participants as part of the Italian ‘brain drain’, since these young talents take their knowledge with them to their host country. Although the participants underlined that “everything is possible abroad”, the majority are planning to move back to Italy after a certain period abroad. As these returnees, take knowledge with them, the development of Italy will benefit from the foreign earned knowledge. This growth includes challenging the own assumptions and leaving the previous, well-known environment behind. We detected a strong drive of participants to be different to their peers, to express themselves. Thereby the majority of the Italian participants agreed on the influence of their family within the decision-making process to move and work abroad. We see the attachment of the young talents to their family as a powerful ‘mooring’ force. Moreover, during the interviews, we got a distinct feeling, that the family bond, the health situation of relatives, and the word of family members is heavily weighted. The motivation and the possibilities of young talented people from Italy to move to another country, first for study purposes and at a
later stage for work-related issues, is enhanced by the ERASMUS+ Programme. Furthermore, it emerged that the transferability of the degree and the freedom of movement, within the EU, had a positive impact on the decision of the Italian participants to become part of this flow of a well-educated workforce. Another main driving force of most young talents from Italy to move abroad is the ability to speak different languages and discover other cultures. At the same time, the pattern of motivations, which are connected to the theme of culture also revealed the importance of culture to the Italian participants. It became visible to us that the Italians are proud of their rich history, culture and the Italian identity. This pride is also a ‘mooring’ force, which attaches the young talents to their roots.

Similar to the young talents from Italy, the majority of the young talents from Lithuania are also aiming for an international career. The reasons to move abroad are diverse but are also connected to common patterns. The young talents from Lithuania, who took part in our study, are attracted by the individual perceptions of better chances in other countries, and thus other countries ‘pull’ the young talents towards them. Overall, the opportunities elsewhere are seen, compared to the ones in Lithuania, as better. All of the young Lithuanian talents, which participated in this study, want to move abroad to work elsewhere by the time they finish their degree. This decision is mainly based on the better opportunities abroad, whereby opportunities are understood very broad, from personal to professional development. This ‘pull’ force, which is influencing the young Lithuanian talents to leave the home country, is the individual chance to learn and grow in an international and better-equipped environment. The personal growth is not only planned to be achieved through better external factors but also through challenging the personal barriers and boundaries. Furthermore, this potential growth is seen as a boost for the CV through the international experiences. Hence, one of the driving forces to work abroad is directly interconnected to the assumption of better career opportunities after a stay abroad.

A further significant pattern of motivations is, according to our understanding, connected to the social groups of the young talents. We see the individual perception as strongly influenced by the overall stream of young talents leaving the country. All Lithuanian participants were directly, through family members or friends, affected and hence, had access to ‘inside’ information about studying and working abroad. Furthermore, the interviews revealed, that there are ‘centers’ where the majority, according to the perception of the participants of this study, of young Lithuanian talents flow to. These mentioned ‘centers’ are in western Europe, more precisely, the German-speaking countries and Great Britain - based on language and culture.
Another pattern is the comparison after the return from the semester abroad, which had, according to our judgment, a powerful impact on the decision of the young talents to leave or to stay in the home country. The majority of the Lithuanian participants were facing a disillusion by the time of return, as they perceived the culture of the host country as more positive. Part of the culture, at least according to our understanding is the language. At this point we have to underline, that the majority of the participants of the study already knew in which culture, and thus in which language they want to work by the time they graduate. Furthermore, almost all of the Lithuanian participants went already to their striven future host country to improve the language skills and get an authentic impression of the culture. We see this overall tendency of young talents leaving Lithuania as ‘brain drain’. The country loses most of its young talent to other EU countries, which can offer ‘more’, according to the individual understanding of the young talents. As almost all of the Lithuanian participants of our study are planning to return to their home country at one point in the future, the coin can flip. The knowledge, which will be earned by these young talents elsewhere in the world, will be transferred back to Lithuania and will enhance the local knowledge. Additionally, not only the experiences will be transferred to Lithuania; during the time abroad, the young talents will probably support their family moneywise. This support can lead to a shift of purchase power and hence stimulate the economic growth within Lithuania. Furthermore, through knowledge spillovers, the overall development of the entire country can be enhanced. Thus, the returns of the young talents will be a boost for the Lithuanian economy and the society at large. However, as life often changes, and personal plans are adjusted to the current situation, the question of how many young talents will eventually return, remains unanswered.

6.1 Comparison

Both groups of the young talents perceived the conditions of another country in comparison to their own home country. Some of the driving forces, which motivate and influence the young talents to move abroad, are based on an individual understanding of the situation, others are of external nature. The following chapter highlights this comparison as well as the influences, which appeared to be especially attractive to the young talents and thus motivate them to migrate. This decision-making process is, from our understanding strongly reliant on the individual perception of the situation. We found several themes of driving forces, which play a crucial role in the decision-making process of the young talents to apply for a job abroad.
6.1.1 Family and Friends

The input of family and friends, as well as the social group from the university, play a crucial role within the decision process to move and work abroad, as these people can share inside information and own learning with the young talents. Independent of the home country of the young talents, the circle of people, who had a direct influence on the decision-making process was, according to the talents, limited. All participants underlined that the decision was made by themselves. However, we have a slightly different perception of this assumption of the young talents. We believe that the constant input, as well as the direct and indirect triggers of the social environment, influence the build-up of understanding on a deep and probably unconscious level. This role of the family is another crucial distinction between the two countries under investigation. In the circumstances, described by the participants, we strongly see the family as one of the ‘mooring’ forces, which were introduced by Lee (1966). On the one side, the Italians described the family bond as very strong. Many of the family members of the young Italian talents, had never left the hometown or the region they were born in. Moreover, the importance of the emotional attachment to the family members came across through all interviews with young Italian talents. On the other side, the majority of the Lithuanian talents did not mention the relationship to their family members as a crucial element, which would hinder them, or hold them back from migrating to another country. We see, especially in the descriptions of the Italians, the family and the relationship to the friends as individual ‘mooring’ forces. Although the measurement of these individual, emotional influences is almost impossible, we see a strong influence and impact on the individual decision-making process of the young talents as given. Furthermore, we understand the particular importance of the family as part of the education, as well as the culture.

6.1.2 Perception of Culture

The culture, in a broader sense, is also a theme of interest, especially in the comparison between the two countries. Thereby, our findings are in line with the results of Christofi & Thompson (2006; 2007), who discovered cultures and in particular disillusion, as an important driving force for people to apply for a job overseas. The way in which the Italians underlined their pride on the richness of their history, the importance of architecture, art and the role of food in the social cohabitation caught our eye. All the Italian participants underlined how much they will miss this richness and how much this ‘mooring’ force holds them in their home country. All the Italian people we interviewed highlighted, that, at least in their inner circle, the motivation to leave the country is not universal, as many people do not want to leave the Italian culture behind.
On the other side, almost all of the young Lithuanian talents did not highlight the advantages of the own culture, but the advantage of the host culture. Moreover, the majority brought up the strengths of other cultures in direct comparison to the Lithuanian culture, which can be seen as individual ‘mooring’ forces. Such a cultural comparison was the core of the studies of Christofi & Thompson (2006; 2007), who underlined the impact such a comparison can have on individual well-being. Within the group of participants, some started to reflect critically on the own culture and were facing difficulties in returning to the home culture. During the stay abroad, the own perception was influenced, and alienation to the culture of the home country happened. Furthermore, some of the young talents of our study described the psychosomatic impact, as that strong, that they felt sick for weeks. Hence, the finding of our study stands in line with the findings of Christofi & Thompson (2006; 2007). According to Moon (1995) are all culture connected driving forces individual perceived and thus have to be claimed as ‘mooring’ forces. The example of the young Lithuanian talents shows, how the perception of one’s own culture can differ, based on different experiences abroad and hence, influence the decision-making process to migrate on a deep level. While the comparison of one’s own culture with the culture of the host country led the majority of our participants to conclude to migrate to this ‘new’ culture, the opposite happens for one of the young talents of the group. This brings up the topic discussed by Sonis (1980) who claim that the people evaluate between different options and will decide what is most attractive to them.

The example of our study underlines how subjective and unpredictable this decision-making process can be. This culture comparison was mainly made based on the experience the participants made in their host country by studying abroad. A common pattern in this comparison was the friendliness and the supportiveness characteristics of western European cultures, especially the German culture. This understanding of culture seems irrational and hard to grasp to us; while culture fills the young talents from Italians with pride, the Lithuanians like foreign cultures better than the own. Although the effect of the culture was mainly homogenous within the groups, the effect was strongly heterogeneous in the comparison between the groups. On the one side, we see that the pride of the own culture and the attachment to it as a powerful ‘mooring’ force which holds people in the home country. On the other side, the perceived advantages of another country act as a strong driving force, which ‘pulls’ people from one country to another. In this situation, the participants follow their wish to live in a ‘better’ culture. The example of Lithuania shows further that the stream of migration, based on the influencing motivation of living in an advantageous culture is pointing to only one ‘center’, western Europe. We see in this a superordinate movement, a
movement from less to further developed countries and cultures. This finding of our study stands in line with the findings of Wiers-Jenssen (2008) In contrast to this, we see the group of young Italian talents, which were not focused on growing in a further developed country but put ‘soft’ factors (e.g. family and culture) in the focus of the elaboration for, or against a possible host country. Hence, our qualitative study adds a further facet to Wiers-Jenssen’s (2008) already existing understanding of migration streams.

6.1.3 Mobility within the EU

A further point of distinction between the groups of talents was the mobility of the social environment the participants came from. The majority of the Lithuanian participants described the flow of talents as flowing to a small number of ‘center’ within the EU, such as the German-speaking countries or Great Britain. These flows to knowledge ‘center’ were explained by long traditions and good experiences of those, who were able to share stories and experiences from these ‘center’. In a comparison between Lithuania on the one side, and Germany and Great Britain on the other side, it appears that the stream of talents is flowing from a less to a more developed country. Thus, the developed western European ‘center’ can ‘pull’ further talent towards them. We had the overall perception that the fact of moving to another country to study, or to work abroad is somewhat typical in the group of the Lithuanian participants. We see these streams as a form of the gravity model (Anderson 2011), as the high number of people, who already went to the mentioned countries support further movements. We see a direct correlation between the people who already moved abroad and those, who are following, as the people, who already went abroad, are influencing, through stories and shared experiences, the subjectively perceived ‘pull’ forces of a possible host country. A further component of the gravity model is, besides the actual mass, which is representing the number of migrants, the distance between the western European ‘center’ and the home country. In our example, where the freedom of movement within the EU is given, we leave behind the metric measurement of distance. We use the cultural distance as the second variable of the model. As the interviews revealed, the culture of the host country is already partly embedded in the understanding of the young Lithuanian talents. Thus, the cultural distance can be described as rather short. Hence, the short distance, as well as the large mass, are enhancing future migration to the mentioned western European ‘center’ even further.

In contrast to this centralized steam of talents from Lithuania, the moving behavior of the Italians was impossible to generalize, as the countries of destinations were various. The only
common denominators were: (1) the perception that the semester abroad had a direct influence on the decision to work overseas, and (2) the majority of the participants of our study will choose another country of the EU as a host country to work in. This movement within the EU caught our attention, as it can be seen as evidence for the success of the ERASMUS+ Programme to stimulate the geographical mobility of the workforce. We see this new mobility of the workforce as crucial for the long-term development and competitiveness for the EU. Furthermore, our findings stand in line with the results of Orahoud, Kruze & Person (2004), who underline that students, who already went abroad in the wake of an exchange semester, are more likely to migrate from their home country at a later stage.

6.1.4 Opportunities

A further pattern, we recognized in the gathered data of our interviews, is connected to opportunities and the understanding of the young talents, what an opportunity is. The main sub-themes which were mentioned were the ones of ‘professional’ and ‘personal’ development. Although the answers were as multifaceted as the participants themselves, the overall understanding was connected to the chance to grow in a different environment. Within the study of Biondo et al. (2012), the main reason of Italians to move and work abroad, was to achieve opportunities, which could not be achieved in Italy. This finding was not underlining the individual understanding of the broad expression of ‘opportunity’ and thus did not make any distinction between the variety of understandings of this expression. Within our study, we were able to add this missing individual understanding. At the same time, we were able to split the given answers into the two main fields, professional and personal growth, whereas the majority of the interviewees saw the personal growth as the primary opportunity with the migration process.

While the young Lithuanian talents were mainly focused on the professional growth, the young Italian talents were essentially focused on the personal development. All the young Lithuanian talents underlined, how an international work experience will improve their knowledge and thus the own chances for the national, as well as for the international labor market. The participants saw their potential participation in larger projects, the use of better laboratories, as well as the chances for networking as clear motivations to move elsewhere. Hence, the individual association and understanding seem to be almost completely connected to the long-term planning of the own professional career. These findings stand in contradiction to the findings of Kazlauskienė & Rinkevičius (2006), who discovered that factors such as professional realization and economic and financial conditions were not as
crucial as other influences within the decision-making process. This inconsistency may be influenced by a change of the priorities within the group of people over time, who are willing to migrate. No matter what the actual reason of this shift is, our study highlights in this case, why our choice for primary data was adequate, as this difference in the meaning may also have been influenced by the way the data was collected or, how Kazlauskienė & Rinkevičius read the results.

Different from the Lithuanian interviewees, we see the reasoning and explanations of the plans of the Italian participants of our study. We got the feeling that the majority of these young talents are motivated to move abroad to get the chance to express themselves and dive into a different environment to learn through immersion on a personal level. One of the central motivations of the Italians was connected to the opportunity to learn a language other than Italian. The motivation to move abroad to benefit from the knowledge and the standards of another country was not mentioned at all.

Unlikely Kazlauskienė & Rinkevičius (2006) and Biondo et al. (2012), who were able, based on the use of a quantitative approach, to formulate general statements about the behavior and reasoning of the participant, we are, as we used a qualitative approach, not able to do so. Our understanding of the particular reasoning is strongly interconnected to our understanding of the situation. We are not in the position and not willing to judge, which theme of reasoning is more profound or advantageous over the other. Moreover, we believe, that the perception, of what an opportunity is, is strongly influenced, by various facts. One of these factors is, for example, the self-image as mentioned earlier of the family, friends, and the own culture. We see further influences, in the themes connected to the education, the personal understanding, who ‘One’ wants to be in the life, and what role ‘One’ wants to be associated with, as strong influences. While young Lithuanian talents are ‘pulled’ out of the country by better professional opportunities elsewhere, the Italians are ‘pulled’ by personal opportunities.

### 6.1.5 Labor Market and Future Plan

Another influencing factor, when it comes to the driving forces of young Italian talents to apply for a job elsewhere, is the feeling of being ‘pushed’ out of their home country. The lack of job opportunities forces young Italian talents to leave the previous environment behind, even though all Italians described the ‘mooring’ forces (e.g. family, culture) as strong and profound. Although the Italian participants are not ‘pushed’ out of their country based on basic needs in its most fundamental understanding, the lack of national jobs functions on this occasion simultaneously. According to Bogue (1969), this lack of opportunity acts as a strong
factor, which ‘pushes’ people out of their natural environment. During our interviews, we got the feeling, that the Italian participants do appreciate the environment in which they are currently living. Although all participants loved this environment, this love was overshadowed by the lack of opportunities. Thus, the findings of our study support the statement of Bogue (1969). This form of loss of young talents has to be seen critical and put into perspective of the long-term development chances of Italy. These people are essential parts of the society and the foundation of the future development of the entire workforce of Italy. Furthermore, Italy is facing an aging population (Statista 2018), in which the young generation is needed, to ensure the social welfare system, as well as the foundation of future generations. Another aspect which has to be taken into account in the discussion of the meaning of our study, is the psychological aspect of the lack of job opportunities for the young Italian talents, as these face hurdles to motivate themselves for a national career. Hence, we see it as reasonable to describe the current talent situation of Italy as a ‘brain drain’. Furthermore, we see this as a significant challenge for the young talents in Italy, to keep up a positive attitude towards a national career in an environment, in which the number of chances seems to be massively limited.

In comparison, the young Lithuanian talents feel more attracted by western Europe and the job chances elsewhere, although there are changes in the home country. Overall it appears, that the ‘mooring’ forces, which influence the young Lithuanian students are not that pronounced, and thus do not have such a vast impact on the decision-making process. Further, the young Lithuanian talents are also planning to leave the country, but in contrast to the driving forces of the Italians, the young Lithuanian talents are attracted by the job offers in other countries. Hence, the Lithuanians are ‘pulled’ out of their county. According to our understanding of the reasoning of the young Lithuanian talents, the central ‘pull’ forces are connected to better chances of development elsewhere. This tendency of Lithuanians leaving the country is nothing new, as the size of the Lithuanian population has been decreasing over the last decades (World Bank 2018), and the movement of young Lithuanian talent already has a tradition. Although Lithuania seems to face a constant ‘brain drain’ as well, our study also revealed a positive forecast for Lithuania. The majority of the participants of our study are already actively planning to return to their home country after a stay abroad. The reasons for this are diverse, but overall it can be said, that the level and the certainty of the statements stood out for us. Consequently, we see the possibility of returns as rather high. Through the experiences and the knowledge, which returnees take with them back to Lithuania, the development may be supported. Straubhaar (2000) and Saxenian (2004) described the
movement of the ‘brain’, back to its origin, as a possible major influence on the future development. These returnees could directly, through knowledge-implementation, enhance the development of Lithuania. Although some of the young talents may still keep dual citizenship and will commute between the home country and the new host country, the ‘brain’ of these people will still stimulate the growth of the Lithuanian economy. However, it is essential to underline that the simple return itself is not facilitating any development, as the returning 'brain' needs compatible interfaces, to be able to use the knowledge to its full capacity. If this is compatibility is not given, the returnees will not be able to make use of the knowledge and thus 'brain waste' could crop up (Lofters et al. 2014). Furthermore, it needs to be mentioned that the individual situations might change over time. Cases such as a fulfilling job elsewhere or personal reasons such as the relationship to a partner might hold these people in the host country and motivate them to settle down in that country entirely to become permanent citizens. A further aspect which could interfere with the initial plans to return may be the individual adjustments to the culture of the host country and the resulting mismatch to the way of living of the home country. Based on this, the initial plan to return could be canceled or the timeframe adjusted.

To summarize; our study shows that young talents from Italy and Lithuania compare the perceived situation in the home country with the perception of, how the life and work could look like in different countries and decide for what appears more attractive. The individual perceptions of the chances and opportunities to grow on both, the personal and professional level, motivate young talents to challenge themselves abroad. It is essential to mention that the social life of the participants strongly influences the individual boundaries and barriers. Furthermore, influencing factors - constructed by the policymakers - such as freedom of movement, transferability of certificates, etc., determine the decision-making process of the young talents to a large extent. The young talents of our study are not deterred from leaving the previous environment behind to look for the pursued elsewhere. National borders or language barriers are not seen as restrictions, which can hold these young talents back. Moreover, these hurdles are seen as obstacles which can be challenged, and which are not perceived as frightening, but as a chance to grow.
7 Research Conclusion and Future Research

Overall, the phenomenon of the global talent flow describes the migration of highly educated people on a global scale. In order to answer our research question - What influences and motivates young talented people during their decision for or against migration in the framework of the global talent flow? - it is essential to underline that the multi-faceted answers are as individual as the participants themselves. Nevertheless, we were able to identify four shared themes. Overall, the young talents form Lithuania and Italy were mainly influenced and motivated to apply for a job abroad by: (1) chances and opportunities to grow on the personal and individual level, (2) the culture, especially in comparison to other cultures, (3) better prospect of a job, and (4) the inside information from family and friends.

However, the examples of Lithuania and Italy show that the phenomenon of the global talent flow is not a matter of distribution; it is a matter of ‘winners’ and ‘losers’ on a global scale as the talent flow is only going to some countries. It seems that young talents migrate to some ‘center’ around the globe - no matter if there is a shortage elsewhere. These talent-losing countries seem to be unable to attract people. This clear distinction between ‘winners’ and ‘losers’ already has a substantial impact on the development of some stakeholders, such as governments, companies, and society at larger. It could become one of the major global challenges in the long-term. Our research results highlight that studying abroad contributes to the ability to put the own status quo - home country and the opportunities there - into some perspectives. These perspectives can point into two different directions. On the one side, students can realize that things are quite good in their home country and thus want to stay there. On the other side, students can realize that opportunities are better elsewhere and hence, want to leave the home country to reach the full potential elsewhere.

With our Master thesis, we were able to shed some light in a research area, which was under-investigated so far. The influences and motivations of young talents to move and work abroad after a study experience abroad are as various and individual as the young talents themselves. Nevertheless, we were able to show how these individual motivations can be clustered and summarized into major themes. Young people from Italy and Lithuania are looking for places, which challenge them, and which offer chances to grow on a personal and professional level. Although young talents are attracted by the opportunities elsewhere, the identity seems to be firmly connected to the place, environment, and social group, in which they grew up. Overall, strong bonds and the individual perception of the own identity are factors which can function as ‘mooring’ factors and attach the people to their roots. Our study showed further, that the
framework of the EU and the transferability of certificates, as well as the easy traveling, are important influences, on the individual decision-making process of young talents from Italy and Lithuania. In this context, the Italian example, presented in our introduction, may be understood as evidence for the successful intentions of the EU to enhance the migration within the Single European Market. As a result of this, the percentage of Italian migrants settling down within the EU is increasing.

Our research findings can be seen from a more superficial point of view and might be used as a starting point for the future understanding of the complex phenomenon of the global talent flow within the EU. Initiatives such as the ERAMUS+ Programme might be seen as a double-sided sword. On the one side, the program offers a unique chance for young academic people to learn more about the different sub-cultures of the EU. Through the immersion in different cultures and the local value system, ‘One’s’ own understanding of other European countries is enhanced. This better understanding can lead to a more peaceful cohabitation in the future, and thus the aim of the EU to create a European culture is supported. Through this international understanding and the shared identity, future conflicts, as well as challenges might be solved together. Furthermore, the immersion into different cultures is a valuable experience to the participants, as they can compare their actual situation to something completely new. Through these experiences, the own understanding of the personal driving forces, as well as the development of the identity is enhanced, and thus the participants benefit from participation on a deep individual level.

On the other side, these programs may stimulate something unforeseen. As young people get the chance to experience another environment themselves, it is natural, that these people start to compare the different situations and will be attracted, by what seems to be more attractive. As the already strong, further developed, members of the EU can most likely offer more to the participants of the global talent flow, the strong countries will become stronger, while the weak ones will lose further talents. Thus, the initiative is helpful for the development of a more flexible, intercultural diverse and mobile workforce, which is be required to hold ground in the increasingly intense competition on an international level. Nevertheless, there are only a few countries (mainly western Europe), which will benefit from those initiatives, as the stream originates in many countries, but leads to just a few. This could be seen as an adverse a side effect of the ERASMUS+ Programme, as the strong participants become stronger. Although the stream of talents is pointed to western European ‘center’, some participants of the global talent flow may return to their home country in the future.
This ‘brain circulation’ can be seen as sub-dimension of this phenomenon. Although the returning ‘brain’ might be able to enhance the future development of the home country, it will never be enough to catch up with the leading countries. The flexibility and the mobility of the ‘brain’, in combination with the individual willingness to move, open up a new level of competition within the EU, as the member countries compete against each other, to attract this mobile workforce. As the further developed, countries are most likely able to offer ‘more’ to the members of this mobile workforce, the gap between the further developed and the less developed countries opens even further. It is crucial for policymakers, to not only focus on the development of the own talents through educational programs. Moreover, it is essential to plan the implementation of young talents into the labor market, as these will leave the country otherwise, to move to another nation. This migration decision cannot only be seen from a rational perspective, as our study underlines the importance of the ‘soft’ influences such as culture and family, within the decision-making process. Thus, our study highlights the complexity of this non-rational phenomenon.

Policymakers, companies, and educational institutes have to ensure a fruitful way of cooperation, in which the own developed talent can easily be embedded into the local workforce. A further aspect, which has to be taken into account in this constellation, is the economical perspective. If a country provides the education for the young talents and this generation leaves the country before it starts to pay taxes, the government and thus the society of a country will not be refunded for this pre-financed education. Furthermore, besides the in-house development, the attraction of foreign talents becomes more relevant. This is even further strengthened by the increasing average age of many European countries, and thus the need of capable young talents is further increasing. Hence it is essential, especially in the European Single Market, to support the transferability of certificates and experiences and increase the interfaces even further, to not lose ‘brain’ to competitors (e.g. China, USA). In this framework, all participants have to realize, that the individual perception of those needed young talents is decisive, and thus the programs and changes need to be communicated in a way, which is appealing to exactly this group. Not only the countries, which are losing ‘brain’ need to realize this, also the policymakers of the countries, which are for now able to attract foreign talent, as the stream of ‘brain’ has to be understood as inherent, but still flexible. This fact is, especially for policymakers, of interest and challenging, as the general tendencies in many of the European countries are becoming more nationalistic, and the rejection of immigration is growing within the population. One example of these tendencies is Great Britain, where the population voted to leave the EU. The long-term changes of Great Britain's
leave will reveal the impact of a cut of from the global talent flow, as new movement restrictions are likely to influence Great Britain's strong position and might even contribute to a loss of the position of being a western European ‘center’ where the young talents immigrated voluntarily. This decision to leave the exchange of knowledge and workforce flow of the European market might weaken the position in the international competition of highly skilled labor.

Furthermore, our study underlines how flexible this new generation of labor is. Young talents are willing to leave the previous environment, including, the loved family and friends, culture, and native language behind, to find a place to grow elsewhere. In this context, the mutual dependence of companies and young talents comes into effect. As the current generation is willing to move across borders, to find a place to grow, the barriers for these people to change the company they are working in, are by far smaller. The companies need to be aware of this willingness to leave the known behind to grow elsewhere. Thus, it is not only essential for companies to be able to attract these young talents, especially as many companies face the effects of an aging generation. Moreover, GTM programs must be set up in a way, which ensure the long-term growth of the participants, as these will probably leave the company otherwise.

At this part of our Master thesis, we want to reintroduce the metaphor of the ‘Musical Chairs’, which we introduced at the beginning of our thesis. Our findings show similarities between the phenomenon of the global talent flow to the game ‘Musical Chairs’. While the traditional game is usually played within a short time frame, in the context of our Master’s thesis we obtained a macro perspective in which the duration of one ‘game’ is by far more extensive. Unlike the game ‘Musical Chairs’ where a chair is abruptly removed, we see the chair removal in the context of the global talent flow as a constantly ongoing process. Additionally, the ‘chairs’ (companies and countries) are, unlike the real game, also active participants of the game. While the music within the real game is perceived by all the players the same way, the music which within the ‘game’ of the global talent flow is perceived individually. Although the 'players' take part in the same game, everyone listens to individual music (driving forces). Furthermore, is the music within the global talent flow not of external nature, it is composed by an orchestra of the players themselves, companies, governments, and the society at larger. Moreover, the ability of the ‘chairs’ to attract ‘players’ (young talents) to sit down is essential to stay in the ‘game’ of the global talent flow. Within this competition of the ‘chairs’ to attract ‘players’ the ‘game’ becomes a matter of ‘winner’ and ‘loser’, as those ‘chairs’ that are not able to compete accordingly are removed from the game. This permanent ‘chair’ removal
process leads to the fact that the number of ‘chairs’ which can attract ‘players’ is decreasing, while at the same time there is a disproportionate buildup of players for available chairs. Ultimately this presents the dilemma of too few chairs available for far too many players. Overall the EU is trying, through, for example, legal regulations and freedom of movement, to prolong the stay of the EU ‘chairs’ in the game. The example of the Italian migration stream, which is more and more shifting its core from South and North America to Europe, can be seen as evidence for the success of this effort. Within our study, we were able to detect two different ways of ‘chair’ removal from the game. On the one hand, it became clear, that some ‘chairs’ invest too little to attract ‘players’ and thus decrease the own importance and influence within the game. This investment backlog can be seen by the examples of Italy and Lithuania, where the own young talents do not see the opportunity to grow within their home country. On the other hand, we recognized an abrupt voluntary ‘chair’ removal of Great Britain which left the ‘game’ based on political reasons. As a consequence of Great Britain suddenly leaving the ‘game’, the number of ‘players’ who were willing to settle down on this ‘chair’, which will no longer be part of the Single European Market, will decrease tremendously. Furthermore, the decision made by Great Britain to abruptly remove their “chair” from the “game” will increase the competition amongst the remaining ‘players’ and ‘chairs’ even further.

Our study shows, how multi-faceted the motivations and influences of young talents within the complex phenomenon of the global talent flow are. Not only the governments and policymakers but also the companies have to realize, that the young talents have to be seen as an essential pillar of future development, which has to be attracted through incentive systems. These young talents are aware of their chances and opportunities elsewhere and are not held back by national borders or boundaries. Moreover, young talents are looking for chances to challenge themselves to grow and find their own identity. This new self-confidence of the mobile workforce of tomorrow can be seen as boon and bane at the same time, as the global distribution of talent has to be understood as a competition, where national companies and governments compete for the favor of the young talents. Consequently, the talent distribution becomes, similar to playing 'Musical Chairs' a matter of ‘winners’ and ‘losers’. However, unlike the game of 'Musical Chairs', where the game can be played consecutively, the wager within the global talent flow is much higher - the wager is the future development of entire nations.
8 Limitations

Within our Master thesis, we contribute a degree of subjective layer to the already existing knowledge on the phenomenon of global talent flow. We are aware of the limitations affecting our research and data. According to Schuler, Jackson, and Tarique (2011b), the potential shortage or surplus of talent is in high correlation to the economic situation. This Master thesis is only a snapshot of the current market situation. The current situation is described by economic growth, low-interest rates, and peace in the western world. To be more precise, based on this good economic situation, there exists a high demand for highly educated young people on a global scale. Hence, the outcomes of our thesis may be useful in similar macroeconomic situations but do not take into consideration periods of depressions, recessions, and crises as influences and motivations to move and work abroad might differ.

Furthermore, governments, as well as unions such as the EU or the Arabian League, are primary contributors to the global talent flow. The political dimension, the subjective sense of security and the cooperation between the different governments, influence the global talent flow strongly. Nevertheless, we do not focus on the role of the governments or unions itself within the phenomena of global talent flow. Besides, to tackle a shortage of talented people, companies set up different kinds of training and trainee programs, to attract, develop and retain young talents. These programs are also not the scope of our Master thesis, although these programs are of interest in the overall framework of global talent flow. We believe that the perspective of these talented people themselves is the key to future development in this area and therefore concentrate only on this. A strong focus on the student perspective is needed to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of global talent flow. If we would have focussed on the Unions, Governments, and Companies, we would have obtained an ‘outside’ perspective from those who set up the framework of the phenomenon and not the ‘inside’ perspective of young talents, who are, on an individual level perceive the influences and react according to them. Furthermore, to gain a broad understanding of the driving forces of young talents, we do not distinguish between different industries sectors which may be of particular interest to young talented people. The motivations might differ from one industry sector to another. However, we aim for an individual perspective to gain a deeper understanding of the situation itself. More precisely, we investigate the overall phenomenon and not small splinter groups.

Moreover, driving forces differ based on the cultural and the educational influences. Therefore, within our Master thesis, we focus our study on European students from Lithuania.
and Italy who fit into our definition of young talented people. As the Literature review reveals, these countries are affected by the global talent flow in a particular way. We see the topic of a mobile European workforce as an interesting discussion point. Thus, we focus on young talents who are willing to move within the EU to find significant meaning through shared perspectives and common perceptions. We believe that the driving forces are more complex than our study reveals. Furthermore, we focus on the EU, as the framework specifically for the ease of cross-border movement and educational degree transferability is unique.

In our study, we focus on people, who are about to enter the workforce. Hence, we want an understanding of the expectations of the group of participants rather than their experiences. More specifically, we focus on motivation and influences within the decision process and not after the decision is already made. We firmly believe that the driving forces are influenced once they are fed with real work experiences from their new environment. Furthermore, the sensemaking of the people, who already entered the workforce is retroperspective and thus distorted from previous expectations (Weick 1995). Last, we are aware that individual driving forces might differ based on the chosen target group. We studied different literature on the definition of young talented people, but since these definitions vary widely, we came up with our own. To make this Master thesis our Master’s project and to represent our understanding of young talent within the framework of global talent flow we define the term from our point of view.
9 References


Appendices

Appendix A: Content of our Semi-Structured Interviews

**bold** - Question asked during the interview  
_(Italic)_ - Information for us, what we are aiming for  
“⇒” - Follow-up question

**Part 1: Driving Forces: Studying Abroad**

Tell us **about your experience of studying abroad** (Give the “voice” over to the interviewees to decide how to formulate their stories)  
⇒ What has been positive, challenging and/or difficult? (General discussion)

Why and when did you decide to study abroad? (Push factors / how intense was the planning)  
⇒ Why did you decide to study in exactly that country? (Driving forces / pull factors)  
⇒ What have been your motivations? (Driving forces / Push-Pull-Mooring)

Have you discussed your decision with someone (friends, family etc.)? (Social aspect / gravity model / driving forces / subjective mooring factors (e.g., expectations for business students to study abroad)  
⇒ What input have these people might given?  
⇒ If you think about your friends, are there a lot of people with similar motivations as you embody?

Were you facing any difficulties to settle down in the new environment? If yes, what kind of difficulties?  
⇒ How have you experienced the process of settling down? (How easy is it to move within the EU / culture)

How did you experience/perceive the culture of your host country upon arrival? / home country? (Cultural Disillusion / clash of cultures / culture as an influence on driving forces)
If you think back to your experience abroad; what would you say, changed in your perception of other and own cultures? If there was any change. (Cultural disillusion / clash of cultures / cross cultural understanding / people who went abroad are more likely to go abroad again)

What would you do differently the next time you move to another country? (Learning / influence of previous experience)

**Part 2: Driving Forces: Working Abroad**

Could you tell us how you got the idea about working abroad? (Give the “voice” over to the interviewees to decide how to formulate their stories)

What is influencing / motivating you the most within this decision for or against a job abroad? (Mooring factors / driving forces)

→ What do you understand by: “opportunities” in other countries? (Subjective understanding of driving forces)

→ Is there something that holds you back in your home country? (Mooring factors / transferability of certificates & degrees)

From your point of view, what are possible hurdles you could face throughout your decision process / migration process? (Transferability of certificates & degrees / legal regulations)

Where do you see your long-term career located?

→ Do you plan to stay abroad for a couple of years, or in the long run as well?

→ and why? (Brain drain / brain circulation / driving forces / EU / transferability of certificates & degrees / legal regulations)
Appendix B: Interview Participants of our Interviews

Table 1: Interview Participants from Italy

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Table 2: Interview Participants from Lithuania

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