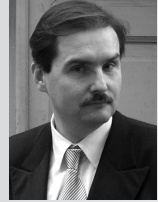


## University journalism study programme in the context of higher education and science reform

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**The reform of higher education and science in Lithuania** has brought new challenges: study programmes will have to be restructured according to new laws and it will be necessary to improve what has already been created. Therefore, the prospects for the discipline of journalism studies should be explored in the context of higher education and science reforms in Lithuania, with the main focus on the following aspects:

- 1) How to understand the aims and tasks of university schools of journalism in our modern networking society (original participation in the network of schools);
- 2) How to achieve quality in university schools and their studies (how and what research programmes should be supported and implemented);
- 3) What is the future of university studies, considering university or universities traditions, resources, and the needs of both graduates and the market.

**Keywords:** history and changes in journalism studies, higher education and science reform, media research, university studies, creative communication, political communication, and freedom of the press.

For a long time, the development of Lithuanian journalism and university journalism studies had been separated in Lithuanian history with very limited integration between academic life and the journalism industry. Put in philosophical terms, they were like the other two notions, which cannot be regarded as the same: journalism in Lithuania (multi-cultural and multilingual) and Lithuanian journalism (national in the international space).

**Any media researcher**, especially in the context of political communication, must take notice of the evolution of Lithuanian journalism and the roles it has taken since the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the United States of America, Prussia, other European countries, Russia and Lithuania itself. It is a widely experienced phenomenon of international culture that has rallied Lithuanian communities and helped them to take part in diverse political processes in order to protect not only their own interest in freedom but also the interests of the annexed and/or occupied Lithuanian society. Consequently, multicultural journalism in Lithuania, in comparison with that of Western Europe or even Russia, has acquired as of late the characteristics of a media system. In Lithuania's historical experience, it has mostly been equated with Lithuanian periodicals in Lithuanian language that have been published since the 19<sup>th</sup> century in so called Lithuania Minor, a territory that formerly belonged to the Kingdom of Prussia<sup>1</sup>. The periodicals in the territory of Lithuania, as documents of cultural heritage, had been issued since the 16<sup>th</sup> century in Polish and later in Russian and Jewish. Overall, two ideas – resistance to Tsarist repression and restoration of the independent State of Lithuania as two interrelated objectives were most clearly revealed in the media published in Lithuanian, taking an active role in Lithuanian journalism and political communication, especially at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This journalism of days past may now be compared to contemporary *blogs*. Its authors were medical and law students, university graduates and also priests – in other words, the Lithuanian political elite of a new generation, individuals with university education who cared about the dissemination of the ideas described above by gathering facts, making comments on events and organising resistance movements. It may also be seen as a thrusting (forceful) style of journalism; however, it is markedly different when compared to the *new* European journalism of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Fundamentally, it represents a constituent part of 19<sup>th</sup> century political communication.

Taking into account that after 1832, Vilnius University was closed by the Tsar's decision to prohibit Lithuania from having any institute of higher education, the creators of this thrusting Lithuanian journalism studied in other universities of the Russian Empire, including institutions in Warsaw,

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<sup>1</sup> Klein Litauen, Preussisch Litauen (in German).

St. Petersburg, Moscow. Consequently, the majority of the political leaders in Lithuania from 1918–1940 were directly related to the resistance and Independence media movement, having worked as the editors of such newspapers at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup>/beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Until the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, journalism was a profession in Lithuania which did not guarantee sufficient earnings necessary for living, thus it was necessary to have a *real* source of income to make ends meet. It was in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the United States of America (and the end of that century in the Western Europe) that journalism studies began appearing in universities, namely because working in the media had started to be perceived as a viable profession.

The development of professional journalism of Lithuania and the mass media system only started after the First World War. At that time, an attempt to organise journalism schools occurred – the so called free courses in the mass media or organisations as well as a series of lectures delivered at Vytautas Magnus University. Basically, its corresponding with 3 media models by D. C. Hallin and P. Mancini (Media and Political Systems..., 5).

**Moreover, the 150 year-old tradition of journalism** in Lithuania has a historically distinctive feature: its entire development until the end of the 20th century, namely until the rise of the Sąjūdis (the Movement) media, was marked by the fight for freedom of the press, challenging censorship and government-enforced bans. Until the end of the 20th century, journalism in Lithuania has never been free from the supervision and instruments of official state power – only the methods of employing this power were different in corresponding periods<sup>2</sup> when the procedure was established, indicating what could be published and how violations should be fined. Therefore, the problem of journalism in higher education (as a professional trade) has been determined by this peculiarity of the media system.

<sup>2</sup> I. 1864–1904 is the period of the ban on Lithuanian press in the Russian Empire; II. 1904–1915 – when the Emperor of Russia cancelled the ban on press (until World War I); III. 1915–1918 – the occupation period by the Kaiser of Germany; 1919–1940 – First Republic of Lithuania when two laws on the press were passed (1919, 1935), however, the government and/or military censorship institutions constantly operated (IV. 1919–1926 – the period for the establishment of parliamentary rule in Lithuania and V. 1927–1940 – the period of authoritarian presidential power); VI. 1940–1941 – the Soviet Union occupied the Republic of Lithuania and after its “official” annexation into the USSR structure (3 August 1940) reformed the media system; VII. 1941–1944 – period of Nazi Germany; VIII. 1944–1989 – during the period of the Soviet Union when a propaganda system of the Communist party was established.

The establishment of journalism schools (even short-term) and the actual content of study programmes have mostly been in conflict with the actual situation in the media system. Generally, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, universities in Lithuania provided basic knowledge on idealistic journalism practises and journalism as a mean for advancing propaganda, as well as the distinctive importance of the media in the modern world. A critical view towards biased journalism emerged in a more theoretical aspect which utilised examples, which were not directly related (or poorly related) to the media system in Lithuania, its legal and political challenges, and the trends that dominated the Lithuanian practice. Journalism in the theoretical and practical literature before World War II was often equated with a special educational Humanistic mission, warning of the negative impact of business and money by selecting and publishing facts in the media. After World War II, during the Soviet period the special mission of the media in theoretical literature was linked to the creation (more precisely building) and strengthening of the communist regime; while the “defect” of media entrepreneurship was a feature of bourgeois (foreign) journalism that didn’t exist in the Soviet media system.

From 1918–1940, the Lithuanian News Agency ELTA, journalists, editors, the Lithuanian Journalists Union and Catholic Press Bureau initiated and held a training (Gudaitis, 2) when the consecutive programme studies at the university level at Vytautas Magnus University (VMU) were not continued: the Government of Lithuania and VMU rectors did not provide political and financial support for such studies and ignored the necessity of such an investment. As I mentioned earlier, such a situation had resulted from restrictions on the freedom of the press previously established by Government decisions and its developing system of press supervision, especially tightened in 1926 after a military upheaval. The persecution of free expression affected VMU as well. For example, in 1931 the Faculty of Theology – Philosophy was reorganised leaving 19 lecturers from an original faculty of 38. The lecturers of this faculty had developed an especially critical attitude towards the media supervision policy. In 1932, Professor Pranas Dovydas was sentenced to 6 weeks in prison because of his public lectures. Prof. Juozas Eretas, one of the founders of Lithuanian journalism, was fired (he had given journalism history and culture lecturing courses in VMU during the 1925–26 academic year, and after being given permission to return to the uni-

versity, he lectured Journalism Theory during the 1939–40 academic year. In 1936–1937, Juozas Keliuotis, editor of Catholic cultural magazine *Naujoji Romuva*, delivered a series of interdisciplinary journalism lectures as part of the faculty. Therefore, in the fourth decade of the 20th century the philosophy on the role of media in society developed in a more intensive way. Journalism began to be analysed not only as a means of information exchange or a product but also as an important method of documentation and research, or cultural phenomenon having a large impact on the masses. At that time, the first national theoretical sources about media psychology, media business and information literacy appeared in Lithuania. An idealistic journalism image<sup>3</sup>, however, has not corresponded to the media system's problems: a journalist, editor, or publisher was under the persistent control of censorship institutions. What is more, workers at the censorship institution were also members of the Journalists Union.

In the fourth decade of the past century, the Lithuanian Government allocated scholarships only to loyal journalists who worked for nationalistic goals (and political party press) to study journalism abroad, while neither the left wing nor Catholic media employees were able to get such support, despite the fact that primarily the Catholic press in Lithuania had become the most modern periodicals while its journalists had the sharpest political insight.

Some Lithuanian intellectuals, who in 1920 had stayed to live in Polish-occupied Vilnius, worked as journalists in the Vilnius region or studied journalism in the Warsaw school of higher journalism (including writers Juozas Kėkštis, Albinas Žukauskas, and others). On average, about 100–220 students studied each year in the school that remained in operation from 1917–1939. Vilnius S. Batory University (1920–1939) had no studies in the field of journalism.

In 1941, the Department of Sociology and Journalism was established at VMU and functioned for a year. It organised studies in journalism that were headed by the aforementioned Juozas Keliuotis and other practitioners. However, study of such a subject during the period of Nazi oc-

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<sup>3</sup> For example, "Journalist is the elite of the nation. He is a sole aristocrat. As such he stands higher above the mass population. Journalist rules the masses and leads to new world." – Izidorius Tamošaitis (Chairman of the Lithuanian Journalists Union 1934–1939). In: *Dabartis ir žurnalistas./ Chronicle of the Lithuanian Journalists Union, 1937.*

cupation, while having philosophical or intellectual importance to the individual persons involved, was paralleled by the stark reality that the published dailies and magazines in Lithuanian journalism were under the direct supervision of German military censorship.

In 1949, journalism studies started at the Vilnius University (VU) which officially became part of the common system for the education of journalists in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. This journalism programme, however, still had some national peculiarities; first, in the beginning, it was established as a division of the Faculty of History – Philology under the Department of Lithuanian Language and Literature (the Head, Meilė Lukšienė, who had graduated in Lithuanian linguistics studies at VMU before World War II, was a researcher of Lithuanian literature). Later, a Department of Journalism was established, which after reforming this faculty operated in the Faculty of History for 33 years (in 1985 two Departments were established: the Press Journalism Department and the Radio and TV Journalism Department). Second, all subjects taught throughout the entire period of Soviet occupation were given in Lithuanian, while literature, history and language in general served as a background for journalism studies' theoretical presentation; this background was deeply rooted in the central party (communist) journalism's principles. I was right to emphasise that during this period, the studies at the university created an image of the journalist as an attractive profession – an idealist.

In reality, a journalist would ultimately become an instrument of propaganda for Communist power or such a media worker who was forced to practice self-censorship, knowing what topic, how to write, and what is (or is not) allowed. The latter circumstance used to have different colourings in different periods of the Soviet era: in the period of Stalinism until 1953 (when Bolshevik propaganda dictated that a correspondent had to “beat with words”), during the so-called *thaw* period until 1965 (when the conditions for more open cultural, creative journalism briefly appeared), the stagnation<sup>4</sup> period until 1982 and finally the *perestroika* and *glasnost* periods from 1985 to 1990. Teaching to write in a more beautiful style while searching for attractive sentence constructions distracted developing journalists from critical thinking and/or investigating the crimes of the Communist Party leadership, corruption, and

<sup>4</sup> Also referred to another way as the period of rule under Leonid Brezhnev, General Secretary of Soviet Union Communist Party' Central Committee.

planned socialist economy. On the contrary, students could be politically critical only so far as was officially permitted by the Communist Party and only during some of the time periods mentioned: for example, in 1956–1960 (for Stalinism crimes) and from 1985 for the shortcomings of the planned economy. Special propaganda disciplines had to shape student criticism (e.g., criticism of “bourgeois journalism” and such) while the content had partly revealed an opportunity to learn about new theoretical sources. Nevertheless, it was not permitted (prohibited) to evaluate them in an objective way. After being granted a permit by the head of the Department, it was possible to become more familiar with the media that had existed from 1918–1940 (stored in a so-called *special* stock collection of the Vilnius University Library) but it was not possible to analyse it honestly or publish such research. While delivering journalism lectures in Lithuanian, as practised the entire University, there were periodic attempts in certain academic years to provide information on the origins of Lithuanian journalism (especially the development of the media in the 19<sup>th</sup> century) as well as the circumstances for the formation of journalism in the world. However, the content of such lectures, for sure, was informal and their conclusions were not formulated in a fair or objective way.

**In different time periods, the political systems, media and universities** in Lithuania forced both journalists and students to acclimate: to think one-way and work in another. Such systems failed to produce an open society but instead provoked underground rebellion. Analysis of sources from several periods highlights the essence of journalism in education: journalism shapes public opinion. This feature is attractive to those who want and/or wanted to work as a journalist. However, the political reality meant acclimatisation, conformity or the service to simply shape opinion(s). Full freedom to speak openly and the freedom to disseminate information were achieved at the end of the 20th century. Investigating our history of information and press freedom gives the impression that filarets has represented a consistent symbol of the past 200 years<sup>5</sup> – young people who were constantly striving for education and knowledge dissemination in a political and social environment of perpetual repression and censorship.

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<sup>5</sup> Filarets is a secret youth fellowship started at the Vilnius University at the beginning of the 19th century, where young researchers gathered together and established periodicals.

Beginning in 1988, the independent *Sąjūdis* press appeared and immediately enjoyed tremendous popularity. Simultaneously, the official party media system began its steady decline, while journalism as a professional calling and opportunity to speak attracted many people with no background in the profession. It was also a time when the journalism study programme at VU began implementing the process of transformation by rendering obsolete the titles of subjects characteristic of the Communist educational system. Trust in the media has increased since the *Sąjūdis* period, and only in recent years has society become more critical towards the media (at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the media enjoyed a level of trust among social institutions in Lithuania ranking number one, compared with 7–9<sup>th</sup> place today). This had a strong influence on increasing the popularity of integrated journalism studies and from 1997 reinvigorating Bachelor degree studies at the VU. The decision of the Government of Lithuania to allow the establishment of journalism programs at two new universities in Lithuania reinforced this trend. Prior to 1997, only VU offered journalism studies in Lithuania.

What did the universities offer? Presently, I can affirm that the establishment of a new programme at Vilnius University developed over several years while teachers had to literally teach themselves to search and present an innovative curriculum. It was the perfect time to formulate insights on the transformation of the media systems in Central and Eastern Europe. The establishment of programs in Kaunas and Klaipėda had no significant impact on the demand for journalism studies in VU among Lithuanian students. At the time, the Faculty of Communication in VU was advised to transfer a creative writing competition to the Bachelor's degree journalism studies. However, the faculty had no intention of waiving this entrance exam. The programs remained in high demand. Every year, the Faculty of Communication in VU, continues to receive inquiries (from approximately 2–3 students at Klaipėda University) who have finished their first year of journalism studies and now wish to continue studying journalism at VU.

Nevertheless, a profound disadvantage of journalism studies, after the restoration of Independence, has been the lack of research in media systems. Concentrated media (especially regional) research existed here until the *Sąjūdis* period.

Some insights provided by the researchers who worked for the VU during the *Sąjūdis* period have been fully correct: monitoring and as-



sessing the adoption of the Law on Press in 1990 and its subsequent application, the transformation of media dissemination, the privatisation of Lithuanian state industries and the development of the Law on Public Information in 1996. However, the reorganisation of studies at VU in 1990–1991 in the context of the surrounding social and political changes had no conceptual scientific background. It is a paradox that in 1991, while establishing the Institute of Journalism, the Laboratory of periodical research was closed down. The submission of a proposal formulated by the Institute of Journalism in 1991 to the Council of Vilnius University and its Faculty of Communication shows it to be a creative school where scientific research is not the main purpose (even if a function for improving qualifications was at one time envisaged<sup>6</sup>). This disadvantage ultimately initiated a discussions (indirectly) at the Institute of Journalism: in 1997 – whether or not it was necessary to establish Master's degree study programme (especially considering that at the same time Master's degree studies in journalism were starting at VMU in Kaunas) and in 1998 – a Bachelor's degree study programme. The rector of VU approved the decision of the Council of the Faculty of Communication stating that both programmes must be in fact established. However, until the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, he did not pay any attention to insufficient level of media research carried out at that unit.

**The relationship** between the current Lithuanian media system and university journalism study programs remains problematic. First, I doubt whether we can speak on the whole about the university journalism studies tradition in Lithuania<sup>7</sup> as an example worthy of being continued (in terms of quality and ethical standards). The tradition here only derives its meaning as a cultural document. Finally, the University has to maintain an influence on the media system.

Second, the Lithuanian media system, *as a phenomenon* in the aspect of information culture, is not a relevant example to be considered interesting to monitor, analysed for trends or critically assessed as a qualitative product. Only certain media shall be recognised as demonstrating this phenomenon; e.g. Internet news portals, which accept e-communication era challenges and may be investigated as an example of presen-

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<sup>6</sup> Now it is carried out by the Lithuanian Journalism Centre.

<sup>7</sup> Gudaitis, Leonas. *Žurnalistikos mokslas ir mokymas Lietuvoje* (Journalism and its Teaching in Lithuania in 1922–1943). Kaunas: Vytauto Didžiojo universiteto leidykla, 2001.

ting news. Academic studies are now obligated to be strongly based on global media analysis, and therefore must reflect the latest developments while evaluating journalism as a whole for its intellectual activity and changes in values. Journalism students who perform practical work for journalism in Lithuania have to solve the following dilemma: the vast dichotomy between what is analysed in auditoriums and what is going on in the media of Lithuania, especially in the aspect of journalism ethics? There exists such a scenario when it is necessary not only to evaluate and analyse media culture on the basis of cases in Lithuania but also, first, on the basis of analysing the world media and international cases. This leads to an understanding of media culture and expands the discipline of media philosophy not only from the aspect of research but also for the purpose of developing the intellectual capacity of students.

Note the following detail. According to the 2009 data of TNS Gallup LT<sup>8</sup>, “Vakaro žinios”, “Lietuvos rytas” and “Respublika” were among the top dailies in 2004–2009. We can therefore state the core of the problem: what can be the significance of competences developed by the university study programme when the most popular newspaper in the country is the sensation-monger with no tradition of trust? The problem does not become less serious having found out that almost no graduates of the journalism study programme of Vilnius University work in that paper. Thus, our target is really a “*different*” journalism. It is a challenge for lecturers, developers and leaders of the study programmes to gain insight into this drama of change and answer the questions to what extent and what specifically the student of the programme is capable of mastering and must master.

In 2008, a self-analysis of journalism Bachelor’s and Master’s degree study programmes was carried out at Vilnius University, while amendments were proposed<sup>9</sup> which left the impression that we are working not for the Lithuanian market but educating a specialist (especially in the Bachelor degree programme) who will be able to find a job abroad rather than choose to work in the Lithuanian media industry. It seems that we are actively contributing to the general trend of a brain drain that is regarded as a fundamental economic problem in Lithuania. This is only

<sup>8</sup> TNS LT. The annual survey of media research, 2009.

<sup>9</sup> An updated journalism Bachelor’s degree study programme and updated Master’s degree study programme has been implemented since 1 September 2007.

the first impression, however. I assume that actually we need 7–10 years for the University graduates to make an impact on the media system in Lithuania. This assertion is valid not only for journalists but also for graduates in the fields of economics, law, and political science.

The development of the system of journalism studies in Lithuania is still uncertain, similar to the entire higher education system that has been undergoing reforms since 1996–1997. It is evident that the academic content of the Bachelor's degree study programmes at Vilnius University and Klaipėda University differs in terms of quality. The Journalism Master's degree study programmes at Vilnius University and Vytautas Magnus University were developed independently and without academic collaboration. Nevertheless, now it is time to harmonise competences, address shortcomings and strengthen relations among researchers at both institutions. Higher education reform in Lithuania has not yet provided any opportunities for graduates in Lithuania to become fully confident in the quality of study programmes, especially in the area of social sciences, because the standardization (audit) of most of such programmes has yet to be conducted. The reform has presently only formally “documented” the programmes of the same title but with different content and aims. The state has also fixed the same fee for studies, disregarding the specifics and therefore misleading a young person seeking high quality education.

Higher education reform, however, has created sufficient assumptions not only to improve current studies but also strengthen education, which has always been a background for a good school. Any university study programme which is not implemented along with rigorous scientific research should not exist.

Universities should not only be involved in the endless polemic within society regarding “who is a journalist” (even more as we now reasonably refer to the “end” of this profession) but also participate in the dissemination of intellectual contributions from university journalism.

Currently, a non-academic attitude towards journalism as a trade in Lithuania exists among journalists themselves as well as those working in the area of the media in general. Not as a way of life, profession, or level of competence, but as a trade that *everyone* can be engaged in. The divide between journalism theory and practice during studies at Vilnius University and other universities has been reviewed in an article by Prof. Auksė Balčytienė and co-authors Journalism Training and Education in

Lithuania (Balčytienė, 1) in the text *From Theory To Practice*. Based on research, the article emphasizes that editorial offices considers a person to be a good journalist who possesses practical skills rather than someone having a journalism degree. However, practical skills, as we know, are not only acquired but can be lost if there is no system for raising standards. Neither the Lithuanian Union of Journalists nor VU has created such a system, although the Lithuanian Journalism Centre has taken the assumption of becoming a key component in the framework of constantly training journalists from VU (by inviting the staff at VMU) as well as professional organizations of journalists.

Speaking about practical skills provided by VU, it should be clarified that they are developed at two levels: by the University training media tools (the on-line project infoJazz, the training newspaper University Journalist (founded in 1977, re-established in 2007) and [www.universitetozurnalistas.lt](http://www.universitetozurnalistas.lt) (founded in 2006), VU radio station STARTFM, VU newspaper *Universitas Vilnensis*) and in both the Lithuanian and foreign media (the choice of students abroad is wider due to the Internet media produced by the new emigrant' wave of Lithuanians around the world – it is therefore an important international feature of studies). Thus, the ability to use in a creative manner such acquired knowledge in practice are continually developed during the period of professional practice. Seeking to understand and utilise the media system in a consistent way, the professional practice is divided into two areas: periodicals and audio-visual journalism. At the end of the first year, students perform practice exercises in the periodicals of diverse Lithuanian regions. This practice not only provides various opportunities to use theoretical knowledge in practice but also reveal the specifics of regional media as students gain ever deeper knowledge of the economic and social development of the regions of Lithuania. By the end of the second year, students will have gained practical abilities in the audio-visual media from organised practice. Upon request, students may choose to work with TV, radio or Internet media. This is a way to realise the aim of educating specialists for the labour market who are able to work with different media. In the beginning of the fourth year, upon the student's selection, the practice shall be performed in the periodical press or audio-visual media in Lithuania or, as I mentioned before, (from 2008) abroad. Since the 2010 academic year, this practice includes one more peculiarity: a student can implement an

independent creative project (to announce a reportage cycle, to create a show or documentary film, or similar project). Each practice is carried out according to a tripartite contract between the employer, student and VU Faculty of Communication. However, by wishing to reorganise studies in such a way that the University has no “walls” for a student, we could lose such a consecutive system for the formation of practice skills.

**What are the main problems of contemporary journalism**, what are their origins, in what way are those problems reflected in the context of democratic, European journalism systems and journalism universities? All of the announced research findings and those still in the process of giving answers to these questions need to address, the fundamental questions about media ethics) the press and power relationships, about the impact of the economy on the media and vice versa. How, whether and when will the answers appear in the study programmes? In what way will these answers be presented? Perhaps instead of giving an answer, we should try to replace it with something different, investigate new and other things and propose an attractive product.

The problem is that universities and other institutes of higher education would like to make journalism studies multi-medium: suppose that by studying to become an actor, painter, designer, writer, photographer and operator arts, it is possible to learn not only advertising but also journalism as well? Surely, it is impossible to do so without marketing – special marketing offered by creative industries. It means that journalism may be interpreted as encompassing part of such creativity – creative workshops where it is transformed into a method but not a final product or profession. However, the goal of journalism has never been just to exist as an art form. It has always been perceived as the conveyance of reality, not a montage. There may be a journalism of cultures and subcultures but not creative journalism. If we allow ourselves to interpret journalism in such a way, then it disappears from the space of political communication. An entire journalistic performance may appear in this space that interprets, plays, and reconstructs “facts”. An approaching wave of theories about the interaction of creative workshops would sweep away the theory about a vibrant and civil journalism. This is unacceptable.

The development of information technology and media convergence raises a challenge to the journalist who seeks to become a specialist of professional excellence. It is not necessarily true that *everyone* wishing

to be a journalist will accept this challenge, because he or she does not necessarily understand it to be a challenge. Understanding how quickly an editorial office can now be created and a new product delivered, we believe that a journalist can also become an intangible, *virtual* person. His (or her) intelligence, understanding of the goal of journalism, knowledge of copyright issues, personal and audience interests and the ability to choose experts in the process of collecting information remains an inevitable necessity of the trade. However, it is not a requirement, since the audience formulates such a requirement. Only we, working for the university, believe that giving lectures about high journalism standards represents the audience. However, it cannot be denied that today primarily Internet journalism generally assumes to be an example of quality – depending on the education of the creator and what goals he or she has.

The development and improvement of journalism curriculum aims to find the right insights, among which one is connected with the journalist's competencies. Nevertheless, it is still true that a person who has acquired journalism Bachelor's degree:

- has acquired a fundamental university education, which forms the values and critical attitude towards social development trends, their problems and solutions, while also developing citizenship and tolerance;
- is aware of modern mass communication operating procedures, their principles, institutional structure and legal framework in Lithuania and throughout the European Union;
- is familiar with the media's political, social and economic environment, understands its influence on journalists' work and respects the principles of professional ethics;
- recognises the peculiarities of different genres of journalism and the media (press, radio, TV, Internet), is able to use them in an optimal and creative way in practice;
- is able to intentionally collect, analyse and interpret information, to identify various interests and values, to ensure the impartiality of information dissemination and diversity of opinions;
- is able to articulately express ideas orally and in writing in one's native language and at least one EU language, while observing the provisions of language culture and improving foreign language skills;
- analyses and evaluates his or her own professional achievements, formulates self-learning tasks and expediently chooses the measures for their implementation.

Journalism studies at Vilnius University (as existing for the past 10–15 years) has passed through a fairly independent period of changes and is now entering the common phase of teaching and applying communication and information theories. At this stage, virtual journalism studies may be required – it is the second assumption for facilitating cooperation between a number of universities as well as journalist organizations. This would accelerate the internationalisation of studies as well. Journalism, the concept of which the University has developed, is a cognition and transfer of the social life of different cultures. Therefore, a graduate in journalism from a Lithuanian university must know more than one foreign language in order that the cognition of cultures becomes a matter-of-course process. A new establishment – our Media Research Laboratory<sup>10</sup> – should provide a more reasoned scientific background for the reorganisation and renewal of studies.

If we analyse our neighbours' experience, we may see radically opposite situations, which reflect an attitude towards journalism in education. If I am correct, journalism at the University of Latvia is taught in the Faculty of Social Sciences and constitutes an integral part of the Bachelor's degree communication studies programme. In Warsaw University, it is the most popular 5-year Master's degree programme at this school which is currently implemented in the Faculty of Political Sciences.

I am not certain about closely linking journalism, public relations and advertising studies (as Latvians have announced) in 3 modules within the programme is the best solution, because journalism cannot and is not taught at exactly the same level (compared with the other two subjects mentioned). VMU also interprets public communication studies as an investigation and conjunction of journalism and public relations theories and practices. Journalism is more than just a product of information or a commercial subject; it still has value as an historical document and provides a solid background for research as well as social and political insights. Consequently, it should be emphasized that journalism is an art and science. As for public relations, it is hardly considered to be an object of science, although it is very attractive, popular and always fashionable. Master's study programmes of Public Relations at the Faculty of Communication of VU only confirms this statement.

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<sup>10</sup> Medijų tyrimų laboratorija (Lith.).

Only in this decade has the Bachelor's degree programme in journalism at VU become closely linked to the communication sciences, having developed a unit of fundamental academic subjects in communication and information and having integrated it into the mentioned programme. The variety of academic departments at the Faculty of Communication of VU also provides opportunities to integrate different subjects of communication directly into the journalism study plan (including, for example communication theory, public communication, communication research methods and intercultural communication).

**A fundamental issue is how to interpret journalism;** undoubtedly, it should be considered to be political communication. I believe that the basic pillars for media research, which could be reflected, for example, in the Bachelor's degree programme, may be three: ethics, politics and economics (finance).

These axes should be reflected as specific aspects in the components of all subjects. They are the cornerstone of the information culture, namely its creation and application. For example, ethics is the major problem in modern media in Lithuania; it needs not only major research but also insights and calls for a more modern perception than exists presently in Lithuania. On the other hand, discussions may be held regarding other pillars; however, my opinion now is as follows: we must rally together to ensure the best research, so that a school (or two) would strengthen; this is the challenge for Lithuania and the current reform which has started.

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## Universitetinė žurnalistikos studijų programa mokslo ir studijų reformos kontekstuose

### Santrauka

Autorius siūlo žurnalistikos studijų perspektyvą Lietuvos mokslo ir studijų reformos kontekstuose nagrinėti trimis aspektais (kaip suprantame universitetinės žurnalistų mokyklos tikslus ir uždavinius šiuolaikinėje tinklaveikos visuomenėje (originalų buvimą mokyklų tinkle); kaip sukuriama universitetinės mokyklos ir studijų kokybė (kaip ir kokius mokslinius tyrimus būtina sutelkti ir vykdyti); kokia universitetinių studijų rytdiena, įvertinant Universiteto (-ų) tradiciją, išteklius, absolvento ir rinkos poreikius.

Apžvelgęs žurnalistikos studijų istoriją ir dabartines žurnalistikos studijų programų sukūrimo ir įgyvendinimo aplinkybes Lietuvoje, autorius mano, jog Lietuvoje būtų neteisinga kalbėti apie universitetinių žurnalistikos studijų tradiciją kaip apie vertą tęstinumo pavyzdį (kokybės ir etikos prasme). Tradicija gali būti suprantama tik kaip kultūros dokumentai, atspindintys istorinę raidą – juk įvairiais laikotarpiais (net iki 20 amžiaus pabaigos) politinės sistemos, medijos ir universitetai Lietuvoje mokė žurnalistą ir studentą prisitaikyti: viena galvoti – kitaip dirbti, kalbėti, skelbti. Tačiau autorius išvelgia keletą esminių problemų. Pirma jų ta, kad universitetai, kitos aukštosios mokyklos (ne vien Lietuvoje) taip pat nori paversti žurnalistikos studijas daugiaterpėmis: ar studijuojant šiek tiek aktoriaus, dailininko (dizainerio), rašytojo, fotografo menų, galima išmokyti ne tik reklamos, bet ir žurnalistikos? Tai reiškia, jog žurnalistika gali būti interpretuojama kaip „kūrybinių dirbtuvių“ dalis, kur ji paverčiama metodu, bet ne galutiniu produktu ar profesija. Atslenkanti teorijų banga apie kūrybinių dirbtuvių sąveikas nušluos teoriją apie veržlią ir pilietinę žurnalistiką. Antra, autorius pasigenda nuoseklaus kvalifikacijos kėlimo sistemos. Trečia, Lietuvos medijų sistema *kaip reiškinys* informacijos kultūros aspektu nėra pavyzdys, kuris būtų įdomus stebėti, ieškoti tendencijų ir kritiškai vertinti kokybišką produktą. Studentui, kuris susiduria su praktine žurnalistikos veikla Lietuvoje, tenka spręsti dilemą tarp to, ką nagrinėja auditorijose apie užsienio medijas ir to, kas vyksta Lietuvos medijose – ypač žurnalistinės etikos aspektu, kuri yra labai ryški problema. Žurnalistikos studijų programų kūrimas ir tobulinimas verčia rasti teisingų išvalgų, tarp kurių viena yra susijusi su žurnalistų kompetencijomis ir kintančia žiniasklaidos sistema. 21 a. universitetas pagaliau turi daryti įtakos Lietuvos medijų sistemai ir tam reikalinga suvienyti medijų tyrėjų jėgas.

**Raktiniai žodžiai:** žurnalistikos studijų istorija ir kaita, aukštojo mokslo reforma, žiniasklaidos tyrimai, universitetinės studijos, kūrybinė komunikacija, politinė komunikacija, spaudos laisvė.