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Communication and creative technologies

**COMMUNICATION IN SOCIAL MEDIA BY THE
POLITICIANS OF LITHUANIA**

Master Thesis

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SUMMARY

The appearance of political communication on social media is a relatively new phenomenon. The importance of political communication can be seen in the major advantages offered by the Internet - the rapid transmission of information and the possibilities for large numbers of people to mobilize and to connect. With the prevalent use of the internet and the growth of Web 2.0 applications that have facilitated online collaboration through social networks, video, photo sharing sites, and blogs, politicians now have the ability to spread ideas more quickly, widely, and cheaply. This is especially significant for politics of Lithuania, which embraces a body of 2,5 million voters. According to the data of the Research of the the the internet users' audience conducted by the research company TNS in 2014, around 73% of the Lithuania population has the internet connection today (TNS LT, 2014). The number of social media users significantly changed in 2014 – 65% of Lithuania internet users used social media. This number is considered to be high enough for political communication application in social media by the politicians of Lithuania. The question arises whether the politicians of Lithuania use the channels of social media in communication with their potential electors. In order to find an answer to this question, this Master Thesis aims to examine the extent of use of social media by the politicians of Lithuania to promote their image and political messages, among their supporters and peoples in social networking sites.

Research objective of this Master Thesis was to analyze the activity in the social media of the members of the Seimas of 2012-2016 term, to establish the specifics of communication in the social media. To achieve and clarify the above mentioned research objectives the following methods have been chosen: quantitative analysis of the social media profiles of the members of the Seimas, semi-structured interviews with the members of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania.

Quantitative analysis of the social media use, showed that 84 percent of the members of the Seimas of 2012-2016 use at least one social media form. Sex and age analysis demonstrated that male members of the Seimas rather than female are inclined to use social media more. As it was demonstrated in third chapter of this Master Thesis, in order to efficiently use strategy in social media, politicians should focus on a few of the most popular social media sites and establish a quality presence there. However, age analysis vividly illustrated that only younger members of the Seimas tend to use various social media forms. Analyzed answers of the questionnaire might be alleged that the respondents are familiar with the social media, use social media to spread their ideas, opinions, however have not gone deep into the social media strategies. Members of Seimas refrain from goal-oriented, planned and well-considered strategy in the social media. Politicians should encourage citizens to discuss different issues by posting about current, provocative and interesting topics. Their

stronger presence could influence political marketing, especially when it is considered that online discussions can shape people's opinions and behaviors, as it has been seen proven in this Master thesis.

SANTRAUKA

Politinės komunikacijos formos socialinėje medijoje yra ganėtinai naujas fenomenas. Politinės komunikacijos svarba atsiskleidžia per pagrindinius interneto teikiamus privalumus: nepertraukiamą informacijos sklaidą ir galimybę mobilizuoti didelius kiekius žmonių. Didėjant interneto sklaidai bei augant Web 2.0 aplikacijoms, palengvinusioms komunikaciją tinkle per socialinius tinklus, nuotraukų bei vaizdo medžiagos dalinimosi programas ir tinklaraščius, politikai turi galimybę dalintis idėjomis greitai, plačiai bei pigiai. Tai ypač taikytina Lietuvos politikams, kur elektoratas sudaro 2,5 milijonų rinkėjų. Pagal 2014 m. Tyrimų bendrovės TNS atliktą Interneto naudotojų auditorijos tyrimą, maždaug 73% Lietuvos gyventojų turi prieigą prie interneto. (TNS LT, 2014). Tyrimas atskleidė, kad socialinės medijos vartotojų skaičius reikšmingai pasikeitė būtent 2014 m. – 65% apklaustųjų įvardino besinaudijantys socialinės medijos įrankiais. Šis skaičius yra pakankamai didelis akstinas, politinei komunikacijai Lietuvoje naudoti socialinės medijos priemonės. Kyla klausimas, ar politikai Lietuvoje tinkamai išnaudoja socialinės medijos kanalus savo komunikacijoje su potencialiais rinkėjais? Siekiant sužinoti atsakymą į šį klausimą, šiuo magistriniu darbu siekiama išsiaiškinti kaip aktyviai Lietuvos politikai naudoja socialinės medijos priemonės siekdami pagerinti savo įvaizdį ir skleisti politines idėjas tarp rėmėjų bei socialinių tinklų vartotojų.

Šio tyrimo tikslas - išanalizuoti 2012–2016 m. kadencijos Lietuvos Seimo narių veiklą socialinėse medijose, nustatyti komunikacijos socialinėse medijose ypatumus. Išvardintiems tyrimo tikslams pasiekti ir išsiaiškinti pasirinkti šie metodai: kiekybinė Seimo narių socialinių medijų paskirų analizė ir kokybiniai, pusiau struktūruoti interviu su Lietuvos seimo nariais.

Kiekybinė Seimo narių socialinių medijų paskirų analizė parodė, kad 84 procentai 2012 – 2016 m. kadencijos Lietuvos seimo narių naudoja bent vieną socialinės medijos formą. Lyties ir amžiaus analizė parodė, kad seimo nariai vyrai labiau nei moterys yra linkę naudoti socialines medijas. Kaip aptarta trečiame skyriuje, efektyvi socialinių medijų strategija vyksta kuomet kokybiškai komunikuojama keliuose populiariausiuose socialinės medijos kanaluose. Deja amžiaus analizė iliustravo, kad tik jaunesni Seimo nariai linkę naudoti įvairias socialinių medijų formas. Išanalizavus klausimyno atsakymus, galima teigti, kad respondentai yra su socialinėmis medijomis susipažinę, naudoja socialines medijas savo idėjoms, nuomonėms skleisti, tačiau įsigilinę į socialinių medijų strategijas vis dar nėra. Seimo nariai nuo kryptingos, suplanuotos ir apgalvotos komunikacijos strategijos socialinėse medijose susilaiko. Skelbdami aktualias, provokuojančias ir įdomias temas, politikai turėtų skatinti gyventojų diskusiją. Kaip įrodyta šiame Magistriniame darbe, interaktyvios diskusijos formuoja žmonių nuomonę ir elgesį, todėl aktyvesnis naudojimasis socialinėmis medijomis galėtų įtakoti politinio marketingo rezultatus.

INTRODUCTION

The number of the Internet users and openness to technologies is constantly growing all over the world. Open access to the Internet has revolutionized the way individuals communicate and collaborate, and politicians and citizens interact. Most importantly, the Internet provided possibilities for two-way communication between the politicians and the members of society, where politicians can have a straightforward and reversible connection and citizens can create and transmit any type of messages unlimited. Unlike traditional media where journalists choose information for publishing, the Internet provides politicians with the possibility to directly approach their audience in a wishful way. As a result, the nearly 3,5 billion the internet users are both creators of information (Internet Live Stats, 2015).

The development of information technology and spread of new media changed political communication landscape. Social media – sometimes called Web 2.0 – is now at the forefront of this change. More and more of us live more of our social, professional and political lives online. According to the data of the Research of the internet users' audience conducted by the research company TNS in 2014, the number of social networks sites users grew up from 39 % in 2012 to 47 % in 2014 (TNS LT, 2014). Social-networking sites have ridden an exponential growth curve, and today Lithuanians are creating, participating in, or reading some form of social media every day.

Relevance of research. With this tremendous growth, the internet and social media allow both citizens and politicians to participate in political discussions, to share political content publicly, to access large audiences easily. As a result, social media tools had become standard communication practice for political actors. Politicians have a space to communicate more easily than ever before but on the same time citizens have better opportunities for individual communication with politicians as well. Therefore, there is no doubt that the increasing scope of political communication in social media stimulates the need to examine the relevance of social media in political communication from the perspective of Lithuanian politicians.

Novelty of the research. The use of social media for political communication has been increasingly studied by researchers of political communication. The presidential election in the USA in 2008 can be considered to be a turning point: Obama has taken grassroots campaigning into the digital age by embracing social media and using it as a central platform of his presidential campaign. Therefore, researchers started to actively analyze the political communication processes in the social media.

Since 2008, the use of social networking websites for political communication has been analyzed by researchers of Bentley university - Christine Williams and Girish Gulati „Social Networks in Political Campaigns: Facebook and Congressional Elections 2006, 2008” (Williams, Gulati, 2009). This should be considered as one of the first study for analyzing political communication in social media.

In Lithuania, the analysis of the use of social networking websites by the candidates in the 2011 municipal election campaign, have been completed by Andrius Šuminas (Šuminas, 2011). Possibilities of members of the Seimas to communicate with citizens via the Internet, their attitude towards blogs as a way of political communication have been analyzed by Vidas Erkauskas (Erkauskas, 2014). In 2015, Gintarė Genytė analyzed the communication of candidates during mayoral elections in 2015 on Facebook website (Genytė, 2015). Electoral communication processes in Lithuania have been more extensively studied by Lauras Bielinis (2000), Renata Matkevičienė (2006, 2008), Virginijus Savukynas (2004), A. Krupavičius (1998), I. Unikaitė-Jakuntavičienė (2015, 2008) etc.

The research problem. With annual growth of the internet users, the members of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania of 2012-2016, in an effort to raise their popularity, outspread important issues, endeavor to use social media for communication with the society. The question arises whether the politicians of Lithuania use the channels of social media in communication with their potential electors. In order to find an answer to this question, this study aims to examine the extent of use of social media by the politicians to promote their image and political messages, among their supporters and peoples in social networking sites.

The object of this research is efficiency of political communication in social media.

The main aim of this master thesis is to analyze the relevance of social media in political communication from the perspective of Lithuania politicians.

The research objectives are the following:

1. To analyze the concept of political communication as well as to analyze the concept of social media, distinguishing its dimensions in political communication;
2. To analyze the role of social media in political communication;
3. To introduce connection between political communication and political marketing;
4. To analyze the activity in the social media of the members of the Seimas of 2012-2016 term and to establish the specificities of their communication in the social media. To clarify what influences the scope of communication in the social media of the members of the Seimas of 2012-2016 term in Lithuania, how politicians communicate in the social media, do they use social networking tools to the full extent to bring their message to the society.

Thesis to be defended: The members of Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania do not use the potential of social media efficiently.

Research methods. Method of analysis of the literature have been used in the theoretical parts of the work – in defining and examining the concepts of political communication, social media. The methodology of the research is briefly described in the fourth chapter.

Structure of the master thesis. This master thesis is organized according to four central research questions. The Introduction describes the relevance and research problem of the master thesis, substantiates the scientific novelty, frames the research object and main objectives, formulates the defended statement, and presents research methods and the structure of the thesis.

The first chapter is divided into two parts. Firstly, I will identify the concept of political communication and the underlying technological trends and relevant changes in media landscape that created the conditions for politicians to communicate in social media. Then I will introduce the concept of social media and what role does it play in our society. First part of the first chapter will also elaborate the motives why people use social media by using various researches done on the topic and linked to Maslow's concept of psychological needs. In addition, categorization of social media will be explained.

The second chapter debates the use of social media in mobilizing people for movements and revolutions. Examples from Egypt and Moldova are presented.

Third chapter will analyze the role of the social media as a channel for political marketing, and its ability to change the opinions and sway the loyalty of its viewers. I intend to focus on the attributes of the social media marketing strategy that I argue enable successful political communication on social media.

Fourth chapter will analyze the activity in the social media of the members of the Seimas of 2012-2016 term and will establish the specifics of their communication in the social media. Moreover, in this chapter I will clarify what influences the scope of communication in the social media of the members of the Seimas of 2012-2016 term in Lithuania, how politicians communicate in the social media, do they use social networking tools to the full extent to bring their message to the society.

This master thesis is summarized by conclusions and recommendations, list of references and annexes.

1. POLITICAL COMMUNICATION IN SOCIAL MEDIA

1.1. Defining the concept of political communication

According to Robert E. Denton and Gary C. Woodward, cited by Brian McNair, political communication is defined as “pure discussion for the allocation of public resources (revenues), the official authority (who is given the power to make legal, legislative and executive decision), and official sanctions (what the state rewards and punishes)” (Denton, Woodward, 1990; McNair, 1995). Moreover, Denton and Woodward characterize political communication in terms of the intentions of its senders to influence the political environment. As they put it: the crucial factor that makes communication ‘political’ is not the source of a message [or, we might add, referring back to their earlier emphasis on ‘public discussion’, its form], but its content and purpose (Denton, Woodward, 1990). Following Denton and Woodward, Brian McNair defined political communication as:

1. All forms of communication undertaken by politicians and other political actors for the purpose of achieving specific objectives.
2. Communication addressed to these actors by non-politicians such as voters and newspaper columnists.
3. Communication about these actors and their activities, as contained in news reports, editorials, and other forms of media discussion of politics.

Dominique Wolton suggests that political communication, being as old as politics itself, is the product of the first communication among people over issues related to the organization of their polis (Wolton, 1995). For Wolton, political communication, after having passed by various stages and determined various forms of public communication, covers the study of the role of communication in political life in general, including mass media, polls, political marketing and advertising, with a certain stress on pre-election periods.

However, classic definitions of political communication focus on the source and the motivation; political communication flows out from the political sphere and must have a political purpose (Lilleker, 2006). Such definitions would not be appropriate for many modern states, particularly given the role of media.

The American writer Doris Graber advances a more all-encompassing definition of what she terms ‘political language’, suggesting that it comprises not only rhetoric but paralinguistic signs such as body language, and political acts such as boycotts and protests (Graber, 1981).

Political communication consists of a variety of acts. These acts of communication are not just verbal and written. Paralinguistic signs such as body language, demeanor and attire are also acts of communication that are important factors for a politician's image.

The study of political communication directs attention to the relationship between main three elements – politicians or political actors, the audience, the media. Brian McNair defined political actors as individuals “who aspire, through organizational and institutional means, to influence the decision-making process” (McNair, 1995). Categories of political actors includes:

1. Political parties – individuals, who come together within an agreed organizational and ideological structure to pursue common goals.
2. Public organizations, “where individuals come together not just to help each other in the resolution of practical problems associated with their common situation, but to campaign for change or to rise the public profile of a particular problem, often through enlisting the help of elected politicians”.
3. Pressure groups (or single-issue groups) may be distinguished from public organizations mentioned above as they are typically less institutionalized and more overtly political in their objectives, being concerned with such issues as natural environment, prevention of animals in testing cosmetics etc.
4. Terrorist organizations - groups whose members see themselves as ‘freedom fighters’ in ‘national liberation’ or ‘resistance’ movements, groups which use terror tactics – urban bombing, hi-jacking, assassination, and kidnapping, to list the most common – to achieve their political objectives.

As mentioned above, Denton and Woodward characterized political communication in terms of the intentions of its senders to influence the political environment (Denton, Woodward, 1990). Obviously, the target of this persuasion – the audience is – the second element, without no any kind of political communication possible. The term audience describe “a number of largely unidentifiable people, all of whom will be using particular media or receiving a particular message” (Lilleker, 2006). According to Graber, cited by Darren G. Lilleker, an understanding of audiences is very important, as it is audience members who ultimately decide where to accept the message or not, and who are able to relay political messages within the public sphere that can influence group political decisions within any social community (families, workplace, friends), so blocking out many of the effects the media are credited with (Lilleker, 2006). The audience might be broad (where the objective is to persuade voters) or might be narrow. Whatever the size of the audience, all political communication is intended to achieve some effect. The third element – media organizations,

which today comprise print, broadcasting and online channels. Political communication has therefore always been central to policymaking process but in the last decade certain important structural developments have fundamentally altered this process, particularly postwar trends in the media moving from the traditional world of newspapers, radio and television broadcasting towards the Internet. This include websites operated by BBC, CNN as example, blogs and independent sites such as WikiLeaks, and social networks sites – Facebook, Twitter, which allow user to share information rapidly.

Obviously, political actors must use the media in order to transmit their messages to target audience. *“Political programs, policy statements, electoral appeals, pressure group campaigns, and acts of terrorism have a political existence – and potential for communicative effectiveness – only to the extent that they are reported and received as messages by the media audience. Consequently, all political communicators must gain access to the media by some means, whether legislative, as in the rules of political balance and impartiality which govern British public service broadcasting, or by an appreciation of the workings of the media sufficient to ensure that a message is reported”* (McNair, 2011).

The media are important to the political process in more direct ways. The evolution of the internet has altered the growth of web logs – regularly updated, individual websites on which authors place commentary and opinion about events of the day. Blogs and other forms of online commentary such as the posting of video messages on YouTube have become an important element of the political media. In 2005 one observer noted that “what has emerged is a fully fledged alternative wing of the opinion industry, challenging the primacy of newspaper commentators” (Burkeman, 2005). This trend has accelerated with the emergence of Twitter, Facebook, and social networking, as we shall see in next parts of this chapter.

1.2. Political communication in the age of WEB 2.0

Evolution of the internet permitted simultaneous point-to-point and broadcast forms of communication for the first time, and it provided individual users easy access to unlimited audience. Every individual on the network of computers making up the World Wide Web is both a sender and a receiver. Any user of the internet can direct e-mail messages to individual recipients and at the same time communicate with worldwide audience by hosting a Web site, posting a message boards, o participating in an online chat room.

The development of internet for political communication basically rests on the traditional argument that citizens in a democracy need full information and an enlightened understanding of situations to contribute to democratic deliberation and make good decisions (Dahl, 1989). The internet provides huge amount of information available to the public – citizens can be provided with the detailed data, reports, experts advice and in the same way, instead of getting abstracts of politicians' statements, citizens can get full text, and have a better knowledge of what politicians really declare. Therefore, the internet provides politicians with an easy access to people. First, they reduce the cost of information production and, above all, of information dissemination. By sting up a web site, any political group can be in a position to communicate its views to the rest of the world (Vedel, 2003). Second, the Internet can make direct communication possible among politicians and citizens. As history shows us, when new technologies are made available, they begin to reshape the personalization factor between the candidate and the voter. This increase in interpersonal interactivity has shown to offer opportunities and increase success for political communication.

The advent of the 21st Century brought along some significant challenges in the arena of political communication, among those, the development of web-based applications that enabled the transition between Web 1.0 and Web 2.0. Web, build on the infrastructure of the internet, contains myriad sites that are not part of the social media construct. These myriad sites include information resources without an interactive, discussion or sharing component. Such resources typify Web 1.0, which describes resources that allow users to view and consume information without sharing and interacting with contents (Hill, Dean, Murphy, 2014). Whereas Web 2.0 has allowed users to interact with the web and with other users and has permitted the consumer to become the creator of the content. Web 2.0. is an umbrella term for user-generated and user-manipulated content and generally refers to the explosion of services like social networking sites, wikis, blogs, podcasts, RSS (really simple syndication) feeds. These are the technologies that have helped make the Internet even more interactive and content-rich than it was in the first place and, in political communication, these technologies are key.

For obvious reasons, politicians have taken to the Web 2.0 to get out their messages and mobilize their members. In the first decade of 21st century, many stories became world news because citizens were empowered by new social media such as Facebook and Twitter (Scammell, Semetko, 2012). Even in closed societies where access to information is routinely controlled and denied by authorities, connectivity means that many local protests and crackdowns can become global news. Today, individuals, organizations, campaigns and social movements, and governments around the world are all affected by the opportunities and issues presented by the new media environment (Bennet, 2003).

1.3. Social media – a new element for political communication

In less than two decades, digital media have become a routine part of private and public life, from the ways that friendship are made and products are purchased to the ways that politicians are elected. Spanning the intersection of digitally enabled private and public lives is the domain citizenship, where personal interest and concerns are made public, where political learning occurs, political expression and affiliation play out, and where opportunities for public engagement and collective action created and remade.

In politics it is now generally recognized that technology has advanced political communication and that the processes in political campaigns have been influenced by “techniques from the worlds of corporate advertising and marketing in order to compete in the modern information-rich society” (McNair, 2011).

With the rise of social networking tools, such as Facebook and Twitter, a new element to political communication became available. According to McNair, “Social networking is now routinely used to communicate with electorates and stakeholders” (McNair, 2011).

Politics on the Internet can be in the form of public activity in forums such as weblogs (blogs), chat rooms or discussion boards. Established political organizations are also active on the Internet, though to a lesser extent than the public (Lilleker, 2006). The Internet provides the public with a forum where they can utter their opinions in true democratic form. Communication in politics is usually one-way, from the politician to the public. However, with the emergence of the Internet and social networking tools there is now the possibility of dialogue between individuals and groups in the political sphere, as well as outside.

Social media, as a new generation of media, where toward horizontal communication organized around networks, provide tools for citizens themselves to create and contribute in ways that broke down boundaries between social, creative and political domains (Scammell, Semetko, 2012).

There are at least three explanations at play why an association exists between use of digital media and political participation (Scammell, Semetko, 2012):

- 1) Information and choice. Digital media make available to interested citizens unlimited alternatives for learning about politics, choice about which political interests to pursue and how. It also creates opportunities for action. They reduce costs associated with political participation.

- 2) Mobilization efforts. Citizens are better able to communicate mobilizing messages horizontally among themselves through social media, and politicians are able to tailor mobilizing messages to specific groups, and to produce essentially continuous streams of communication.
- 3) A third reason for the association between digital media use and political participation involves the contextual character of media use in political action, and its effect reverses the implied direction of causation. In this view, digital media serve as a tool of action for those who have decided to act. Media engages citizens pursue their interests: political behavior leads to the use of media. As Bimber, Flanagin and Stohl argue, digital media change the context in which people act, having become a routine part of political participation for politicians (Bimber, Flanagin, Stohl, 2012).

1.3.1 Social Media: definitions and types

The term social media came into wider use in the middle of 2006 and still has no generally accepted and unambiguous definition. Some researchers use this term in parallel with the term Web 2.0 which describes specific way of communication among the users of World Wide Web when service and content control is assigned to the users. The accepted definition of “social media,” “new media,” or “Web 2.0” refers to the internet technologies that include campaign websites, blogging, fundraising tools, and social networking sites such as Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube.

Social media, as defined by the Merriam Dictionary, is a term used to describe “forms of electronic communication (as Web sites for social networking and microblogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal message, and other content.” (Merriam-Webster, 2015). Andreas Kaplan and Michael Haenlein describe social media as a group of the internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allows the creation and exchange of user-generated content (Kaplan, Haenlein, 2010).

The term social media is composed of two words: social, which refers to the intuitive need of humans to connect with other human beings and media, which people use to keep those connections and as means of communication. Social media “*refers to activities, practices, and behaviors among communities of people who gather online to share information, knowledge, and opinions using conversational media. Conversational media are Web-based applications that make it possible to create and easily transmit content in the form of words, pictures, videos, and audios.*” (Safko, Blake, 2009).

Social media is also often likened to pubs or other public spaces. Turner and Shah explain that Facebook is a casual place where one can go and talk about everything they would talk

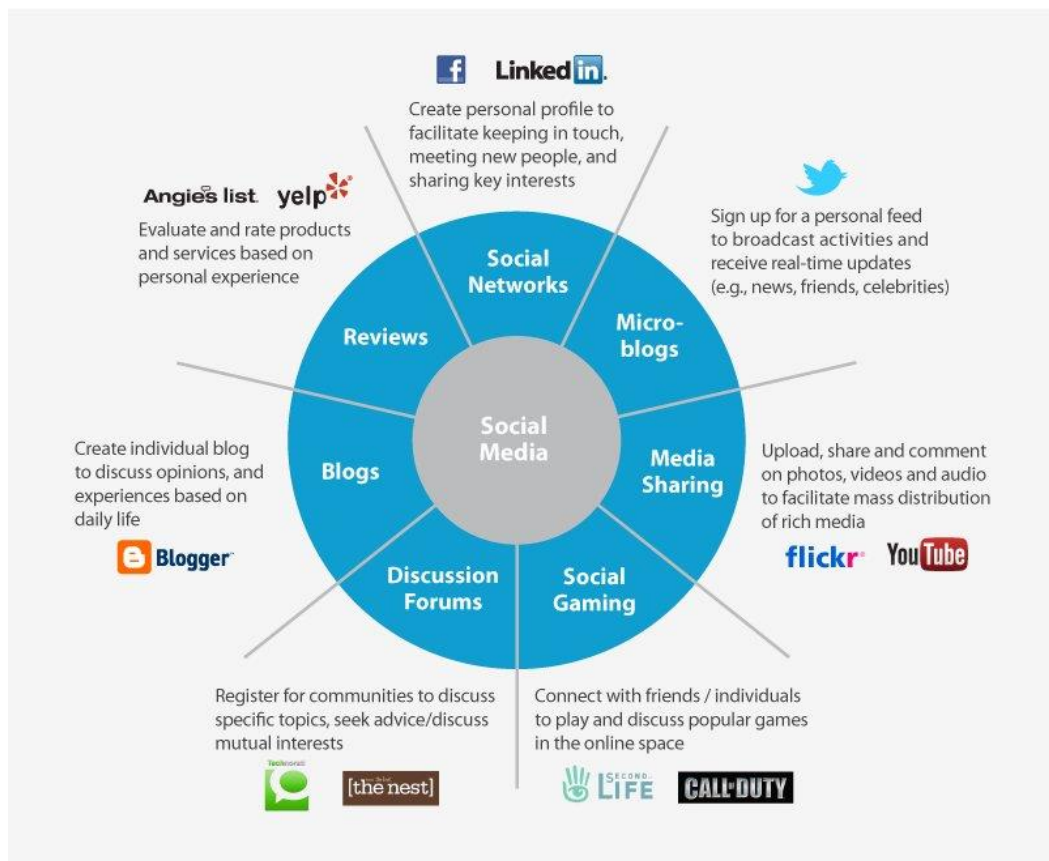
in a pub (Turner, Shah, 2011). Chris Brogan describes this analogy even more. He says: “Pubs are where people talk. There’s news. There’s gossip. There are deals and selling...”. The same is happening on social media, people from all background can gather like in a pub (Brogan, 2010). Moreover, when a marketer shares something of value on social media, it can be compared to the situation when a person gets a drink for free (Turner, Shah, 2011).

In addition, T.Funk describes social media as “*an umbrella term describing all Web-based and mobile services that give individuals the ability to establish a personal profile, connect with other users, and create, publish, and respond to content – whether to share with network of friends or with the Internet as a whole*” (Funk, 2011).

According to James E. Katz, Michael Barris, Anshul Jain, “*social media can be defined as digital multiway channels of communication among people and between people and information resources and which are personalized, scalable, rapid, and convenient. They are characterized by user-generated content and interaction among users.*” (Katz, Barris, Jain, 2013). Therefore, according to authors of this book, the term social media also has a connotation of drawing its power from ideology emphasizing freedom of expression, individual empowerment, and collective action.

There are many types of social media including social networks, forums, photo sharing, review sites and more (Picture 1). Essentially all social media can be accessed over the web with a traditional browser.

The term of social networks refers to the people and their connections. This applies off-line and online. Online social networks allow to create accounts and form connections with one another. In general, social networks are user-oriented, free, and mirror the structures of our societies (Rice University Study, 2007). In contrast to other advancements in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) they allow for a two-way interaction between people, organizations and governments.



Picture 1. Social media landscape. Source: <http://www.sumitdhawan.com/tools-those-must-not-miss-in-social-media-analytics/>

Social networks give a public voice to individuals and allows them to engage in ways not previously possible (Power, 2012). In a political environment this means that citizens can connect and interact with political figures through the use of online social media and tools. According to a study conducted by the Pew Research Center, the people that use social networks are more likely to be politically active (Evangelista, 2011). This happens because people who use social networks are kept apprised of political developments because of those in their networks who are politically active. Therefore, social media act as a “social sharing machine” that increases the visibility of issues and “speed up that collective action model” (Power, 2012).

Social networks allow individuals to establish a public or semipublic profile, build a network of friends on the site, and publish comments, messages, images, videos, and other content for their friends or the site large. Examples of popular social-networking platforms include Facebook, and LinkedIn.

Facebook is a popular free social networking website that allows registered users to create profiles, upload photos and video, send messages and keep in touch with friends, family and colleagues. The site, which is available in 37 different languages, includes public features such as:

- Marketplace - allows members to post, read and respond to classified ads.

- Groups - allows members who have common interests to find each other and interact.
- Events - allows members to publicize an event, invite guests and track who plans to attend.
- Pages - allows members to create and promote a public page built around a specific topic.
- Presence technology - allows members to see which contacts are online and chat.

Launched in 2004, Facebook is a website and social networking service with 1.01 billion daily active users on average for September 2015 (Facebook Newsroom, 2015), making it one of the most popular sites on the internet.

Most modern social networks allow users to post status updates, photos and other contents. The goal behind this is usually to help people engage with their friends by sharing updates about their lives and links to things online they find interesting.

Weblog or blog is a Web information sharing technology (Boulos, Maramba, Wheelerm 2006). Functioning as an online journal, blogs have unique date entries about an issue with the most recent comments shown first in reverse chronological order (Mayfield, 2008). Composed of text, image, videos, commentary, and links to other Web sites, the contents are contributed by individuals or a group of both professionals and amateurs. Many blogs allow to invite discussion from readers in the form of comments directly on the site. In popular blogs, the discussion via comments can contain more varied information and opinion than the original blog post itself.

Combining the characteristics of both SNSs and blogs, micro-blogging allow users to write brief updates—up to 140 characters—through the mobile text message, Instant Messaging, and a desktop application (Mayfield, 2008). Twitter is an example of micro blogging services. Applying a light-weight and easy form of communication, microblogging offer users an efficient means of sharing information about their activities and opinions (Java, Song, Finin, Tseng, 2007).

While sharing SNSs' traits of requiring registration to obtain a personal home page and connect with friends, content communities focus on sharing a certain type of content, such as photo, video, music, and bookmark (Mayfield, 2008). Contents are easily shared by a networked group with a tag to the content. Flickr, YouTube, are widely known content communities for photos, videos, and bookmarks, respectively.

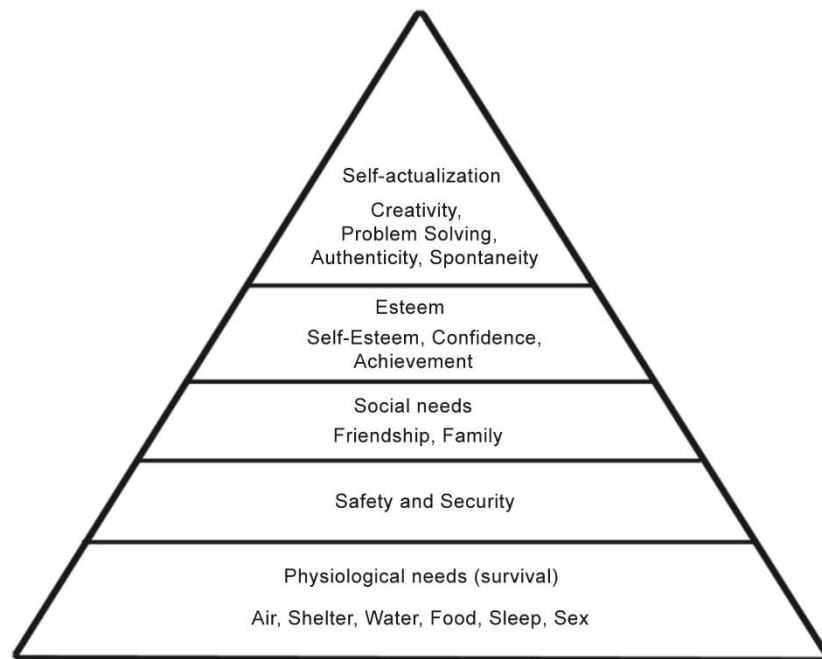
According to the data of the Research of the internet users' audience conducted by the research company TNS in 2014, the objective of which was to observe the tendencies of hardware and the internet use in Lithuania, 96 per cent of all social networking audience of Lithuania use social

networking site Facebook. (TNS LT, 2014). Whereas YouTube video-sharing website is used by 89 per cent, Twitter – by 10.9 per cent, Instagram – only by 13.1 per cent of all Lithuanian audience of social networks. Given this data it may be stated that Facebook is the most popular virtual space in the social media.

1.3.2 Why people use social media

Donna L. Hoffman and Thomas P. Novak, professors of marketing, conducted a research to examine why and how people use social media in the context of their basic needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness, intrinsic and external motivators, and well-being perceptions (Hoffman, Novak, 2012). Research showed that motivations differentially drive social media goal pursuit, and users with different primary social media goals differ in perceptions of well-being. Participation in social media introduce a positive and negative aspects on social media users well-being. However, despite some negative elements, people are attracted by a number of advantages and positive factors of social media. The research argues that the interactivity of social media allows four higher-order goals: connect, create, consume and control (Hoffman, Novak, 2012). Authors of this research identified hundreds of motivations why people use social media. Among those are: social interaction, entertainment, achievement, self-expression, peer pressure and information (Hoffman, Novak, 2012). This research divides reasons to social (49.8%) and non-social (50.2%). Examples of social goals among the results of the survey were: sharing pictures and videos, connecting with friends and family, meeting new people. Among non-social goals were: learning about events, reading the news, listening to music, finding good deals and researching products. Moreover, Hoffman and Thomas argue that people have the need to connect with each other and social media enable these connections and offer users to fulfill their basic psychological.

In 1943, psychologist Abraham Maslow introduced a concept of a hierarchy of human needs. The theory is based on the principle that people are motivated to fulfill their basic needs before moving on to more complex needs. The hierarchy is displayed as a pyramid where the lowest levels represent the basic needs such as the need for air, food, sleep and safety; and more compound, psychological and social, needs are shown at the top of the pyramid. He used the terms Physiological, Safety, Belonging, Esteem and Self-Realization to describe which motivations are more important to us and to what extent. The more fundamental and basic needs are at the bottom of the hierarchy (Picture 2).



Picture 2. Creating unrestricted discussion. Source:
<http://communicationtheory.org/maslow%E2%80%99s-hierarchy-of-needs>

Aside from physiological needs, which obviously need to be physical, social media has been providing all the other stages of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Cherry, 2015):

1. Physiological Needs - Basic physical needs of air, water, food, shelter and clothing. Social media cannot fulfil these needs, and nor should that be attempted.

2. Safety needs in Maslow's hierarchy refer to the need for security and protection. When we have our physiological needs for food and water met, our safety needs dominate our behavior. These needs have to do with our natural desire for a predictable, orderly world that is somewhat within our control. Safety needs in today's world can manifest themselves as job security, savings accounts, insurance policies, financial security, and health and well-being. LinkedIn – might be presented as an example of safety, where users are able to find jobs and networks that could open doors for your career path.

3. Social Needs - the needs for belonging, love, friendship but also involvement in social, community or religious groups. Social networking sites are based on the principle of belonging and creating communities of people with the same hobbies, favorite brands, ideologies and beliefs. Facebook, Google + - examples of love/belonging, where you are able to reconnect and gain relationships, whether it is in the form of acquaintances, friends, lovers or family.

4. Esteem Needs- success, prestige, achievement, respect by others, social recognition and feeling of accomplishment (Cherry, 2015). Some of these needs were also mentioned as reasons for using social media, among those: achievement, self-esteem and self-augmentation (Hoffman, Novak, 2012). Twitter appears at the Esteem level, as a confidence and self-esteem booster.

5. Self-Actualizing Needs. The need of self-actualization is about achieving one's full potential; however, it is actually never fully satisfied since there are always new opportunities to grow. On social media, creative activities might be presented and one can get feedback for example on blogs, YouTube or Flickr. Writing a blog lets creativity flow freely and helps to expand user ideas throughout the internet. As a result, blog platforms such as Blogger, WordPress and Tumblr appear at the top of Maslow's pyramid, in the Self-Realization area.

Important psychological theory of Maslow, presented basic explanation of human needs. However, this can be easily translated into what motivates people to share. Social media has become a dominating factor in our lives. Whether we think of it just as a helpful tool to keep in touch with old friends, make new ones, or to be able to share our thoughts, just being able to access to all types of social media can actually make our life more fulfilled. Social media fosters a strong sense of group mentality — learning from peers, being recognized by peers, relying on peers for that sense of belonging. Politicians should use Maslow theory when both developing content and social media communication campaigns.

1.3.3. Important features of social media

Before the rise of social media, information available to the public was limited. Now the internet has supplied society with an ever-growing, open platform that allows everyone with the internet connection to share their views. People can now discuss politics, from anywhere, with people all over the world. People are no longer limited to the local pub or conversations with family and friends and can now take online tests to determine which politician they should vote.

A study conducted by Ipsos Mori, found that a third of 18-24 year olds think social media will influence their vote in the election (Ipos, 2015). According to this the research results, a third of young people think social media will influence their vote. Ipsos Mori's results also show that while 71% believe that social media provides a platform and voice to people who wouldn't normally take part in political debates, there is concern that social media sites, such as Twitter and Facebook, are making political debate more divisive and superficial.

The feeling is shared both by those active on social media and by those that aren't. Among social media users, 57% and 50% agreed that social media has made the debate more divisive and superficial that it used to be. The results of this research once again showed a significance of social media where voter can be influenced by using important features of social media.

Peer to peer recommendations are an extremely powerful tool in politics. Social media platforms have allowed people to reveal political views without speaking them.

Peer recommendations or so called "word of mouth" model, where information goes from one person to another has always been among the most effective marketing tools. However, via this model, the information spreads slowly and the meaning can be altered. The internet and especially social media overcome these imperfections and the "word of mouth" model takes another level and becomes something what Qualman calls "World of Mouth," where the information goes from one person to many people; therefore, the information spreads much faster (Qualman, 2013).

Getting feedback by the audience is one of the most helpful features of communication with the audience, and social media are highly suitable medium for comments and feedbacks. People have bigger trust into the customer's review than into regular commercials. Safko points out that people do not trust and do not want to hear commercials anymore; on the contrary, they want to get their products/services reviews by people they know and trust. On social media, people share their experience, both bad and good (Safko, Blake, 2009).

Grunig's global theory of public relations suggests following some generic principles and adjusting them to one's needs and to the background in the local area. Two-way and symmetrical communication is mentioned among those principles. According to Grunig two-way, symmetrical relations: "uses research, listening, and dialogue to manage conflicts and to cultivate relationships with both internal and external strategic publics' more than one-way and asymmetrical communication" (Grunig, 2009).

One of the biggest advantages of social media is that it enables the two-way communication between the organization and its stakeholders. J.Turner and R.Shah use metaphor which mentions that social media are more like a telephone than a megaphone. The metaphor shows the contrast between traditional media using a monolog or one-way message as by a megaphone; compared to social media which are characterized by a dialogue or two-way communication likened to a telephone. Grunig's research reveals that symmetrical communication is more successful in building relationships between the organization and the public (Grunig, 2009).

The two-way communication feature of social media and its importance for politicians is stressed in the second chapter.

2. IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION IN SOCIAL MEDIA

2.1 Social media changes society

McLuhan, famous with his words “The medium is the message”, was the first to point out media’s power of transforming the world we live in. He noticed that inventions which related to communication (printing press, radio, etc.) changed the whole world and the way people perceive it (Acar, 2014). He mostly focused on the electronic age, in which anyone can communicate with anybody all around the world, and anyone can be famous for a short time.

As to point out that the advent of social media is a beginning of another era would be too early, it is clear – whenever the way people communicate changes, other things change too. In other words, the way people exchange messages change, the world changes as well. Therefore, social media change the way we communicate. It also changes society and break away from established rules about communication, relationships (Nistad, 2013).

Eric Schmit, the CEO of Google who famously claimed that “*in every 2 days we create as much digital content as we did from the dawn of civilization to 2003. The Internet is the largest experiment involving anarchy in history. Hundreds of millions of people are, each minute, creating and consuming an untold amount of digital content in an online world that is not truly bound by terrestrial laws.... Never before in history have so many people, from so many places, had so much power at their fingertips. And while this is hardly the first technology revolution in our history, it is the first that will make it possible for almost everybody almost everybody to own, develop and disseminate real-time content without having to rely on intermediaries*” (Stein, 2013).

For obvious reasons, politicians have taken to the Internet to get out their messages and support and mobilize their members in various forms. In the first decade of 21st century, many stories became world news because citizens were empowered by new social media such as Facebook and Twitter (Scammell, Semetko, 2012). Even in closed societies where access to information is routinely controlled and denied by authorities, connectivity means that many local protests and crackdowns can become global news. Today, individuals, organizations, campaigns an social movements, and governments around the world are all affected by the opportunities and issues presented by the new media environment (Bennet, 2003).

According to C. Shirky, mass media and social networks, two important components of modern societies, are now quite different from any of their previous forms, and are more interconnected than ever before (Shirky, 2011). In the past, news was created and edited by news reporters and distributed by media conglomerates. Today, news is created by the members of society

and distributed via free social media channels like Facebook, Twitter. By the same token, the way social networks are formed today is totally different. With the new social media platforms, forming a group and gathering new members, raising awareness, organize volunteers, supporting community, may just take hours - something that used to take days, months or years in the past.

An example of when social media has been a great tool in raising awareness was in the summer of 2014, when ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis) Association lunched “Ice bucket” social media campaign. The campaign played a huge role in helping the association to raise \$115 million. As of August 2014, it had resulted in 1.2 million related Facebook videos and 2.2 million Twitter mentions. Thousands of people, including celebrities like Taylor Swift and Oprah Winfrey, have posted videos of themselves getting buckets of ice water dumped over their heads and challenging others to do the same — or donate money to The ALS Association, which raises money for Lou Gehrig's disease research and assistance.

In addition, social media plays crucial role for supporting community in natural disasters. After a 7.0 magnitude earthquake hit Haiti, nonprofits used social media to mobilize rescue efforts and to support the community. This also saw the deployment of one of the most successful text-to-donate campaigns seen at the time. Similarly, when earthquake and tsunami rocked Japan on Mar. 11, 2011, millions around the globe to used social media to search for family and friends, as well as get updates on a situation that was very frightening at the time, given the damage to the nuclear reactor. Similarly, in a recent New York area earthquake, residents were receiving tweets from the epicenter of the event before the tremors had reach them. The Red Cross in particular has become very good as using social media to organize volunteers and solicit donations for relief work.

Moreover, after the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing, a man from Cleveland named Curtis Clough tweeted a simple message just hours after the bombing: “Curtis Clough @AKCTEMan: Thoughts and prayers to Boston marathon victims. Hoping for the best. #bostonstrong.”. In the following year, the same hashtag was used more than 1.5 million times and became the tagline in support of those affected by the Boston bombings. The hashtag #bostonstrong was printed on t-shirts, billboards, written on sidewalks and used in speeches and on social media. Eventually, it was used to help raise money for the victims and families though One Fund Boston established by Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick and Boston Mayor Thomas Menino (getassist.com, 2015).

2.2. Social Media in Mobilizing People for Movements and Revolutions

Social movements driven by collective action are heavily impacted by public framing of the movements and the mobilization of resources (time, money, staff, volunteers, information etc.) needed by the participant (Acar, 2014). Framing in particular – building public and media support, creating sense of community and solidarity, reflecting an image of a movement formed by many different sections of society, etc. – plays a huge role in the success of social movements. Nowadays *“social media technologies have been used especially in organizing and implementing collective identity among marginalized group members, creating less-confined political spaces, establishing connections with other social movements and publicizing causes to gain support from the global community”* (Eltantawy, Wiest, 2011).

The Arab Spring was a revolutionary wave of demonstrations and protests, riots, and civil wars in the Arab world that began on 18 December 2010 in Tunisia with the Tunisian Revolution, and spread throughout the countries of the Arab League and its surroundings (wikipedia.org). The term “Arab Spring” was popularized by the Western media in early 2011, when the successful uprising in Tunisia against former leader Zine El Abidine Ben Ali emboldened similar anti-government protests in most Arab countries. The protests shared some techniques of civil resistance in sustained campaigns involving strikes, demonstrations, as well as the effective use of social media to organize, communicate, and raise awareness in the face of state attempts at repression and the Internet censorship. Several politically motivated events contributed to the Egyptian revolution, however one of the significant “tipping points” was the death of Said (Management Association, 2015).

For many Egyptians, the brutal murder of 28-year-old Khaled Said at the hands of Egyptian police, became a symbol of police corruption and brutality against Egyptian citizens (BBC, 2015). His death became a public debate for the internet activists. According to the documents of Egyptian police, Khaled Said died while choking on a bag of drugs. However, it convinced no-one. Google executive Wael Ghonim created a Facebook page called ‘We Are all Khaled Said.’. It featured horrific photos, shot with a cellphone in the morgue, of Said’s face. That visual evidence undermined the official explanations of his death. As a result, the Facebook page attracted 500,000 members and protestors flooded Cairo’s Tahrir Square. One thousand people attended Said’s funeral in Alexandria, while activists protested outside of the Interior Ministry’s offices in Cairo. The government of Egypt used some strategies to block access to Facebook and Twitter, tried to restrict access to the Internet. However, it failed because the insurgents, with help from supporters around the world, were able to subvert the censorship. The internet restrictions by the Egypt government negatively affected

companies' and the government's business relations. Under increasing domestic and international pressure, Prime Minister Hosni Mubarak resigned February 11, 2011. During the week before Mubarak's resignation, the total rate of tweets from Egypt – and around the world – about political change in that country increased from 2,300 a day to 230,000 a day. Videos featuring protest and political commentary went viral – the top 23 videos received nearly 5.5 million views. The amount of content produced online by opposition groups, in Facebook and political blogs, increased dramatically (O'Donnell, 2011).

While Malcom Gladwell rejected the idea that social media can cause revolutions (Gladwell, 2010), many researchers agree that social media was critical during the Arab spring because:

- a) political debates circulating prior to the events were driven by social media;
- b) an uptick in social media conversations was followed by an increased level of on-street activities;
- c) with the help of social media, protesters garnered international support.

No doubt, that social media is the best tool for activism in the twenty-first century, since it is not censored, can help people organize in a short time and has strong immediate effects. An analysis of social media messages sent during Egyptian revolution showed that social media not only helped the mobilization of people and information but also stimulated the protesters, who received sympathy and encouragement through social media from those who were far away (Eltantawy, Wiest, 2011).

Another one of the first widely-recognized use of social media as a tool of political revolution occurred in Moldova in 2009. Activists used Facebook and Twitter to organize protests and bring attention to the political unrest in the former Soviet republic. Interestingly enough, during the protests, Russian-language Tweepsters debated the role of social-net-working tools in organizing the demonstration. On April 6, 2009, following disputed general elections, protests broke out in the capital. On April 7, protestors were joined by opposition leaders in front of government offices in the capital. The demonstrators' numbers had grown from 10,000 the day before to nearly 30,000, in a metropolitan area of about 900,000. “Word had been spreading rapidly via Twitter and other online networking services. The official media carried no coverage, but accounts, pictures, and video of the rally were appearing in real time on Twitter and YouTube” (Mungiu-Pippidi, Munteanu, 2009) (Picture 3). Although the protestors failed to prompt a change of leadership or a new election, they got the world to focus on a small, remote country, and digital activism became recognized as a source of political power.



Picture 3. Protest riots in front of the Parliament of Moldova, 7 April 2009. Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Chisinau_riot_2009-04-07_01.jpg

In January 2001, new technologies have emerged as the driving force for the overthrow of a national leader. After the Senate decided that there was insufficient evidence for the impeachment of Philippine's President Joseph Estrada, students began exchanging text messages by cell phone with the call "Go 2 EDSA. Wear black." In one week, seven million messages were exchanged and a crowd took Epifanio de los Santos Avenue (known as EDSA) in Manila. The Congress had to reverse its decision and depose President Joseph Estrada. According to Shirky, this event "marked the first time that social media had helped force out a national leader. Estrada himself blamed "the text-messaging generation" for his downfall." (Shirky, 2011).

In September 2011, The Occupy Wall Street movement began as a protest against the inequality and corruption associated with the financial sector of the economy. What was extraordinary about this movement was the speed with which it spread, passing rapidly between communities via social media and Twitter in particular. During the protest, resource mobilization was achieved by locally targeted (geotagged) tweet messages (e.g. where people could find food, tents, etc.) and public support was built by the rest of the messages that are sent to the national audience. The way social media was utilized by the Occupy Wall Street demonstrators clearly showed that social movements is heavily and successfully used by activist.

However, the importance of social media in this latest wave of political upheaval has political theorists and social scientists lining up in opposing camps. One of the most vocal critics in the US is writer Malcolm Gladwell. He points out that "the platforms of social media are built around weak ties. Social networks are effective at increasing participation by lessening the level of

motivation that participation requires”. He argues that these types of relationships are not conducive to the sustained, hierarchical, and high-risk behavior needed to make real social change as seen in the US civil rights movement in the 1960s (Gladwell, 2000).

To sum up, there is no doubt that social media plays a significant role in the revolutions movements. The Egyptian and Moldova revolutions, Occupy Wall Street demonstrations, therefore, demonstrates the opportunities offered by social media for large-scale mobilization and the organization and implementation of social movements. Additionally, the use of social media helped to draw local and international attention to important activities that otherwise may have been shielded from public view, thereby isolating the participants. Social media introduced speed and interactivity that were not possible through the reliance on traditional mobilization resources such as brochures, faxes, and telephones.

3. USING SOCIAL MEDIA FOR POLITICAL MARKETING

The importance of online political marketing can be seen in the major advantages offered by the Internet - namely the rapid transmission of information and the possibilities for large numbers of people to connect. This is especially significant for politics of Lithuania, which embraces a body of 2,5 million voters. According to the data of the Research of the internet users' audience conducted by the research company TNS in 2014, the objective of which was to observe the tendencies of hardware and the Internet use in Lithuania, around 73% of the Lithuania population has internet connection today (TNS LT, 2014). The number of social media users significantly changed in 2014 – 65% of Lithuania users used social media. These number are considered to be high enough for political marketing application in politics.

As the mass media system moved from a 'one to many' model to a 'many to many' model, the field of political communication shifted from a mass media model to what Margaret Scammell has called 'a consumer model of political communication' (Scammell, 2007). The concept of the brand subsumes all, she argues. Branding has moved from products to politicians, with the same methods and practices in politics that are common in marketing and public relations.

The fundamental difference between corporate business marketing and political marketing lies in the handling of the messaging, with the media taking an active role, rather than distributing the messages in a neutral manner. The media rarely takes a stance on a corporate product, yet the media personalities can all be found freely providing passionate criticism on all the political candidates' past and current actions. The public is thus largely influenced by the bias of the media, rather than drawing their own opinions and inferences from the facts and history of the politicians. Savigny argues: "*First, that the media are political actors in their own right and that management-based marketing models in politics need to account for this; and second, that the media may play a corrective function to the democratic deficiencies that these models logically entail*" (Savigny, Temple, 2010).

In this chapter I will discuss the role of the social media as a channel for political marketing, and its ability to change the opinions and sway the loyalty of its viewers. I intend to focus on the attributes of the social media marketing strategy that I argue enable successful political communication on social media.

3.1. Social media – arena for political marketing

Political marketing as field study and practices have been developing by worldwide scholars. According to Newman, political marketing studies could cover five sub-domains (Newman, 1999). First, political marketing studies relate to the management of campaign of parties and candidates, management of volunteer of parties and candidates, media placements and political fundraising. Second, this field study also could assess the analysis of political market by using the survey research to assess the popularity, likeability and electability of parties and candidates, including marketing research during the campaign and election and exit polls and campaign, and analysis of the factors which determines the voter behavior and non-voter behavior. Third, this field study could examine the political marketing development strategies of parties and candidates, including the direct marketing, political debates which is presented in television, market segmentation and market positioning. Fourth, this field study could go into the analysis of how to formulate the best strategy and implementation of campaign for parties and candidates, manage the lobbyist during the campaign and election, facing various political interest and government interest, and managing the permanent campaign. Fifth, this field study also should enable to reveal the contemporary issues of political marketing such as the transformation of political marketing using the new media, political fundraising problems, political marketing and propaganda and money politics.

Brian McNair argues, that advertising has two functions in the process of exchange between a producer (of goods, services, or political programs) and the consumer. First, it informs. The political process is supposed to involve rational choices by voters, which must be based on information. Journalism represents one important source of such information, advertising another. So political advertising can be seen as an important means of informing citizens about who is standing and what they are offering the citizenry in policy terms. Moreover, it seeks to persuade (McNair, 2011).

Social media marketing is a term that describes use of social networks, online communities, blogs, wikis or any other online collaborative media for marketing, sales, public relations and customer service (A.Barker, D.I.Barker, Bormann, Neher, 2012). The end goal of social media marketing is a “conversation”. As Wikipedia points out, this conversation is accomplished by creating as buzz online so that complementary content about individual or company’s offerings goes viral (Wikipedia.org, 2015), with consumer-generated media endorsements spreading like wild fire across the Internet (Barker, etc., 2012).

And while television still remain the most important channel of political marketing, funding their campaign in the television requires to look for an additional budget. Therefore, as

alternative solution, politicians use social media as a tool of political marketing. Together with political marketing, social media is one of the most effective platforms for raising awareness of political issues, encouraging people to vote, and promoting political candidates. As a subject providing variety of advantages mentioned above, there is no doubt, that political marketing in social media is the most important area for the politicians and marketing specialists. Moreover, political marketing passed through all political organizations: as people act increasingly like consumers in the market place, the rise of political consume puts pressure on all public institutions to become more responsive to the demands of those they serve (Lees-Marshment, Wymer, 2005). Political parties, individual politicians are adopting marketing tools and use marketing to design their political product for satisfying potential voters and society members. Furthermore, social media provide a possibility for candidate to develop various types of the Internet and social media features usage to build their political parties brand and personal branding of their candidates. According to Lilleker (Lilleker, Lees-Marshment, 2005), political party brand relates to the three sphere that are: 1) the history, traditions and ethos of parties; 2) core concepts and constraints of parties; and 3) communication pattern of parties. Emphasizing the political party brand will be relevant if the parties take prominent role during campaign and election and the election system will put the parties as a choice for the voters which lead for the party-centered campaign. However, the situation will be different if the candidate centered campaign. The personal political branding of candidates will be more important rather than political party branding. Therefore, the mass media, the Internet and social media as medium or arena of political marketing will be employed for marketing the candidates rather than parties.

3.2. Social media marketing VS traditional marketing

A common misconception is that social media marketing juts means using new online social media sites to do traditional marketing (Barker, 2012). The traditional marketing approach, emphasizing the four Ps (product, place, price and promotion) has become second nature to may professionals. While traditional marketing perspective still has important lessons for the future marketers, in the new terrain of social media, it has to be adapted or in some areas, changed completely (Barker, 2012).

Understanding how social media is different from traditional media has a major impact on whether politician is successful with social media. Table 1 emphasizes the main differences between social media marketing and traditional marketing.

Table 1. Social media and Traditional marketing: differences

Social Media	Traditional Media
Two-way conversation	One-way conversation
Open system	Closed system
Transparent	Opaque
One-on-one marketing	Mass marketing
About you	About ME
Brand and User-generated Content	Professional content
Authentic content	Polished content
FREE platform	Paid platform
Metric: Engagement	Metric: Reach/ frequency
Actors: Users/ Influencers	Actors/ Celebrities
Community decision-making	Economic decision-making
Unstructured communication	Controlled communication
Real time creation	Pre-produced/ scheduled
Bottom-up strategy	Top-down strategy
Informal language	Formal language
Active involvement	Passive involvement

Source: Created by the author

Traditional marketing is made up of mediums such as television, radio, newspapers, billboards, and more. These can each be thought of as one-way communication media, as a broad range of voters receive information from political parties or individual politicians but are never able to communicate back. This is a strength and a weakness rolled into one, since so many voters are exposed to the marketing message, but there is no real connection made between the voter and the politician.

The idea of traditional marketing had never been a problem before the invention of the internet. It was the only way to put a message in front of the voter, so it was a necessity for politicians to take part in if they wanted to be successful.

On the other side, social marketing is totally different. It is made up of different avenues within the internet, like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, and others. These mediums can be thought of as more two-way communication media, which makes up the true uniqueness of social marketing. When a message is placed in front of the voter, the voter is then able to respond back to it – being social in a sense. The politicians and the voters are then able to take part in a conversation, learning and growing with one another. This relationship creates trust and entices the voter to become loyal to the political party or individual politician.

There are no doubts, political advertising differs from commercial advertising on social media. However, same strategies could be, frequently applied to politicians too. Politics has become

a process in which ‘consumers’ are presented, through the mass media, with a range of politics from which they must select (McNair, 2011).

3.3. Political marketing in social media: learning from best practices

Some political campaigns highlighted the changing landscape of politics and laid the groundwork for new marketing tactics. To better understand the value of political marketing, it’s important to take a look how political marketers are setting the tone for successful communications in social media.

In early 2007, Barack Obama was a little-known senator running for president against Democratic nominee and household name, Hilary Clinton. But on November 4, 2008, Obama, 47, was the first African American to win the election against Republican candidate, John McCain, becoming the 44th president of the United States. Obama won by nearly 200 electoral and 8.5 million popular votes. A major success factor was how Obama’s campaign used social media and technology as an integral part of its strategy, to raise money, and, more importantly, to develop a groundswell of empowered volunteers who felt they could make a difference. Obama won by “... converting everyday people into engaged and empowered volunteers, donors and advocates through social networks, e-mail advocacy, text messaging and online video. The campaign’s proclivity to online advocacy is a major reason for his victory” (Lutz, 2009). Obama’s campaign garnered 5 million supporters on social networks. By November 2008, Obama had approximately 2.5 million (some sources say 3.2 million) Facebook supporters. In his 2012 campaign, Obama Facebook page had over 1.2 million likes. By 2012, using social media for political marketing wasn’t a new tactic. However, the way that Obama team combined data, social media and other marketing channels is what ultimately helped succeed success.

Social media will undoubtedly play a major role in the upcoming President election of the United States in 2016 too. Given the success of Obama campaigns, it's hardly surprising to see most of the presidential candidates are active on Facebook and Twitter. Hillary Clinton and Jeb Bush considerable both as actually the first candidates to use Snapchat to announce their bid for the presidential nomination.

As social media become more and more in the center of attention, there are emerging guidelines that might be called “rules of political marketing in social media”. Even though, opinions of social media experts on how to engage social media strategy properly differ, there are certain rules that should be followed in order to accomplish successful political marketing campaign. The

following advices are mainly based on the book “301 Ways to Use Social Media to Boost Your Marketing” by Catherine Parker (Parker, 2011):

- **Consistent voice:** Social media campaigns are usually held on more than one channel and in order not to confuse the audience and have a coherent brand messaging, the politician should deliver the consistent message across all channels;
- **Suitable channels:** There is no need to use all the social media tools available. The success of social media campaign depends more on the right choice of channels that are appropriate for the politician;
- **Interaction:** Interaction is the foundation of social media and it requires a time commitment. If no one responds to comments and questions raised on the profile, the politician would look like ignorant towards the public;
- **Connectedness:** Various channels should be used to support each other, plus the link to the official website of the politician should be written on every social media channel;
- **Engage regularly:** There should be a regular activity engaged on every social media channel.

3.4. Political marketing in social media by the politicians of Lithuania

With the development of social media and increase in the number of users of social networking websites each year, these interactive tools for political communication are becoming attractive to some politicians of Lithuania too. Politicians and political parties try to dominate the common information context and to rise the popularity between other politicians.

It has been less than one year since the Liberal Movement’s Remigijus Šimašius was voted in as Mayor of Vilnius. In Lithuania’s first-ever direct mayoral elections, Šimašius secured 61% of the vote in the March 15 run-off, beating then incumbent, Artūras Zuokas of the Lithuanian Freedom Union party. While there might be many reasons why Šimašius and not Zuokas was elected, one of them could be attributed to their activity on Social Media.

The Facebook page ‘Remigijus Šimašius’ had 40 789 followers on November of 2015 (<https://www.facebook.com/remigijus.simasius?fref=ts>). Because of the personal style of communication Remigijus Šimašius creates an unrestricted discussion spirit and simply become friends with the audience (Picture 4).



Picture 4. Creating unrestricted discussion. Source: <https://www.facebook.com/remigijus.simasius>

Moreover, in his exclusive two-part interview to the Lithuania Tribune, Šimašius explained how he treats social media as a “normal [communication] channel, the same as a phone call or an email”, and how using it intelligently will allow politicians to “become closer to voters” on the Lithuanian political landscape (delfi.lt, 2015).

Artūras Zuokas was outrivalled in Vilnius City Mayor elections by Remigijus Šimašius. On November of 2015, Facebook account “Artūras Zuokas” had 13 391 followers. In the run-up to the municipal elections, Artūras Zuokas made a rather successful attempt to reach his target voters, the youth, on the internet. He opened the Fluxus Ministry (an arts center for youth) in central Vilnius and created a Facebook profile for it. The page immediately acquired a big number of followers who received regular feed on the activities at the Fluxus Ministry. The content was not straightforwardly political, yet the information indirectly contributed to an attractive image for Zuokas. A number of

young and active people got involved in the Fluxus Ministry and they shared Facebook posts with their friends thus unintentionally expanding the network of Zuokas fans.

In addition, by sharing his personal remarks, funny experiences from their daily life, travel impressions, Artūras Zuokas creates an immediate and friendly atmosphere where no distance is left between the politicians and the audience. This leaves the participants of the process of communication feeling more confident with each other (Picture 5).



Picture 5. Creating friendly atmosphere. Source: <https://www.facebook.com/arturas.zuokas>

According to Šuminas, during the election of the President of the Republic of Lithuania in 2009, page of Algirdas Butkevicius was created on the social networking website Facebook, but active communication was not engaged in (Šuminas, 2011). The Facebook page ‘Algirdas Butkevicius’ had 171 supporters on the election day. However, in November of 2015, Algirdas Butkevičius, Prime Minister of Lithuania since December 2012, had 4607 followers (facebook.com, 2015). Algirdas Butkevicius use images of himself in “quiet moments” with family members (e.g., the caption accompanying an image of Sunday walk with his wife, Picture 6). This creates a special sense of personal communication with the electors.



Picture 6. Creating a sense of personal communication. Source: <https://www.facebook.com/algirdas.butkevicius>

Over the past years Twitter has become the channel of choice for digital diplomacy between world leaders, governments, foreign ministries and diplomats. Social media in general and Twitter in particular is no longer just an afterthought but an essential communication tool for governments to interact and broadcast 140 character messages and six-second soundbites.

For many diplomats Twitter has become a powerful channel for digital diplomacy and 21st century statecraft and not all Twitter exchanges are diplomatic, real world differences are playing out on Twitter and sometimes end up in hashtag wars between embassies and foreign ministries.

Lithuanian Prime Minister Algirdas Butkevičius joined Twitter on 24 March 2011 but was passive until Lithuania took over the rotating EU presidency on 1 July 2013. Algirdas Butkevičius does not engage with his followers, replying or mentioning others only on rare occasions. Frequency of his tweets recently increased and continues to be posted mainly in English. The content also changed a bit through over the past year and now focuses more on sharing Lithuania's achievements. The events in Ukraine remain another important topic, and these tweets get the most attention. For example, the most retweeted post expresses condolences after the plane crash in Luhansk airport. His Twitter account has 3794 followers (<https://twitter.com/AButkevicius>).

Foreign Minister of Lithuania Linas Linkevičius has been tweeting since December 2012 when he became Lithuania's Foreign Minister. Linas Linkevičius is the most active Lithuanian politician on Twitter. Linkevičius' Twitter feed is dominated by comments on international meetings and EU policy decisions. Among his most used hashtags are the #EU, #Ukraine, #Russia and #NATO reflecting a keen interest and an active involvement in the current debate about the situation in Ukraine. Linas Linkevičius tweets on average three times per day and a third are retweets of the @LithuaniaMFA account and Lithuanian ambassadors and he occasionally replies to his peers (<http://twiplomacy.com/info/europe/lithuania/>). The Lithuanian foreign minister is well connected with his peers, mutually following 38 other world leaders and has 39 634 followers on Twitter (<https://twitter.com/linkeviciusl>).

Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė set up her Twitter account on 21 November 2012 and has 85 494 followers (https://twitter.com/grybauskaite_lt). Dalia Grybauskaitė increased her Twitter activity in the second half of 2013, tweeting about her meetings, the European Union and the events in Ukraine. Her most retweeted post is from February 2015, on the murder of Russian opposition leader Boris Nemtsov. D. Grybauskaitė reacted by telling that “it shows that Russia slides down to darkness of terror against its own people”. The President tweets in English, targeting mostly the international community. Dalia Grybauskaitė is well connected to her peers, mutually following 17 other world leaders (<http://twiplomacy.com/info/europe/lithuania/>).

In addition, President of Lithuania Dalia Grybauskaitė has 288 647 followers on Facebook account. It leads me to assume, that the page of the President of Lithuania in Facebook website has a significant number of supporters who constantly received actively communicated information relevant to D. Grybauskaite. Adding selfie photos, D. Grybauskaite creates attractive content (Picture 7).

However, Lithuanian politicians still lack professionalism. Political communication is being done hopelessly amateurishly. Missing personal discussion with society might be considered as the weakest part of social media account of President Dalia Grybauskaitė. Lithuanian President Grybauskaitė communicates unilaterally on Facebook. Despite the fact that social media strategy of Prime Minister Algirdas Butkevičius remarkably changed in 2015, the number of the supporters of Algirdas Butkevičius in the other groups and pages of Facebook seems relatively low. It should not be forgotten that communication must have objective addressees. Social networking websites allow the politicians to maximize the segmentation and personalization of messages; therefore, they can customize and transmit their messages directly to the target audience through reasonable forms and channels. Social networks replace traditional eye-to-eye campaign and puts it to virtual space (which functions in ways of community relations, emotion-based content creation and short messages) so political communication has to cope and adopt new communication model and act correspondingly.

There are exceptionally good examples of individual communication but more attention to social networks should be considered for each Member of Parliament of Lithuania and more financial and human effort it should be provided for this matter.



Picture 7. Creating attractive content. Source: <https://www.facebook.com/dalia.grybauskaite>

4. EXPLORATORY SURVEY OF SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE BY THE POLITICIANS OF LITHUANIA

4.1. Methodology

Research problem. With annual growth of the Internet users, the members of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania of 2012-2016, in an effort to raise their popularity, outspread important issues, endeavour to use social media for communication with the society. The objective here is to clarify what influences the scope of communication in the social media of the members of the Seimas of 2012-2016 term in Lithuania, how politicians communicate in the social media, do they use social networking tools to the full extent to bring their message to the society.

Research objective. To analyse the activity in the social media of the members of the Seimas of 2012-2016 term, to establish the specifics of communication in the social media.

Assigned tasks:

- 1) To establish primary social media tools used by Lithuanian politicians for communication purposes, to clarify the scope of use of these tools;
- 2) To mark out basic characteristics of the politicians that allow to define and forecast the potential use (or non-use) of social media tools for communication purposes;
- 3) To conduct a semi-structured interview and obtain direct information from the members of the Seimas regarding the motives and features of the social media use in political communication, to find out politicians' position on the importance and factors stimulating the use of social media.

Research methods. To achieve and clarify the above mentioned research objectives the following methods have been chosen: quantitative analysis of the social media profiles of the members of the Seimas, semi-structured interviews with the members of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania. A two-part research has been conducted:

1. Quantitative analysis of the scope of social media use. Period of November 3-15, 2015 was chosen;
2. Qualitative analysis, a semi-structured interview of the members of the Seimas by means of an online questionnaire. Period of September 23, 2015- November 14, 2015 was chosen.

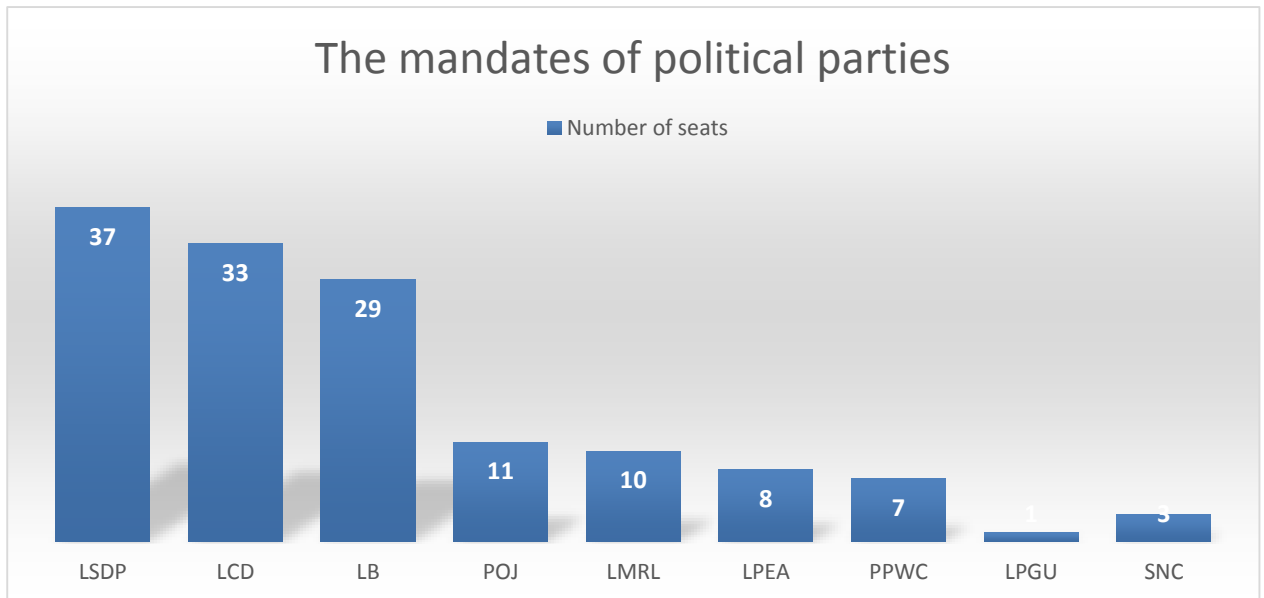
In the first part the data is being systemized and later the number is given as of how many members of the Seimas use respective social media forms. Systemized data is provided in the table attached (Appendix No. 1), and the results are described in the empirical part. In Appendix No. 1 each member of the Seimas is provided with information whether his/her profile is found by searched keywords (yes/no). Moreover, Appendix No. 1 provides demographic characteristics of the members of the Seimas – sex and age, party membership.

The second part analyses the statements of individual members of the Seimas gathered from a semi-structured online interview. A semi-structured interview in a form of questionnaire (Appendix No. 2) has been prepared for this part of the research for the members of the Seimas to complete online. Online questionnaire is more convenient method for a respondent as interviewer's influences is avoided and the respondent is given more privacy and a possibility to answer the questions when and where convenient.

Methodology and process. The goal of quantitative analysis was to estimate the scope of the social media profiles of the members of the Seimas and prove an assumption that members of the Seimas communicate insufficiently by means of new communication forms. The research has been carried out based on search conducted through social media channels. During the research the name and surname of each member of the Seimas had been entered into a search field of the social networking site Facebook, microblogging site Twitter, video-sharing sites YouTube and Instagram. Moreover, Lithuanian version of the search engine Google was used.

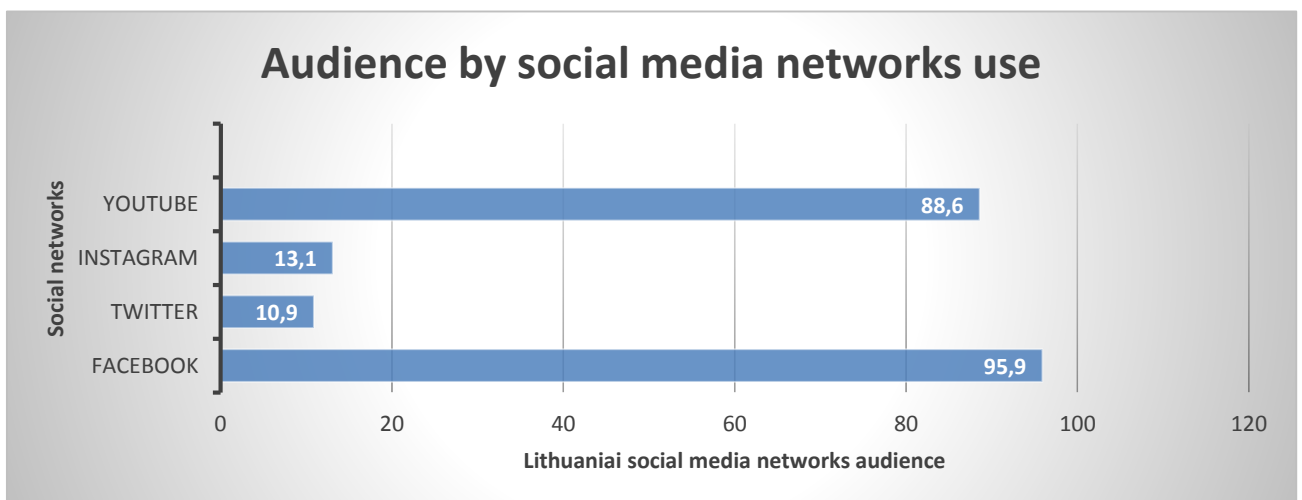
Scope and sources of the research. For the analysis of this part of the research the whole scope of 141 members of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania elected for 2012-2016 term was taken.

In October 2012, during the election to the 11th Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, Lithuanian citizens entrusted the mandates of Members of Parliament to the representatives of the following political parties: Lithuanian Social Democratic Party (LSDP, 37 seats), Homeland Union - Lithuanian Christian Democrats (LCD, 33 seats), Labour Party (LB, 29 seats), Party "Order and Justice" (POJ, 11 seats), Liberals Movement of the Republic of Lithuania (LMRL, 10 seats), Lithuanian Poles' Electoral Action (LPEA, 8 seats), Political Party "The Way of Courage" (PPWC, 7 seats), and Lithuanian Peasant and Greens Union (LPGU, 1 seat), as well as self-nominated candidates (SNC, 3 seats) (Picture 8).



Picture 8. The mandates of political parties

Besides the most popular means of the social media of different categories attracting the most users in Lithuania were chosen for the research: social networking site Facebook, microblogging site Twitter, video-sharing sites YouTube and Instagram. According to the data of the Research of The Internet users' audience conducted by the research company TNS in 2014, the objective of which was to observe the tendencies of hardware and the Internet use in Lithuania, 96 per cent of all social networking audience of Lithuania use social networking site Facebook (TNS LT,2014). Whereas YouTube video-sharing website is used by 89 per cent, Twitter – by 10.9 per cent, Instagram – only by 13.1 per cent of all Lithuanian audience of social networks (Picture 9). Given this data it may be stated that Facebook is the most popular virtual space in the social media.

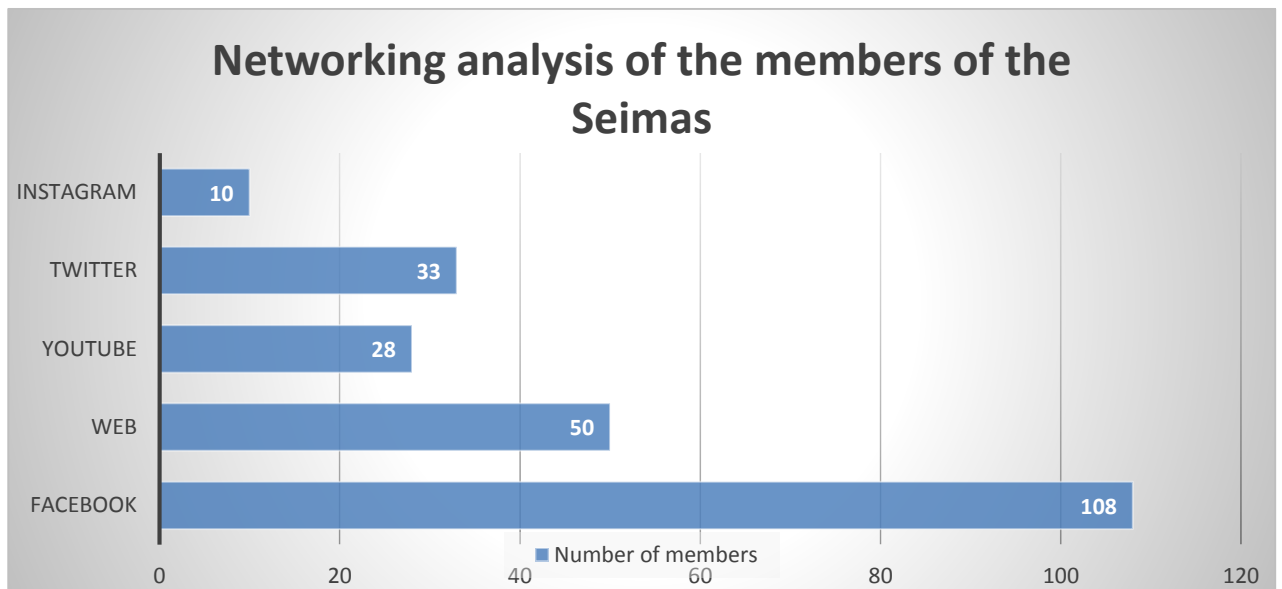


Picture 9. Audience by social media networks use

4.2. Results of the research

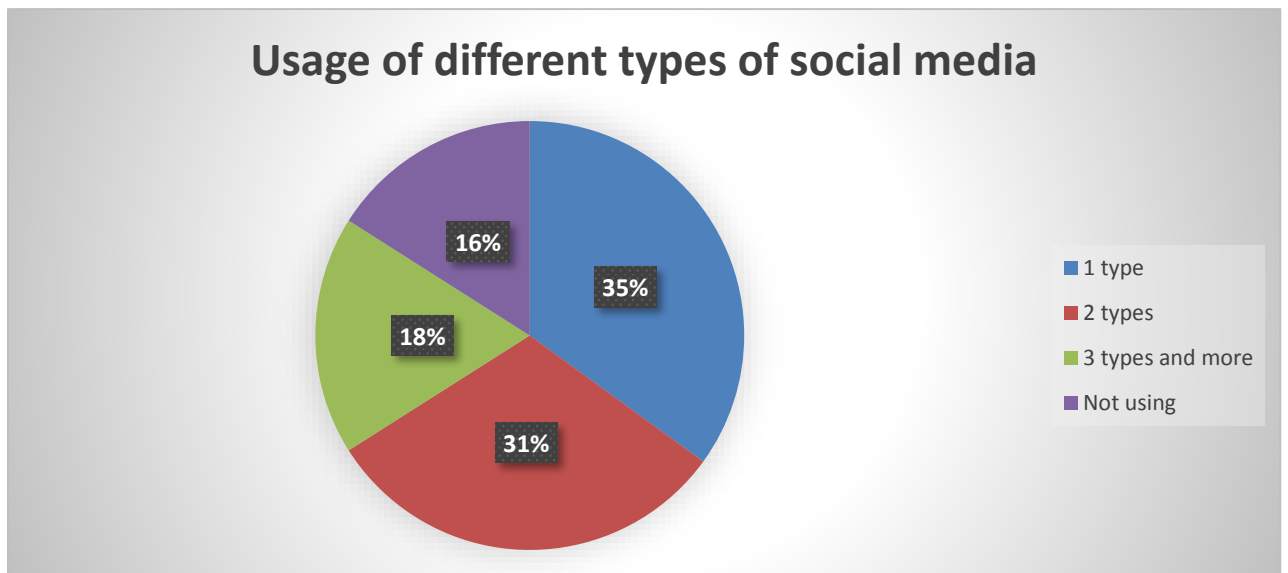
4.2.1. Networking analysis of the members of the Seimas

Having analysed the scope of the social media use by the members of the Seimas of 2012-2016 term, it was established that 119 members of the Seimas out of 141 use at least one social media form (84 percent). Besides it was established that 108 of them had Facebook profiles. This makes 91 per cent. 50 (35.5 per cent) members of the Seimas have personal websites. 28 members of the Seimas had YouTube channels (i.e. 19.9 per cent). Meanwhile 33 members have created Twitter profiles (23.4 per cent), and 10 members use Instagram (7.1 per cent) (Picture 10). Apparent differences of the scope of use of social media forms by the members of the Seimas of 2012-2016 term have been established and found out that almost all members of the Seimas use Facebook to communicate in the social media.



Picture 10. Networking analysis of the members of the Seimas

Moreover, it was found out that 16 per cent of all members of the Seimas do not use any forms of social media at all. 35 per cent use at least 1 form of social media, 31 per cent – 2 forms of social media, 18 per cent use 3 and more forms (Picture 11).



Picture 11. Usage of different types of social media

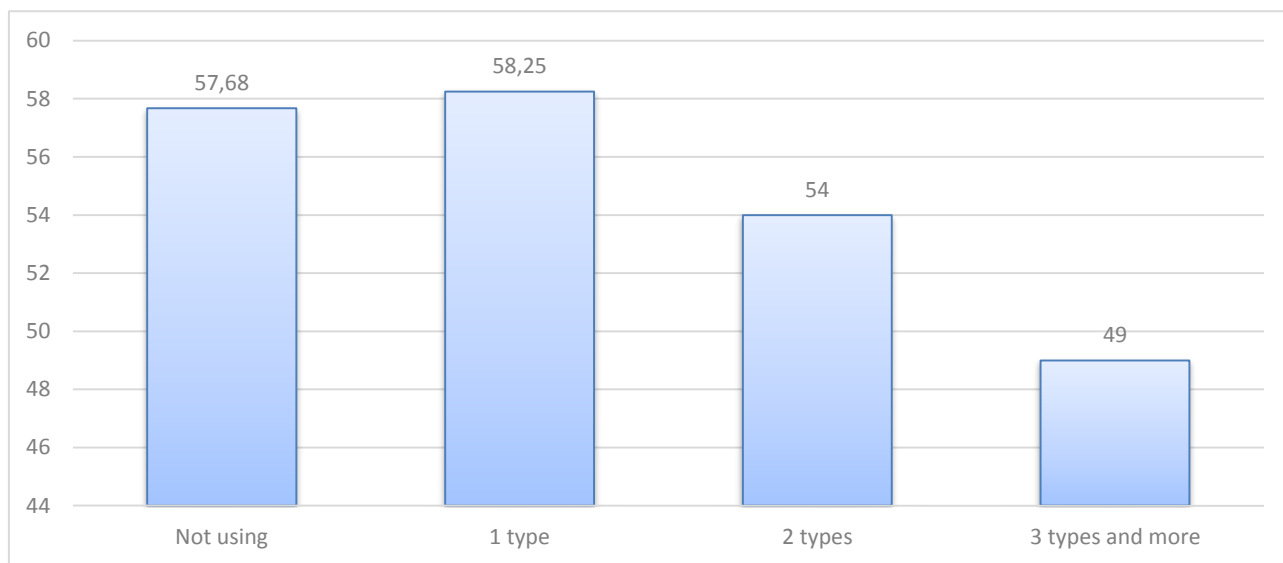
Through the analysis of general ecosystem of social media tools used by the members of the Seimas it was established that the members using microblogging site Twitter and video-sharing site YouTube also had their own profiles in social networking site Facebook. Moreover, it was noticed that politicians using Twitter and video-sharing site YouTube for communication usually duplicated posted content on the social networking site Facebook.

To establish primary characteristics of politicians that allow to forecast the candidate use of social media two primary demographic characteristics of the members of the Seimas were considered: sex and age.

Sex and age analysis demonstrates that male members of the Seimas rather than female are inclined to use social media more. 76 per cent of all female members of the Seimas use social media, whereas among men this figure is 11 per cent higher, i.e. 87 per cent. Average age of all members of the Seimas involved in the research is 55 years. 58 years is an average age of the members of the Seimas using at least one form of the social media, 54 years – for 2 forms, 49 years – for 3 and more social media forms. This vividly illustrates that younger members of the Seimas tend to use various social media forms (Picture 12).

On the other part there are exceptions indicating there is no need to closely link the age and use of the social media of the members of the Seimas. For instance, 32 years old Viktorija ČMILYTĖ-NIELSEN has no profiles in neither of the social media forms. Herewith Arimantas Dumčius who is 75 years old had been frequently using social networking site Facebook for political

communication. Therefore, the merit of efficiency of social media communication frequency may not always be linked with the age of the member of the Seimas.



Picture 12. Age average for using different types of social media

Party membership analysis of the members of the Seimas showed that the Lithuanian Social-Democratic Party uses social media tools best of all – as many as 92.31 per cent of all party members use social media. Whereas the smallest percentage of party members using social media was found in the Lithuanian Poles’ Electoral Action party. Here only 37.5 per cent use social media channels.

4.2.2 Attitude analysis of the social media use of the members of the Seimas

This part analyses the statements of individual members of the Seimas obtained through a semi-structured interview (Appendix No. 2). For this part of the research a semi-structured interview in a form of questionnaire was prepared to be completed by the members of the Seimas online.

Politicians were asked if the Internet as communication tool is an integral part of their everyday life, what communication tools and social media forms they know and use. Besides questions about social profile management features were asked. The objective was to find out what motives and factors determine the use of the social media by the members of the Seimas in political communication. Here the scope of respondents was of no importance as the focus was put on respondents’ answers. Period of September 23, 2015 – November 14, 2015 was chosen for qualitative research and interview analysis.

Scope of the research – 6 members of the Seimas („saturation“).

Type of interview – people related to the problem under research in MA paper (key informants).

Research method – a semi-structured interview in a form of online questionnaire. Interview questionnaire consisted of 9 questions. Time for answers was not limited.

Description of the members of the Seimas under research. 6 members of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania of 2012-2016 term have been questioned (Table 2).

Table 2. Description of respondents

No.	Date and time of the answer	Respondent name, surname	Code
1.	2015-09-24, 00:07	Agnė Bilotaitė	AB_1
2.	2015-11-08, 18:27	Marija Pavilionienė	MP_2
3.	2015-09-27, 19:17	Algimantas Dumbrava	AD_3
4.	2015-11-10, 15:33	Dalia Teišerskytė	DT_4
5.	2015-11-09, 11:06	Arminas Lydeka	AL_5
6.	2015-10-14, 16:25	Liutauras Kazlavickas	LK_6

Source: created by author

The first respondent – **Agnė Bilotaitė** – a member of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania elected for the second term. This member sits in the Anti-Corruption Commission of the Seimas and is a chairman of the parliament group „Už Lietuvą be Korupcijos“. Agnė Bilotaitė owns a personal website constantly posting recent news related to her activity as well as uses Facebook (4059 followers) and Twitter (588 followers) profiles frequently.

The second respondent – **Marija Pavilionienė** – a member of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania elected for the third term, a philologist, professor, doctor of science. Marija Pavilionienė is a member of committees of the human rights, European affairs, education, science and culture. Besides she was elected a president of the Lithuanian Association of University Women (1991–1996) and awarded for protection of human and women rights in Lithuania, for activity in The Family Planning and Sexual Health and Rights Association (2012). This member of the Seimas constantly uses her Facebook profile (2231 friends, 856 followers).

The third respondent - **Algimantas Dumbrava** – a member of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania elected for the second term. This member of the Seimas is a member of the

Committee on Social Affairs and Labour, Order and Justice Political Group. Algimantas Dumbrava constantly uses his profile in social networking site Facebook.

The fourth respondent - **Dalia Teišerskytė** – is a member of the Seimas, a journalist, poet, political and public person of Lithuania. Dalia Teišerskytė is a Presidium Member of the Lithuanian Business Employers’ Confederation, a member of the board of Kaunas department of the Lithuanian Association of University Women, a member of the Lithuanian journalists’ association. Dalia Teišerskytė frequently uses Facebook profiles (3111 followers, 4978 friends).

The fifth respondent - **Arminas Lydeka** – a member of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania elected for the fourth term, a politologist, an expert of protocol and professional etiquette. A consulting teacher of the Lithuanian Institute of Public Administration, Training Centre of the Ministry of Finance, the Lithuanian Centre for the Perfection of Cultural Administrators, the Management Solution Centre, an expert of diplomatic protocol and professional etiquette.

The sixth respondent - **Liutauras Kazlavickas** – a member of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania. Areas of engagement: reform of the education system, development of social policies and social sector, development of youth policy, civic society, and use EU structural assistance.

Prior to analysis of interview results it must be stressed that unanimous opinion was observed from the research results. Respondents do not object to communication through social media. According to one of the respondent’s communication in the social media is unavoidable – all politicians will enter the space of social media in the future. The social media in politics is an exceptional opportunity to publish needful information irrespectively of the favour of the mass media. Politicians speaking in favour of the blogs emphasize that social networks allow direct communication with the target audience, moreover mass media representatives often pick out needful information and topics to expand on from the social media information flow.

All respondents agreed that it is impossible to do without the newest worldwide spreading communication technologies, that the Internet as a communication tool takes a significant part of their everyday life. The respondents estimated their presence on the internet and the Internet altogether as a communication tool as an important aspect.

Is it important for you to be seen on the Internet?

<i>Respondent code</i>	<i>Answer</i>
<i>AB_1</i>	<i>Yes – every politician as a public person is interested in his works being seen, and that he himself could explain unbiased motives of his actions and arguments of taken positions</i>

<i>MP_2</i>	<i>Yes – to make my attitude clear</i>
<i>AD_3</i>	<i>It is important, but if I am not there, I am not worried.</i>
<i>DT_4</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>AL_5</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>LK_6</i>	<i>Yes</i>

Does the Internet as a communication tool make an integral part of your everyday life?

<i>Respondent code</i>	<i>Answer</i>
<i>AB_1</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>MP_2</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>AD_3</i>	<i>I believe, yes</i>
<i>DT_4</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>AL_5</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>LK_6</i>	<i>Yes</i>

When asked to explain how they generally take the social media, 4 respondents stated that they understand and use social media. It has to be emphasized that 2 respondents have indicated being insufficiently informed to make grounded decisions.

How do you take the social media?

<i>Respondent code</i>	<i>Answer</i>
<i>AB_1</i>	<i>I have a clear picture of what it is and use social media.</i>
<i>MP_2</i>	<i>I have sufficient understanding.</i>
<i>AD_3</i>	<i>I use social media, however I am not sufficiently informed to make grounded decisions.</i>
<i>DT_4</i>	<i>I have a clear picture of what it is and use social media.</i>

<i>AL_5</i>	<i>I use social media, however I am not sufficiently informed to make grounded decisions;</i>
<i>LK_6</i>	<i>I have a clear picture of what it is and use social media.</i>

All the respondents have stated using the most popular in Lithuania form of social media – social networks, however only 1 respondent mentioned using video-sharing site YouTube, and 4 out of 6 respondents do not use microblogging site Twitter in their political activity at all. In an earlier mentioned TNS conducted research it was established that YouTube video-sharing site was used by 89 per cent of all social media users of Lithuania. Apparently the members of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania are not interested in the tendencies of modern technologies or other opportunities.

The members of the Seimas noticed that the social media is a highly efficient tool to advertise, form an image of a politician and express ideas.

Why have you started using social media?

<i>Respondent code</i>	<i>Answer</i>
<i>AB_1</i>	<i>I thought this is inevitable, all politicians will enter the space of social media in the future; I believed to gain real benefit for the image of myself as a politician;</i>
<i>MP_2</i>	<i>It broadens the horizons, this is an arena to share my thoughts, connect people.</i>
<i>AD_3</i>	<i>I believed to gain real benefit for myself as a politician;</i>
<i>DT_4</i>	<i>I thought this is inevitable, all politicians will enter the space of social media in the future; I believed to gain real benefit for the image of myself as a politician;</i>
<i>AL_5</i>	<i>I was following the example of other politicians; I thought this is inevitable, all politicians will enter the space of social media in the future; I believed to gain real benefit for the image of myself as a politician;</i>
<i>LK_6</i>	<i>For activity responsibility and feedback support</i>

Primary motives determining the choice of the social media for political communication of the members of the Seimas are the following: spread of information, advertising, maintaining of the contacts with the society, promotion of popularity, study of society's opinion on various issues. All the respondents have agreed with the benefits brought by the social media.

The opinion of the members of the Seimas regarding formation and maintaining of the communication strategy in the social media differed. The majority of the respondents believed that there is no need in strategy, however this only even more proves that the members of the Seimas do not really grasp the meaning of the social media and opportunities that might open fully. *“First a very clear, specific, measurable and achievable objective has to be set. Then it is advised to prepare a plan of actions and start implementing it. To form a strategy detailed social media knowledge is needed. Having an ambition only would make it really complicated to achieve real efficient results.”* – stated A. Žakas - a digital communication expert (Žakas, 2015).

Do you have a defined social media strategy?

Respondent code	Answer
<i>AB_1</i>	<i>Yes, I do;</i>
<i>MP_2</i>	<i>I do not, I use the once created by others.</i>
<i>AD_3</i>	<i>I do not and I have no plans of incorporating one.</i>
<i>DT_4</i>	<i>Yes, I do;</i>
<i>AL_5</i>	<i>No, I do not, but I plan to incorporate one in the future;</i>
<i>LK_6</i>	<i>I do not and I have no plans of incorporating one.</i>

Further the members of the Seimas have stated that they can complete the social media profiles by themselves, they do not need any communication professionals’ assistance on that. Having in mind these answers it might be stated that a part of politicians does not perceive the importance of communication in the social media. They are not inclined to hire a communication expert to secure themselves from the statements that could harm their political image.

Do you manage your social media profiles by yourself?

Respondent code	Answer
<i>AB_1</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>MP_2</i>	<i>Both myself and my assistant</i>
<i>AD_3</i>	<i>Yes</i>

<i>DT_4</i>	<i>When possible I try to do it myself</i>
<i>AL_5</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>LK_6</i>	<i>Yes</i>

It is obvious that frequency of posting in social networks by politicians depends on important events.

What determines the frequency of your posts in the social media? What topics do you choose?

Respondent code	Answer
<i>AB_1</i>	<i>Frequency of my posts reflects those cases when I believed I have something meaningful to say to my readers. However, I try to follow the rule “not more than a few posts per day”. Simply I have no intention to flood people with lots of posts, so this encourages me to make better choices of what is important and what is not.</i>
<i>MP_2</i>	<i>A wish to express my opinion, criticize backwardness, dogmatism, fanaticism.</i>
<i>AD_3</i>	<i>Everyday events, news.</i>
<i>DT_4</i>	<i>Daily routine, events, opinions, creation.</i>
<i>AL_5</i>	<i>Talked-about issues</i>
<i>LK_6</i>	<i>Gave no answer</i>

The social media is attractive as induces interactivity, various discussions may take place here. Certain political involvement of citizens may be cherished, however the major part of the respondents rarely gets involved into discussions when they could have contributed by their advice, guide in problematic areas.

Do you expect a discussion under your posts? Do you yourself get involved in a discussion?

Respondent code	Answer
------------------------	---------------

<i>AB_1</i>	<i>I always expect a discussion and there always is one. I get involved in a discussion myself only when I see it as constructive confrontation.</i>
<i>MP_2</i>	<i>Yes, I rarely get involved into discussions, unless I want to express my positions.</i>
<i>AD_3</i>	<i>Very rarely</i>
<i>DT_4</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>AL_5</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>
<i>LK_6</i>	<i>Gave no answer</i>

The respondents have marked out negative user responses as one of the major communication problems in the social media. Good to know that here politicians invoke their professionalism and parry negative responses with positive ones. Almost all respondents have indicated that negative responses have no influence on their decision to use social media.

What is your reaction to negative comments under your posts in the social media?

<i>Respondent code</i>	<i>Answer</i>
<i>AB_1</i>	<i>If this is positive criticism that may be considered without giving up my creed, I am being thankful and try to respond. If this is personified mockery or simply another opinion to be imposed, I give no response.</i>
<i>MP_2</i>	<i>I ignore the dirt and make no response.</i>
<i>AD_3</i>	<i>I do not read them</i>
<i>DT_4</i>	<i>I try to respond to all remarks.</i>
<i>AL_5</i>	<i>Normal reaction</i>
<i>LK_6</i>	<i>Gave no answer</i>

“A wish to control the message politicians send is perfectly seen in some social media profiles of both the parties and politicians. It needs to be understood that the social media is uncontrolled media, that messages you posted along with yourself are created by all the users commenting, seeing online, clicking ‘Like’. This is general content creation process”, says L. Auškalnienė, a lecturer of the Department of Public Communications of Vytautas Magnus University.

Communication experts stress that proper communication in social networks is based on constant mutual communication (LRT,

Summarizing the results, quantitative analysis of the social media use, showed that 119 members (84 percent) out of 141 use at least one social media form. Besides it was established that 108, or 91 percent of them had Facebook profiles. Sex and age analysis demonstrated that male members of the Seimas rather than female are inclined to use social media more. 76 per cent of all female members of the Seimas use social media, whereas among men this figure is 11 per cent higher, i.e. 87 per cent. Average age of all members of the Seimas involved in the research was 55 years. 58 years is an average age of the members of the Seimas using at least one form of the social media, 54 years – for 2 forms, 49 years – for 3 and more social media forms. This vividly illustrates that younger members of the Seimas tend to use various social media forms. Party membership analysis of the members of the Seimas showed that the Lithuanian Social-Democratic Party uses social media tools best of all – as many as 92.31 per cent of all party members use social media. Whereas the smallest percentage of party members using social media was found in the Lithuanian Poles' Electoral Action party. Here only 37.5 per cent use social media channels.

Analysed answers of the questionnaire might be alleged that the respondents are familiar with the social media, use social media to spread their ideas, opinions, however have not gone deep into the social media strategies. Members of Seimas refrain from goal-oriented, planned and well-considered strategy in the social media. Moreover, they are not inclined to hire a communication expert to secure themselves from the statements that could harm their political image. This proves that the members of the Seimas do not really grasp the meaning of the social media and opportunities that might open fully. There are exceptionally good examples of individual communication but more attention to social networks should be considered for each Member of Parliament of Lithuania and more financial and human effort it should be provided for this matter.

It may be stated that the members of the Seimas yet more trust traditional political communication tools like for instance direct communication with electors. It is hard to escape the conclusion that the members of the Seimas are interested in the social media use in political communication, however they refrain from goal-oriented, planned and well-considered strategy in the social media.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Political communication is based on the model that conceptualizes political communication as a system of dynamic interaction between political actors, the media and audience members, where each is involved in producing, receiving and interpreting political messages. To achieve their own interest and objectives, politicians transmit their messages on the performance of media and therefore, targets their audience.
2. Evolution of the the Internet permitted simultaneous point-to-point and broadcast forms of communication and provided easy access to unlimited audience. Web 2.0 has allowed users to interact with the web, other users and has permitted the consumer to become the creator of the content. As a result, politicians have taken to the Web 2.0 to get out their messages widely.
3. The relevance of social media for political communication is steadily increasing in recent years. Individuals, organizations, campaigns and social movements, around the world are all affected by the opportunities and issues presented by the social media environment. By offering opportunities for large-scale mobilization and the organization and implementation of social movements, social media is an exceptional opportunity to publish needful information irrespectively of the favour of the mass media.
4. Because of its ability to change the opinions and sway the loyalty of the society, social media has become a channel for political marketing. Politicians and political parties try to dominate the common information context and to rise the popularity between other politicians.
5. Analysis of the social media use by the members of the Seimas of 2012-2016 term, showed that 119 members (84 percent) out of 141 use at least one social media form. Besides it was established that 108, or 91 percent of them had Facebook profiles. Sex and age analysis demonstrated that male members of the Seimas rather than female are inclined to use social media more. 76 per cent of all female members of the Seimas use social media, whereas among men this figure is 11 per cent higher, i.e. 87 per cent. Average age of all members of the Seimas involved in the research was 55 years. 58 years is an average age of the members of the Seimas using at least one form of the social media, 54 years – for 2 forms, 49 years – for 3 and more social media forms. This vividly illustrates that younger members of the Seimas tend to use various social media forms. Party membership analysis of the members of the Seimas showed that the Lithuanian Social-Democratic Party uses social media tools best of all – as many as 92.31 per cent of all party members use social media. Whereas the smallest percentage of party members using social media was found in the Lithuanian Poles' Electoral Action party. Here only 37.5 per cent use social media channels.

6. Attitude analysis of the social media use of the members of the Seimas showed that respondents recognize social media as a highly efficient tool to advertise, to form an image of a politician and express ideas. However, members of Seimas refrain from goal-oriented, planned and well-considered strategy in the social media. Moreover, they are not inclined to hire a communication expert to secure themselves from the statements that could harm their political image. this proves that the members of the Seimas do not really grasp the meaning of the social media and opportunities that might open fully. There are exceptionally good examples of individual communication but more attention to social networks should be considered for each Member of Parliament of Lithuania and more financial and human effort it should be provided for this matter.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Responsibility for the coordination of communication in social media needs to be incorporated into each political party overall management structure and associated with traditional communication and engagement strategies.
2. Political parties should also to consider whether and how they can provide training and support to members who wish to start using social media to engage with the public.
3. Lithuanian politicians should use social media by communicating, engaging with the audience and building networks of supporters. This should be done through greater personalization of their social media profiles, monitoring the content posted and regularly following the discussions that develop on them.
4. Politicians should encourage citizens to discuss different issues by posting about current, provocative and interesting topics. Their stronger presence could influence political marketing, especially when it is considered that online discussions can shape people's opinions and behaviours, as it has been seen proven in this Master thesis.
5. Politicians should develop a goal-oriented, planned and well-considered strategy in the social media.
6. In order to efficiently use strategy in social media, politicians should focus on a few of the most popular social media sites and establish a quality presence there.
7. Politicians should hire a communication expert to secure themselves from the statements that could harm their political image.
8. Politicians should promote greater use of social media among Lithuanian citizens, especially among countryside members.

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APPENDICES

Appendix No. 1:

Networking analysis of the members of the Seimas:

No.	Name and Surname	Age	Sex	Facebook	Youtube	Twitter	Intagram	Party membership
1	Mindaugas BASTYS	50	Male	Yes	No	No	No	LSDP
2	Juozas BERNATONIS	62	Male	Yes	No	Yes	No	LSDP
3	Bronius BRADAUSKAS	71	Male	No	No	No	No	LSDP
4	Algirdas BUTKEVIČIUS	57	Male	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	LSDP
5	Arūnas DUDĖNAS	32	Male	Yes	No	No	No	LSDP
6	Kazys GRYBAUSKAS	61	Male	Yes	No	No	No	LSDP
7	Edmundas JONYLA	63	Male	Yes	No	No	No	LSDP
8	Benediktas JUODKA	72	Male	No	No	No	No	LSDP
9	Gediminas KIRKILAS	64	Male	Yes	No	No	No	LSDP
10	Orinta LEIPUTĖ	42	Female	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	LSDP
11	Vidas MIKALAIŠKAS	60	Male	Yes	No	No	No	LSDP
12	Gintautas MIKOLAITIS	56	Male	No	No	No	No	LSDP
13	Kristina MIŠKINIENĖ	55	Female	Yes	Yes	No	No	LSDP
14	Albinas MITRULIČIUS	62	Male	Yes	Yes	No	No	LSDP
15	Arvydas MOCKUS	55	Male	Yes	Yes	No	No	LSDP
16	Alma MONKAUSKAITĖ	54	Female	Yes	No	No	No	LSDP
17	Antanas NESTECKIS	59	Male	Yes	No	No	No	LSDP
18	Juozas OLEKAS	60	Male	Yes	No	No	No	LSDP
19	Andrius PALIONIS	40	Male	Yes	No	No	No	LSDP
20	Bronius PAUŽA	74	Male	Yes	No	No	No	LSDP
21	Marija Aušrinė PAVILIONIENĖ	71	Female	Yes	No	No	No	LSDP
22	Milda PETRAUSKIENĖ	66	Female	Yes	No	No	No	LSDP
23	Darius PETROŠIUS	40	Male	Yes	Yes	No	No	LSDP
24	Domas PETRULIS	34	Male	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	LSDP
25	Raminta POPOVIENĖ	45	Female	Yes	No	No	No	LSDP
26	Juras POŽELA	33	Male	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	LSDP
27	Giedrė PURVANECKIENĖ	70	Female	Yes	No	No	No	LSDP
28	Julius SABATAUSKAS	57	Male	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	LSDP
29	Algimantas SALAMAKINAS	63	Male	Yes	No	No	No	LSDP
30	Vytautas SAULIS	64	Male	Yes	No	No	No	LSDP
31	Rimantas SINKEVIČIUS	63	Male	Yes	Yes	No	No	LSDP
32	Algirdas SYSAS	61	Male	Yes	No	No	No	LSDP
33	Artūras SKARDŽIUS	55	Male	Yes	No	No	No	LSDP
34	Eduardas ŠABLINSKAS	58	Male	Yes	No	No	No	LSDP
35	Rimantė ŠALAŠEVIČIŪTĖ	61	Female	Yes	No	No	No	LSDP
36	Irena ŠIAULIENĖ	60	Female	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	LSDP
37	Birutė VĖSAITĖ	64	Female	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	LSDP
38	Aleksandras ZELTINIS	64	Male	Yes	No	No	No	LSDP
39	Edvardas ŽAKARIS	63	Male	Yes	No	No	No	LSDP
40	Mantas ADOMĖNAS	43	Male	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	LCD
41	Vilija ALEKNAITĖ ABRAMIKIENĖ	58	Female	Yes	Yes	No	No	LCD
42	Arvydas ANUŠAUSKAS	51	Male	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	LCD

43	Audronius AŽUBALIS	57	Male	Yes	No	Yes	No	LCD
44	Agnė BILOTAITĖ	33	Female	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	LCD
45	Vida Marija ČIGRIEJIENĖ	79	Female	No	No	No	No	LCD
46	Rimantas Jonas DAGYS	58	Male	Yes	No	No	No	LCD
47	Irena DEGUTIENĖ	66	Female	No	No	No	No	LCD
48	Arimantas DUMČIUS	75	Male	Yes	No	No	No	LCD
49	Donatas JANKAUSKAS	57	Male	Yes	No	No	No	LCD
50	Sergejus JOVAIŠA	61	Male	No	No	No	No	LCD
51	Rasa JUKNEVIČIENĖ	57	Female	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	LCD
52	Vytautas JUOZAPAITIS	52	Male	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	LCD
53	Liutauras KAZLAVICKAS	34	Male	Yes	No	No	No	LCD
54	Dainius KREIVYS	45	Male	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	LCD
55	Andrius KUBILIUS	59	Male	Yes	No	Yes	No	LCD
56	Rytas KUPČINSKAS	66	Male	No	No	No	No	LCD
57	Kazimieras KUZMINSKAS	68	Male	Yes	No	No	No	LCD
58	Vincė Vaidevutė MARGEVIČIENĖ	66	Female	Yes	No	No	No	LCD
59	Kęstutis MASIULIS	58	Male	Yes	No	No	No	LCD
60	Antanas MATULAS	59	Male	Yes	No	No	No	LCD
61	Jurgis RAZMA	57	Male	Yes	No	Yes	No	LCD
62	Paulius SAUDARGAS	36	Male	Yes	No	Yes	No	LCD
63	Kazys STARKEVIČIUS	59	Male	Yes	No	No	No	LCD
64	Algis STRELČIŪNAS	55	Male	Yes	No	No	No	LCD
65	Valentinas STUNDYS	55	Male	Yes	No	No	No	LCD
66	Stasys ŠEDBARAS	57	Male	Yes	No	No	No	LCD
67	Egidijus VAREIKIS	57	Male	No	No	Yes	No	LCD
68	Arvydas VIDŽIŪNAS	53	Male	Yes	No	No	No	LCD
69	Emanuelis ZINGERIS	58	Male	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	LCD
70	Pranas ŽEIMYS	58	Male	Yes	No	No	No	LCD
71	Rokas ŽILINSKAS	43	Male	Yes	No	Yes	No	LCD
72	Virginija BALTRAITIENĖ	57	Female	Yes	No	No	No	LB
73	Šarūnas BIRUTIS	54	Male	Yes	Yes	No	No	LB
74	Saulius BUCEVIČIUS	48	Male	Yes	No	No	No	LB
75	Valentinas BUKAUSKAS	53	Male	No	No	No	No	LB
76	Petras ČIMBARAS	48	Male	Yes	No	No	No	LB
77	Kęstutis DAUKŠYS	55	Male	Yes	Yes	No	No	LB
78	Sergej DMITRIJEV	56	Male	No	No	No	No	LB
79	Larisa DMITRIJEVA	65	Female	No	No	No	No	LB
80	Vilija FILIPOVIČIENĖ	56	Female	Yes	No	No	No	LB
81	Viktoras FIODOROVAS	28	Male	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	LB
82	Vytautas GAPŠYS	33	Male	No	No	Yes	No	LB
83	Vydas GEDVILAS	56	Male	No	Yes	No	No	LB
84	Loreta GRAUŽINIENĖ	52	Female	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	LB
85	Gediminas JAKAVONIS	57	Male	Yes	No	Yes	No	LB
86	Jonas KONDROTAS	72	Male	Yes	No	No	No	LB
87	Raimundas MARKAUSKAS	49	Male	No	No	No	No	LB
88	Dangutė MIKUTIENĖ	49	Female	Yes	No	No	No	LB
89	Petras NARKEVIČIUS	60	Male	No	No	No	No	LB
90	Raimundas PALIUKAS	68	Male	Yes	No	No	No	LB
91	Artūras PAULAUSKAS	62	Male	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	LB
92	Audronė PITRĖNIENĖ	57	Female	No	No	No	No	LB
93	Ričardas SARGŪNAS	61	Male	Yes	No	No	No	LB
94	Valdas SKARBALIUS	32	Male	Yes	No	No	No	LB
95	Gintaras TAMOŠIŪNAS	39	Male	Yes	No	No	No	LB
96	Darius ULICKAS	44	Male	Yes	Yes	No	No	LB

97	Sergej URSUL	63	Male	Yes	No	No	No	LB
98	Vitalija VONŽUTAITĖ	35	Male	No	No	No	No	LB
99	Mečislovas ZASČIURINSKAS	69	Male	Yes	Yes	No	No	LB
100	Zita ŽVIKIENĖ	60	Female	Yes	No	No	No	LB
101	Remigijus AČAS	53	Male	Yes	No	No	No	PPWC
102	Linas BALSYS	54	Male	Yes	No	Yes	No	PPWC
103	Rima BAŠKIENĖ	55	Female	No	No	No	No	PPWC
104	Povilas GYLYS	67	Male	No	No	Yes	No	PPWC
105	Vytautas Antanas MATULEVIČIUS	63	Male	Yes	No	No	No	PPWC
106	Audrius NAKAS	48	Male	No	No	No	No	PPWC
107	Naglis PUTEIKIS	51	Male	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	PPWC
108	Valerijus SIMULIK	49	Male	Yes	No	No	No	PPWC
109	Aurelija STANCIKIENĖ	49	Female	Yes	No	No	No	PPWC
110	Povilas URBSYS	53	Male	Yes	No	No	No	PPWC
111	Jonas VARKALA	64	Male	Yes	No	No	No	PPWC
112	Kęstutis BARTKEVIČIUS	54	Male	Yes	No	No	No	POJ
113	Stasys BRUNDZA	68	Male	Yes	No	No	No	POJ
114	Algimantas DUMBRAVA	57	Male	Yes	No	No	No	POJ
115	Petras GRAŽULIS	57	Male	No	Yes	No	No	POJ
116	Vytautas KAMBLEVIČIUS	65	Male	Yes	No	No	No	POJ
117	Kęstas KOMSKIS	52	Male	Yes	No	No	No	POJ
118	Rimas Antanas RUČYS	61	Male	Yes	No	No	No	POJ
119	Jolita VAICKIENĖ	45	Female	Yes	No	Yes	No	POJ
120	Ona VALIUKEVIČIŪTĖ	70	Female	No	No	No	No	POJ
121	Valdas VASILIAUSKAS	64	Male	Yes	No	No	No	POJ
122	Remigijus ŽEMAITAITIS	33	Male	No	No	No	No	POJ
123	Viktorija ČMILYTĖ-NIELSEN	32	Female	No	No	No	No	LMRL
124	Vitalijus GAILIUS	46	Male	No	No	No	No	LMRL
125	Eugenijus GENTVILAS	55	Male	No	No	No	No	LMRL
126	Kęstutis GLAVECKAS	66	Male	No	No	No	No	LMRL
127	Šarūnas GUSTAINIS	40	Male	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	LMRL
128	Dalia KUODYTĖ	53	Female	Yes	Yes	No	No	LMRL
129	Arminas LYDEKA	47	Male	Yes	No	No	No	LMRL
130	Eligijus MASIULIS	41	Male	Yes	No	Yes	No	LMRL
131	Andrius MAZURONIS	36	Male	Yes	No	Yes	No	LMRL
132	Gintaras STEPONAVIČIUS	48	Male	Yes	No	No	Yes	LMRL
133	Dalia TEIŠERSKYTĖ	71	Female	Yes	No	No	No	LMRL
134	Zbignev JEDINSKIJ	56	Male	No	No	Yes	No	LPEA
135	Vanda KRAVČIONOK	46	Female	No	No	No	No	LPEA
136	Juzef KVETKOVSKIJ	76	Male	No	No	No	No	LPEA
137	Michal MACKEVIČ	62	Female	No	No	No	No	LPEA
138	Jaroslav NARKEVIČ	53	Male	Yes	No	No	No	LPEA
139	Irina ROZOVA	57	Female	Yes	No	No	No	LPEA
140	Leonard TALMONT	59	Male	No	No	No	No	LPEA
141	Rita TAMAŠUNIENĖ	42	Female	No	No	No	No	LPEA

Abbreviations in the table:

Yes- his/her profile is found by searched keywords; **No** - his/her profile was not found by searched keywords.

LSDP - Lithuanian Social Democratic

LCD – Lithuanian Christian Democrats

LB – Labour Party

PPWC – Political Party “The Way of Courage”

POJ – Party “Order and Justice”

LMRL – Liberals Movement of the Republic of Lithuania

LPEA - Lithuanian Poles’ Electoral Action

Appendix No. 2:

Semi-structured interview questionnaire:

Dear Respondent,

My name is Agne Gaizutiene. I am a student at Mykolas Romeris University-Middlesex University Business and media school. Please take your time to fill up the following questionnaire regarding the use of social media by the politicians of Lithuania. This survey is done as a part of my Master Thesis. The purpose of this study is to obtain direct information from the members of the Seimas regarding the motives and features of the social media use in political communication, to find out politicians’ position on the importance and factors stimulating the use of social media.

Your participation is voluntary and there is no penalty if you do not participate. If you have any questions or concerns about completing the questionnaire, about being in this study, or to receive a summary of my findings you may contact me by e-mail agne.gaizutiene@gmail.com.

Thank you in advance for your time.

Sincerely,

Agne Gaizutiene

Your name, surname *

Is it important for you to be seen on the Internet? *

Please comment your answer.

Does the Internet as a communication tool make an integral part of your everyday life? *

Please comment your answer.

What kind of social media forms do you use for political communication? *

Choose few answers if needed.

- Social media networks (Facebook, MySpace);
- Blog's;
- The Internet encyclopedia (Wikipedia);
- Forums;
- Video and photo sharing sites (YouTube, Instagram);
- Microblogging site (Twitter).
- Other:

How do you take the social media? *

- I do not know what it is
- I have sufficient understanding
- I use social media, however I am not sufficiently informed to make grounded decisions
- I have a clear picture of what it is and use social media
- Other:

How does social media help for you to promote your as political actor image? *

	Totally agree	Agree	I do not have an opinion	I do not agree
Study of society's opinion on various issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Promotion of popularity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Spread of information, advertising	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Maintaining of the contacts with the society	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Why have you started using social media?

Choose few answers if needed

- I was following the example of other politicians
- I thought this is inevitable, all politicians will enter the space of social media in the future
- I believed to gain real benefit for myself as a politician
- Other:

Do you have a defined social media strategy? *

- Yes, I do.
- No, I do not, but I plan to incorporate one in the future;
- I do not and I have no plans of incorporating one.

- Other:

Do you manage your social media profiles by yourself? *

- Yes
- Both myself and my assistant
- Other:

Do you expect a discussion under your posts? Do you yourself get involved in a discussion? *

Please comment your answer.

What determines the frequency of your posts in the social media? What topics do you choose?

Please comment your answer.

What is your reaction to negative comments under your posts in the social media? *

Please comment your answer.

Are you planning to use social media in the future? *

- Yes
- No
- Maybe
- Other:

Pateikti