Balčytienė, A., Vinciūnienė, A. (2009). Das Mediensystem Litauens. *Internationales Handbuch Medien' 2006/2007*, Hans-Bredow-Institute. Baden Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, p. 423-435.

Lithuania

Auksė Balčytienė and Aušra Vinciūnienė

Introduction: news market – small, concentrated and vulnerable

There are at least three factors to be mentioned concerning the national characteristics of news market in Lithuania.

The *first factor* is related to the size of the market.

The size of any news market depends on the number of potential consumers and on the advertising money available. The news market in Lithuania is small (see Table 1) but homogeneous, while in the other two Baltic countries Latvia and Estonia the market is split between two language groups (Latvian or Estonian and Russian).

Table 1: Population and reading culture in the Baltic States

Population and major linguistic groups (mil., 2007)	1.34 68.6% Estonians, 25.7% Russians, 3.3% Ukrainians and Belorussians	2.27 59% Latvians, 28% Russians, 4% Belorussians, 2% Poles, 1% Lithuanians, 5% other	3.38 84.6% Lithuanians, 6.3% Poles, 5.1% Russians, 1.1% Belorussians, 2.9% other language groups
Reading culture (first dailies in the national languages, newspaper reach according to WAN, 2006)	*Luhhike Oppetus* (1776) 68,5%	*Latviesu Arste* (1768) 64,7%	*Nusidavimai Dievo karalystėje* (printed in Lithuania Minor, 1823) 56%

Sources: *Lithuanian Press statistics*, 2007; *World Association of Newspapers*, 2006.

Concerning news media availability, in principle, no clear regional divide can be observed in Lithuania (in contrast, for example, to Latvia or Estonia where media companies are established and cover the regions where the biggest capital cities are located). In Lithuania, the relevant news media are widely present and available to all citizens (see Table 2); its usage patterns, however, depend on other factors such as news reading culture and book publishing traditions, the culture, traditions and role as well as history of journalism development, audience openness to innovations and so on (Balčytienė, 2006).

Table 2: Total population (in mill.) and household equipment (in % of households) in 2000, 2005-2007

	2000	2005	2006	2007
Total population (in mill.)	*3,4995*	*3,414 3*	*3,3941*	*3,3756*
Number of households (in mill.):	*1,3724*	*1,3389*	*1,3310*	*1,4250*
- TV Set	na	98,5%	98,4%	98,6%
- PC and/or Notebook	5,3%	29,0%	36,5%	42,0%
- Internet*	2,3%	14,4%	31,7%	40,3%
- VCR	na	29,6%	28,7%	34,0%

- DVD Player	na	13,9%	22,0%	na
- More than 1 TV set	na	39,0%	38,5%	37,3%
- Cable	na	43,7%	na	46,6%
- Satellite Dish	na	7,5%	na	na
Mobile telephone subscribers (in mill.)	na	4,3534	4,7182	4,9211

*Only via PC. Accessing the Internet via mobile phone and other devices is excluded.

Sources: *Statistical Yearbook of Lithuania 2006* (2007). Vilnius: Department of Statistics to the Government of the Republic of Lithuania. URL: http://www.stat.gov.lt/lt/catalog/download_release/?id=670&download=1; *Statistical Yearbook of Lithuania 2007* (2008). Vilnius: Department of Statistics to the Government of the Republic of Lithuania. URL: http://www.stat.gov.lt/uploads/pdf/1_LSM_2008.pdf. *Radio and TV in Lithuania: Guide to Audiovisual Sector 2005/2006* (2006). Vilnius: Petro ofsetas. URL: http://rtk2.c-i.lt/ci.admin/Editor/assets/knyga.pdf. *Radio and Television in Lithuania 2007/2008* (2008). Vilnius: Atipija. URL: http://www.rtk.lt/ci.admin/Editor/assets/Apzvalga07_08.pdf; *Lietuvos ryšių sektorius 2007* (2008). LR ryšių reguliavimo tarnyba. URL: http://www.rrt.lt/index.php?-28047764.

Another important observation is that the usage of all kinds of media is growing rapidly (see Table 3).

Table 3: Usage of different media (in 2002, 2006 and 2007)

	Cover %*				Min./day**				Reach %***		
	2002	2006	2007		2002	2006	2007		2002	2006	2007
Dailies	50,5%	56,1%	57,9%	**Radio**	148 min / day	170 min / day	179 min / day	**Internet**	Weekly reach 13,4% monthly reach 17% 6 months reach 20,8%	Weekly reach 28,3% monthly reach 32,4% 6 months reach 34,7%	Weekly reach 36,9% monthly reach 42,2% 6 months reach 43,9%
Weeklies	54,2%	68,3%	71,3%	**TV**	189 min / day	192 min / day	202 min / day				
Magazines, monthlies, bi-monthlies	44,6%	47,3%	49,7%								

*Average press readership (cover %) (National Readership Survey, population aged 15-74, sample size 6 291 permanent residents of Lithuania)
**Average daily amount of media use per capita (TV Meters Survey, population aged 4-74, sample size 950 permanent residents of Lithuania; Radio Survey, population aged 12-74, sample size 11 400 permanent residents)
***Internet usage (Internet Penetration Survey, population aged 15-74, sample size 1500 permanent residents of Lithuania)

Sources: *TNS-Gallup Annual Review of Media Surveys for 2004, 2005, 2006 & 2007*. URL: http://www.tns-gallup.lt/en/disp.php/en_2/en_2_1.

In Lithuania, since 2000 the advertising market has been growing and has not experienced drastic changes. For instance, total annual advertising spending in newspapers in the period of 2000-2007 has gradually grown from 17,84 to 35,91 million Euro while in the period of 2005-2006 the advertising revenue growth was 13,2% just in one year (see Table 4).

Online advertising has grown from 0,40 (in 2002) to 1,10 million Euro (in 2003), which was 150% just in one year; and in the period of 2005-2006 it has grown from 2,32 to 3,48 million Euro (i.e. increased in 50%). In the year 2007, the growth of the Internet advertising was the most rapid of all means of media and further increased in 33,3 %.

Table 4: Annual advertising spending in 2000-2007

Media Channel	2000		2005		2006		2007		Growth in 2006 (%)	Growth in 2007 (%)
	EUR (mill.)	%	EUR (mill.)	%	EUR (mill.)	%	EUR (mill.)	%		
TV	18,38	36,4%	44,89	42,6%	54,16	43,5%	65,74	45,7%	*20,6%*	*21,4%*
Newspapers	17,84	35,3%	30,70	29,2%	34,75	27,9%	35,91	24,9%	*13,2%*	*3,3%*
Magazines	6,22	12,3%	12,74	12,1%	15,35	12,3%	18,39	12,8%	*20,5%*	*19,8%*
Radio	4,59	9,1%	7,39	7,0%	8,11	6,5%	9,85	6,8%	*9,8%*	*21,4%*
Outdoor**	3,51	7,0%	7,24	6,9%	8,57	6,9%	9,27	6,4%	*18,4%*	*8,1%*
Internet*	na	na	2,32	2,2%	3,48	2,8%	4,63	3,2%	*50,0%*	*33,3%*
Cinema	na	na	0,03	0,0%	0,14	0,1%	0,14	0,1%	*400,0%*	*0,0%*
Total annual advertising spending in EUR (mill.)	**50,54**	100,0%	**105,31**	100,0%	**124,57**	100,0%	**143,94**	100,0%	***18,3%***	***15,6%***
Annual advertising spending per capita in EUR	**13,98**	***	**30,70**	***	**37,00**	***	**42,52**	***	***20,5%***	***14,9%***

*The monitoring of Internet and cinema advertising was began in 2002
**Outdoor advertising is monitored in all cities since the beginning of 2000

Source: Data from "TNS-Gallup" media surveys for 2000-2007 (www.tns-gallup.lt).

The *second factor* concerns the ownership and media concentration issues.

Differently to other Baltic countries, where foreign investors from Scandinavia were getting strong since late 1990s, the local capital dominated in the media in Lithuania. Since 2005 the situation has started rapidly changing with more diverse and mixed ownership forms in all three Baltic countries.

There are less than ten foreign media owners in Lithuania. In spite of fact that situation with media ownership is changing towards more concentrated and much more mixed ownership forms in media business, a limited cross-cultural intervention and cross-media concentration can be reported in Lithuania (see Table 5). Exceptions are the industry group Achemos grupė which owns national daily Lietuvos žinios, BTV television station and a chain of radio stations; also MG Baltic Group with LNK and Alfa.lt ownership.

Table 5: Main players in the Lithuanian media market (2008)

Owner	Media Titles	International activities
Lithuanian National Radio and Television (LRT), state-owned public service broadcaster	TV channels (LTV, LTV2), radio stations (LR1, LR2, Opus3), LTV World, Lrt.lt	***
MG Baltic, national industry enterprise consisting of 29 companies in Baltic countries	TV channels (LNK, TV1), Alfa.lt, chain of magazines	***
Modern Times Group (MTG), international television network in Scandinavia and Baltic countries (Swedish capital)	TV channels (TV3, TV6, ViaSat) Radio station (Power Hit Radio)	TV3 channels in Latvia, Estonia, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Russia
Achemos grupė, national industry enterprise of 30 companies	Radio stations (Radiocentras, RC2, Russkoje Radio Baltija), national daily (Lietuvos žinios), printing houses in Kaunas & Šiauliai, radio advertising company	***
Ekspress Group, one of the largest	Chain of magazines (18 different titles)	In Estonia: magazine

Estonian media enterprises		publisher (Ajakirjade Kirjastus), weekly (Eesti Ekspress), quality daily (Eesti Päevaleht), tabloid (SL Õhtuleht, 50% of shares)
Hermis Capital, national group mainly specializing in development of real estate projects	Regional dailies (Kauno diena, Sekundė), weekly (Panorama), regional TV channel (Žemaitijos televizija), Politika.lt, magazines	***
Lietuvos rytas, closed stock company	National daily with supplements for Kaunas & Vilnius (Lietuvos rytas), regional daily (Panevežio rytas), Lrytas.lt, printing house and press delivery service, TV channel Lietuvos ryto televizija	***
Respublikos leidinių grupė, enterprise of 3 closed stock companies (Respublikos leidiniai, Respublikos spaustuvė, Respublikos investicija), **Naujasis Aitvaras** & **Brolių Tomkų leidykla**	National daily (Respublika), tabloid (Vakaro žinios), regional daily (Vakarų ekspresas), ELTA (news agency), printing house and press delivery service	***
Schibsted, Scandinavian media group	Free sheet (15 min), chain of magazines	Dailies and magazines in 20 countries: France & Spain (20 Minutes), Sweden (Aftonbladet & Svenska Dagbladet), Norway (Verdens Gang, Aftenposten), Estonia (Postimees & SL Õhtuleht, 50% of shares), etc.

Sources: *Radio and TV in Lithuania: Guide to Audiovisual Sector 2005/2006* (2006). Vilnius: Petro ofsetas. URL: http://rtk2.c-i.lt/ci.admin/Editor/assets/knyga.pdf; *Radio and Television in Lithuania 2007/2008* (2008). Vilnius: Atipija. URL: http://www.rtk.lt/ci.admin/Editor/assets/Apzvalga07_08.pdf; Business News Service http://www.vz.lt; websites of media companies.

The Lithuanian legislation contains no special provisions on media concentration. The sector comes under the more general competition law, which forbids dominant positions, meaning over 40 per cent of a market. The lack of special restrictions on cross-ownership has paved the way for a consolidation of the media markets in recent years.

In Lithuanian television market, there are two leading channels – commercial broadcasters LNK and TV3. A severe competition exists between these two, as their popularity is at similar rates: in 2007, TV3 controlled 26,6 percent, while LNK – 22 percent of the overall market. The third largest player is the public service broadcaster (LTV) which owns 13,4 of the market (TNS Gallup 2007). The total market share of these three channels is 62 percent.

In the radio market, situation is different for the public service broadcaster, as its station LR 1 is the leading one (it controls 21,1 percent of the market). Other two dominant positions are taken by commercial stations "Lietus" and "M-1" (13,3 and 10,6 percent respectively). Taken together, these three channels comprise 45 percent of the overall market.

Considering the market of national dailies, "Vakaro zinios", "Lietuvos rytas" and "15 minuciu" control 22, 19 and 15 percent of the overall market respectively. "15 minuciu" is a free daily and entered the market rather recently (in 2005). The total market share of these three dailies is 56 percent (TNS Gallup 2007).

In general, conclusion could be made that the highest concentration exists in the television section (CR3 reaches 62 perc.), that is followed by the daily newspaper market (56 perc.) The lowest concentration is noticed in radio market (45 perc.). Even though internet media is rapidly strengthening its positions in the overall media market, no data is available on the marker share by the leading news portals.

No sanctions have ever been imposed in Lithuania for abuse of dominant positions by owners of more media in pursuing their personal or business interests. It is difficult to prove that media ownership concentration has direct impact on media content but observations can be made. Lietuvos rytas, one of the biggest national dailies, has stepped seriously into the TV business by acquiring shares of the regional TV stations network 5 kanalas. The producer company owned by the same owners has weekly programs on the public service broadcaster. The Journalists' Ethics Inspector publicly criticized LTV for not ensuring diversity of opinions in its shows by repeatedly inviting the same guests to its talk shows.

Indeed, media structural diversity is a serious problem for small markets and, as practice reveals, it is difficult to find one adequate solution suitable for every situation. In some countries, an interventionist regulation is used to promote media diversity; still, in the Baltic States, such formula was rather difficult to apply. Therefore, free market and liberalism was chosen as an ideology promoting the development of domestic actors. Actually, certain preconditions have shaped media policies towards promotion of a liberal, market-oriented thinking in the Baltic States. If assessed historically, in the early 1990s following the political breakthrough, the ideal of market liberalization was initiated by immediate needs (to promote development of domestic actors) as well as still active memories from the communist past (media control, lack of autonomy, censorship). Thus, certain bans and restrictions in media regulation were lifted. Also, as the Baltic States do not share languages with their giant neighbors (Poland, Russia), media regulation does not follow the protectionist path (foreign ownership is allowed and even encouraged, especially favoring the media owners from the neighboring Scandinavia). However, such way of thinking (i.e. tolerance towards foreign owners) should be applied with caution: a different kind of ownership (e.g. capital from Russia) would be treated totally different.

Briefly, in Lithuania media ownership concentration is not an issue of big concern, but certain worries were already aired by media experts as the situation may rapidly change to critical levels. In the early 1990s, in media regulation in all three Baltic countries no other alternatives were perceived as proper – only liberalism (statutory media regulation was treated as politically unacceptable). Therefore, at present, any attempts to impose stricter regulations and deliberalize media markets by, for example, putting restrictions on cross-media ownership would be interpreted as a step backwards. In the European media politics, too, a general tendency towards neoliberal policy promoting deregulation, competition and openness can be also observed.

The *third factor* concerns some legal issues.

In Lithuania, the regulation climate of the media is very liberal. There are no regulations against media concentration as well as no restrictions on cross-media ownership. It causes the situation where media owners seek to cover as much of the available traditional media market as possible; some of these conventional media (national daily and TV stations) also have strong brands online (Lrytas.lt, Alfa.lt, Lrt.lt).

Very liberal market policy is complemented by the lack of efficient media accountability mechanism. Liberal market and freedom with little responsibility has given the media nearly unlimited possibilities to set the news agenda according to their business interests.

The economic reasoning behind the media organisations has clear impacts on the type of journalism that is produced in the Baltic countries.

Market-oriented journalism has indeed found its way into the public communications. The "new criteria" seem to replace the others: making money as fast as possible and as much as possible. Journalists gradually anticipate more market-oriented style of journalism which is treated by the management as a commodity which furthers the trend towards hybrid media production. Indeed, good journalism still exists, but it exists within a system of certain calculus.

All the above mentioned characteristics create a dichotomous situation.

On the one hand, liberal media regulation (no laws against media concentration or cross-ownership) opens new fields and forms for media development. On the other hand, very liberal regulation and weak media accountability and practically no state intervention into the matters of mass media create favourable conditions for the market-oriented logic to proliferate.

In Lithuania as well as in other Baltic states, the participation of the state in the matters of the mass media is fairly constricted.

The level of state intervention is manifested in the public information policy in several ways, for instance, in the values which are promoted, in the types of subsidies (direct and indirect), in the regulation of the media industry, and in power sharing among various councils to regulate the broadcast sector.

In Lithuania, the Law on Provision of Information to the Public (first accepted in 1996, new amendments as of July 2006) says that there is an institution authorised by the government to co-ordinate the implementation of national policy in the sphere of public information provision. Since 2001, this governmental institution has been the Ministry of Culture. The information policy seeks to increase the openness and transparency of the media (as is indicated in Article 24 of the law), as well as to enable the widest range of views to be put forward in the media (diversity of the media) providing conditions under which they can have an equal chance of attracting public attention.

Concerning transparency of the media, Article 24 of the law states that owners, producers and disseminators of public information are obliged to submit data to the ministry once a year, by March 30, regarding the shareholders or co-owners of the enterprise.

According to Article 28 of the law, the state supports cultural and educational activities of public information producers through the Fund for the Support of the Press, Radio, and Television, and the Seimas approves the budget of the Fund, annually. Sources of funding are state subsidies, funds contributed by legal or natural persons, license tax on commercial broadcasters, and other funds. Although the budget is not big (in 2007 it was 1,4 million Euro) by funding non-commercial media it contributes to diversification of information space.

Another possibility to correct the so-called "market failure" – when media seek immediate commercial goals – seems to be the public funding. Public finance (by funding of non-commercial media projects) has a particular potential in fostering and enhancing pluralism, diversity and quality in content provision. In Lithuania, for example, since 2005, according to the Law on Income Tax of Individuals, any natural person may transfer up to 2% of the amount of the income tax paid to the state to any public or business organisation. This has allowed public financing of some traditional media projects (such as monthlies and weeklies) as well as specialised news media online.

In the context of post-transformational media change, three factors in particular – liberal media policy with an ongoing media concentration, growing news commercialization, and the impact of new technologies – have influenced journalistic culture, journalistic content, journalistic practices and the values that Lithuanian journalism is based on.

Press

The Lithuanian press is remarkable for the quantity of its titles. In 2006, 334 newspapers were being published, 22 of them dailies, i.e., published at least four times a week (World press trends, 2007). However, people in Lithuania are not the most devoted press readers in the world: the newspapers reach only 56.1 percent[1] of the population (TNS Gallup National Readership Survey, 2006), and this affects the print media culture. Indeed, the Lithuanian newspapers follow the so-called middle trend, fusing popular and quality journalism in one edition. Moreover, all newspapers are published in a compact format. They have bright covers, eye-catching headings and subheadings, and many photos. All newspapers are morning papers; there is no evening or Sunday press. The only newspaper distributed for free, "15 minučių" (15 Minutes), has been published since 2005.

Despite the distinguishing features between quality and tabloid press, the majority of the Lithuanian national dailies follow the middle road, i.e. serious things may intertwine with popular reports on newspaper pages. It is also customary that dailies are published in a smaller, i.e. compact (tabloid) format. A smaller format does not necessarily indicate that a newspaper is overtly sensational.

Table 6: Top 5 dailies according to circulation and average readership* (2007)

Title	Place of publication	Type	Publisher	Average number of circulation (thous.)	Average readership (cover %)	Average readership (thous.)
Vakaro žinios	Vilnius	National tabloid	Naujasis aitvaras, closed stock company	from ~36 to ~230	22	564,1
Lietuvos rytas	Vilnius	National daily	Lietuvos rytas, closed stock company	from ~56 to ~182 (on weekends)	19	471,8
15 min	Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipėda	National daily (free sheet)	Shibsted, Scandinavian media group	~104	15	295,3
Respublika	Vilnius	National daily	Respublikos leidinių grupė, closed stock company	from ~29 to ~70	7,7	189,1
Kauno diena	Kaunas	Regional daily	Hermis Capital, closed stock company	from ~39 to ~46 (on weekends)	5,5	155,3

*National Readership Survey, population aged 15-74, sample size 6 291 permanent residents of Lithuania.

Sources: *TNS-Gallup Annual Review of Media Survey for 2007*. URL: http://www.tns-gallup.lt/en/disp.php/en_2/en_2_1; Websites of media companies; Data published in the online news service www.vz.lt.

Briefly, Lietuvos rytas and Respublikos grupė, two publishing houses deeply rooted in the press market, give evidence that the newspaper market is an oligopoly in Lithuania (see Table 6).

[1] In recent years, news and information consumption in Lithuania has been growing: for example, in 2004, newspapers reach was 53.8 percent (World Association of Newspapers, 2005).

Although competition is getting stronger, there are prospects that a large number of owners and publishers will not endure. Especially in small media markets, concentration is inevitable. In Lithuania, it is expected that the press concentration process has not yet finished: by now there are new entrants into the market such as the Norwegian Schibsted (with tabloid L.T., free sheet 15 min, and chain of magazines) and Hermis Capital (with regional and local dailies such as Kauno diena and Sekundė).

Broadcasting

Lithuanian television market consists of 31 national and regional television networks, 30 of which are commercial and one is public (LRT, broadcasting two national television programmes LTV1 and LTV2). Four of them have a national coverage: the public broadcaster LRT and three commercial stations TV3, LNK and BTV. The two of commercial television stations – TV3 and LNK – are in a strong competition for audience attention (see Table 7). As "TNS Gallup" surveys show, their share in 2007 was respectively 26,6 percent and 22 percent, as the LTV1 and BTV were less popular acquiring respectively 13,4 percent and 8,3 percent of total audience share. Over 95 percent of TV advertising market is shared by the above mentioned television stations (Radio and TV in Lithuania 2007).

Table 7: Top 5 TV programmes by market share* (2007)

Programme	Area of transmission	Owner / Media group	Type	Daily reach (cover %)	Market share (in %)
TV3	National coverage	TELE-3, closed stock company (owned by Modern Times Group)	Commercial	53,9	26,6
LNK	National coverage	Laisvas nepriklausomas kanalas, closed stock company (MG Baltic – 80%, Amber Trust S.C.A. – 20%)	Commercial	52,7	22
LTV1	National coverage	LRT, state-owned public service broadcaster	Public service	43,8	13,4
BTV	National coverage	Achemos grupė, closed stock company	Commercial	36	8,3
PBK	Programme in Russian rebroadcast by cable TV operators	***	Commercial	12,6	5,8

*TV Meters Survey, population aged 4-74, sample size 950 permanent residents of Lithuania.

Sources: *TNS-Gallup Annual Review of Media Survey for 2007*. URL: http://www.tns-gallup.lt/en/disp.php/en_2/en_2_1; *Radio and Television in Lithuania 2007/2008* (2008). Vilnius: Atipija. URL: http://www.rtk.lt/ci.admin/Editor/assets/Apzvalga07_08.pdf.

It is the television, not the press, which plays the biggest role in the Lithuanian news market. Lithuanian TV stations indeed apply business strategies that have so far been used only in the press market – by media companies attempting to cover different needs of the audience by making special offers. Thus, the diversification of film, youth, documentary, and educational channels goes hand in hand with a general economic growth. Most of the money spent for advertising is absorbed by TV (45,7%), which is indicated by the dynamics of revenues of private broadcast stations (see Table 4).

According to the Law on Provision of Information to the Public, persons that desire to engage in broadcasting and/or re-broadcasting activities must obtain a license from the

Radio and Television Commission of Lithuania (RTCL). The Service of Communications Regulation at the Ministry of the Interior announces available frequencies at the end of each quarter of a calendar year.

In issuing licenses, priority is accorded to broadcasters who assume the responsibility for producing original and creative broadcasts of a cultural, informational, and educational type. These rules also apply to broadcasters that have a monopoly within their reception zone. The RTCL may interrupt the validity of a license by its own decision for a term not exceeding three months, if the person holding the license fails to implement or systematically violates the conditions of the license (such as fails to pay license fees on time, Article 31).

The activities of the public service broadcaster – the Lithuanian Radio and Television (LRT) – are not licensed. Based on a strategic plan, the Service of Communications Regulation assigns channels (radio frequencies) for broadcasting LRT programs without a tender, coordinating the decision with the Commission. The Law on National Radio and Television establishes the procedures of the founding, the administration, the re-organisation, and the liquidation of LRT as well as its rights, obligations, and liabilities. LRT bases its activity upon the Law on the Provision of Information to the Public and the Law on Public Institutions. It denotes a public and non-profit institution that, according to the right of ownership, belongs to the state.

The functions of the general meeting of LRT are assigned to the LRT Council. The Council, comprising 12 members, is the supreme body of the LRT. The latter elects the Director General, confirms the budget, and decides about the content of programming. The Council is funded (compensations for the meetings, administrative expenses) from LRT funds. It appoints the Director General of LRT for five years and forms the state strategy of the content broadcasted by LRT. It also supervises how LRT tasks are implemented and how the broadcasters comply with requirements developed for them in legal acts. The law states that LRT is funded from the three sources, namely a) the allocation of the state budget, b) income obtained from state taxes for the services provided to the public by LRT, and c) for transmission of radio and television broadcasts, advertisement, publishing, and from sponsorship and receipts obtained from commercial and economic activity.

As for the radio market there are 48 radio stations (11 national, 7 regional and 30 local radio broadcasters). Radio programmes are being broadcast by 47 commercial and 1 public radio station – Lithuanian Radio, broadcasting three nation-wide radio programmes: LR1, LR2 and LR3. Commercial radio stations broadcasting nationwide are privately owned and profit-driven ventures. In contrast to the public television channel LTV1, radio listening is mostly dominated by the public radio program, the LR1 (see Table 8). According "TNS Gallup" surveys for the year 2007, among the commercial radio programs the most popular are: Lietus, M-1, Pūkas and Radiocentras.

Table 8: Top 5 radio programmes by market share* (2007)

Programme	Area of transmission	Owner / Media group	Type	Daily reach (cover %)	Weekly reach (cover %)	Market share (in %)
LR1	National coverage	LRT, state-owned public service broadcaster	Public service	23,5	32,4	21,1
Lietus	National coverage	Ultra Vires, closed stock company	Commercial	17,3	32,4	13,3
M-1	National	M-1, closed stock	Commercial	16,1	32,8	10,6

	coverage	company				
Pūkas	National coverage	Pukas, closed stock company	Commercial	12,5	23,4	9,4
Radiocentras	National coverage	Achemos Grupe, closed stock company	Commercial	12	26,9	7,1

*Radio Audience Survey, population aged 12-74, sample size 11 400 permanent residents of Lithuania.

Sources: *TNS-Gallup Annual Review of Media Survey for 2007*. URL: http://www.tns-gallup.lt/en/disp.php/en_2/en_2_1; *Radio and Television in Lithuania 2007/2008* (2008). Vilnius: Atipija. URL: http://www.rtk.lt/ci.admin/Editor/assets/Apzvalga07_08.pdf.

Online

In Lithuania, the Internet is already acknowledged as a self-contained medium equal to print and broadcasting.

The Internet media is the fastest growing media, with annual growth of advertising revenue about 50 percent every year. Aside to online news portals maintained by conventional media such as national daily, business daily or news portal of the public service broadcaster, there exists an abundance of online-only news portals (Delfi.lt, Balsas.lt, Bernardinai.lt) that are taking a full advantage of the existing opportunities to conquer online audiences by providing breaking news, news analysis, interviews and press reviews, interactive games and other online services of added value (see Table 9).

Table 9: Main online-only news portals in Lithuania

Title	Owner	Type	International activities	Number of unique users, 2007
Delfi.lt	Interinfo, closed stock company	Mainstream news media	Delfi.lv; Delfi.ee	841 136
Balsas.lt	Naujosios komunikacijos prekyba, closed stock company	Mainstream news media	no	124 878
Alfa.lt	MG Baltic, closed stock company	Mainstream news media	no	207 233
Bernardinai.lt	Bernardinai.lt, public institution	Non-commercial news media	no	na
Vz.lt	Bonnier Media (Sweden)	News media specialized for business sector	Di.se; Aripaev.lv; Borsen.dk; Db.lv; Pb.pl; Business.hr	49 722
Lrt.lt	LRT, state-owned public service broadcaster	Mainstream news media	no	na

Source: *Audience.lt*

According to "TNS-Gallup", among the Top 5 most accessed sites (see Table 10) are the online-only news portal Delfi.lt and the rest being search engines, email or mobile services providers. Delfi is a leading online-only news portal in the Baltic States, where it has over 2 million of users. Otherwise than in Lithuania, Delfi.lt sites in Latvia and Estonia provide news in the Russian language as well. Delfi.lt is visited by 800 thousand of visitors each day (see Table 9).

Table 10: Top 5* Web domains in Lithuania (Winter 2007)

Web addresses	Owner	Type	Average % of users
www.google.lt	Google	Search engine	92,2
www.delfi.lt	MicroLink Data, closed stock company	Online news portal	71,5

www.one.lt	na	Website offering services such as e-mail, SMS, etc.	50,9
www.gmail.com	Google	Search engine	39,8
www.autoplius.lt	Plus, closed stock company	Website offering different services in buying, renting & selling cars	36,8

*Internet and PC Survey (user-centric), population aged 15-74, sample size 1479 permanent residents of Lithuania.

Sources: *TNS-Gallup surveys*. URL: http://www.tns-gallup.lt/en.

Online-only media operates in a different setting than traditional media. Its functioning is shaped by several factors, namely the ownership structure, the size of the company, the business model, the scope of technologies applied, and the audience.

Ownership structures of online-only news portals are different. Very often it is IT companies (Balsas.lt) or public organisations (Bernardinai.lt) that provide news as an additional service to their clients. The size and newsroom organisation structures of Internet media companies are also very different. As a tradition, online-only news projects are produced by small staff, i.e. somewhere between 6-8 (Lrytas.lt, Balsas.lt, Alfa.lt) and 20 (Delfi.lt) people. Recently established and small newsrooms do not have hierarchical decision-making structures very often found in other media such as newspapers or television. In addition, with online media, different criteria (such as time pressures, audience requests, etc.) determine news organisation and management.

The growth of the Internet and mobile phone users has significantly affected the expansion of the news market online. In Lithuania, the Internet comprises more than 60 online-only portals, over 70 online newspapers with print equivalents, several dozens of magazines, TV sites and radio stations which can be accessed via the Internet. In 2005, at least 30 percent of population accessed the Internet once per 6 months, 130 percent of population had mobile telephones and 15 percent of households were connected to the Internet. In 2006 alone, the Internet connections at home amounted to 32 percent (see Table 2). In 2007, the size of online audience has reached 44 percent percent of population who accessed Internet once per 6 months, and there is a clear tendency observed that the Internet usage is increasing in the regions indicating leveling of Internet media use between bigger cities and regions of the country (see Table 3).

Assessing internet media in Lithuania, the usage of broadband connection should also be taken into account. Providing high speed in comparison to dial-up modems, it improves data transfer and increases the quality of internet usage. Furthermore, users' possibilities to watch videos are increased, this way fostering video journalism on the web.

During recent years, the usage of broadband internet in Lithuania is growing at high rates. Comparing 2006 and 2007, the number of households using broadband internet increased by 14 percent (from 19 till 34 percent). These numbers are still smaller that the European average of 27 states (excluding Malta), which was 30 percent in 2006 and 42 percent in 2007. However, the difference between European and Lithuanian average is diminishing (from 11 percent in 2006 till 8 percent in 2007). Despite fast growth, the conclusion could be made that only one third of Lithuanian households are enjoying the advantages of broadband internet connection.

Synthesis: media convergence and hybridization of journalism

The Lithuanian news market is not that open to new competitors as it was a decade ago, thus competition is getting stronger: media concentration and convergence and the ideology of "three-in-one" are becoming a daily trend.

Indeed, journalism in Lithuania has faced strong pressures of change in recent years.

The overall circulation of dailies has decreased while the circulation of tabloids has multiplied. The number of news broadcasts has increased. All media companies (including the Internet) have faced economic challenges. The number of news channels (the number of free sheets, broadcasting time, online news portals, and magazines) has increased much more than the resources available. Moreover, the costs of digitalisation have been huge, and in this context, the public service mission of national broadcasting company (the LRT) has been questioned. Entertainment has become an essential part in the mainstream media.

The convergence and commercialisation of the media has created new challenges for journalists. It has also exacerbated potential weaknesses such as proliferation of cheap and hybrid media. For many news media it becomes a tempting challenge to exploit ready-made information (PR and promotional news) which reaches it free-of-charge. This has impact on structural changes in the media organizations too. Many conventional media have become content-production companies instead of news media: they publish newspapers, books, online news portals, catalogues, and also organize conferences – in short, just re-pack information into different forms, formats or channels.

Hybrid media is indeed cheaper to produce than good journalism. For the mainstream media operating under strong commercial impetus this works well because hybrid news helps to grab audience attention and deliver these audiences to advertisers. In other words, less costly production and the process of bringing audiences to advertisers confirms compatibility of such journalism to media organizational goals. To be fast and efficient niche audience targetter becomes of crucial importance.

But the causes of hybrid media are quite plain – quality of journalism suffers due to bottom-line pressures. Journalists gradually anticipate more mixed journalism which is treated as a commodity, and which in turn furthers the trend toward cheaper media production in contrast to in-depth and investigative reporting by professional journalists.

There is a general trend observed that in favour of expanding profit margins the media has gradually abandoned the public service mission of journalism. Large corporations have begun colonizing both offline and online media. In addition, there is a fundamental shift of newsworthiness which is based upon the judgement of, on the one hand, serving the public full stop and, on the other, serving the public as long as it is profitable and promises to become more profitable. This is how the market (but also the Internet – the so called 24/7 logic) operates. At the same time, it signals to qualitative shift in journalism.

Thus there are new (addressing structural changes in the national media systems, initiating public discussions, dealing with commercialisation and image oriented politics) and old (performing a role of a watchdog) questions of professional journalism in Lithuania. The journalistic culture of Lithuania is affected by the Liberal media model. But weaker historical journalistic traditions and weaker self-regulation (lack of respect and social responsibility) has caused significant distortions from British or Nordic examples, therefore secularization, competition and consumerism are typical keywords describing journalistic culture in the Baltics today.

Bibliography

Balčytienė, A. (2006). *Mass Media in Lithuania: Changes, Development, and Journalism Culture*. European Journalism Review Series 8. Berlin: Vistas.

Baerug, R. (2005). *The Baltic Media World.* Riga: Flera (book available online at http://www.politika.lv/index.php?f=549).

Lietuvos ryšių sektorius 2007 (2008). LR ryšių reguliavimo tarnyba (available online: http://www.rrt.lt/index.php?-28047764).

Radio and TV in Lithuania: Guide to Audiovisual Sector 2005/2006 (2006). Vilnius: Petro ofsetas (available online: http://rtk2.c-i.lt/ci.admin/Editor/assets/knyga.pdf).

Radio and Television in Lithuania 2007/2008 (2008). Vilnius: Atipija (available online: http://www.rtk.lt/ci.admin/Editor/assets/Apzvalga07_08.pdf).

Statistical Yearbook of Lithuania 2006 (2007). Vilnius: Department of Statistics to the Government of the Republic of Lithuania (available online: http://www.stat.gov.lt/lt/catalog/download_release/?id=670&download=1).

Statistical Yearbook of Lithuania 2007 (2008). Vilnius: Department of Statistics to the Government of the Republic of Lithuania (available online: http://www.stat.gov.lt/uploads/pdf/1_LSM_2008.pdf).

TNS-Gallup Annual Review of Media Survey for 2007 (2008) (available online: http://www.tns-gallup.lt/en/disp.php/en_2/en_2_1).

Internet links

Law on Provision of Information to the Public,
http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=286382

Law on the National Radio and Television,
http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=123324&p_query=&p_tr2

Law on Competition,
http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=234246&p_query=&p_tr2

Law on Advertising,
http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter2/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=117415&p_query=&p_tr2

Law on the Protection of Minors against Detrimental Effect of Public Information,
http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter2/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=216702&p_query=&p_tr2

Law on Legal Protection of Personal Data,
http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter2/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=208886&p_query=&p_tr2

Law on Copyright and Related Rights,
http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=291051&p_query=&p_tr2

Ministry of Culture, http://www.lrkm.lt/index.php/en

Radio and Television Council, http://www.rtk.lt/en

Radio and Television Commission of Lithuania, http://www.rtk.lt

Fund for the Support of the Press, Radio, and Television,
http://www.srtfondas.lt/index.php?-1862570624 (in Lithuanian)