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**INTERNETA MEDIJU IETEKME UZ SABIEDRISKO DOMU PAR MEŽA
NOZARI LATVIJĀ UN IGAUNIJĀ**

MAGISTRA DARBS

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**THE INFLUENCE OF INTERNET MEDIA ON PUBLIC OPINION ABOUT
THE FOREST INDUSTRY IN LATVIA AND ESTONIA**

MASTER'S THESIS

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ANOTĀCIJA

Maģistra darba „Interneta mediju ietekme uz sabiedrisko domu par meža nozari Latvijā un Igaunijā” nolūks ir aprakstīt, vai interneta mediji ir ietekmējuši sabiedrības viedokli par mežu nozari Latvijā un Igaunijā.

Jaunas tehnoloģijas, mediji un internets atstāj iespaidu uz sabiedrību. Īpaši ar interneta plašajām iespējām mūsdienās, kad tas ir pieejams nepārtaukti un jaunākās ziņas ir iespējams uzzināt uzreiz, cilvēki paļaujas uz informāciju, ko tie izlasa interneta medijos. Tā kā meža nozare ir viena no tautsaimniecības balstiem gan Latvijā, gan Igaunijā un šī nozare ir demonstrējusi lielu nozīmi ekonomikas attīstībā, ir svarīgi noteikt kādu priekšstatu interneta mediji rada par šo nozari.

Šī darba mērķis ir noteikt vai interneta mediji rada negatīvu priekšstatu par meža nozari Latvijā un Igaunijā, analizējot interneta mediju saturu un tādējādi noteikt kādas ziņas par mežu nozari ir pieejamas lasītājiem.

Darba teorētiskā daļa ir balstīta uz mediju un komunikācijas teorijām, un pētījums tika veikts interneta mediju platformās *Tvnet* un *Delfi* Latvijas gadījumā un *Delfi* Igaunijas gadījumā no 2011.gada 1.februāra līdz 2013.gada 1.februārim.

Šis pētījums ir norādījis, ka interneta mediji daļēji rada negatīvu iespaidu par meža nozari Latvijā un jo īpaši tas bija redzams *Tvnet* sadaļā „Zaļā Zeme” no 2011.gada jūnija līdz 2011.gada septembrim, savukārt tāda tendence netika novērota Igaunijā.

Atslēgvārdi: mediji, internets, meža nozare

ANNOTATION

The master thesis “The influence of internet media on public opinion about the forest industry in Latvia and Estonia” aims to describe the ways internet media influences the public perception of the forest industry in Latvia and Estonia.

New technology, media and the Internet have an impact on society. Especially with the wide possibilities of the internet in recent times, when it is available continuously and the latest news are to be reported immediately, people rely on the information they read in online media. Because the forest industry is one of the economic pillar’s in Latvia and Estonia, and the industries have demonstrated great importance to economic development, it is important to determine how internet media represents this industry.

The paper aims to explore whether or not internet media creates negative perception about the forest industry in Latvia and Estonia, and to determine what different messages are hidden throughout internet news site articles.

The theoretical framework is based on media and communication theories and the research was carried out by analyzing internet media platforms *Tvnet* and *Delfi* in the case of Latvia and *Delfi* in the case of Estonia from February 1, 2011 to February 1, 2013.

This study has indicated that internet media partly creates negative public perception about the forest industry in Latvia and in particular it was observed in *Tvnet*’s section “Green Land” from June 2011 to September 2011, however, it was not observed in Estonia.

Keywords: media, internet, forest industry

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INTRODUCTION

The internet and other innovative technologies have changed the world. The twenty-first century has many things to offer, and its technology is now central to communications and the media. Information is spread all around us with enormous speed, and internet media has become a dominant source of news and information for all generations. Simply put, “ has drastically changed the way people are receiving news and information” (Roberts, Wanta and Dzwo, 2002: 452)

The Internet media has been one of the most important daily news feeds to the public for at least the last 10 years. With the development of technology in recent years, the number of people who get their daily news from internet sites has increased dramatically. According to the Internet World Stats, in 2012, almost 70 percent of Latvian population used internet while in Estonia 77 percent of population was using it (Internet World Stats, 2012).

This M.A. thesis is entitled “The influence of internet media on public opinion about the forest industry in Latvia and Estonia,” and herein it will be argued that the growth of internet media influence on public opinion regarding the forest industry in Latvia and it will be compared if the same happens in Estonia.

Forests are Latvia’s “national treasure.” This “green gold” is deeply rooted in Latvian cultural traditions. In 1999, author Katrina Schwartz noted that there is a “battle over sustainable forestry” in Latvia since the time when Latvia gained its independence from the Soviet Union. Since then there has existed a deep division in “political culture between two competing conceptions of national identity and developmental destiny.” One group maintains that “Latvian forestry is not sustainable environmentally, economically, or socially, and that fundamental reform of forestry sector governance is imperative” yet others insist that “Latvian forestry practices are at least as environmentally sound and economically rational as those of purportedly enlightened Western countries, and that the Latvian state is fulfilling adequately its stewardship role” (Schwartz, 1999).

A current event that reignited the debate was a movie called “*Latvia’s Pulp Fiction*” shown on the channel Al Jazeera in February, 2011. It stressed that the future of the forests in Latvia is under concern. This caused a debate and discussions in

internet media sites where anyone was able to participate and express their opinion. While it will not be argued in this thesis whether or not the accusations (namely, massive deforestation of Latvian forests) are reasonable, it is very important to note what role internet media plays when publishing stories about the forest industry in Latvia and it will be discussed if a similar situation exists in Estonia.

The proof of this topic's significance can be found in many sources. Internet and mass media affect society's opinion and influence its readers with its presented information. They have become an important tool for the transmission of information which later assists in the formation of opinions.

According to the above mentioned the **hypothesis** of this paper is: The Internet media creates negative perceptions about the forest industry.

The purpose of the master's thesis is to explore the way the media represents the forest industry and the use of forest resources in Latvia and Estonia, and to determine what different messages are hidden throughout internet news site articles. To achieve the goal, the **objective** of this master's thesis is to examine and identify the role of internet media in the public perception of the forest industry in Latvia and Estonia.

This paper presents a scientific evaluation on how communication and media works both in theory and practice in two countries. In order to examine the importance of internet media, the following **tasks** are required:

1. To analyze theoretical background and theories, explain the terms related to internet media, communication, and information.
2. To analyze the importance of public communication in internet media.
3. To analyze the importance of the forest industry in Latvia and Estonia.
4. To compare and conduct content analysis of two Latvian internet media websites and compare it with one Estonian internet media website as it pertains to what has been written about the forest sector, and to determine in which, if any messages, potential differences are detected. In order to achieve that, an emphasis on negative articles will be put.
5. To conduct a survey in order to find out if the news in internet media affects the public opinion about the forest sector.

The method used in this thesis is descriptive and comparative contextual analysis which consists of studies of the theoretical literature and an analysis of the obtained facts and findings.

The theoretical portion of this thesis consists of an analysis of various types of literature designed for communication, media studies and internet, as well as forestry and the forest industry itself, thus linking them to the practical research portion, where theories will be assigned to actual activities on the internet media.

The empirical portion of this thesis consists of general statistical data, a comparative study between Latvian and Estonian internet media and their activities there, as well as a survey. The empirical research will attempt to show that internet news media is biased when presenting information about the forest industry, particularly when it highlights negative rather than positive news; in this way forming a certain opinion for the public. This will attempt to prove the hypothesis that the internet news media creates negative connotations about the forest industry.

The paper consists of three chapters and subdivisions. The first covers the theoretical part about the communication, news media and rise of internet; the second chapter introduces the forest industries in Latvia and Estonia; and the third chapter is devoted to a comparative study of internet media and its representation of forest industries in Latvia and Estonia.

1. FROM COMMUNICATION TO INTERNET MEDIA

Over the last years, the influence of mass media has grown rapidly with the advance of technology. First there were books, then newspapers, magazines, photography, sound recordings, films, radio, television and finally the so-called New Media: the Internet, as well as the social media. In recent years, just about everyone depends on information and communication to keep their lives moving through daily activities. Additionally, people make decisions based on the information that they gather from mass media and interpersonal media sources.

People should be aware that the values, beliefs and the decisions regarding a particular topic are made based on assumptions, experiences, and education in addition to known facts. Internet and media surround us and therefore affect the way we learn about our world and the way we think of certain issues. People rely on mass media for current news, and facts about what is important and what should be known and understood. People trust the media as an authority for news, information, education and entertainment. Considering that news media has powerful influence, it should be understood how it really works.

1.1. The Development of Communication

The scientific approaches to defining “mass communication” may differ but Berger and Chaffee (1987: 17) categorized it under the name “communication science” and defined it as “a type of communication using media to distribute sound, text and images among an audience.”

Another important term is “information.” According to Levitan “information is infinitely variable in that it characterizes every different subject one is able to recognize and it is ubiquitous in that it pertains to everything.” Thus information “carries with it a variety of meanings ranging from news to acts of informing or conveying” (Balnaves, Donald and Shoemith, 2009: 110).

Communication is the sharing of meaning through the exchange of information. In interpersonal communication, the designated senders and receivers are the subject of communication; in societal communication, the content of communication has the potential to be diffused to society at large and that is what can be called as “mass communication.” There are several theories related to mass communication and mass media; one of the most important of those theories is the

“mass communication theory” which argues that relations between society and media have both social-cultural and political aspects.

While interpersonal communication is interactive when the message is sent from one to one with feedback, mass communication can be either interactive or one-directional. Traditional mass communication used to be one-directional; that is, where the message is sent from one to many. However, with the expansion of the Internet, a new kind of interactive communication has appeared, characterized by the potential of sending messages from many to many, in real time or scheduled time; including also the chance of using point-to-point communication, depending on the purpose and characteristics of the intended aim (Castells, 2009: 54-55).

According to Professor Denis McQuail, the study of mass communication is based on a statement that there are certain effects from the media. However, there have been many studies and debates on what exactly those effects are and by what means they can be identified. Lasswell in 1948 formulated that communication is the study of “Who says what to whom in which channel and to what effect?” Katz in 1980 defined the history of communications theory as “oscillation between active and passive audiences, between minimal or powerful effects.” Later in 1995 Lowery and DeFleur introduced the leading question of communications research as “What do mass communications actually do to us, both individually and collectively?” (Nightingale, 2011: 320).

Author Manuel Castells (2009: 55) has gone further and developed the term *mass self-communication*. It is “mass communication” because it can potentially reach a global audience anywhere in the world but at the same time it is “self-communication” because the formation of message is self-generated, the definition of the potential receiver is self-directed, and the possibility of being restored in specific messages or content from the Internet and electronic communication networks is self-selected. The three forms of communication: “interpersonal,” “mass communication” and “mass self-communication” coexist, interact, and complement each other rather than substituting for one another.

There have been a number of transformations that have taken place in the communication process. Mansell in 2002 and McChesney in 2007 labeled them as a “communication revolution.” In addition, already in 1984 Rice identified the emergence of new media through the interaction of technological change and communication (Castells, 2009: 55).

The first transformation was related to technology, and was based on the digitization of communication, computer networking and Internet access. Secondly, an important transformation happened in the organizational and institutional structure of communication because of the widespread commercialization of the media; the globalization and concentration of media business through networking; the formation of multimedia business groups that reach out to all forms of communication; and the segmentation and diversification of media markets, with emphasis on the cultural identification of media markets. Thirdly, there has been a process where two contradictory trends have developed – the rise of a global culture and multiple identity cultures; and the rise of individualism and communalism. Those are two opposing yet powerful cultural patterns that characterize our world. The capability or inability to form communication between the different cultural frames defines the possibility of communication or miscommunication between the subjects of diverse communication processes. Therefore, the media is an important part of the communication process that either ties or divides societies in any kind of issue. Lastly, the growing influence of corporations in the media, information, and communication industries over the public may shape the communication revolution in the service of business interests (Castells, 2009: 57).

Given the impact of Internet technologies on human communication, scholars have shown increasing interest in the Internet and other new media. The discussion as to how and why the Internet should be examined from a communication perspective includes articles describing how traditional mass communication theoretical frameworks can be applied to the new developments and the basic unit of analysis of Internet communication. The “How and Why” of Internet research have been considered one of the major agendas of communication research (Lee, Kim and Rosen, 2009: 16).

1.2. Mass Media and Society

We live in times where the society is surrounded by mass media. For many people television, music, radio and the internet are important and central parts of their lives. A way to realize the importance of the media in our lives is to consider how life would be without the media because without it, nothing else would be the same. Therefore, understanding the relationship between media and society has become a

significant topic to investigate, as one considers that a free, high-quality and wholly independent social media is one of the most important cornerstones of a free society.

While the theories surrounding the effects of media is a complex and ongoing field of research, many research studies show that mass media has a significant impact and effects on public awareness, perceptions and sometimes behavioral patterns, such as buying decisions and voting.

The term “mass media” is quite complex and hard to define as well. The Dictionary of Media studies explains it as “all of the communications media that reach a large audience, especially television, radio, newspapers” (Dictionary of Media studies, 2006: 141). Another way to explain mass media is to say that “mass media are the technological vehicles through which mass communication takes place.” However, the “new media” is defined as “media which are both integrated and interactive and also use digital code at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries” (Van Dijk, 2006: 9).

Yet another important part in the field of mass media is its connection with the audience. Many times mass media becomes as a primary information source; therefore, people become dependent on the media, which influence their concept and perception of reality. Although the audience seems an obvious and natural concept, in terms of media, the concept of the “audience” is complicated and it can be defined from different perspectives – from both media makers and their consumers. The awareness of the audience is essential in creating media content and at the same time the discussion of the impact and effect on the audience; that is, in a discussion about media’s effects (Rožukalne, 2011: 15).

In the communication process the “audience” refers to “the readers of, viewers of, listeners to one or other media channel or of this or that type of content or performance” (McQuail, 1997: 1). Media audiences can be regarded as the product of social context, which is characterized by a shared cultural understanding and common information needs as well as a response to media content offered (Rožukalne, 2011: 15).

To become a member of a media audience is very easy. This process is characterized by independent, voluntary, and free media content choice. Often both media theorists as well as professionals refer to media audience as to public because they are both recipients of the context. Yet sociologist Leon Mayhew referred to a term “media public” as a situation when media audience members are involved in a

debate in broader public issues. As emphasized by media theorist Nicolas Garnham, in recent times social interactions that affect the opinions of individuals are carried out by the influence of media (Rožukalne, 2011: 28).

Generating mass media content with the help of media audiences has a longstanding tradition. Readers' letters to the editor were the most popular example of audience participation opportunities offered by the mass media before the emergence of internet media. However, the development of the new media has developed a new era in audience participation – one that is interactive and more accessible – due to “to the availability of cheap and easy-to-use digital technologies” (Van Dijck, 2009: 44).

A way for individuals to be connected with the social world is through socialization that can be characterized as “the process whereby we learn and internalize the values, beliefs, and norms of our culture and, in so doing, develop a sense of self.” If there are no disturbances in the socialization process, the dominant values, beliefs, and norms of our society become “our” values and norms. From a sociological point of view, the media play a crucial role in shaping those values and norms and therefore media affect how we learn about our world and interact with one another (Croteau and Hoynes, 2003: 15).

Media theorist Marshall McLuhan's (1964: 8-9) medium theory stated that “any advanced modern society is shaped by the various media technologies that are available to it.” Therefore, what matters is the medium presented by the media, not necessarily the message, because “the ‘message’ of any medium or technology is the change of scale or pace or pattern that it introduces into human affairs.” That means that the messages contained in any medium are inseparable from the medium's human consequences and “the medium is the message because it is the medium that shapes and controls the scale and form of human association and action.”

Authors Michael O'Shaughnessy and Jane Stadler (2008: 42) write that there are two models that can be analyzed to understand the relationship between media and society. The first suggest that media reflect the realities, values and norms of the society; however, the media itself does not directly affect society; they simply act as a mirror of society or a window on the world, which can be used as a resource to understand the society. The second model suggests that media does have an influence on what people think, what they believe, and how they behave. Therefore, the media shapes society's values, and has direct effects on society's actions. In this thesis the second model will be examined.

In Figure 1.1 the aspect of media and its influence on society can be understood. In such a model, media producers, media texts, and media audiences are separated from popular common sense. The media producers, in constructing their stories and images are reflecting various social ideas and beliefs that are held by different groups. The audience then consuming these texts are somehow influenced and affected of what they see and read. These influences then contribute to the general common-sense ideas (O’Shaughnessy and Stadler, 2008: 58).

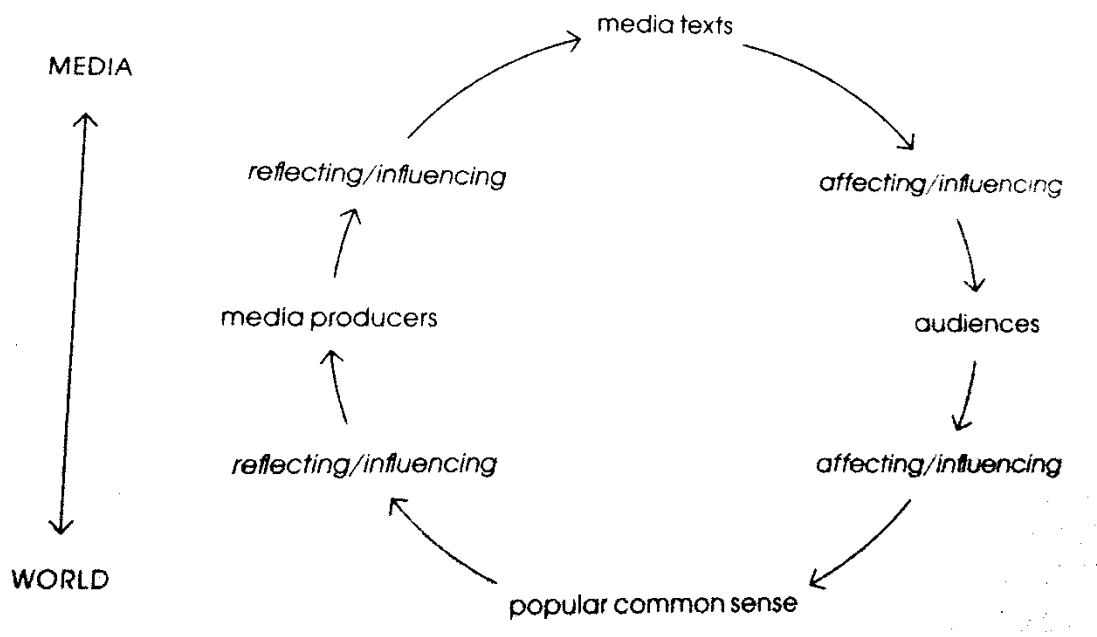


Fig. 1. 1. Model of the media-world relationship (O’Shaughnessy and Stadler, 2008: 58)

The early mass media such as newspapers, magazines, television, radio and cinema developed rapidly and they are still important in today’s society. There are many and continuing changes regarding the aspects of media content and form as well as the changes in the spectrum of available media, yet they still are considered to have a great impact in the process of influencing society. There is no doubt that whatever changes there are, they have significance in mass media in contemporary society in all spheres of life (McQuail, 2010: 4).

The expression “new media” has been used since the 1960s and has included the expanding and diverse set of applied communication technologies. There are difficulties in defining what the “new media” consist of. Some choose to link information communication technologies (ICT) with their associated social contexts, bringing together three elements: technological devices; activities, practices and uses;

and social arrangements and organizations that form around the devices and practices. Because of the “new media” and the consequences of the development of technology, the “balance of power” has shifted from the media to the audience because there are now more options to choose from and more active uses of media available (McQuail, 2010: 39-40).

1.3. The Influence of Mass Media

The impact of media is obviously seen at the ways in which mass media is such a focal point of our lives, and therefore shapes our relationship with various social institutions. As such, it is also essential to recognize some of the different roles that the media play in the society. Media is often controversial because different groups of the society expect that media would play different roles. For audiences, the media can serve as entertainment and as a source of information. For media workers, the media industry is a job opportunity which can result in professional prestige and its resulting income. For media owners, the media is a source of profit and possibly also a source of political power. In addition, for society in general, the media can be the start of transmitting information and values and can serve as the source of political and economic power (Croteau and Hoynes, 2003: 20).

Reasonable discussions of news media often concentrate on the question of objectivity in the news. Michael Schudson in his study *Discovering the News* provided a definition for objectivity stating that “the belief in objectivity is a faith in ‘facts,’ a distrust of ‘values,’ and a commitment to their segregation.” Therefore, objectivity is more than just getting facts correct and straight; it is a doctrine that identifies the division of “fact” and “value” and it requires using a method or set of practices that would ensure that the two terms are separated (Croteau and Hoynes, 2003: 132).

People holding different interests, different amounts of power, and enjoying different relationships to those producing the news actively tries to influence the content of the news. It is not surprising that what appears on the news often reflect to the relative power of actors in the society rather than some “objective” reality. Therefore, according the Croteau and Hoynes (2003: 135), “news is the product of a social process through which media personnel make decisions about what is newsworthy and what is not, about who is important and who is not, about what views are to be included and what views can be dismissed.” However, it is important to

notice that an ideal of objectivity where the values would be separated from the facts is unobtainable, although some would argue that it is an honorable goal.

“Representation” is a key idea in traditional media studies where it points out the role of “ideology, belief, and selective perception in the act of communicating ideas about and experiences of the ‘real’ world (in photography, television, film, etc.)” It also draws our attention to the role of language and visual representation, the signs and codes that we consume when looking at images. In using the concept “representation” the way that the words or visual signs are used to change the object in the world about which we communicate are stressed. Therefore, it can be argued that the world only has meaning for people because of the concepts that are employed to make it meaningful. Images and words both lead people to “see” the world in certain ways and shape people’s ideas and in recent times (Lister et al., 2009: 127). Technology and new media have played a significant role in such a process.

Most media scholars believe that media texts provide consistent, well organized and shifting ways of seeing the world and therefore the scholars are interested in the basic images of society they provide. In this context, an ideology is “a system of meaning that helps define and explain the world and that makes value judgments about that world.” Ideology is connected to terms such as worldview, belief system and values, but it goes beyond those concepts; it applies not only to the beliefs held about the world but also to be basic ways in which the world is defined (Croteau and Hoynes, 2003: 160).

One of the dominant ideas in media studies has been that the media apply an ideological control over society. Mass media texts can undeniably be understood in ideological terms and as forms of communication that points out certain sets of ideas and pays no attention to others. Media is therefore ideological, selling certain messages and worldviews. For those who are responsible for the promotion of particular ideas, media is among the primary battlegrounds. James Davison Hunter (1991) claimed that media is at the center of so called “culture wars” in which fundamental issues are being discussed and fought over. He argued that the ways in which the media provides forms of public discourse is often in very biased terms because different people use various media technologies to promote their positions. “The media give us pictures of social interaction and social institutions that, by their sheer repetition on a daily basis, can play important roles in shaping broad social definitions” (Croteau and Hoynes, 2003: 161-163).

Author Robert Fowler (2007: 19) in his book *Language in the News* argued that nearly all news stories are socially constructed; the stories are constructed on the basis of mental categories which are present in readers and built on by the media. Because the institutions of news reporting and presentation are socially, economically and politically situated, all news is reported from some specific angle. Anything that is written about the world is expressed from a particular position and language plays an important role in reflecting that position (Fowler, 2007: 10).

The discourse of the media also relate to its own institutional and economic position. An economic circumstance which relates to the press' ideological role is the fact that most of the media is owned by people and companies which are commercial enterprises, often selling a range of diverse products and services. There are two factors which give mass media specific importance in mediating ideology for the individual. First is the scale of publication and the amount of people reading these publications in their daily routine. The second factor is qualitative rather than quantitative. The economic and political circumstances of the media industry give it unconditional interest in mediating ideas from particular perspectives (Fowler, 2007: 122).

Dissimilar news is reported differently in both content and presentation. Disaffections and affiliation are seen obviously when reading carefully and making connections with the stories reported. According to Stuart Hall and Greg Philo "the media do not simply and transparently report events which are 'naturally' newsworthy in themselves. 'News' is the end-product of a complex process which begins with a systematic sorting and selection of events and topics according to a socially constructed set of categories." Philo goes further and explains that "news is not 'found' or even 'gathered' so much as made." (Fowler, 2007: 12-13). Therefore, the news media select events for reporting according to a complex set of criteria of newsworthiness; news is not simply what happens but rather what it is that can be presented as newsworthy.

Researchers Daft and Lengel in 1984 proposed the "media richness theory" to explain the media choices of the messages they exchange. They defined "information richness" as the ability of information to change an individual's understanding. Moreover, uncertainty and ambiguity influence the ways in which information is processed (Okazaki and Romero 2009: 103).

Therefore, it is evident that news not always is a natural phenomenon emerging straight from 'reality,' but it is a product that is shaped by particular mass media. News is produced by an industry, formed by the bureaucratic and economic structure of that industry and by the relations between media and other industries (Fowler, 2007: 222).

According to author Maxwell McCombs (2004: 1-2), through their daily selection and display of the news, editors and news directors focus society's attention and influence their perceptions of what are the most important issues of the day. This ability to influence the salience of topics on the public agenda has come to be called the "agenda-setting" role of the news media. To a certain degree, the agenda of the news media becomes the agenda of the public. News media has power to establish news that would become important topics and by placing an issue of the public agenda where the issue becomes the focus of public attention and thought, it has the ability to start the formation of public opinion. It was predicted that "when the media emphasizes an event, they influence the audience to see it important." In addition, Wanta and Wu found that "interpersonal communication can reinforce the media agenda-setting effects on the public agenda when the conversation deals with the same issue that the media have emphasized" (Roberts, Wanta and Dzwo, 2002: 454).

Already in 1972 McCombs and Shaw "found a significant correlation between the amount of media coverage generated and the rankings of importance by media consumers." Therefore, the media has a significant role in determining which issue will be covered in the news section and which will not; as such it has the power to stimulate interest in certain topic. Researchers Brosius and Kepplinger discovered that these agenda-setting effects become visible when coverage of a topic is intense, which then leads to subsequent discussion of issues in the media (Roberts, Wanta and Dzwo, 2002: 452-453).

Discussion of public opinion usually focuses on the distribution of opinions, meaning how many are for, how many are against and how many are undecided as to a particular issue. However, it is also important to note that people have opinions on many things, but only a few topics really matter to them. Therefore, the agenda-setting role of the news media is their influence on the importance of an issue, an influence on whether a number of people really regard to hold an opinion about that issue. Bernard Cohen has observed that the news media may not always be successful

in telling people what to think, but they are very successful in telling their audiences what to think about it (McCombs, 2004: 2-3).

Four rhetorical nuances affect the agenda-setting process by drawing attention to the salience of particular news items:

1. Frequency of repetition
2. The prominence with which items are displayed: headline news is assumed to have greater significance than *smaller* news stories
3. The degree of conflict present in the news items
4. The framing of a news item – in what context and when it appears (McCombs and Gilbert, 1986: 7-8).

The main conclusions found by agenda-setting theorists state that any given media agenda will give rise to a public agenda over the course of time; the audiences tend to see important those issues that the mass media see important. Jack McLeod explained that “an audience member exposed to a given medium agenda will adjust his or her perception of the importance of issues in the direction corresponding to the amount of attention devoted to those issues in the medium used” (Balnaves, Donald and Shoesmith, 2009: 66).

1.4. The Rise of Internet

It is important to notice that mass communication is no longer the only means of society-wide and global communication. Mostly it is associated with the development of new technologies which have created an alternative potential network of communication. Mass communication, in the sense of a large-scale, is one way flow of public content; it is still direct and intense, but it is no longer presented only by the “traditional” mass media such as newspapers, magazines, television. These have been supplemented by new media such as the Internet and mobile technology and therefore new types of content and flow are carried at the same time (McQuail, 2010: 4).

The Internet at first began as non-commercial means of intercommunication and data exchange between working professionals and was first deployed already in 1969 (Castells, 2009: 62).

The first phase of convergence of computing and communication in the Western world began in the mid-1950s. However, until the 1970s, networking was still

expensive and limited. Early networking services were available to large business users and were slow; therefore, networking focused almost exclusively on large business centers. Thus, the first phase can be characterized by limited development of low-performance information technologies (Cowhey et al., 2009: 20).

The most successful development during the 1960s and 1970s was the rise of computer and corporate networking. Networking opened new markets for firms, initiated new demands from users, and required new policy responses. Cowhey (2009: 21) explains that “the number, ubiquity, and heterogeneity of network end points accelerated as PC connections to the Internet proliferated and as voice and data mobility spread” from the 1950s through 1980s. Because of that the prices for services declined but the breadth of applications supported by the network increased sharply.

The second phase of convergence of computing and communication began in the mid-1980s. Personal computers became more available and the Internet and its commercialization also were very important. The Internet revolutionized the architecture of underlying capacity of the network. The start of inter-networking dates back to the mid-1980s when companies and network providers began to “inter-connect” their networks. That set the stage for the ICT growth of the 1990s. By 1994, the Internet was overloaded by email services but in 1995, the “dot com” boom started (Cowhey et al., 2009: 23).

“Revolutionary,” “explosion,” “a new era in communication” – that kind of language is used to explain the Internet’s growth (Croteau and Hoynes, 2003: 3). Therefore, Internet technology is characterized by mainly being more extensive, less structured, often interactive as well as private and individualized. No communication tool has developed faster and proven to be more diverse than the Internet (Schorr, Campbell and Schenk, 2003: 13).

In 1993, a physicist Tim Berners-Lee developed commands which meant that all internet access could take place through a common browser, and the World Wide Web (WWW) became known as a platform through which almost all internet access and transfer could have taken place (Lax, 2009: 168-169). Therefore, in recent times internet has grown to be the main alternative of personal and interpersonal communication as well as providing profitable services. In addition, the Internet is being called Web 2.0 and it has three distinguishing features: it is easy to use, it promotes sociality, and it offers users free publishing and production platforms that

allow them to upload any content (Lovink, 2012: 5). As a result, the number of Internet users on the planet grew from under 40 million in 1995 to about 1.4 billion in 2008 (Castells, 2009: 62).

The Internet, the World Wide Web, and wireless communication are not media in the traditional sense anymore but rather they are means of interactive communication. Because of the diverse range of its applications, the Internet is the communication fabric of our lives. All over the world, Internet users under 30 years of age primarily read newspapers online because newspapers have become internally networked organizations, globally connected to networks of information on the Internet. Therefore it is clear that mass communication in the traditional sense is now also Internet-based communication in both its production and distribution (Castells, 2009: 65).

Lazarsfeld already in 1940 examined the displacement effect of radio on print media. Since then this branch of research has covered virtually all new forms of communication technology, including television, cable television, video, e-mail and the internet. Media displacement theory researches the amount of time spent accessing different media types, with the assumption that individuals have limited time for media consumption. In this context displacement theorists have introduced the term “niche”, which can be defined as “the function or role of a form or population within the community.”

Dimmick studied media displacement effects between interactive and traditional media in the provision of news content. Based on niche theory and uses and gratifications theory – which can be defined as the “utilities consumers use to make media and content choices,” Dimmick compared the gratification opportunities of the internet as perceived by consumers with their perceptions of broadcast television, newspaper, radio and cable TV. His findings suggested that the internet has the largest niche in terms of gratification opportunities for news consumers (Okazaki and Romero, 2009: 101).

Therefore, much like the invention of the printing press, the internet is radically transforming the most basic elements of modern civilization.

1.5. Internet as Mass Media

The Internet has drastically changed the ways in which individuals receive news and information. It provides links to other news media and their content. It allows individuals to receive messages electronically from other individuals via e-mail. And it provides open forums for discussion on a wide variety of topics through discussion lists, bulletin boards, and chat rooms (Roberts, Wanta and Dzwo, 2002: 452). Online media represent a new kind of media because it offers greater potential for interactivity.

Interactivity is a feature that can affect change, and as such it is fundamentally changing the relations between media producers, public figures and the public (Craig, 2004: 10). Because the Internet continues to initiate a cultural revolution in many ways, based on the distribution of information, it is not surprising that changes also happen in news media. For example, mostly all print newspapers have an online page where some of the newspaper content is available for free (Craig, 2004: 88).

However, it is important to note that the advantage and opportunities of the “new media” compared to the traditional media is still relevant and important because it has had a significant role in the development of media industry, thus remembering that the traditional media must not to be forgotten; it will always be relevant. Fidler (1997: 29) spoke about the “mediamorphosis” phenomena when describing media changes and convergence. He argued that “new media do not arise spontaneously and independently – they emerge gradually from the metamorphosis of older media. When newer forms emerge, the older forms tend to adapt and continue to evolve rather than die.”

In order to understand all communication technologies, one of the “Media Lab” cofounders N. Negroponte drew overlapping circles representing “broadcast and motion picture industry,” “print and publishing industry” and “computer industry” (Figure 1.2). Negroponte assumed that all of the industries will be forming one distinct form of communication (Bucy, 2005: 40).

Therefore, it is clearly seen that the new media is becoming a main public opinion creator, integrating all industries in one entity. Because the new technology has appeared, it has the possibility to create immeasurable mass communication flow. No more are there separate areas of communications because the boundaries are dissolving. “We are now entering the era of convergence. The potential is impressive and new combinations are becoming possible” (Golding et al., 2000: 79). The process of bringing together different media into one activity or one medium is called “convergence.” The Internet is a convergence technology because it has brought together video, sound and text (Balnaves, Donald and Shoesmith, 2009: 6).

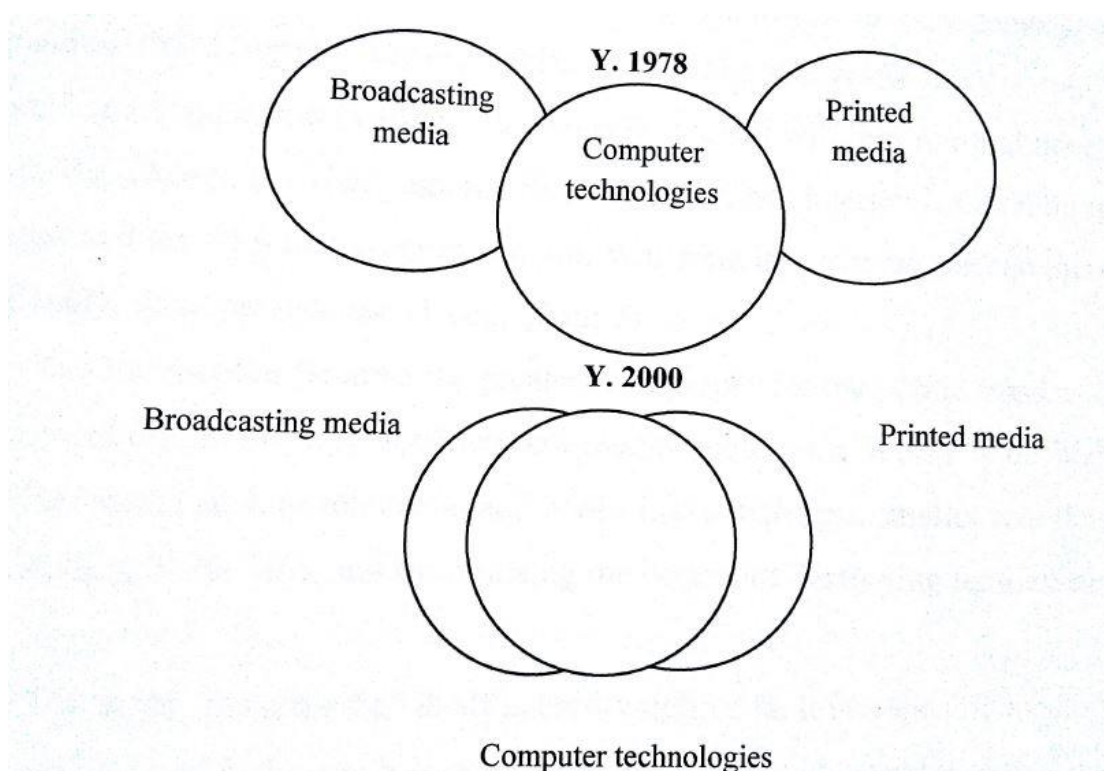


Fig. 1. 2. Negroponte conception model (Bucy, 2005: 39)

Internet news media has the distinct advantage of being able to provide coverage of events and news almost instantly, and most certainly constantly. The Internet news media can not only provide information quicker but it is also able to provide more comprehensive background information; for instance, links to databases, videos or audios. Such multi-media news is not only more entertaining and visually attractive but is able to provide wider communication, including a greater degree of realism (Craig, 2004: 89).

Internet media audience characteristics have changed over time, because in the past the Internet was used only by few people. However, in recent years the Internet

audience almost exactly reflects the overall structure of society. In Latvia, the Internet is used less by population over 50 but other age groups use it daily (Rožukalne, 2011: 48).

According to the Internet World Stats, there were 1,540,859 internet users in Latvia which represents 69.9 percent of the population (Figure 1.3) in June, 2012 while in Estonia at the same time there were 993,785 internet users representing 77.5 percent of the population (Figure 1.4) (Internet World Stats, 2012).



Fig. 1. 4. Percentage of population online in Latvia (Internet World Stats, 2012)



Fig. 1. 4. Percentage of population online in Estonia (Internet World Stats, 2012)

In today's digital and online age, the audience is not passive anymore as it was before when they only received the presented messages. Now when people go online to a news site for the latest news, they can post comments and take part in a discussion with other users (Pavlik, 2008: 56). Therefore, the internet media allow society to interact more rather than consume the information in a passive way.

Many scholars maintain that now we live in an "information society," meaning that there is a lot more information around than there was before. Much of this process was based on the power of computers and Internet which were beginning to become more widely adopted by individuals as well as businesses (Lax, 2009: 200). Therefore, it is important to investigate some of the aspects of life which are impacted upon by the notion of the information society.

Internet news sites offer different kinds of multimedia products but most news sites, however, are mainly based on the textual materials supplemented by pictures, videos, sound files, etc. Professor J. Foust (2005: 144-145) thinks that reading something on a computer screen requires more time. In addition, he notes that it makes one's eyes tired and therefore the users do not read most of the Internet news, but rather scans web pages, searching for interesting and important parts of

information. Readers are looking for things that attract them. This makes it important to follow the classical principles of writing news - conciseness and accuracy. Texts on the internet have to be written as succinctly as possible. Web expert Jakob Nielsen (2008) conducted a study of how people spend an average period time at the website and it showed that on average people read about 18-20 percent of the words of one article. In other words, it can be assumed that a person reads the headline and introduction. Therefore, online news from other news media differs in their structure over specific message because the most important facts and content is expressed at the beginning of the article.

Thus it must be remembered that the internet offers unlimited information about a wide range of topics. In addition, online technologies increase the level of society's participation. Internet can be accessed any time and place, compared with traditional media. The question what this thesis argues is, whether these new internet media options and possibilities actually impact what people think of the forest industry.

2. FORESTS AND FOREST INDUSTRIES IN LATVIA AND ESTONIA

Forests play a major role in maintaining life on Earth because they are the manufacturer of oxygen; they serve as natural air filters and moisture regulators. Wood was the first fuel and the first building material in the history of mankind and a raw material for various other products. No less important is the role of forests in the strengthening of human health and recreation.

The forest is an ecosystem in which the main elements are trees. It is a complex system because different ages of trees, plants, animals, soil with its fauna, bacteria, algae and other microscopic elements is part of a forest ecosystem. A set of interactions happen among all of those organisms as well as they are linked to a food chain (Znotiņa, n.d.). Both Latvia and Estonia are located in the forest area; therefore, forests have been an important part to the society.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (2012), forests are defined as “Land spanning more than 0.5 hectares with trees higher than 5 meters and a canopy cover of more than 10 percent, or trees able to reach these thresholds *in situ*. It does not include land that is predominantly under agricultural or urban land use.”

The forest industry (meža nozare) combines forest, forest resource management and forest products production, trade and consumption of a united system in which the components are interrelated. It consists of forestry, wood and forest products - both wood and non-wood, as well as chemical processing (FAO Forestry, n.d).

Forestry is defined as “the science and practice of managing forests and woodlands”. It includes forest land management in full production cycle, forest product production and trade. It includes everything from planting and managing large forests to creating and tending small woodlands, raising young trees in nurseries to felling and delivering timber to wood-using industries (Royal Forestry Society, n.d). Forest products are the material (wood, mushrooms, berries, etc.) and the intangible (forest biodiversity, recreation facilities and services, mainly protective functions of forests, etc.). From an economic point of view, the main forest product is timber. Logs are the basis for the forest industry; therefore, the forestry is often defined more narrowly:

- Forestry (forest restoration and management)
- Logging (timber production and delivery)
- Round timber trade.

The forest industry (mežrūpniecība) processes raw materials from forests - roundwood, pulpwood, felling residues, resulting in the pretreatment (sawn timber, wood-based panels, pulp, etc.) and secondary (handicrafts such as wooden doors, windows, frames; furniture, etc.), or value-added products (FAO Forestry, n.d).

2.1. Latvian Forests

Latvian forests and the wood resources are one of the key measurements to national wealth and make a major contribution to the Latvian economy as well as provide raw materials for renewable and environmentally friendly products. In addition to timber, the Latvian forests are a source of significant non-timber forest products, such as mushrooms, berries, nuts, and also wild animals. Outdoor-activities, like hunting and picking of berries and mushrooms are important both for recreation and household subsistence. Therefore, forests are identified to have three main functions – social, economic and ecological (Meža nozare Latvijā, 2012: 5).

There is a clear historical trend for the areas of wood resources to increase in Latvia. In 1930 the total areas covered by forests were just about 24 percent, and in 1961 it had increased to 36 percent (Fig. 2.1). By 2013, 54 percent of Latvia’s territory was covered by the forests, with a total area of 3,497,000 hectares (Latvijas Statistika, 2013). This means that there are 1.5 hectares of forest per capita in Latvia – nearly two times more than during the first period of independence.

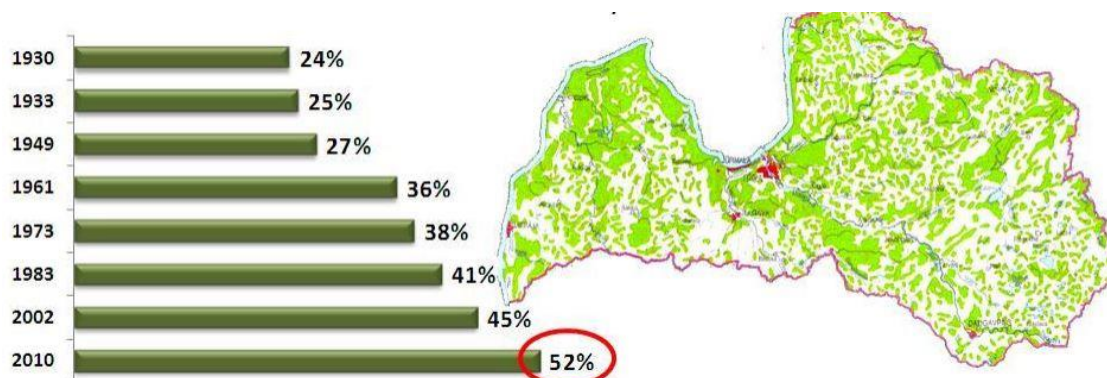


Fig. 2. 1. Forestlands in Latvia in different years (Private forestry in Latvia, n.d)

Therefore, since the restoration of Latvia’s independence, forest area in the country has increased in a stable way. This process mostly has happened due to the

forestation of land that was not used for agriculture anymore, in addition, it has been very important because the value of the forests have grown and the forest resources have increasing role for future generations.

Most of the forests are a heritage from the period of Latvia's first independence; in addition, extensive areas have been planted purposely. The official policy of the state is that in order to provide the Latvian economy with the necessary timber resources while at the same time preserving ecological balance in the environment and improving the recreational and visual properties of the forest, it is necessary to plant highly productive and biologically durable stands of trees.

Latvia has the fourth highest forest coverage among all European Union countries, surpassed only by Finland (77 percent), Sweden (76 percent) and Slovenia (63 percent). Estonia has 50 percent of the territory with forests. In the European Union, 41 percent of the overall territory is forestland (Meža nozare Latvijā, 2012: 4-5).

2.1.1. Forest Policy

According to the report that Latvia presented in 2010 for Global Forest Resources Assessment, forests are managed sustainably. The Latvian forest policy identifies one general goal: the sustainable management of forests. The main criteria are as follows:

- “Prevention of reduction of forest area.
- Protection and improvement of the productivity and value of forests.
- Afforestation of non-agricultural and other lands” (Global Forest Resources Assessment, 2010: 20).

The National Forest Policy, approved by the Latvian Cabinet of Ministers in 1998, governs the management of the Latvian forests. Formulation of the Policy involved a multi-stakeholder process including business and environmental interests. The Policy defines sustainable forest management as “the stewardship and use of forests and forest lands in a way, and at a rate, that maintains their biological diversity, productivity, regeneration capacity, vitality, and an ability to fulfill, now and in the future, relevant ecological, economic and social functions, at local, national and global levels, and that does not cause damage to other ecosystems” (Ministry of Agriculture, 2006).

Forestry policy future goals, defined by the Ministry of Agriculture, are primarily related to sustainable forestry:

- “Market economy and free competition in forestry, which is based on appropriate legislation and minimum government intervention in forest management.
- Market-driven money flow in order to ensure sustainable forest management.
- High biodiversity which should be achieved by maintaining sustainable management methods while performing maintenance activities.
- Work security and high qualification which is driven by sustainable and a favorable business environment.
- High efficiency of wood utilization, the introduction of environmentally-friendly materials; processing of leftover wood to facilitate continued use of the board and pulp; the facilitation of power generation; as well as appropriate tax policy and other forms of motivation.
- Increase forested area, afforestation of agricultural land that is no longer being used for agriculture or other purposes.”

The framework of the Forest Policy is the Constitution of the Republic of Latvia, the internationally ratified conventions and international agreements, national forest management traditions and practices, and science-based Latvian natural, social and economic regularities (Ministry of Agriculture, 1998).

Management of all Latvian forests is regulated by the *Forest Law of 17 March 2000*. The aim of the law is to promote “economically, ecologically and socially sustainable management and to ensure equal rights and obligations of all forest owners or lessees, the inviolability of property rights and economic self-sufficiency.” In addition, the Forest Law regulates national forest land management and alienates conditions (Likumi, 2000).

One of the newest editions to the Forest Law took effect on January 1, 2012. The essential amendments were connected with the change of confirmation and inventory procedures of tree felling as well as changes in the work order of the State Forest Service. It is also stated in the Law that the management of the forests cannot

interfere with the spatial planning. That means that in the process of documentation of the spatial planning, local municipalities and forest managers need to work closely together (Ministry of Agriculture, n.d).

2.1.2. Forest Management

Since 2000, The Ministry of Agriculture has been the central executive institution, and its main job is to work together with other institutions of governance in designing and then implementing national policies in the areas of agriculture, forestry and fishing, as well as to coordinate the activities of these sectors. The Forest Sector of the Ministry of Agriculture is made up the Department of Forest Policy and Department of Forest Resources (Meža nozare Latvijā, 2012: 7).

The State Stock Company Latvia's State Forests (LVM) carries out the actual management of the 1.59 million hectares of state-owned forests. The establishment of Latvia's State Forests was determined by an order of the Cabinet of the Republic of Latvia issued in October 1999. According to LVM's website, their strategy is “a rational management of state-owned forests by generating a profit from the management of this sustainable national asset without depleting its value, preserving the values which are important as an environmental and cultural-historical heritage and ensuring the accessibility of the forests to the public.”

At present LVM manages commercially usable state-owned forests and, alongside with the forest management, that includes timber selling. In addition, LVM develops other kinds of activities for the society as well. The basic economic activity in which LVM is engaged is forestry, and the main source of income for the company is timber sold on the market (Latvijas Valsts Meži, 2011).

The State Forest Service (VMD) is a state-run administrative civil institution in conjunction with the Ministry of Agriculture, which is responsible for pursuing a unified forest policy in all the forests of Latvia, maintaining the observance of the provisions of statutory acts, and implementing support programs, in the long term aimed at ensuring sustainable forest management. The VMD comprises the Central Office and territorial units called the State Regional Forest Districts, functioning as the forest authority for a definite territory, and the entities for performing special tasks.

The Forest Research Station is an institution for performing special tasks, intended to manage the forests with scientific research and to ensure the continuity of

forest research. The VMD keeps the State Register of Forests (VMR) – one of the country's major forestry databases, representing a unified information system on the forest resources and forest management (Valsts meža dienests, n.d).

Information about Latvia's forest resources is obtained via statistical forest inventories and monitoring of forest resources. This work has been done since 2003 by the Latvian State Forest Research Institute "Silava" (Ministry of Agriculture, 2011: 11).

Latvian forests may be national, local, or owned by private persons. In the Latvian law there are regulated property rights, which guarantees equal rights to all the owners, and the same duties, inviolability of property rights and economic independence. Forest management principles apply to all forests and it does not depend of the type of property (Meža nozare Latvijā, 2012: 7).

2.1.3. Forestry

Although the forest is an integral part of the Latvian landscape and includes significant environmental values, sustainable forest management is the mainstay of the economic benefits that can be provided only by regular timber production and its processing. The timber industry and forestry has always interacted because without finished goods for export, funding for forest restoration, caretaking, breeding and protection of the environment diminishes. However, without long-term sustainable forest management there cannot be a viable timber industry. Consequently, the overall historical development of the sector has been closely linked to the annual timber volume. Since the independence of Latvia, only part of the annual growth devoted to annual logging, which contributes to a continuous increase in volume of the stock and ensure the sustainability that the Latvian forests will be available for the future generations (Meža nozare Latvijā, 2012: 15).

Historically, large private forest estates were socialized and divided among small farmers' estates in the 1920s, during the first land reform in the newly independent Latvia. Another part, previously owned by the Crown of the Russian Empire, passed to the State. After the land reform the largest part of the forests was under state ownership. Private persons and legal entities owned no more than 30 percent. After the Second World War farmer forests were managed by State of collective farms.

In the 1990's, dramatic changes in the ownership structure of Latvian forests took place. As part of the Soviet Union all land in Latvia was state owned. The break-up of the Soviet Union, which led to the independence of Latvia, brought a return to private ownership of land and forests. If previously 30 relatively large national logging companies (which also partly worked with wood processing) worked in state's forests, those companies were taken over by private investors or set up partnerships with foreign companies (Ministry of Agriculture, 2011: 7).

According to Latvian Forest Owner's Association (LMIB) data (Fig.2.2), 1.5 million ha is owned by the state which is about 47 percent of the all forests in Latvia and 1.7 million ha is owned by private persons (41 percent), companies (10 percent) and local municipalities (2 percent). According to the 2010 census, there are 2.07 million people living in Latvia which means that the private forest owners are relatively large social group. There are total about 150 thousand forest owners in Latvia with average property of 8 ha. Therefore, 92 percent of the forest owners have less than 20 ha of forests. As result, part of the privately owned forests are managed ineffectively or not managed at all (Meža nozare Latvijā, 2012: 6)

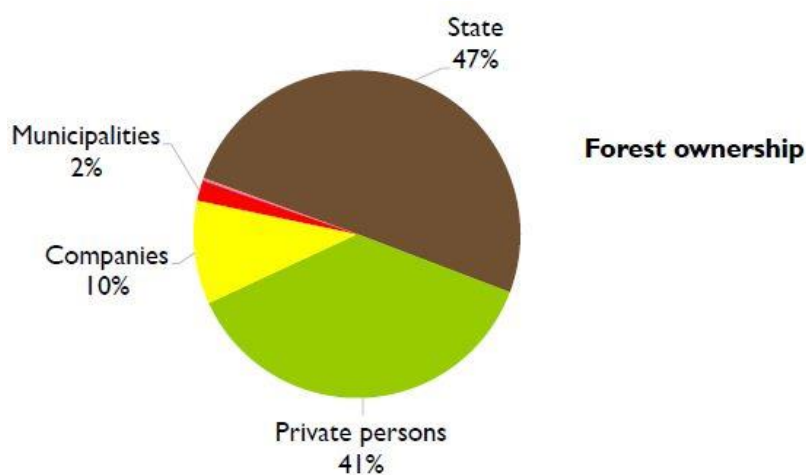


Fig. 2. 2. Ownership of Latvian forests (Private forestry in Latvia, n.d.)

In this respect, Saeima approved amendments to Cooperative Societies Act of autumn 2012. As a result, a new type of co-operative society type was created – forestry co-operative, which is relatively the same as the farmers' unions, may qualify for income tax relief. Forest owners who merge in cooperatives have a likely chance to sustainably and profitably manage their property; in addition, in the long term it would improve the flow of resources in the industry. In order to promote the co-operation process and motivate private forest owners to participate, in 2014 there is a

plan to include a number of support tools in the next EU Structural Funds program (Meža nozare Latvijā, 2012: 7).

During the first years of restored independence, the logging increased very rapidly, to the point where it had almost tripled. Yet from 1991 to 1996, the permitted cutting volume was not fulfilled. For example, in 1992 there was cut 4.013 million m³ and in 1996 - 6.762 million m³ even though the cutting volume could have been as high as 8.349 million m³ per year. The result of that was that Latvian forests had accumulated about 11.15 million m³ of timber (Figure 2.3). Intense deforestation started in the privately owned forest after 1996. Evaluating the independence period from 1991 till 2000, the total felling of the forests did not exceed the permitted level (Ministry of Agriculture, 2006).

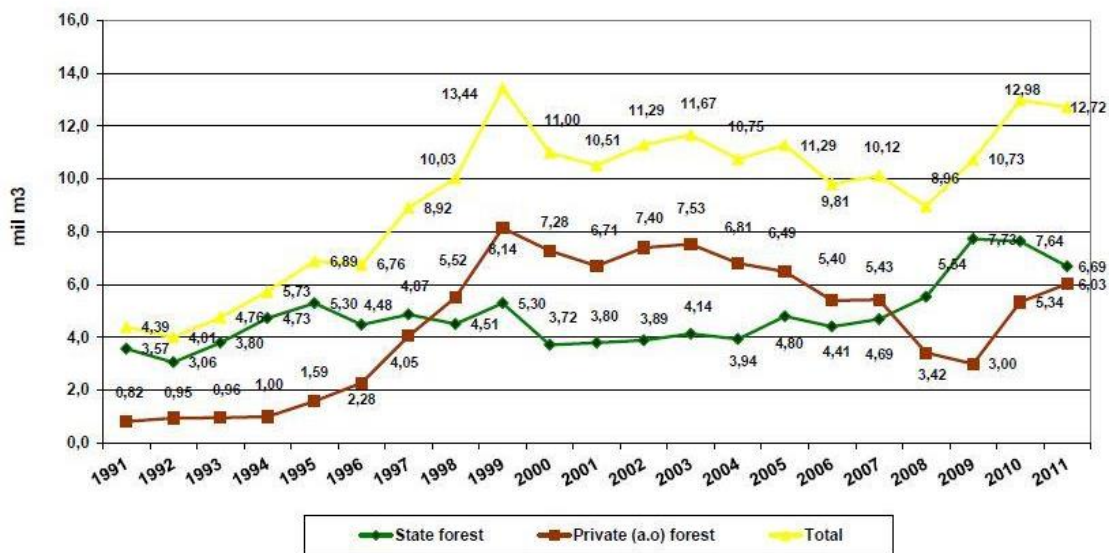


Fig. 2.3. Harvested timber volume in the forests of Latvia (Valsts meža dienests, 2012)

In the last decade, in average the Latvian forests obtain around 12 million cubic meters of logs annually. Until 2007 the average harvested timber in the state forests was less than in the privately-owned forests but when the global economic crisis came, the situation changed. Because the prices of the logs lowered, private owners were no longer interested in timber production and sale. However, timber companies needed a solid amount of resources to continue working; therefore, the government stepped in and saved many companies from bankruptcy by increasing the annual timber logging by 2 million cubic meters in 2009 and 2010.

One of the key principles of sustainable forestry is the restoration of the felled forest. Reforestation is one of the main goals for high-quality forest re-growth.

According to researchers, for new tree plantation to grow better and avoid diseases, it is recommended to restore the forest – not the same year when the logging occurred, but a year or two later.

As shown in Figure 2.4, the State Forest Service collected information on reforestation in the country shows that 35.2 thousand ha of forest was restored in 2011 in Latvia, half of which was in state forests and half in private owned forests. Compared to 2010, renovated total forest area in the country increased by 3 thousand ha in 2011 (Valsts meža dienests, 2012). Because in 2009 and 2010 the harvested volume was higher than in the years before, in 2012 the state forests restored 17.3 thousand ha, of which 11.4 thousand ha was an artificial recovery planting 33 million new trees (Meža nozare Latvijā, 2012: 11).

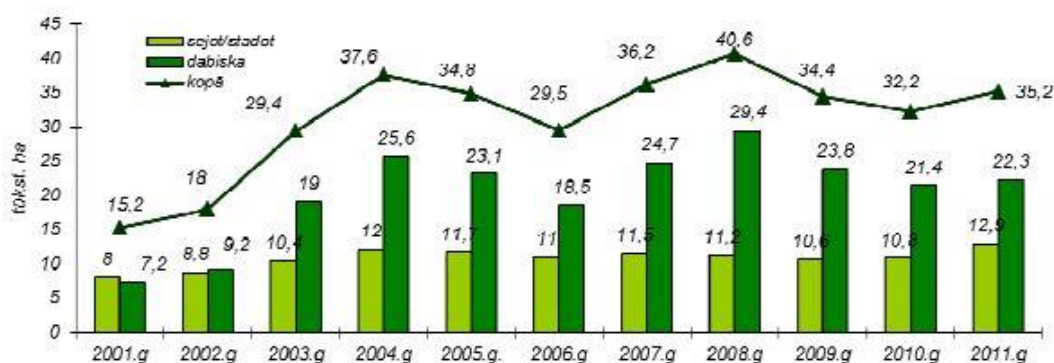


Fig. 2.4. Reforestation in Latvia (Valsts meža dienests, 2012)

2.1.4. Economic Impact

Forest industry is one of the strongest contributor to Latvian economy. According to the Latvian Central Bureau of Statistics in 2011 in forestry and logging, wood and wood products and furniture manufacturing there were employed 45 thousand people. By 2011 there were more than 2500 companies in the industry. The proportion of the population that is employed in the forest sector is 2.4 percent of all of the country's residents.

The forest sector has convincingly demonstrated its strategic importance to Latvia's national economy because it is the second largest industrial sector in Latvia after food processing industry (Investment and development agency of Latvia, n.d). Without developed wood-processing industry, from an economic point of view; forest value would not be great. It is recognized as one of the priority sector; its gross domestic product accounts for 5.3 percent of overall GDP. Forest sector added value

has raised significantly - from 208 million in 2000 to 601 million Lats in 2010 (Ministry of Agriculture, 2011: 30).

The forest industry is the only sector of the Latvian economy with a positive balance of imports and exports. Forest products exports in 2010 were 20 percent of the total national exports and the value of exports in 2010 reached the second highest level in history - 955 million Lats; however, the global economic crisis slowed down the upward trend in processed exports. Almost a quarter of the wood and wood products export is considered to be of high or medium-high value-added; including exports such plywood, cellular wood panels, etc. (Ministry of Agriculture, 2011: 33).

The forest sector contributes to Latvia's manufacturing by making up 26 percent of the total manufacturing in Latvia in 2011. Production of sawn wood is the largest subsector in Latvia, which accounts for 60 percent of the subsector's added value. In 2011, sawn wood production increased by 6 percent compared to 2010. The major outlet of Latvian sawn wood is the UK market, comprising 26 percent of sawn wood exports in 2011 (Meža nozare Latvijā, 2012: 16).

The furniture sector is important in Latvia both as an exporter and employer. The general direction for the furniture industry has been orientated towards exports, and the share of exports in sales has increased every year. Also there are over 300 furniture manufacturers in Latvia. In January 2013 compared to the corresponding period of previous year Latvian produced wood furniture export value increased by 6.4 percent (LETA, 2013).

In 2011, wood-based panels accounted for 16 percent of the total export value of the woodworking sector. Plywood has become one of Latvia's major woodworking branches. Latvia has become the largest plywood producer in Eastern Europe and JSC Latvijas Finieris is the leading birch plywood producer in Latvia. In 2011, plywood exports increased by 24 percent compared to 2010.

A number of Latvian enterprises have invested a significant amount of money in order to develop the manufacturing of modern carpentry products such as wood window frames, doors, and construction materials. The main market is Scandinavia and 70 percent of the export consisted of wooden houses exports in 2011, which meant that in 2011 export value of construction and carpentry products increased by 22 percent (Meža nozare Latvijā, 2012: 18).

The wood energy subsector is very developed in Latvia as well. Latvia has appropriate climate for such a subsector; therefore, the production of thermal energy

traditionally has formed the largest proportion of the national energy balance, which is currently 64 percent. There is little local demand, which means that most of it is exported; therefore, Latvia is ranked 7th in the European Union in terms of wood pellets production capacity. In 2011, compared to the previous year, exports of wood-fuel products increased by 6 percent or 13 percent of total wood-product exports (Investment and development agency of Latvia, n.d).

2.1.5. Preservation of the Environment

Not all forested areas are exposed to forestry activities. Latvia has set strict requirements for environmental protection. For example, a statutory requirement to leave a 5-10 per hectare ecological trees on the main felling exists.

All forests in Latvia are divided into three forest categories, according to their function and importance from the ecological, economical or some other specific function:

- Class I - protected forests (in state reserves, national parks and wildlife parks, and anti-erosion forests, as well as forest parks in the green zone), 12 percent.
- Class II - restricted management forests (in protected landscape areas, in the green zone and other forests which are significant to environmental protection), 39 percent.
- Class III - exploitable forests (all other forests), 49 percent (Global Forest Resources Assessment, 2010).

As noted before, there are different kinds of restrictions on economic activity for 12 percent of the forest, most of which are state-owned. With the aim of nature conservation 674 Special Areas of Conservation were created. The list includes four nature reserves (Teiču, Krustkalnu, Grīņu and Moricsalas), four national parks (Gaujas, Slīteres, Ķemeru and Rāznas), nine protected landscape areas (for example, Vecclaicene, Augšdaugava, Vecpiebalga), a Biosphere Reserve (Ziemeļvidzemes), 42 nature parks (for example, Gaiziņkalns, Abavas senleja, Daugavas loki), 259 nature reserves and 355 natural monuments, which are separated, isolated natural formations. Some of these areas are included in the European protected areas network, known as Natura 2000 (Meža nozare Latvijā, 2012: 10).

The fact that the area has the status of a “protected site” does not necessarily mean that no economic activity can take place. In some places no interference with

the natural processes are allowed, but there are areas where forest management is necessary to preserve the natural values.

In order to integrate the forest conservation in economic activity, Latvian State Forests founded the “Eco forest” network. The above mentioned protected areas create 60 percent of the network; the other forested areas identified have a high concentration of natural values. Overall, the “Eco forest” network includes more than 15 percent of all Latvia’s forest land. In many of those territories there are nature preservation projects carried out.

During the past decade, forest owners and manufacturing companies in Latvia have sought to receive certification of the sustainable use of forest resources. Forest management processes and timber product delivery chains in Latvia are certified on the basis of the two most widely used systems in the world – FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) and PEFC (Program for the Endorsement of Forest Certification Schemes). These certifications prove that forests are managed according to internationally acknowledged standards of good forestry (Meža nozare Latvijā, 2012: 13).

Currently, more than 50 percent of Latvian forests, including all state-owned forests, are certified in accordance with the PEFC system, and 15 companies in Latvia have received certification of their delivery chains from the same system. Over 280 forest-sector enterprises and forest owners have certified their timber chain-of-custody systems according to the FSC requirements. The amount of forestland that has been certified on the basis of FSC requirements exceeds 793,000 ha (Investment and development agency of Latvia, n.d).

Forests play a major role in maintaining CO₂ level and are therefore also called the “Earth’s lungs.” Latvia has fulfilled the requirements of the Kyoto Protocol which required reducing harmful emissions by 8 percent by 2012 compared to 1990. Given the stable forest cover and growing wood volume, forest industry has generated positive greenhouse gas balance in Latvia. Latvia is one of the few countries in the world where the forestry’s created CO₂ attraction is greater than the total amount of harmful emissions (Meža nozare Latvijā, 2012: 10).

2.1.6. Forests and Society

In society there is an often false and not completely understood view of the processes that are taking place in forestry and wood processing; therefore, the forest industry hosts a number of educational activities annually. The most well-known is

the “Forest Day” which is held each spring. During this day all society is invited to plant new trees, cleanup recreation sites in the forest and be aware of the forest processes. For example, in 2012, Latvian State Forests planted 33 million new trees which count as more than 16 new trees for every inhabitant of Latvia (LETA, 2013).

Much of the forest sector activities are organized for school-aged children. One of these is the competition “Our little hike” (Mūsu mazais pārgājiens) which is organized by the Ministry of Agriculture and aims to raise awareness among children and young people of the diverse uses of wood and opportunities that Latvian forests can offer.

Latvian State Forests organizes programs such as “Know the Forest” (Izzini Mežu) and “Mother Nature” (Mammadaba). In addition, one of the the well-recognized images of the struggle for clean forests is found the organized campaign entitled “Do not litter in the woods” (Nemēslo Mežā) with the main character Pigman (Cūkmens) (Meža nozare Latvijā, 2012: 24).

2.2. Estonian Forests

In Estonia, as in Latvia, there is a long history of forestry traditions. Because of the human activity, forests covered only 30 percent of the territory of Estonia during its first independence; however, according to FAO, today forests cover 52 percent of the area of Estonia (Figure 2.5) which is approximately 2.2 million ha with a growing stock around 442.5 million m³. Therefore, during the last seventy years growing stock has increased more than four times (FAO Country report, n.d).



Fig. 2. 5. Forestland in Estonia (Estonian Forestry, 2011)

When Estonia regained its independence in 1991 it began restoring its economy, mainly relying on private property. The process of returning forests to its previous owners began and long-term loans enabled the privatization of the forest land, and created conditions for establishing timber industry enterprises. When the Soviet Union occupied Estonia in 1940, farm land was nationalized and farm forests became once again the property of the state. Today there are approximately 80,000 private forest owners in Estonia.

Forest land is estimated on the basis of the definition given in the Estonian Forest Act. According to the Act, “forest land is land listed in the land register as forest and or land of at least 0.1 hectares where woody plants with a height of at least 1.3 m and with crown closure of at least 30 percent grow.” Compared to 1939, the total area of forest land has increased by more than 50 percent and annual growth and is, on average, 12,000 ha (FAO country report, n.d). Over the last 80 years the total area of forest land has grown significantly due to the afforestation of former agricultural land (Figure 2.6).

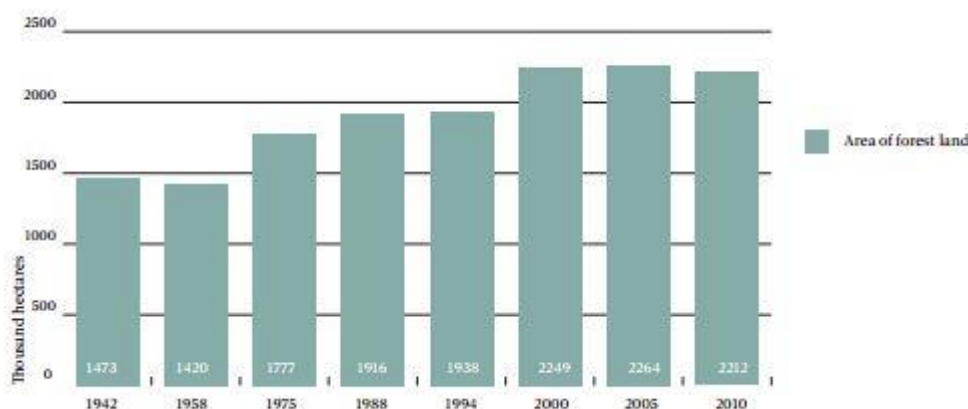


Fig. 2. 6. Area of forested land in Estonia (Estonian environmental indicators 2012, 2013: 40)

The area covered by forests and the volume of forests have significantly increased making it one of the biggest resources in Estonia both in natural and economic terms. Based on total forest area, Estonia is ranked fifth in Europe, after Finland, Sweden, Slovenia and Latvia.

Forests are an important part of the Estonian landscape. Estonians have always had a close relationship with their forests, and long traditions of forestry. The average age of Estonian forests is 56 years, ranging from 30-year-old grey alder forests to 71-year-old pine forests (Estonian Forestry, 2011).

2.2.1. Forest Policy

In the early 1990s the Estonian forest sector was largely organized on the basis of structures left over from the Soviet era. The adjustment to a market economy and new environmental standards were slow and difficult. In 1992 The Constitution of the Republic of Estonia provided the legal basis for sustainable development in Estonia. The Sustainable Development Act was approved in 1995.

The Ministry of Environment in 1995 formulated National Forest Policy in order to develop the forest sector and to improve the basis for legislative reform. In 1997 the Estonian Parliament adopted the Estonian Forest Policy which “recognizes that Estonia’s forests have a high environmental and ecological value in terms of such things as species biodiversity and landscape and natural stand structures.” In addition, it is stressed that the Estonian forest sector should be able to provide material and social benefits, and that the potential and values of the forest sector is not lost or reduced for the future generations.

In accordance with national necessity and global agreements, Estonia drafted the National Strategy on Sustainable Development (SE21), which was approved by the government in 2005. The SE21 is an integral concept clearly focused on the sustainability of long-term development in Estonia until 2030. The general development of the country involves the integration of the need to be successful in global competition with a sustainable development model and preservation of traditional values.

Two objectives for the Estonian forestry sector are:

1. “Sustainability of forestry, which requires the management and use of forests and forest land in a manner and at a rate which maintains their biological diversity, productivity, capacity for regeneration and vitality as well as their potential to fulfill, now and in future, ecological, economic and social functions at the local, national and global levels without damaging other ecosystems.
2. Efficiency in forest management, which entails the securing of efficient production and effective use of valuable forest-based products and services for present and future generations.”

The support for private forestry is also an important objective for the policy. In 1999, the Private Forest Centre Foundation was established with a goal “of

contributing to more environmentally friendly and efficient management of Estonian forests by improving the knowledge of land owners and administering state funding.” In long term this policy has stimulated the growth of forested land in Estonia and it continues to increase.

The forest policy of Estonia outlines the role and responsibilities of the state and public forest administration. Goals were also set in terms of enriching local living environments and the holiday and recreational opportunities available for tourists. Therefore, meeting the objectives set by the policy has meant that the area of forested land in Estonia continues to grow (Estonian Forestry, 2011).

“Estonian forestry development plan 2020” is designed to ensure the productivity and vitality of forests and its diverse and efficient use; that is, the use of wood as a renewable natural resource in the extent of growth. The plan “2020” sets a prerequisite for sustainable forest management, which is as uniform use of forest resources as possible in the extent of increment, which in Estonia is estimated to be 12–15 million m³ per year - such an amount of additional wood grows in forests every year (Estonian Environmental Indicators 2012, 2013).

2.2.2. Forest Management

The administration of forests is divided between different government institutions and organizations. The Ministry of the Environment is appointed to the administration of more than 800,000 ha of forest. The main task of the Ministry of the Environment is to arrange and coordinate environmental policy that would also apply to Estonian forests. The Forest Department and the Nature Conservation Department are both under Ministry’s supervision. The Forest Department’s main role is to organize the preparation and carry out the forest and hunting policy (Estonian Forestry, 2011).

The State Forest Management Centre (RMK) is a for-profit government institution also under the supervision of the Ministry of the Environment. On the one hand it is required to earn income for the state through logging and selling of timber yet on the other hand the Centre has to maintain and preserve the natural landscape of the forests by organizing several activities. In addition, the RMK is responsible for collecting and maintaining national forest seed reserves, from which it supplies seeds to all plant producers. As a major timber supplier, the RMK also plays a stabilizing

role on the timber market, ensuring stable supplies in substantial quantities. RMK manages 38 percent of Estonian forests (State forest management centre, n.d).

The Private Forest Centre (PFC) foundation also has been established; the main task of which is “to increase sustainable, environmentally friendly and efficient forest management practices in Estonian forests among private forest owners.” Therefore, the Private Forest Centre is an educational center where forest owners can ask for help and advice. As a part of the Estonian Rural Development Plan 2007-2013, the center administers the state support and European Union funds (Estonian Forestry, 2011).

Closely related to the PFC, the Private Forest Union of Estonia (EPFU) was founded with the aim to “represent the interests of forest owners and to develop the institutional framework for private forestry.” The Private Forest Owner Associations (PFOAs) are united under the umbrella organization of EPFU (European forest owner organisations, 2008: 11).

Another institution under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of the Environment is the Environmental Board. Its function is to supervise and enforce the power of the state where it is necessary. Its area of operations include the implementation of the state’s policies, issues related to environmental protection, nature conservation, as well as the use of the natural environment and radiation safety. Another responsibility is to protect and maintain a rich natural environment for the future.

The newest institution regarding forests and forestry is The Estonian Environment Information Centre (EEIC) which was established on April 1, 2010 and is a state agency administered by the Ministry of the Environment. The agency merged the Estonian Environment Information Centre and Centre of Forest Protection into one organization. The main tasks of the EEIC is to collect, process, analyze and distribute information about the nature which includes information about forests and forestry in Estonia, the state of the environment and the factors that impact them (Estonian Forestry, 2011).

2.2.3. Forestry

Of all Estonian forests, 48 percent are owned by private owners while the state has 38 percent. Thus, forestry in Estonia is characterized by a large number of forest owners, as there are about 700 000 and on average, they own about 10 ha or less.

Regarding harvesting, the optimal prescribed cut defined in the Estonian Forestry Development Plan until the year 2010 was 12.6 million m³ a year. At the beginning of 2000, the prescribed cut reached a record level, being almost equal to the increment of forest stands which was almost 12 million m³. In 2003, the prescribed cuts began to decrease as processing of raw material and provision of services increased. The felling volume in state forests has remained relatively stable, but has decreased in private forests for the same reason as in Latvia. Yet in 2008 the total felling volume was 5.77 million m³ (Figure 2.7) which is more than half less than it could have been.

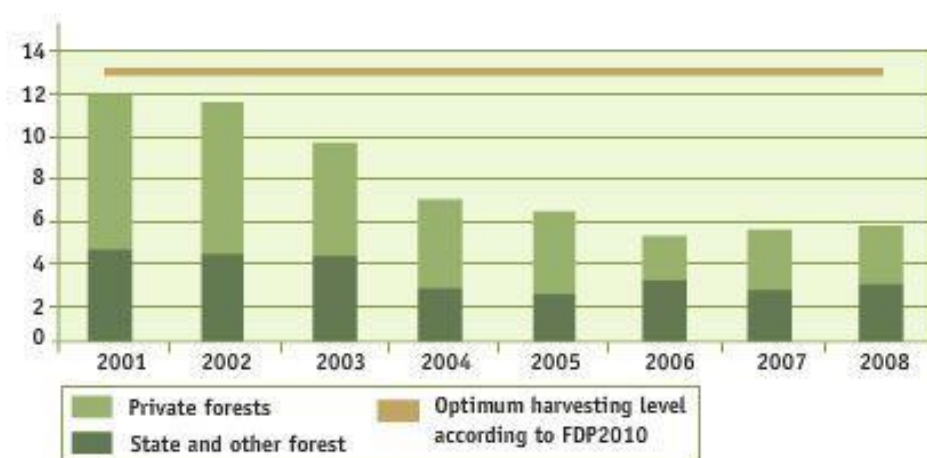


Fig. 2. 7. Felling volumes in Estonian forests (Ministry of Environment, n.d)

On average, 5800 ha of forest has been planted a year but in 2005 up to 2008, the average amounted increased to 6200 ha a year, for which purpose almost 14 million forest tree plants were used a year. In addition to establishing forest cultures, natural forest regeneration (which included sowing, planting of trees, cutting down competing plants) was promoted on almost 2000 ha a year. In order to establish forest cultures and to promote natural regeneration, almost 5300 ha of ground were prepared a year (Ministry of Environment, n.d).

2.2.4. Economic Impact

Forestry is one of the most important branches in Estonian economy. The share of forestry and wood industry has been constantly increasing over the years in the Estonian GDP. However, according to Estonian reports, the export of timber products grew somewhat in 2012 but the growth was considerably weaker than in the two previous years (LETA, 2013).

Forestry is especially important for ensuring employment in rural areas. According to the Statistics of Estonia, in 2008 there were 3,618 workers in the forestry sector in Estonia and additional 16,875 workers in the woodworking industry, which represents a significant proportion of the 476,886 people employed in the country.

Estonia's forest industry was privatized in the early 1990s and since then private sawmills and construction of new mills have been an important part of the sector. In addition, the development of sawmilling was followed by developments in further wood processing (Estonian Forestry, 2011).

In 2009 the value added of the woodworking industry in GDP of Estonia was 1.8 percent of the total GDP value added but the share of manufacturing industry was 14.3 percent of the total GDP value added in 2009. The structure of Estonia's forest-based industry consists of all of the main branches of the forest industry, the strongest being the sawmilling, however, the pulp and paper industries are relatively small.

The Estonian economy uses a lot of wood: apparent consumption of sawn material per capita is thought to be the highest in the world. Estonian sawmills mainly work with softwood. The production and export of prefabricated houses in Estonia has been consistently increasing. The wood-based panel industry is also represented by the birch plywood factory UPM Kymmene Otepää AS which has one of the most modern plywood mills in Europe in terms of labor and energy consumption per m³ of plywood produced. 160 people are employed in the factory. Nearly all of the raw material for the production of high-quality birch plywood is procured domestically.

Estonian Cell produces high quality aspen pulp (BCTMP). There has been 153 million euros invested in this project which has been the second biggest foreign investment in the Estonian economy. The mill exports all of its products mostly to Europe, where they are used in the production of printing paper, tissue paper and other types of paper and cardboard. In the production process the technology used are environmentally friendly, and factories can reduce their energy consumption by using BCTMP.

Another important economic object is Imavere Sawmill. It was founded in 1995 and is the biggest woodworking complex in the Baltic States. Sawn timber makes up 80 percent of its core production, and value added products 20 percent. Imavere Sawmill employs 320 people.

Graanulinvest AS is one of the five biggest producers of pellets in Europe today. The company has six factories in the Baltic States and its Latvian factory produces 100,000 tons of pellets. Nearly all of the pellets are exported to Europe, since domestic consumption in the Baltic States is very low. In 2006, Estonia has the highest per capita production of wood pellets in the world when it was 225 kg per capita (Sweden 160 and Latvia 153). In 2007 per capita production increased to 289 kg and total production volume counted 7 percent of the total pellet production volume of Europe.

Repo Vabrikud AS chipboard plant is the biggest producer of melamine faced chipboards (MFC) in Northern Europe and the Baltic States, and the only producer of moisture-resistant MFC boards for furniture in the Baltic States. The company exports around 80 percent of its production and is one of the biggest exporters in the Estonian economy (Estonian Forestry, 2011).

2.2.5. Preservation of the Environment

According to the Estonian Ministry of the Environment, management of state forests is sustainable because it “ensures biodiversity, productivity, regeneration capacity and the vitality of the forest and the opportunity for multiple uses of forests satisfying economic, social and cultural needs.”

The State Forest Management Centre has established the environmental, quality and policies of the institution to promote the sustainable management of state forests. There are specific strategies regarding sensitive environmental issues such as logging operations during spring and summer as well as managing forest drainage systems. Therefore, preserving and at the same time protecting the environment forms an inseparable part of the RMK’s activities. To pay adequate attention to solving environmental problems, RMK has fulfilled the requirements of FSC and PEFC that are internationally recognized sustainable forest management standards.

Estonian state forests are home to a number of endangered species and rare communities. This is reflected in the steadily growing proportion of strictly protected forests. More than 12,000 ha of forests have been added to the category of strictly protected forests over the past years. For that purpose, several functions related to the management of land under protection, such as marking protected areas and performing protection management work on state land, have been included in the obligations of RMK. In addition, RMK has the responsibility of keeping biological

diversity, to ensure environmental protection and to provide recreational opportunities for everyone in Estonian forests.

The “Estonian Forest Conservation Area Network” (EFCAN) project was established as part of the Estonian Forestry Development Plan in order to preserve valuable forest ecosystems and maintain a level of biodiversity in Estonia. In 2001, another project, “Protection of Priority Forest Habitat Types in Estonia” was launched as a continuation of the EFCAN project.

Today designated protected areas cover 18 percent of Estonian territory which means that approximately one-tenth of Estonia's forest land is under strict protection. Since forests play an important role in preserving human and natural environment, protection of forests is mostly based on the Nature Conservation Act and Forest Act. In order to protect the diversity of nature, but also for other protective reasons, economic activity is restricted in forests. Of special merit among these are the national parks, which have been established to preserve, protect, study, and introduce nature, landscape, cultural heritage, and balanced environmental use. Estonia has five national parks: Lahemaa, Karula, Soomaa, Vilsandi and Matsalu (Estonian Forestry, 2011).

Strictly protected forests include “reserves of protected areas and special management zones, special management zones of species protection site, habitats of protected species, key biotopes protected with a contract or located on state land and

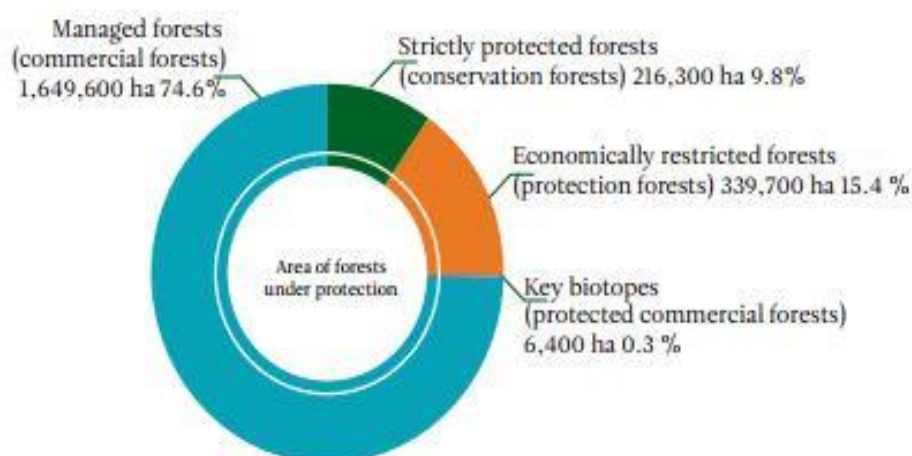


Fig. 2. 8. Share of the protected areas in Estonia (Estonian environmental indicators 2012, 2013: 42)

intended protection areas” (Figure 2.8) (Estonian Environmental Indicators 2012, 2013: 42).

In addition to the five national parks, there are also 131 ecological reserves, 148 landscape protection areas and nature parks, 118 protected areas with non-renewed protection rules, 544 protected parks and forest stands, 343 special conservation areas, 1038 species protection sites, and 1203 protected natural objects in Estonia.

The status of Estonian forests has enjoyed better than average indicators in Europe and to keep it that way, Estonia has established the “Estonian Environmental Strategy 2030;” the goal of which is to ensure the “satisfaction of the ecological, social, cultural and economic needs in forest use in a balanced manner in the long term, while preserving the diversity, balance and recovery of forest ecosystems” (Estonian Forestry, 2011).

2.2.6. Forests and Society

People in Estonia enjoy heading into the forest to go hiking, hunting or orienteering, or to pick mushrooms and berries. The forests of Estonia have also a cultural value because they are an important part of the landscape.

One function of the State Forest Management Centre (RMK) Nature Preservation Department is to contribute to increasing population’s awareness of nature and the preservation of the same; therefore, reducing the impacts accompanying the use of the natural environment. Because state forests belongs to everyone and are open to the public, RMK facilitates opportunities for various use of state forest for recreation. In doing so, it designs and constructs pathways in forests, designates resting places rich in natural beauty and develops sites for. It also builds forest huts and offers overnight accommodation in forest houses (Estonian Forestry, 2011).

In addition to recreation opportunities, the RMK also provides nature education services. Within state hunting districts, the RMK is obliged to secure hunting opportunities and maintain viable game populations. Hunting opportunities are offered through sales of hunting permits or commercial hunting services.

EPFU is organizing campaigns similar to those in Latvia that promote wood, wood products and the forests. A popular campaign is “Tee metsa” (Back in the forests) where national wide tree planting is happening in the spring. There is also a

“Puupäev” (Wood day) when awareness is raised concerning wood and its use (European forest owner organisations, 2008: 14).

In considering the history of Latvia’s and Estonia’s forest sectors it can be observed that there has been stable growth since regaining independence. The area of forestland and the volume of timber in Latvia’s and Estonia’s forests are increasing. In addition, the forest sector has been one of the main employers in both Latvia’s and Estonia’s rural regions.

According to the official statistics and reports that have been made, there are strict laws and regulations regarding the use of wooden resources; there are institutions that are responsible for the forestry and forest industry; there are sustainable development strategies made and plans to maintain high biodiversity of forests and in overall forest industries both in Latvia and Estonia are important part of economies of the countries and adds a significant contributions to the wealth of the people.

3. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE ROLE OF INTERNET MEDIA IN LATVIA AND ESTONIA IN RELATION TO FORESTRY

3.1. Research Method

The goal of the analysis is to explore and understand what messages are found within web portals in which Latvian forest industry is discussed; therefore, the context of the text will be analyzed. In order to accomplish the goal, two research methods will be used. The quantitative content analysis method will be used, through which the necessary data will be selected and analyzed. As qualitative research method of content will be used the discourse analysis, which allows an in-depth examination of the data and its interpretation.

Media Content Analysis was introduced in 1927 by Harold Lasswell as a method to study mass media. Therefore, media content analysis is “a quantitative and qualitative, systematic, objective and interpersonal method to determine form and content of text.” However, internet media analysis is a content analysis method for evaluation of published content and postings on websites. Factors that should be taken into account include multimedia applications, such as any video streams, pictures, and contextualization, for example, linkage to other articles on the issue. Thus, indicators that should be searched for in content analysis are:

- Positive/negative/neutral statements
- Range/user figures
- Time spent on content
- Degree of linkage/search engine position (Internet media analysis: internet monitoring, n.d).

Krippendorff has said “content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts to the contexts of their use. It is learnable and divorceable from the personal authority of the researcher” (Krippendorff, 18).

However, Ole R. Holsti has defined requirements for the content analysis:

- Objectivity – How category A are to be distinguished from category B? What criteria are to be used to decide that a content unit should be placed in one category rather than another?
- Systematic – means that the inclusion and exclusion of content or categories is done according to consistently applied rules.
- Generality – requires that the findings must have theoretical relevance (Holsti, 1969: 3-5).

These are the categories and requirements for fulfilling the goals of the master's thesis.

3.1.1. Research Design

For this thesis, the time period selected for the research is two years – starting February 2011 and ending February 2013. The particular choice can be justified by the nature of the specific theme – the forest industry. In February 3, 2011, the Arabic TV channel Al Jazeera English featured a movie called “Latvia’s Pulp Fiction.” The movie expressed a concern that the future of the forest of Latvia is endangered and the stock company Latvian State Forests was accused for over-intensive deforestation which also threatens the biodiversity. The movie repeatedly stressed that Latvia is unique with its wealth of forests and variety of species, however, the future of the forests is under concern. The people interviewed on the movie suggested that the logging limit in Latvian forests is reached the maximum and the forest cannot be cut down anymore in such rates. The conclusions are also based on satellite photos where it can be seen the areas where there are no forests anymore (Al Jazeera, Feb.3, 2011). It will be investigated if this particular movie has caused negative public perception of forestry and forest industry in Latvia.

According to Holsti’s requirements of content analysis, the following conditions are going to be considered:

- Objectivity – only titles that express negativity about the forest industry and forestry are selected but that does not mean that other articles are excluded. The other titles will be classified as neutral. Therefore, for the purpose of this

thesis, a negative messages regarding forest industry will be searched for and analyzed.

- Systematic – all articles regarding forest industry and forestry will be collected from the chosen time period. If the title expresses controversial or negative thought about the forestry or the industry, it is selected for further analysis of what the article is about and what other characteristics are seen in the article that can “catch” reader’s eye, for example, if there is any highlighted information. As mentioned in chapter 1, Professor J. Foust (2005: 144-145) thinks that the readers do not read most of the Internet news, but rather scans web pages, searching for interesting and important information. Readers are looking for things that attract them. In addition, the articles are viewed in time order, starting February 1, 2011, thus searching for signs if any on the patterns when articles are published.
- Generality – there will be comparison made to determine whether or not the content differ among the selected internet sites and under which classification of “news” they count, in addition, the information from the articles will be linked to the theoretical framework and compared to the official data and statistics of the forest industry.

After Internet Research Company Gemius data, the leading Latvian Internet news site is *Delfi.lv* and in January of this year had 605 455 visitors. The second popular news site is *Tvnet.lv* with 525 970 visitors. In Estonia, the leading news site is *Delfi.ee* with 455 957 visitors in January 2013 (Gemius Audience, 2013). These are going to be the main research sites.

In total 286 articles were found in *Tvnet.lv*, *Delfi.lv* and *Delfi.ee* (Figure 3.1).

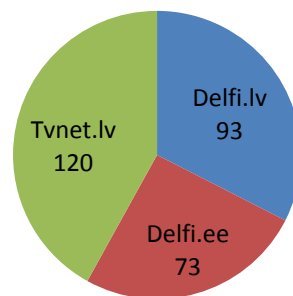


Fig. 3. 1. Number or articles found in *Delfi.lv*, *Tvnet.lv* and *Delfi.ee*

For the Latvian research portion, several key words were typed in the search such as “Latvian forest industry,” “State forests,” and articles were searched in the particular sections of the portals. For the Estonian portion, “RMK” was the dominant key phrase due to the author’s limited knowledge of Estonian language. Be it duly noted, however, that articles regarding forest fires, people getting lost in forest, picking mushrooms were not considered in both Latvian and Estonian cases.

3.2. TVNET.lv

Internet portal *Tvnet* has a separate section for articles that are related to nature and entitled “Green Land;” however, they also have separated articles under section called “Destruction of Forests.” All together 120 articles were found for the selected time period noted (see Annex 1). Key words such as “Latvia’s forest industry” and “State forests” were typed in the search field. The selected chosen articles talked about Latvian forest industry, Latvian State forests and specific companies of the forest industry. 68 of the articles were under the section “Green Land,” 37 were in “Finance” section, 14 in the “News” and 1 in “Entertainment & Culture” (Figure 3.2).

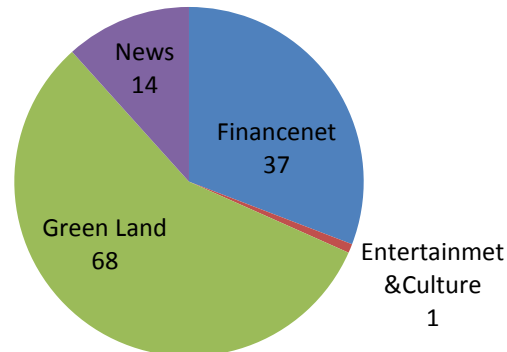


Fig. 3. 2 Sections in Tvnet where articles were found

It is also notable that *Tvnet* has a particular style when writing articles because some of the phrases are highlighted and written in larger font, therefore, for the purpose of this thesis, those phrases will be noted and also highlighted. In addition, a timeline of articles published *Tvnet* was set to observe when coverage about the forest industry was most intense (Figure 3.3).

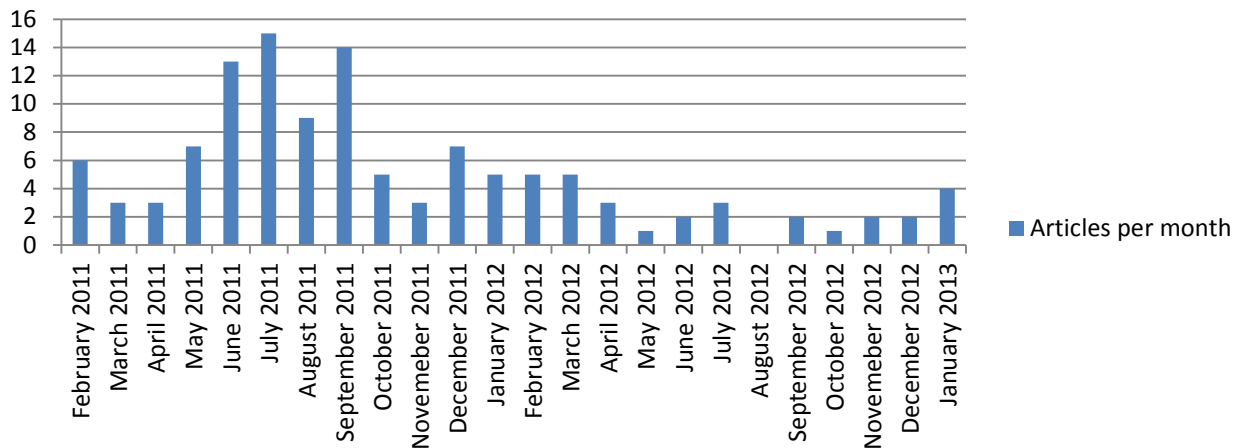


Fig. 3. 3 Articles published per month in Tvnet

First article on February 4, 2011 was about the Al Jazeera movie with an article titled “Al Jazeera informs about excessive deforestation in Latvia.” It is an extensive article under the “Finance” section in *Tvnet* that explains what the movie stresses about and also adds a link to the original source. The main points that are highlighted in the article are: **“However, deforestation in Latvia is much bigger than reforestation”** and “[As the shocking example of Latvian State forest deforestation] **TV channel demonstrates the extensive clear felling in the natural reserve “Ābeļi” even though it is protected both by national and by European Union (EU) regulations.**” (LETA, Feb.4, 2011). There are 440 comments.

An article published on February 7, 2011 was titled “LVM donates for the entertainment of a millionaire, for large families – *nothing* (not exact translation; Latvian word “pīga” was used)” in the “News” section. It becomes clear that the title is misleading when the introduction of the article is read. It states that 50 000 Ls were donated to a millionaire Raimonds Kisiela’s rally team while a large family’s association “Šūpulītis” got 276 Ls for Christmas packages. **“We asked for 276 Lats with the idea that every child gets a pack of sweets for 60 cents. Cannot ask too much – many are in needs.”** One the second highlighted area it is stressed that **Mr.Kisiela’s father was a candidate on the 10th parliamentary elections in “Greens and Farmer’s Union” (ZZS) party and his father-in-law is ZZS partner in Liepāja** (Pietiek.com, Feb.7, 2011). The article has 48 comments.

“Donating millions, Latvian State Forests supports those who are connected to ZZS” is an article on February 13, 2011 in the “News” section. In total LVM has donated 3 688 597 Ls to different organizations. There is no highlighted text apart from different subsections in the article which states that the money has gone to

politics related persons as well as to the Olympic Committee (TVNET, Feb.13, 2011). The article and it has 131 comments.

On June 10, 2011 there are 3 articles published in the section “Green Land,” 2 of them under the subsection of “Destruction of Forests.” The first article is called “The destruction of Latvian forests” and it has a video attachment from LNT news about the new forest law. At the end of the article *Tvnet* states that “with this article TVNET wants to draw public’s attention to the catastrophic situation and invites readers to send photos and descriptions of areas where illegal or maybe legal but suspicious deforestation happens as well as share thoughts by sending an email to lasitaji@tvnet.lv. With this article we start a series of articles about the destruction of Latvia’s forests.” It is observed that the language in the rest of the article is very straight-forward:

- “Thousands of hectares are converted into clear cuts where nothing grows and nothing can regenerate”
- “The situation is beneficial for all the leading clique”
- “And of course – behind all of that is standing (or maybe is not standing) those wallets who has *bought* (not exact translation; word “*sapirkušies*” was used) ‘the forests of Latvia for Latvians’ and wants to get new Lexus”
- “Latvia has no further plan”
- “The lobby of the forest owner’s is powerful – it has hired the best brains to ‘tutor’ the society”
- “In number of countries . . . a certain number of trees can be felled per hectare in certain period of time. But for *ours* (mūsējiem) it would not be beneficial, would it? ”
- “Dombrovskis (Prime Minister of Latvia) should write less books on how to overcome the crisis and on false export growth”

Highlighted parts of the article were statements that “**while forests will be perceived as an alien carrot field where you can only rip off, while we won’t understand the catastrophic situation – nothing will change.**” Other highlighted statements are claiming that “**Forests do not age, only individual trees age**” and that “[Driving through Latvia] **the only cars that are seen are the logging trucks, those are not Latvian Nokia suppliers, Latvians don’t even have their own žiguļa** (an

old type of car), **but they only have a saw**” (TVNET, June 10, 2011). 990 comments were submitted by the readers.

The next article published on the same day is titled “Reforestation rates in Latvia are not pleasing.” There are no highlighted parts of the article, however, the introduction of the article states that “Reforestation rates in Latvia are not pleasing, but in overall the situation is not bad” (BNS, June 10, 2011) which indicates that the title is misleading. The original source of the article is Baltic News Service (BNS) and it has 9 comments.

The third article from June 10, 2011 is titled “State forests are managed environmentally unfriendly.” The article describes 3 cases where “LVM action is in conflict with the society and the environment.” Also it is mentioned that LVM does not have FSC certification anymore which indicates that the management of the state forest is not good enough; a graph is showed to see the felling volumes in years 2008, 2009 and 2010. In addition, it is stated that the head of the State Forest Service has resigned (Nekā personīga, June 10, 2011). The author of the article is “Nothing Personal” (TV news) and it has 169 comments.

Two days later on June 12, 2011, an article “Destruction of forests: forests are renewed in a ragged manner” is published also under the “Green Land” section. It is a summary of LTV program “de facto” story where the reporter together with forester Māris Mitrevics have found out that a harvested forest is not being renewed properly and it has not been done according to the regulations (TVNET/LTV, June 12, 2011). The original video is attached and the article has 134 comments.

The article “Īvāns: Dūklavs introduced changes in the Forest law are robber’s dream” is published on June 20 and more information added on June 26, 2011 in “Green Land” (Dainis Īvāns is an environmental activist; Jānis Dūklavs was the Minister of the Agriculture at that time). It is stated that Mr. Īvāns does not want to keep being silent about the LVM implemented destruction of Latvian national resources for their own gain. In highlighted text there are three Mr. Īvāns quotes: **“What was restored then [after World War I] till the present day, we are destroying it now. There is money. There is greed to grab. All this ‘economy’ is based on plundering the forest.”** The next one is stating that because of the new Forest Law **“There is taken away as seems a small nuance – forest research management function. However, that means that forestry function is taken away as such and State Forest Service loses its meaning. It is a strategy** [that indicates

the illegitimacy of the Minister of Agriculture and his associates].” The third highlighted area expresses outrage that **“one of the next ‘projects’ of the politicians who has the power is to cut out 600 beautiful oaks in Gulbene area.”** At the end *Tvnet* encourages its readers to be active and by using internet banking system, sign a petition for the conservation of Latvian forests in portal *Manabalss.lv* because “each vote has a value. In order for this petition to reach the parliamentary agenda, it requires 10 000 signatures” (TVNET, June 20, 2011). There are links to the Al Jazeera movie as well as the previous mentioned LNT news story about the new Forest Law. The article has 432 comments.

Another article is published on June 27, 2011 with a title “Desert can cover Latvia” in “Green Land.” It is *Tvnet*’s interview with the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development’s (VARAM), the Environmental Protection Department director Daiga Vilkašte. According to Ms. Vilkašte, if such active deforestation continues, Latvian forests can lose their diversity which would negatively affect all living creatures. It is highlighted that **“local governments and residents complain about the deforestation,”** that **“people do not have any opportunity to influence the illegitimacies in the state forests”** and that **“there is no guarantee that the private forest owners will not cut all of their forest.”** There is a question asked “Does our children will have forests?” and therein is expressed a concern that **“cutting volumes in few years can increase significantly”** and that **“people will not have available traditional forests where they can pick mushrooms.”** It is also stated that VARAM specialists do not see forests too often. **“The representative of the Ministry has not seen the clear-cuts on job related but only on personal trips.”** There is a “sad conclusion” because it is hard to tell “if and what kind of forest there will be when we are old...” **“Against the protection of the environment objects everyone”** but “after the conversation with VARAM there is a feeling that the Ministry is helpless to protect the forests from rendering. There is an impression that the Ministry of the Agriculture dictates the tone in this area and the Ministry of the Environment, which would have to fight against the forest destruction, is standing as an orphan. What the older brother tells, that will be done...” (TVNET, June 27, 2011). There are two pictures attached to the article where cut forest is seen and the article has 513 comments.

On June 30, 2011 there are three articles published in the “Green Land” section all under the subsection of “Destruction of Forests.” The first is titled

“Scientists: media is producing a criticizing campaign against forestry” where 36 forest scientists have signed a public announcement. “Silava” released a letter to the society stating that “currently in the media there is an active and purposeful, often anonymous, criticizing campaign about our forestry. Looking for sensations or having other goals in such actions, numerous media, journalists and publicists who may perfectly understand the political events, have quite foggy idea of what is forestry” (Nozare.lv, June 30, 2011). 19 comments are posted.

The next article’s title on the same day is “For the destruction of the forests agitates LVM paid officer.” According to *Pietiek.com*, the above mentioned scientists’ letter was organized by the Latvian State Forestry Research Institute “Silava” director Jurgis Jansons. The situation is considered to be controversial because **“Jansons not only was an employee at LVM few years ago but is still indirectly paid out of LVM pocket. Also ‘Silava’ received an impressive donation from the company last year.”** *Pietiek.com* has evidence where Mr. Jansons states in email: **“There is an idea that the material is signed not only by Jurgis but perhaps also the Scientific Council or the Institute’s personnel, possibly publicizing the names.”** It is mentioned that Mr. Jansons and “Silava” did not give any comments on the issue when *Tvnet* asked them about it (TVNET, June 30, 2011). The article has 97 comments.

“State forests brags with data that does not describe good forestry” is the last article from June 30. The deputy of the Parliament, Uģis Rotbergs, states that State Forest Service has made up the statistical data. **“The fact that forests have growing stock is not the achievement of the LVM. Those are the previous generation’s and middle-age’s stands which continue to grow. Therefore, excuse me, but it is the achievement of chlorophyll and photosynthesis.”** At the end of the article it is the same encouragement to sign petition in *Manabalss.lv* (Bormanis, TVNET, June 30, 2011). The article has 145 comments.

“Destroyed forests are donated to rally and football” on July 4, 2011 starts with a statement that “[you] should not be an expert to understand that state company cannot waste their profit especially when the profit has been gained through controversial forest clearings.” Later in the article there is a “warning that the estimates are very approximate” but since for the development of football in Ventspils has received 200 000 Ls, “metaphorically speaking, for the development of football, LVM cut 100 ha of forest which is equal to 200 football fields,” therefore, **“Clear-**

cuts just as well could be measured regarding LVM marketing budget and board member's salary." According to the article, the money is donated as the company wants and similar situations are in the rest of the world and Chinese example is mentioned: **"Most of the times state companies engage in *charity* because of the administrative orders – such expert's conclusion can be read in Chinese media where last year's donations were discussed"** but **"in case of Latvia, charity is obvious *own deals* (not exact translation; phrase "*savējo būšana*" was used)." At the conclusion *Tvnet* provides links to other articles regarding donations of LVM (Segliņa, July 4, 2011). Therefore, the title of the article should not be understood literally but in a sense that LVM donated their money. The article is written by Inese Segliņa (with no explanation who she is) especially for *Tvnet* and has 313 comments.**

The next selected article is from July 11, 2011 with a title "Behind the bars for forest devastation!" The article warns that illegal felling is punishable act with several years in prison or with heavy fines. **"The State Police has started 214 criminal processes in the first six month of 2011."** In the first half of the year, 21 persons have been punished including **"a case of imprisonment up to one year but six persons have received suspended sentence."** It is also reminded that **"forest destruction or damage imposes a fine on individuals from twenty to fifty Lats"** and in 2010 **"more than half [of the offenses] were arbitrary tree cutting cases"** (TVNET, July 11, 2011). The article has 92 comments.

An article in "Green Land" from July 18, 2011 states that "Forest Laws are written with the hands of 'Latvian State Forests.'" *Tvnet* asked four questions to the leaders of the Parliament's parties. Two of them acknowledged their incompetence in matters regarding forestry therefore refused to the interview. Dzintars Zaķis stated that "[perhaps I do not have precise information but I suspect] **much regarding forest policy documents, first of all, is written with the Latvian state forest hands.**" From the interview of Edgars Cilinskis it is highlighted that **"in my opinion, state company should not donate anything. State decides how much of the company's profit should be included in the state budget and that must be divided according to the State Budget Law."** The last, Edgars Zalāns, after talking to many people **"[has a feeling that] large part of the forest resources (especially land) have been bought by large foreign companies. Consequently, the forests are owned by foreigners and we are saying goodbye to our national resource."** The article is

concluded with the encouragement to sign the petition in *Manabalss.lv* (TVNET, July 18, 2011). There are 149 comments to the article.

“Surrounding is polluted with ‘Latvian State Forests’” is an article from July 24, 2011 in the “News” section. It is an article where *Tvnet* reader has sent in pictures showing cardboard boxes marked as “Latvian State Forests – seeds and plants.” Those boxes are left as trash in the forest (TVNET, July 24, 2011). The article has 46 comments.

Next is an article in “Green Land” from July 26, 2011 titled “[We are] Experiencing highest forest cutting proportions; there is a reason for public concern.” The author of the article is Viesturs Lārmanis, a nature conservation expert who states that serious attention should be given to the emotional mood of the people as it pertains to forestry. According to Mr. Lārmanis, the society could be invited to imagine the forest compared to carrot field or meadows where the crops need to be harvested, however, **“it must be noticed that carrots can grow in a period of a summer and the carrot greens are lower than the human height and it is a distinct difference compared to a century old, wanted forest.”** He also stresses that that there have been years where the harvesting volumes have been close to the level of 2010, however, **“there are no years, let’s say 10-20 year period, that in total would amount the current logging scale aggregates.”** He thinks that the society cannot accept the forestry anymore because **“the clear-cut’s ratio to the total forested area has exceeded the critical threshold.”** There exists some degree of change in the landscape which is unacceptable for the society and **“in peace time most of the people will not accept forest felling the same as they are able to accept the changes taking place in the carrot field during a summer.”** Lastly, Mr. Lārmanis concludes that “after all, the Forest Law in its roots is constructed on clear-cut philosophy.” There is a graph attached showing forest felling volumes in recent times and before as well the author has used three references (Lārmanis, July 26, 2011). The article has 374 comments.

An article written by Dainis Īvāns, originally in *Pietiek.com*, “700 mighty trees per minute” is published on July 31, 2011. Mr. Īvāns is very concerned about “700 giant oak, ash, partly lime and maple alley cutting” near Rēzekne - Gulbene road. It is a long article yet there are no highlighted areas, however, the tone of the article is emotional. For example, a woman who went to Riga to object the tree cutting, “asked

not to mention her name because she was afraid of the possible repressions from the municipality” (Īvāns and Pietiek.com, July 31, 2011). The article has 19 comments.

The next article in “Green Land” is from August 8, 2011 and states that “Politicians are afraid openly talk about the forests.” *Tvnet* is stating that they initiated a discussion on “uncontrolled destruction of Latvian forests,” therefore, they wanted to give an opportunity to the “people’s servants” to comment on this topic. *Tvnet* is confident that the politicians “pretended not to have time” for “uncomfortable topics” because “**Vējonis (Minister of Environment) is so busy that a small interview could not be scheduled until August...**” Also “**Mr. Dūklavs (Minister of Agriculture) work schedule has been planned**” and it has been mentioned that the Prime Minister Valdis Dombrovskis did not find a time for *Tvnet*’s interview. It has been concluded that “the Ministers are busy to get elected into the next Parliament and therefore avoid discussing uncomfortable questions, including the issue of forest destruction” and that “the Ministers do not hide that their actions (both irresponsible and deliberate sabotage) promotes uncontrolled deforestation of Latvian forests and therefore do not want to hold the responsibility in front of the society for the renewable resource sector destruction.” The last paragraph states that the politicians are “elected in the Parliament undeserved” and since the Parliament elections are close “TVNET encourages the voters to think over whether the politicians who *are responsible* (not exact translation; word “*šeptējas*” was used) about the forests but avoid the responsibility, deserve to continue to hold the reins of the power!” (TVNET, Aug.8, 2011). The article has 295 comments.

Another article from August 8, published just few minutes after the previous article, is titled “About the forest and lie politics.” Parliament deputy, Uģis Rotbergs, has written the article expressly for *Tvnet*. He is concerned that there has been a whispering campaign against him and then he explains what kind of proposals he is trying to promote for the new Forest Law (Rotbergs, Aug.8, 2011). The article has 82 comments.

The next article in “Green Land” is from August 11, 2011. It is titled “Counted – 879 trees are going to be sacrificed for the Rēzekne road.” The author of the article is Diāna Odumiņa who is “Dzirkstele” correspondent (regional newspaper in Gulbene’s area). The article emphasizes the fact that large amount of trees will be cut down, including healthy and mighty ones, due to the reconstruction of a road

(Odumiņa, Aug.11, 2011). The article has 169 comments. The same issue was addressed already on July 31 with the article “700 mighty trees per minute.”

On August 15, 2011 there is an article “Latvian State Forests secretly trying to conduct a campaign against the critics,” written by Lato Lapsa especially for *Tvnet*. It states several facts regarding previously mentioned letter from the forest researchers as well as calls them “the fed scientists” because all of them receives money from LVM. It is also stated that the representatives of the company as well as the Latvian Forest Industry Federation, the Latvian Timber Producers and Traders Association “try to elude” from the uncomfortable situation. However, the “truth comes out” and “it is true that LVM have spoken with the representatives of the federation and associations to co-finance the publications of educational films and materials” (Lapsa and Pietiek.com, Aug.15, 2011). The article has 288 comments.

“Forest Destruction: Ašeradens thinks that forests should be cut more” is an article on August 30, 2011. It has been talked that the Parliament committee approves the amendments of the new Forest Law; that forest felling volume is optimal and could be even increased; and the bureaucracy should be reduced when receiving services in forestry (TVNET/LETA, Aug.30, 2011). The article has 327 comments.

The next chosen article is from September 3, 2011, titled “Must change attitude towards forests.” (The author of the master’s thesis has decided to include this article in the evaluation. Even though the title does not describe this article in a negative light, however, from the title is not clear in what direction the text would be developed.) The article is connected to the previous one because Parliament deputy, Uģis Rotbergs, expresses comments of what Mr. Ašeradens had said before. Mr. Rotbergs believes that currently it should be talked about the attitude towards forests and that the responsible institutions and persons are the ones who must change their attitude. Long-term forestry goals include not only economical but also social, environmental and other aspects; therefore, “**forests are not only a source for wood.**” It is stated that in the documents and laws for long-term forestry and its characteristics are described but the realization of them not always is appropriate (TVNET, Sept.3, 2011). The article has 140 comments. Since the article does question current forest policies, it is classified as negative.

An article two days later, on September 5, 2011 is titled “Forest destruction – the real estate bubble No.2.” *Tvnet* begins the article with an irony: “We have been hearing many kinds of wonders from wise forestry doctorates as well as from other

persons Trees are the same as potatoes and so on, and so on.” *Tvnet* also address the politicians who “for several months have not found time for TVNET’s interview” and the irony continues:

- “Raimonds Vējonis – greener than green this former biology teacher, seems that he is Dūklavs’ whipping-boy Vējonis has nothing to say about forestry topic, about the huge felling concentrations”
- “Mister Jānis Dūklavs, peasant’s shepherd . . . the guardian of all the cutters”
- “Once mighty newspaper’s patron has joined them – Ašeradens . . . He thinks the forest should be cut more but ‘Diena’ (newspaper in Latvia) already showed his ability and skills to operate.”

It is observed that the language in the rest of the article is very tendentious and straight-forward:

- “Voter, look twice or even three times.”
- “Forests have been felled in catastrophic levels.”
- “We will not name those responsible but think when you throw your ballot in the ballot-box.”
- “All trees will be cut and sold and the industry will lose its good appeal.”
- “We will be some *shabby* (not exact translation; word “*paplukusi*” was used) state with frightening-looking clear-cuts.”
- “There won’t be jobs in local villages and more likely, there won’t be any villages left.”
- “Just like after the real estate bubble. . . Now wound licking is happening and I can bet that many would give away a lot if the state had restricted the access to credits in reasonable levels.”
- “Shouldn’t the diplomas been taken away from the forestry ‘professors’?”
- “Some Mārtiņš Andžs, a doctoral student in Latvian University of Agriculture in his paper wrote: ‘...there is no reason for concern. Every tree has its life cycle the same as to potatoes’”
- “Mārtiņ, do you know the difference between a tree and a potato?”
- “TVNET will closely follow what happens on September 8, when the Forest Law amendments will be viewed; you will find out about your heroes” (TVNET, Sept.5, 2011).

The author of the article is *Tvnet*. It is interesting that a forestry doctorate student is mentioned as “incompetent” to talk about forestry issue, yet we do not know who the actual author of this published article is. The article has 196 comments.

On September 8, 2011 there are two articles that contradict one another. The first published has a title “Forests of Latvia are felled proportionately – one hundredth part of the whole area.” Since the objective of the thesis is to search for negative articles, this article will not be analyzed; however, the other article’s title on the same day states “The fate of the forests is in the hands of the President” because the Parliament supported the extensive amendments to the new Forest Law. It is stated that in the new Law, two important issues are still not solved – it does not eliminate the conflict of interest regarding the management of forests; it also does not mention the concentrations of the clear-cuts. “The President’s decision will determine whether the forest issue will be addressed in the ‘old’ Parliament agenda or the ‘new’ Parliament will decide this issue. In any case, TVNET will follow what the deputies decide on forests!” (TVNET, Sept.8, 2011). The title is misleading and the article has 116 comments.

On September 13, 2011 there is another article regarding the “destruction of forests” in “Green Land.” The title states: “ZZS (Union of Greens and Farmers) do not see the destruction of forests” and starts with a sentence that most of the leading parties confess that there are “problems in Latvian forestry” but ZZS “believes that forests are currently managed wisely.” First, “**Unity**” lists a number of “**very significant problems**” and “**in the next few years the allowed felling volumes are substantially higher than in the five previous years.**” Also **Zatler’s Reform Party** sees problems in the forestry; “**Harmony Center**” refers to the clear-cut principle as the main problem; **National Association** also recognizes several problems. “Interesting that the **Union of Greens and Farmers** has different opinion who currently oversees the Ministry of Agriculture . . . ‘Greenlanders’ do not see ‘forest destruction’ in Latvia.” *Tvnet* did not receive an answer from **Šlesera Reform Party LPP/LC**. It is also stated that extended answers from the parties can be seen in files attached to the article (TVNET, Sept.13, 2011). The picture at the beginning of the article sticks out because phrase “forest destruction” is framed in a red box. The author of the article is *Tvnet* and it has 253 comments.

An article “Dūkļavs last agony: forest supervisor is chosen without competition” is published on September 26, 2011. The article is about the “absurd

situation” that there is only one candidate for the State Forest Service (VMD) director’s position, in addition, “**Minister Dūklavs is on vacation this week.**” The previous director of the VMD stated that “it would be logical if this issue was left to the new Minister.” The new director’s task will be to reorganize VMD, however, *Tvnet* talked to some person who knows forest sector very well and this person stressed that “**the reorganization reminds gradual elimination on VMD, first removing forestry**” (TVNET, Sept.26, 2011). The article has 213 comments.

“KNAB and VK have been asked to help the forest” is published on September 27, 2011. In this day, the new VMD director, Andis Krēsliņš, was confirmed. “A well-informed source in conversation with *Tvnet* was critical of the current actions of Krēsliņš. Possibly, he thinks about his interests more and not about the public good. In the assessment of the situation, law enforcement institutions should be involved.” According to the “well-informed” person, Mr. Krēsliņš has a “great power” because “**reorganization is being made in revolutionary pace.**” The “well-informed” person also warns of the great risk of corruption because woodsmen decisions will affect “huge cash flows,” therefore it can be said that “**traffic police’s 5 Lats (piecīšu) problem is ridiculous** [compared to the new problems of woodsmen].” *Tvnet* also states that Kresliņš “skeletons” now are masked (TVNET, Sept.27, 2011). The article has 53 comments. As it was observed before, the title of the article is misleading and the picture at the beginning sticks out because phrase “forest destruction” is framed in a red box.

On September 29, 2011 an article “In the film of State forests there is no living tree shown” is published. LVM has prepared a short clip that shows how and what the company is doing to maintain sustainable forest management, however, the article stresses upon a fact that “**the short clip is pure animation and graphs**” and there is “no living tree shown” and continues indignation: “Does LVM really has no actual tree left to show to the citizens? Instead cartoon animals and their Latin names are showed and all it is done by the taxpayer’s money.” In order to find out what the society thinks of this issue, *Tvnet* together with “Snaphots” conducted a “special survey” and the survey showed that “**more than half believe that the felling volumes in the state forests should be reduced,**” in addition, “older people are worried more.” According to the comments by the people “**the biggest complains they have against, in their view, are the slow pace of reforestation**” (TVNET, Sept.29, 2011). The short clip is attached to the article as well as the result table of the

survey. The article has 330 comments. After this article, the amount of articles in forest destruction issue becomes rarer.

The next article in “Green Land” is only after a month on October 26, 2011 with a title “Minister repressed servants.” The former director of VMD, Jānis Kinna, in an interview let *Tvnet* know that he left the office because he “did not want to obey the Minister of Agriculture, Jānis Dūklavs, and his setup of the reorganization.” Mr. Kinna “**had been immune to orders on the phone**” and he believed that “**the reorganization will weaken the Service’s work;**” in addition, the reorganization will be a hard work because “**the forest workers already with mother’s milk have sucked in the existing order and its rules**” (TVNET, Oct.26, 2011). The article has 121 comments.

On December 7, 2011 the question about the road construction and destruction of trees at the side of the road is brought up again in an article “Rēzekne-Gulbene forest destruction road project continues” (Odumiņa, Dec.7, 2011). The author is the same Diāna Odumiņa from “Dzirkstele.” The article has 14 comments.

On January 8, 2012, *Tvnet* is concerned that “LVM donated 4 million, but popular sport is left without support” and “not a penny of this money have been given to the popular sport or non-Olympic sports” (TVNET/LTV “De Facto,” Jan.8, 2012). The authors of the story are “de facto” as well as *Tvnet* and a video is attached. The article has 58 comments.

At the end of March there were three articles regarding the same issue. The first one on March 20, 2012 is entitled “International petition calls to stop forest destruction in Latvia.” It is stated that in internet petition site *Thepetitionsite.com* 17 600 people all over the world have signed a petition to stop forest destruction in Latvia. In the petition it is predicted that “if Latvia will continue to cut two million cubic meters annually, forests will disappear in 50 years or less” (TVNET, March 20, 2012). *Tvnet* provides a link to the original petition and the article has 630 comments. On the main picture of the article is a slogan “Stop deforest!” However, the picture itself shows many felled trees and a mountain in the background that does not correspond to the landscape of Latvia.

On March 21, 2012 an article with a title “18 000 against the destruction of forest; Dombrovskis does not see a problem” appears. *Tvnet* confirms that the Prime Minister “does not see a reason to question the sustainability of Latvian forest management,” however, Uģis Rotbergs is sure that “those who talk about

sustainability are only interested in the wood” (Bormanis, TVNET, March 21, 2012). The article has 382 comments.

The last article on the same topic with the same author, Kalvis Bormanis, is on March 23, 2012 with a title “Young girl from Canada will address the EU against deforestation of Latvia’s forests.” This girl, Raedene Melin, had seen an extended article on *Mongabay.com* (there is a link to the story in *Tvnet*) and she thinks that “**it really will be a tragedy if Latvia will keep felling forests in such high speed.**” The picture by the article encourages: “Lets save Latvia’s forests!” (Bormanis, TVNET, March 23, 2012). The article has 261 comments.

Another article expressing negativity about forestry is from July 5, 2012 with a title “Forestry cooperatives – distraction from deforestation saga.” Dainis Īvāns describes LVM as “an institution that ravage and plunder forests the most” but Jānis Rozītis believes that “foreigners treat forest more gently than Latvians” (TVNET, July 5, 2012). The article has 104 comments.

The last article that fits in the chosen time frame is from November 23, 2012 with a title “State forests’ ‘good work campaign’ is exaggerated.” Those are words of environmental activist Edmunds Kance who started a campaign in *Manabals.lv* for the conservation of Latvian forests. “**The felling continues but most importantly the attitude of the society has changed. It has been talked about and I am not the only one anymore.**” Mr. Kance stresses that “**the facts in many cases are true [presented by LVM] but they are told tendentiously. For instance, LVM says that 26 000 cubic meters regenerate per year but only 12 000 [cubic meters] are felled. Seems that cut is less than regenerated, but on the other hand, not all the forest that regenerates stands forever . . . and does not grow immediately**” (TVNET, Nov.23, 2011). The article has 255 comments.

All together 39 articles were chosen to be “negative” towards forest industry (see Annex 2). It is notable that 34 of the articles were found in the “Green Land” section but only 4 in the “News” and 1 in the “Finance” (Figure 3.4).

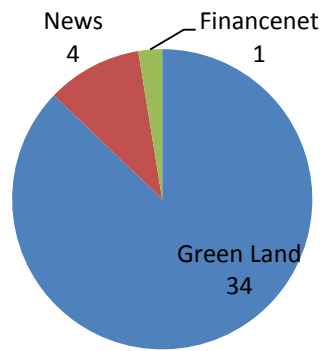


Fig. 3. 4. Sections where the negative articles were found in Tvnet

There is a tendency that articles written by *Tvnet* have highlighted areas that are seen no matter whether one reads the rest of the article or not. It was also noted that some of the articles do not necessarily correspond with the title; therefore in several cases the title was misleading. A key trend in the articles is phrase “forest destruction” and *Tvnet* had very aggressive language when expressing their views about forestry. When looking at the articles about the forest industry, it is notable that when Al Jazeera movie came out there were only 2 other additional negative articles on the same month but most of the articles expressing negative information were published during the summer of 2011 including September (Figure 3.5) which would indicate that the movie was not the main source for negativity against the forest industry but perhaps *Tvnet* had an agenda before the Parliamentary elections on September 2011. There is a clear pattern that from June through September there was a campaign against forestry and the above given examples from the articles demonstrate biased information reflection.

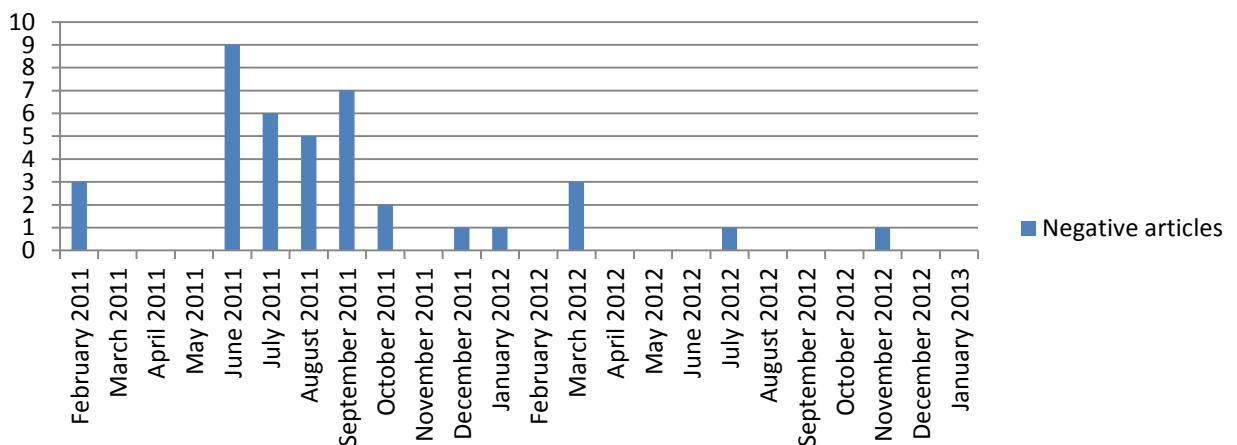


Fig. 3. 5. Period of the chosen negative articles in Tvnet

When the total number of articles is compared to the negative articles, it shows that one third of the articles are negative (Figure 3.6). However, when only “Green Land” articles are viewed, the pattern changes and half of the articles are negative (Figure 3.7).

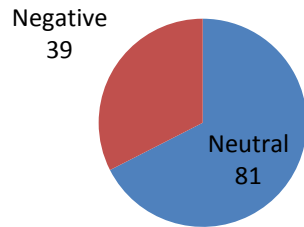


Fig. 3. 6. Negative and neutral articles in Tvnet

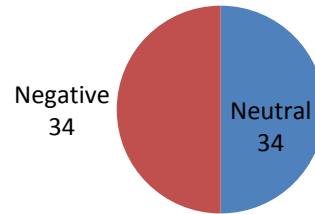


Fig. 3. 7. Negative and neutral articles in “Green land” section in Tvnet

Therefore, another data evaluation was conducted where only “Green Land” articles were selected from June 2011 to September 2011. It showed that majority of the articles were negative and therefore would have greater impact on the reader. In June 2011, a total of 12 articles were published; of which 9 of them were negative; in July there were 8 articles of which 5 were negative; in August, 6 articles of which 5 were negative and in September 11 articles of which 7 were negative (Figure 3.8), therefore, showing that this particular section had an agenda in the particular time period. Yet articles such as “Eurostat: Latvia is 4th most forested country in EU” and “In Latvia the forests are cut proportionally – one hundredth of all area” are published during those months which clearly contradicts with the agenda that “Green Land” has, namely, to draw attention that forests in Latvia are “destroyed,” that LVM does not manage forests properly and that Latvian public should take action to prevent that.

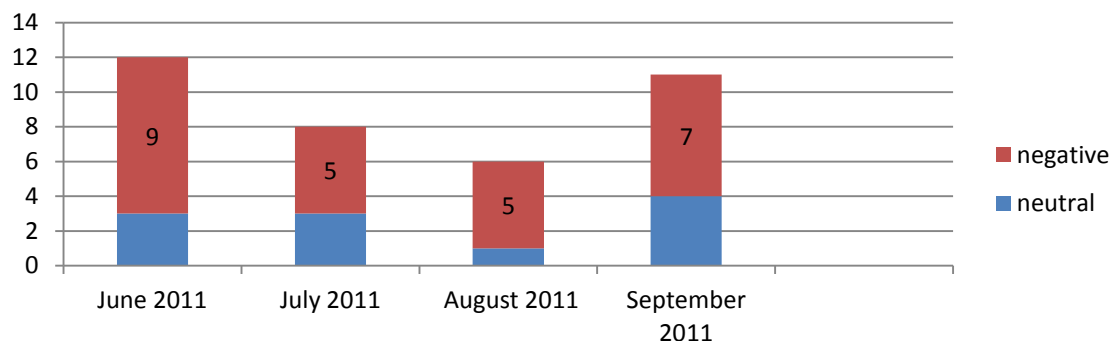


Fig. 3. 8. “Green Land” articles from June 2011 to September 2011

3.3. DELFI.lv

Internet portal *Delfi.lv* is structured slightly differently as *Tvnet*, therefore, it was not possible to select a concrete time period for all the articles when searching for them. However, *Delfi.lv* gives a possibility to choose specific themes, therefore, when a theme has been chosen, all articles are given in time order as they have been published. Themes such as “Latvian State Forests,” “Forestry,” “Ministry of Agriculture,” “Latvijas Finieris,” “chips,” were selected and all together chosen 93 articles (see annex 3) from which 63 were under “Business,” 24 under “News,” 3 under “Eyewitness,” 2 under “Regions” and 1 under “Culture” (Figure 3.9).

In *Delfi.lv* there was significantly smaller number of articles which title

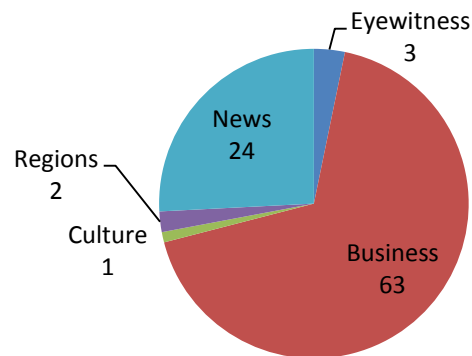


Fig. 3. 9. Sections in Delfi.lv where articles were found

expressed negativity. Another difference from *Tvnet* was the layout of the articles because only in one chosen article parts of the text were highlighted but otherwise there was no such text or even subtitles, however, the titles of the articles were clearer and therefore the title corresponded to the text.

Following the time pattern, the first article regarding forestry on February 3, 2011 was in “News” section titled “‘Al Jazeera English’ is concerned about the future of Latvian forests.” The article states the basic facts about the movie and the original video is attached (DELFI, Feb.3, 2011). The article has 215 comments.

The same article and text as in *Tvnet* on February 13, 2011, is also published in *Delfi* in “News” section with slightly different title: “Latvian State Forests in donations support ZZS related organizations” (DELFI, Feb.13, 2011). The article has 116 comments.

In the “News” section article “Environmental NGOs criticize State Forest Service’s reorganization plans” is published on April 14, 2011. The article stressed

upon a fact that the Environmental Advisory Council (VKP) believes that the Ministry of Agriculture does not have good enough reasons to reorganize VMD (DELFI, Apr,14, 2011). The article has 23 comments.

“Mārtiņš Andžs: we can go back to the brutal forest robbery” is an article in the “News” on July 14, 2011. This particular author was referred as “Some Mārtiņš Andžs” in *Tvnet* (Sept.5, 2011), even though there is no article published in his name in *Tvnet*. He explains the importance of the forest industry and thinks that the suggestions by the Parliament deputy Uģis Rotbergs to reduce the period during which the forest could not be felled is “foolish” because it would lead to stagnation of the forest industry (DELFI, July 14, 2011). This is rather positive article for the forest industry; however, the title can be understood differently. The article has 170 comments.

An article on August 4, 2011 in the “News” section is the only article where text is highlighted and it is titled “Jurgis Jansons: Latvian forests – myth and reality.” He states: “Before looking at forest resources, while respecting the opinion of the society on landscape changes because of forestry, **it must be repeated** that the diversity of the familiar and seen **nature, including the landscape, is a result of the ancient living in Latvia.**” Mr. Jansons himself does not like the visual look of the clearings; however, “**in order for Latvia to exist**, the felling of forest or, in broader sense, **forestry, is necessary.**” He knows that the usual landscape changes but “**the society see the change in the landscape very intensely,**” in addition, “**On the basis of the management of the Latvian forests is information on forest timber resources.**” Jansons is sure that “in any case, the grown timber resources comprise a **huge reserve that at least 13-15 times exceeds the actual annual harvesting volumes in Latvia**” and it has been calculated that “in a decade the **annual felling** is equal to **hundredth part** of total forested area.” He concludes that “the use of timer resources or **the felling spatial placement in socially accepted or unaccepted manner is tactical forest management’s planning task**” (Jansons, Aug.4, 2011). After analyzing the article it can be concluded that it is not negative but rather positive, therefore, was not classified as negative.

A person from Kurzeme has sent in three pictures to show what kind of “views can be seen in Latvian State forests. All goods are felled recklessly but the fallen trees are left to rot. LVM is as wolf on a haystack; they don’t need it, and it isn’t given for the firewood.” The title of the article is “See how felled Latvian State forests look

like!” in the “Eyewitness” section and it has been published on September 13, 2011 (DELFI, Sept.13, 2011). However, the pictures do not look as the author describes them. The article has 27 comments.

On March 1, 2012 an article states that “In Usma municipality in state forest 81 tree has been felled illegally.” Criminal proceeding has been started (DELFI, March 1, 2012). It is very short article in the “News” section and has only 1 comment.

Another article on “Eyewitness” section, where a reader has sent in pictures of tree felling, was published on January 8, 2013 with a title “Eyewitness: In Kęngarags several birches and dozen apple trees felled.” The reader is indignant that “some kinds of *uncles* (not exact translation; word “*tēvaiņi*” was used) are cutting down birches and apple trees!” (DELFI, Jan.8, 2013). The article has 51 comments.

The last chosen article, published on January 19, 2013, with a title “Investor: State’s implemented forest purchasing allows improving LVM positions” is in “Business” section. According to a Swedish company “one million lats worth state’s forest land purchasing program have shot and killed two rabbits with one stone, allowing to have improved business position of ‘Latvian State Forests’ and satisfying the interests of politicians” (LETA, Jan.19, 2013). The article has 16 comments.

There is a significant difference between the articles in *Delfi* and *Tvnet*. The titles in *Delfi* are more neutral, more informative and they do not impose their point of view. Even though most of the articles from *Delfi* were found under “Business” section, only 1 was classified as negative (Figure 3.10).

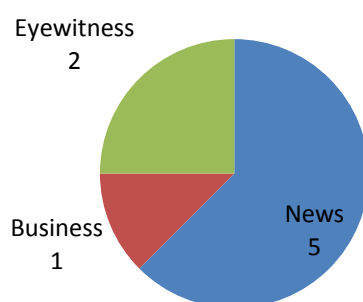


Fig. 3. 10. Sections where the negative articles were found in Delfi.lv

All together 8 (see annex 4) articles out of 93 were considered to be negative (Figure 3.11), therefore, there is no clear pattern that *Delfi* would have any agenda of their views of forestry. In addition, the articles are more informative rather than expressing a particular opinion.

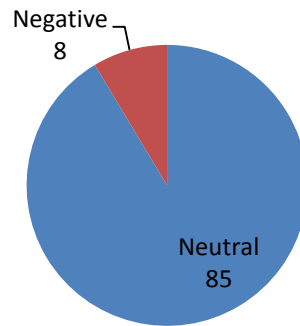


Fig. 3. 11. Negative and neutral articles in Delfi.lv

3.4. DELFI.ee

In regards to the most-viewed Estonian news portal *Delfi.ee*, similar pattern were found as in *Delfi.lv*. All together 72 articles (see annex 5) were found regarding forestry and mostly State Forest Management Centre (RMK) from which 8 (see annex 6) were classified as negative (Figure 3.12).

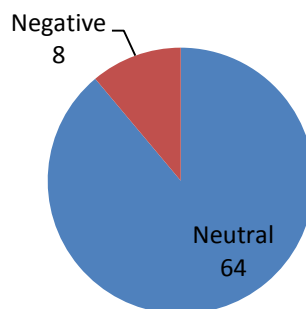


Fig. 3. 12. Negative and neutral articles found in Delfi.ee

“RMK leader gave ten thousand euros to his non-profit organization” is an article found on January 5, 2012 where it is believed that conflict of interest has arose because the RMK director, Aigar Kallas, is a member of an organization to which RMK has given money. However, Mr. Kallas himself does not see conflict of interest (DELFI.ee, Jan.5, 2012). The article has 171 comments.

“Professor’s evaluation: RMK has violated the law” is an article on January 27, 2012. Tartu University criminology professor believes that RMK director, Aigar Kallas, has violated the anti-corruption law regarding the above mentioned issue about another organization while being chairman of the RMK (DELFI.ee, Jan.27, 2012). The article has 17 comments.

There is an article concerning the fact that RMK with its trucks has destroyed the road to Pillapalu village. According to the locals, the road is unusable and they do not have the patience to take it anymore (DELFI.ee, Sept.10, 2012). The article has 19 comments.

The most recent ones were written on January 2013 about clear-cuts that RMK were planning on conducting around tourist area in Mustjoel village. Connection to the same issue, it was also reported that Greenpeace are organizing protests against the plans of the RMK (DELFI, Jan.21, 2013). All together 5 articles about the particular topic were published with 228 comments total.

As with *Delfi.lv*, there was no pattern that indicated that *Delfi.ee* had an agenda regarding forest industry in the chosen time period; however, it is also notable that in the case of Estonia there was no such movie as “Latvia’s Pulp Fiction” released. Most of the negative articles were found under “Estonia” and “Life” sections yet it was also observed that the same as for *Delfi.lv*, both sides of the conflict situations were presented and no opinion was forced on the reader as the same cannot be said about *Tvnet*.

3.5. Analysis of the internet media

Comparing *Tvnet* and *Delfi* it was discovered that media has an important role of which issue will appear to be covered and which will not; it has the power to stimulate interest in certain topic and *Tvnet* clearly showed such interest about the forest industry in “Green Land” section. When coverage of a topic is intense, it leads to discussion of issue in the media which is seen by the amount of comments from the readers.

News media has the power to establish news that would become important topics and by placing an issue of the public agenda where the issue becomes the focus of public attention and thought. For an agenda-setting process to be successful, first, the frequency of repetition is needed; this is what *Tvnet* performed from June 2011 until September 2011; second, the prominence with which the items are displayed is required. It cannot be determined whether or not the articles were headline news yet “Forest destruction” has its separate section, in addition, the number of comments by the readers was compared. Of all negative *Tvnet* articles there were 8499 comments in total, while in *Delfi.lv* the number was 619; but in *Delfi.ee* the number was only 435. In *Tvnet* the average comments per article were 218 (the highest being 990) while in

Delfi.lv it was 77 (highest 215) but in *Delfi.ee* 54 (highest 171) (Figure 3.13). Third, in order to draw attention to particular issue, there is the need to keep the degree of conflict in the news items which was shown in *Tvnet* articles mostly regarding Latvian State Forests, State Forest Service, leading parties and the Minister of the Agriculture. All of them were presented as main actors of the forest industry who do not act in the interests of the society but rather, in their own interests. Fourth, the framing of a news item, in what context and when it appears is a trend in *Tvnet* articles in “Green Land” and “Forest destruction.”

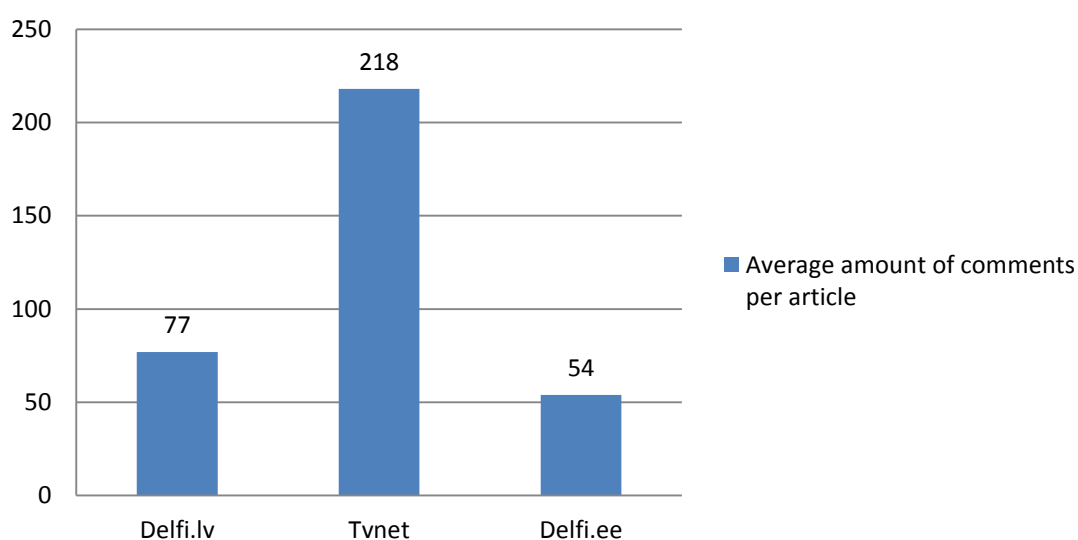


Fig. 3. 13. *The average amount of comments per negative articles is Delfi.lv, Tvnet and Delfi.ee*

Therefore, it was observed that *Tvnet* articles were selling certain messages and worldviews because it certainly pointed out sets of ideas that there is “forest destruction” in Latvia and that LVM and the leading politicians know about it and do everything on their own interests but not society’s, while *Delfi.lv* paid almost no attention to such issue. Even though the negative articles found in *Delfi.ee* were regarding RMK which is equivalent to LVM, those news stories were not as biased and one-sided as in *Tvnet*. It is claimed that the ways in which the media provide forms of public discourse is often in very biased terms and *Tvnet* articles in “Green Land” showed that.

While the task of the news media is to inform society about the latest issues and obviously the media needs to report all negative, positive or neutral issues about the particular topic, the examples shown from *Tvnet* articles suggest that their intention was to shift the view of the society because the language in the articles were tendentious, and often aggressive towards the leading politicians and LVM. Those

articles were reported from specific angle and language played an important role in reflecting that position.

If Professor J. Foust's theory is followed and assumed that the internet viewer rather scans web pages and on average reads 18-20 percent of the words in the article, meaning that the title and the highlighted parts are the most important sentences of the article, thus *Tvnet* had used it on its advantage. With such controversial titles as included "Desert can cover Latvia," "Destroyed forests are donated to football and rally," "Politicians are afraid to talk openly about the forests," etc., and adding highlighted phrases such as "[Driving through Latvia] **the only cars that are seen are the logging trucks**" and "**people will not have available traditional forests where they can pick mushrooms**" *Tvnet* creates the worldview for the reader that Latvia does not take care of its forests even though chapter 2 indicated that it is not true. In addition, in some cases, not the entire sentence was included in the highlighted part. For example, "**much regarding forest policy documents, first of all, is written with Latvian state forest hands**" yet *Tvnet* has not highlighted the first part of the sentence where someone express his own opinion: "perhaps I do not have precise information but I suspect."

If the reader considers the articles in "Green Land" as the only truth about the forest industry in Latvia then the media shape one's values and have direct effects on his or her actions, especially since in several articles *Tvnet* suggested for readers to participate in the petitions against forest cuttings as well as to consider who they vote for in the upcoming Parliament elections. While also negatively-titled articles were found in *Delfi.lv* and *Delfi.ee* as well, their content did not present a particularly biased position and there were different opinions included in the articles.

Therefore, analyzing articles in the leading internet news sites in Latvia, it was observed that media plays an important part of the communication process that either unites or divides societies on particular issue. The media has the power to provide forms of public discourse in biased terms which can lead those dominant values, beliefs and norms of a particular media to become one's values and norms. In *Tvnet*, the content about "Forest destruction" was emphasized and therefore also the audience was influenced to see it important.

3.6. Survey “The influence of the internet media to the forest industry of Latvia”

As a part of the master’s thesis, a survey was distributed to determine how often people read *Tvnet* and *Delfi.lv* and whether or not they believe that internet media creates negative associations towards forest industry in Latvia (see annex 7). 36 participants participated in the survey of whom 23 were females and 13 were males. There were no significant differences found between gender, age groups or the education.

From the responses it was determined that more people read *Tvnet* (Figure 3.15) rather than *Delfi* (Figure 3.14) yet most of the respondents read both of the internet news portals at some point.

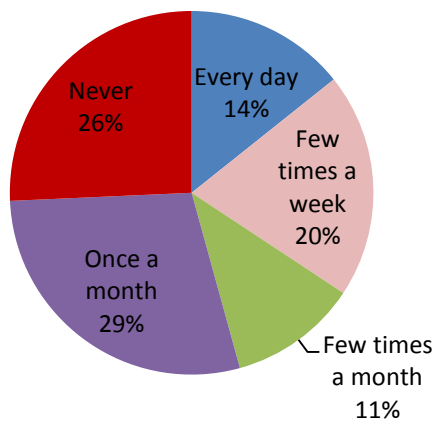


Fig. 3. 14. How often do you read Delfi.lv?

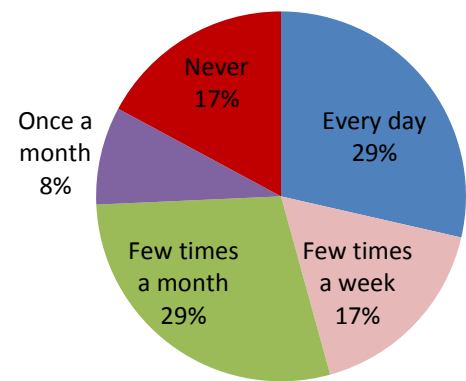


Fig. 3. 15. How often do you read Tvnet.lv?

Since most of the negative articles in the previous analysis were found in *Tvnet*’s “Green Land,” a question regarding that particular section was asked to determine whether or not the respondents have come across it (Figure 3.16). Almost half of the respondents answered that they have not read it while 31 percent confirmed the fact. However, it is significant to note that 20 percent were not sure, therefore, it is possible that they have read articles in the section but they were not aware of that.

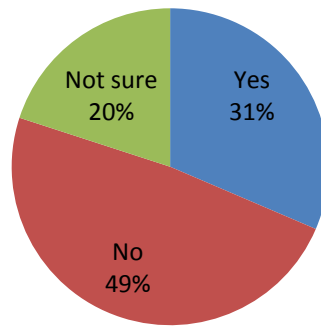


Fig. 3. 16. Have you read Tvnet’s “Green Land” Section?

A question was asked if generally the respondent has noticed biased articles that reflect some situation or event in a one-sided nature on *Tvnet* or *Delfi* (Figure 3.17). 40 percent of the respondents confirmed that they have noticed that in both *Tvnet* and *Delfi*; however, it is notable that 28 percent have observed that only in *Tvnet* where also most of the negative articles about the forest industry were found. Yet these results show that none of the news presented in the internet portals are protected against being biased or one-sided. These results show that people are aware that they might be reading one-sided information that not always is the whole story.

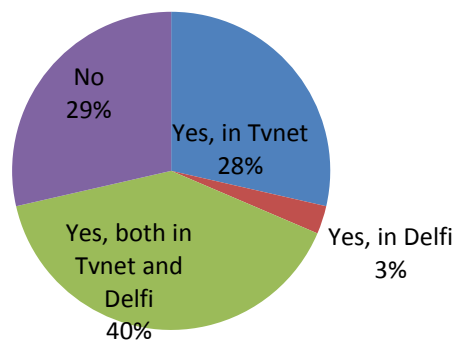


Fig. 3. 17. Have you noticed that in the internet media articles are biased, reflecting some situation or event one-sided?

Also, a question about whether or not the respondent has seen Al Jazeera “Latvia’s Pulp Fiction” was asked (Figure 3.18). 71 percent of the respondents have not seen it which indicates that this particular movie is not the main source of why they would think negatively about forest industry of Latvia; 14 percent of them have heard about it. However, 29 percent have seen it.

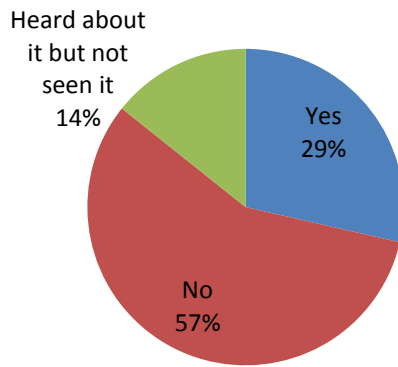


Fig. 3. 18. Have you seen TV channel's Al Jazeera in 2011 produced movie "Latvia's Pulp Fiction"?

While it is not possible to determine whether or not and in what ways the movie has influenced people's thoughts, 46 percent of the respondents think that there is too much cutting happening in the Latvian forests (Figure 3.19). 37 percent thinks that deforestation in Latvia is not excessive; while 17 percent are not informed about such issues. Therefore, the next question asked was to find out if they believe whether

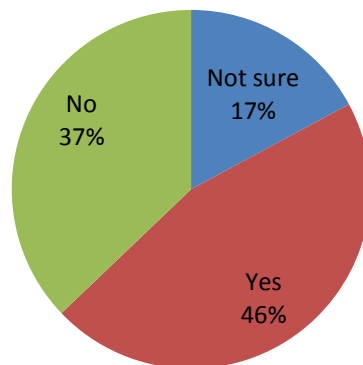


Fig. 3. 19. Do you think that there is too excessive deforestation in Latvia?

or not internet media can affect the way people think about the forest industry and the forests in general in Latvia (Figure 3.20). 74 percent of the respondents agreed that it is the power of internet media to affect public perception about the forest industry and previously shown examples from *Tvnet* articles suggest that internet media is biased. Therefore, according to the previous analysis; *Tvnet* was very successful in presenting forest industry in negative light.

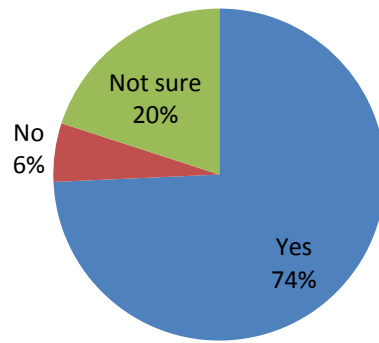


Fig. 3. 20. Do you think that internet media can affect the way people think about the forest industry and forests in Latvia?

The next question asked describes well what people would think if they had no or little information about the forest industry of Latvia but they read titles in *Tvnet* such as “Destruction of forests: forests are renewed in a ragged manner,” “Desert can cover Latvia,” “State forests brags with data that does not describe good forestry,” “Destroyed forests are donated to rally and football,” “Politicians are afraid openly talk about the forests,” “Forest destruction – the real estate bubble No.2” and “In the film of State forests there is no living tree shown” (Figure 3.21). The most controversial titles were chosen from *Tvnet* to present them to the respondents and the answers clearly showed that the titles of the articles are exaggerated. In addition, such titles create negative associations about the forest industry. 54 percent thinks that such titles indicate that there is forest destruction in Latvia, 43 percent agreed that such titles creates the perception that soon there will be no forests in Latvia. Also 40 percent agreed that such titles indicate that the forest industry is not well organized

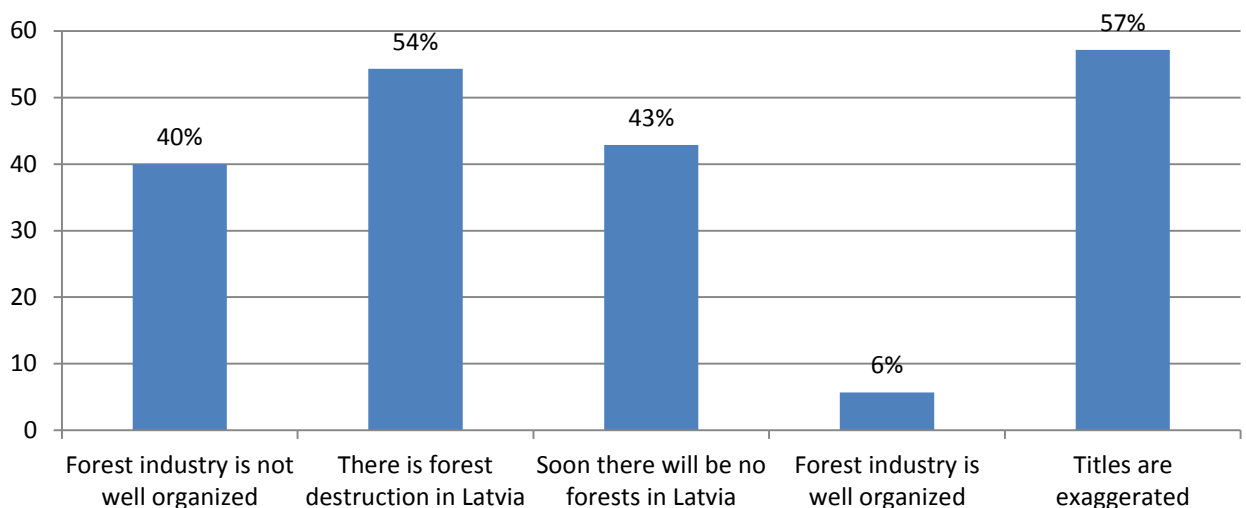


Fig. 3. 21. If you knew little or nothing about the forest industry of Latvia, what would you think if you saw the following titles in *Tvnet.lv*: “Destruction of forests: forests are renewed in a ragged manner,” “Desert can cover Latvia,” “State forests brags with data that does not describe good forestry,” “Destroyed forests are donated to rally and football,” “Politicians are afraid openly talk about the forests,” “Forest destruction – the real estate bubble No.2” and “In the film of State forests there is no living tree shown”? (Multiple answers were possible).

even though the chapter 2 of the master’s thesis proved that there are many laws and regulations as well as different organizations that are responsible for the industry. Only 6 percent would think that forest industry is well organized after reading such titles.

The last question asked corresponds with the hypothesis of the master’s thesis while keeping in mind that now the participants knew what kind of article titles have been published in *Tvnet*. It was asked whether or not the respondent agrees with the statement that the internet media creates negative associations about the forest industry in Latvia (Figure 3.22). Only 6 percent of the respondents do not agree, however, 63 percent confirmed the fact that internet media indeed does create negative perception about the forest industry which also confirms the hypothesis of the master’s thesis. Yet it is also notable that 31 percent is not sure about this issue which indicates that this could be the target audience if it was on somebody’s interest to shift their views to one way or another.

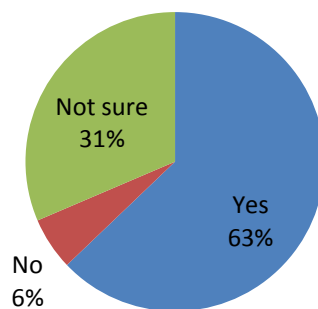


Fig. 3. 22. Do you agree to the statement that internet media creates negative perception about the forest industry in Latvia?

It should be also noted that internet media should not be considered as the only source that has created perception that there is too excessive deforestation in Latvia. This can be based on the survey where only 31 percent indicated that have read “Green Land” and 29 percent have seen “Latvia’s Pulp Fiction” (which were considered the main sources in the internet media that would create negative perception about the forest industry) yet 46 percent believed that there is too excessive deforestation in Latvia. This means that about 15 percent of the respondents have come to such conclusion based on other information. However, if 31 percent have read “Green Land” and 29 percent have seen “Latvia’s Pulp Fiction” then it must be concluded that these are not the only negative sources of information of the forest

industry but there must be something else in the internet media that creates negative perception since 74 percent of the respondents think that internet media can affect the way people think about the forest industry and 63 percent actually believes that internet media creates negative perception about the forest industry in Latvia.

CONCLUSIONS

Latvia and Estonia are similar neighboring countries where the forest industry is one of the key components to national wealth, in that it makes a major contribution to the economies. This research, with its findings about the internet media news stories from February 1, 2011 to February 1, 2013, indicated various significant factors within the media that have a major impact on public perception about the forest industry in Latvia; meanwhile, the same cannot necessarily be said about Estonia.

For the current society, also referred as the “mass society,” mass media is often the primary information source, and therefore, it has the power of controlling the information provided. Based on theoretical research, internet media has several ways of leaving an impact on society. One such way is on that plays an “agenda-setting” role, which focuses readers’ attention to certain topics. By positioning a topic from a certain point of view, the media influences the audience to see it that way and to consider it important. It influences them to see it as truth.

News media has the ability to establish news as an important topic by placing an issue on the public agenda. One should consider that the media influence society in various ways; therefore, helping them to create their concepts and perception of the forest industry.

As it was noted in second chapter, the forest industries have important economic and environmental roles in both Latvia and Estonia. For both cultures, wood is as a renewable resource which is rooted in cultural traditions. It is only logical that issues about forestry are placed on media agendas, yet several cases were observed where media used its power to express particular view; therefore, creating a pattern of what would be published. It was shown that *Tvnet* used and still might be using its power as a link between the forest industry and society to promote their view of forest industry over another. That was mostly expressed through their section “Green Land” where numerous articles were published concerning “forest destruction.”

However, there was no particular connection between the timing of the broadcast of the Al Jazeera movie and the upsurge in *Tvnet* articles 3 months later. Leading politicians, Latvian State Forests and State Forest Service were condemned for their activities especially from June 2011 to September 2011. It seems that the

upsurge was done mainly due to the upcoming Parliament elections on September 17, 2011. It was, however, not observed that *Delfi.lv* or *Delfi.ee* would use their power as an information source to attempt to shift public opinion about the forest industry.

According to the conducted survey, titles in *Tvnet* such as “Desert can cover Latvia” and “Forest destruction – real estate bubble no.2” are considered to be exaggerated in a way that would create negative associations about the forest industry. In addition, 74 percent respondents of the survey indicated that media has the power to affect what people think of such matter and 63 percent indicated that internet media does indeed create a negative perception about the forest industry in Latvia.

It was hypothesized that **the Internet media creates negative perceptions about the forest industry.**

Based on the theoretical background and research carried out on internet media, this assumption could be stated as proven only partly because evidence was found in certain *Tvnet* articles to prove that internet media does have bias as displayed in the often controversial ways of expressing their views and presenting information, but such evidence was not found in *Delfi.lv* and *Delfi.ee*.

Tvnet had a specific agenda from June 2011 to September 2011 which led to the publishing of negative articles about the events in Latvian forests; in this way creating negative associations about the forest industry in general.

The aim of this master’s thesis was to examine and identify the role of internet media in the public perception of the forest industry in Latvia and Estonia. These findings and results show that internet media has played a significant part in creating negative perception in this situation and the conducted survey confirmed it, however, it should also be noted that internet media is not the only source for negativity regarding the forest industry, and it is possible that there are other internet media platforms where negativity is expressed. Within this research it was found how biased articles can be regarding forestry and forest industry in Latvia and therefore it should be pointed out how dangerous media can be in pushing only one particular agenda. Communication and media are huge parts of our daily lives, and with that also comes responsibility. As citizens of modern era, people have to be aware of the bias, and keep the media – both the internet and otherwise – accountable.

This study revealed that the wide availability of technologies and internet are ensuring the existence of debates and arguments, since controversial articles in *Tvnet* would collect more comments than articles in *Delfi.lv* and *Delfi.ee*. The

transformation that is taking place in media field, when internet media platforms are replacing traditional newspapers, is ensuring greater participation and interactivity. It is seen that internet coverage and usage is strong in both Latvia and Estonia, where a majority of citizens are using it more often than ever before.

As to Katrina Schwartz put it, the “battle over sustainable forestry” (Schwartz, 1999) continues because there are still two distinct groups with opposite opinions about the forest industry. Public perception is still deeply divided between those who think that forests in Latvia are being destructed, and those who believe that such accusations are unreasonable.

There is no doubt that many more questions could be raised with regard to this topic. Are *Tvnet*'s concerns reasonable? Are *Delfi.lv* and *Delfi.ee* ignorant about the forest industry? Is it possible that *Tvnet* articles as well as the Al Jazeera movie “Latvia’s Pulp Fiction” were purposefully ordered from somebody “above” or “in power”? How can those in the public protect themselves from being influenced by clearly biased information? This thesis has attempted to show the current situation in the forest industry, and that, regardless of the two distinct sides of the argument, the internet media nevertheless has a massive effect on public perception about the forest industry.

Bernard Cohen has said that news media might not be always successful in telling people what to think, but the media is successful in telling their audiences what to think about it (McCombs, 2004: 3). The myriad articles studied in the aforementioned sites seemed to indicate just such an ability to influence public opinion on the forest industry in Latvia (while regarding Estonian portion, an additional research should be needed), and the conducted survey seemed to support this reality. Be the reader of one opinion or another, the task that the citizens of any nation have in light of the new media is clear – be aware of the biases, be cognizant of it, and make responsible use of the media accordingly. This is the twenty-first century’s new responsibility.

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Annex 1. All articles found in TVNET

	Title of the article	Date	Section	No.of comments
1	"Al Jazeera" vēsta par pārmērīgu mežu izciršanu Latvijā	04.feb.11	Financenet	440
2	LVM ziedo miljonāra izklaidei, daudzbērnu ģimenēm - pīga	07.feb.11	Ziņas	48
3	Valstij izdevies iekļūt "Latvijas Finieri"	10.feb.11	Financenet	
4	"Latvijas valsts meži", ziedojot miljonus, atbalsta ar ZZS saistītos	13.feb.11	Ziņas	131
5	Latvija apsver investoru piesaisti celulozes rūpniecībai	16.feb.11	Financenet	
6	Eksperti Latvijas mežsaimniecību uzskata par ilgtspējīgu	25.feb.11	Zaļā zeme	
7	Mēbeļu eksports palicis nemainīgs 55,1 miliona latu apmērā	04.mar.11	Financenet	
8	Jūrmalā izcirtīs gandrīz 14 hektārus meža	09.mar.11	Zaļā zeme	
9	Janvārī mēbeļu eksports krities par 8%	27.mar.11	Financenet	
10	Pērn Latvijā atjaunoti 32 200 hektāri meža	05.apr.11	Zaļā zeme	
11	Koku ciršanas apjomi pērn kāpuši par 21%	19.apr.11	Financenet	
12	Plāno samazināt administratīvo slogu meža nozarē	28.apr.11	Financenet	
13	Veidos sudrabvītoli aleju Rīgā	11.mai.11	Zaļā zeme	
14	Valsts meža dienesta vadītājs Kinna iesniedzis atlūgumu	15.mai.11	Zaļā zeme	
15	Īpašnieki spiesti izcirst mežus, lai samaksātu kredītus	18.mai.11	Financenet	
16	Saeimā gatavo mežu izciršanas atļaujas atcelšanu	18.mai.11	Zaļā zeme	
17	Notiks Meža dienu 2011 lielie svētki Mežaparkā	20.mai.11	Izklaide & Kultūra	
18	Mēbeļu imports Latvijā samazinājies par 24,4%	22.mai.11	Financenet	
19	Valsts meža dienestā gaidāmas pārmaiņas, taču skaidrības nav	24.mai.11	Zaļā zeme	
20	Meža organizācijas paraksta nodomu protokolu par mežu apsaimniekošanu	04.jūn.11	Zaļā zeme	
21	Valsts mežus apsaimnieko videi nedraudzīgi	10.jūn.11	Zaļā zeme	169
22	Mežu atjaunošanas rādītāji Latvijā nav spīdoši	10.jūn.11	Zaļā zeme	9
23	Latvijas mežu iznīcināšana	10.jūn.11	Zaļā zeme	990
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25	"Eurostat": Latvija ir ceturtā mežiem bagātākā valsts ES	15.jūn.11	Zaļā zeme	
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28	Tuksnesis var pārklāt Latviju	27.jūn.11	Zaļā zeme	513

29	"Latvijas Valsts mežiem" jāmaina pārraudzītājs	27.jūn.11	Zaļā zeme	
30	Valsts meži plātās ar datiem, kas neraksturo labu mežsaimniecību	30.jūn.11	Zaļā zeme	145
31	Par mežu iznīcināšanu aģitējot LVM apmaksāta amatpersona	30.jūn.11	Zaļā zeme	97
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33	Iznīcinātos mežus dāvina rallijam un futbolam	04.jūl.11	Zaļā zeme	313
34	Meža nozares apgrozījums sasniedzis Ls 1,5 miljardus	05.jūl.11	Financenet	
35	Uzņēmējs: Latvijai jādomā par celulozes rūpniecības būvniecību	07.jūl.11	Financenet	
36	Akcijā „Cirvis” vērsas pret nesaprātīgu mežu apsaimniekošanu	11.jūl.11	Zaļā zeme	
37	Aiz restēm par mežu postīšanu!	11.jūl.11	Zaļā zeme	92
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39	Mežu likumi tiek rakstīti ar "Latvijas valsts mežu" roku	18.jūl.11	Zaļā zeme	149
40	Meža nozares eksports sasniedzis 501,62 miljonus latu	22.jūl.11	Financenet	
41	LVM šogad plāno par 20% mazāku apgrozījumu	22.jūl.11	Financenet	
42	Pirmajos piecos mēnešos par 28,3% krities mēbeļu imports	23.jūl.11	Financenet	
43	Ar "Latvijas valsts mežiem" piesārņo apkārtni	24.jūl.11	Ziņas	46
44	Piedzīvojam lielākos mežu ciršanas apmērus; Sabiedrības satraukumam ir pamats	26.jūl.11	Zaļā zeme	374
45	Uz ielām kaisītais sāls veicina koku nokaļšanu	28.jūl.11	Zaļā zeme	
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49	Par meža un melu politiku	08.aug.11	Zaļā zeme	82
50	Saskaitīts - Rēzeknes ceļam upurēs 879 kokus	11.aug.11	Zaļā zeme	169
51	Latvijas Valsts meži paslepus mēģina diriģēt kampaņu pret kritizētājiem	15.aug.11	Zaļā zeme	288
52	Papīra un kartona importa vērtība kāpusi par 21,6%	22.aug.11	Financenet	
53	Jūlijā plānotais ciršanas apjoms ir 650 000 kubikmetru	22.aug.11	Zaļā zeme	
54	Uz LVM zemes uzbūvētas raganu mājiņas	24.aug.11	Ziņas	
55	Meža nozarē par katru darījuma latu nodoklis ir 2 santīmi	25.aug.11	Financenet	
56	Mežu iznīcināšana: Ašeradens domā, ka meži jācērt vēl vairāk	30.aug.11	Zaļā zeme	327

57	Jāmaina attieksme pret mežiem	03.sep.11	Zaļā zeme	140
58	Ofšoru ķēdē paslēpti investori, kas grib pirkt "Latvijas Finieri"	04.sep.11	Ziņas	
59	Mežu iznīcināšana - nekustamo īpašumu burbulis Nr. 2	05.sep.11	Zaļā zeme	196
60	Latvijā mežus cērt samērīgi - simto daļu no visām platībām	08.sep.11	Zaļā zeme	
61	Mežu liktenis prezidenta rokās	08.sep.11	Zaļā zeme	116
62	ZZS neredz mežu iznīcināšanu	13.sep.11	Zaļā zeme	253
63	Pirmajā darba dienā iet bojā mežstrādnieks	13.sep.11	Ziņas	
64	Šogad meža nozares eksports pietuvojies 2009.gada kopējam līmenim	20.sep.11	Financenet	
65	Dūklava pēdējā agonija: izvēlas mežu uzraugu bez konkursa	26.sep.11	Zaļā zeme	213
66	Mežu pārraugš jāizvēlas konkursā	27.sep.11	Zaļā zeme	
67	Mežam palīgā aicina KNAB un VK	27.sep.11	Zaļā zeme	53
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69	Valsts mežu filmā nav neviena dzīva koka	29.sep.11	Zaļā zeme	330
70	VMD vadītājs: Dienesta reorganizācija izmaksās 3,5 miljonus latu	30.sep.11	Zaļā zeme	
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72	VMD atlaidīs 100–150 darbinieku, lai varētu palielināt algas	11.okt.11	Ziņas	
73	Astoņos mēnešos par 20,6% krities mēbeļu imports	15.okt.11	Financenet	
74	Mežu īpašnieki un kokrūpnieki neapmierināti ar jauno valdību	25.okt.11	Ziņas	
75	Ministrs represējis padotos	26.okt.11	Zaļā zeme	121
76	"Latvijas Valsts meži" 2 miljonus ziedo Olimpiskajai komitejai	13.nov.11	Ziņas	
77	"Latvijas Finieris" Igaunijā uzstādīs iekārtas par Ls 4,2 miljoniem	18.nov.11	Financenet	
78	Ārzemnieki turpina milzu apjomos izpirkt mežus	21.nov.11	Financenet	
79	Ciklons "Joda" sabojājis 4000 kubikmetru valsts meža	01.dec.11	Zaļā zeme	
80	Latvijas saplākšņa eksporta vērtība palielinājusies par 20,9%	03.dec.11	Financenet	
81	Nīderlandes investori vēlas iegādāties "LF" akcijas	05.dec.11	Financenet	
82	Rēzeknes-Gulbenes mežu iznīcināšanas ceļa projekts turpinās	07.dec.11	Zaļā zeme	14
83	Palielina sodus par meža neatļautu atmežošanu	08.dec.11	Zaļā zeme	
84	No darba LVM valdē atbrīvo trīs amatpersonas	09.dec.11	Ziņas	
85	Zāģmateriālu imports Latvijā samazinājies par 10,7%	10.dec.11	Financenet	
86	No «Latvijas valsts mežiem» ziedojumos prasīti 8,1 miljons	05.jan.12	Ziņas	
87	LVM ziedo četrus miljonus, tautas sports	08.jan.12	Ziņas	58

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88	Pērn 11 mēnešos mēbeļu eksporta vērtība kāpusi par 3,6%	21.jan.12	Financenet	
89	Iedzīvotāji Ziemassvētku eglītes izvēlē mežos bijuši atbildīgi	21.jan.12	Zaļā zeme	
90	Latvija atzīta par otru zaļāko valsti pasaulē	27.jan.12	Zaļā zeme	
91	Pērn sasniegts meža nozares eksporta vērtības rekords	03.feb.12	Financenet	
92	13% Latvijas mežu pieder ārzemniekiem	05.feb.12	Zaļā zeme	
93	LVM ļaus uzpirkt privātīpašnieku meža zemi, lai konkurētu ārzemniekus	17.feb.12	Zaļā zeme	
94	Latvijas papīra un kartona eksporta vērtība augusi par 40,2%	25.feb.12	Financenet	
95	Pievilcīgākie darba devēji ir uzņēmumi ar valsts kapitālu	29.feb.12	Financenet	
96	11 gados cirmās atstāti 45 miljonus vērti ekoloģiskie koki	02.mar.12	Zaļā zeme	
97	Meža nozares eksporta vērtība janvārī kāpusi par 9,8%	20.mar.12	Financenet	
98	Starptautiskā petīcijā prasa apturēt mežu izciršanu Latvijā	20.mar.12	Zaļā zeme	630
99	18 000 pret mežu iznīcināšanu; Dombrovskis problēmu neredz	21.mar.12	Zaļā zeme	382
100	Jauniete no Kanādas vērsīsies ES pret mežu iznīcināšanu Latvijā	23.mar.12	Zaļā zeme	261
101	Februārī izņemti apliecinājumi 980 000 kubikmetru koku ciršanai	03.apr.12	Zaļā zeme	
102	Par pievilcīgāko darba devēju sauc LVM; studenti – lidostu	17.apr.12	Financenet	
103	Ar «Latvijas Valsts mežiem» turpina lāpīt ministrijas budžetu	22.apr.12	Ziņas	
104	LVM teritorijās šogad iestādīti 6059 hektāri meža	08.mai.12	Zaļā zeme	
105	Dobeles šosejmalā bojā gājis katrs piektais ozols	07.jūn.12	Zaļā zeme	
106	Par 2.līmeņa pensiju uzkrājumiem pirks mežus un zemi	20.jūn.12	Financenet	
107	Mežu kooperatīvi – uzmanības novēršana no izciršanas sērgas	05.jūl.12	Zaļā zeme	104
108	Latvija 20 gadu laikā kļuvusi par Skandināvijas ekonomisko piedēkli?	11.jūl.12	Ziņas	
109	LVM pērn nopelnījuši Ls 50,98 miljonus	16.jūl.12	Financenet	
110	Cirtīs simtgadīgu ozolu, kas traucē «Rimi» lielveikalam?	07.sep.12	Zaļā zeme	
111	Salaspils dome lems, vai saglabāt nociršanai paredzēto simtgadīgo ozolu	07.sep.12	Zaļā zeme	
112	«Latvijas Valsts meži» ziedojumam novirzīs 2,8 miljonus	30.okt.12	Financenet	
113	Vāc parakstus iniciatīvai par Latvijas mežu saglabāšanu	22.nov.12	Zaļā zeme	
114	Valsts mežu «labo darbu kampaņa» ir pārspīlēta	23.nov.12	Zaļā zeme	255
115	Arī šogad drīkstēs nocirst vienu eglīti	03.dec.12	Zaļā zeme	

116	Ziemassvētku eglītes eksportam šogad izķer pārpircēji	14.dec.12	Financenet	
117	«Latvijas Valsts mežu» prezidenta jaunā alga - Ls 8800	11.jan.13	Financenet	
118	LVM vadītāja algu samazina no 8880 līdz 4640 latiem	16.jan.13	Financenet	
119	Meža zeme Latvijā «pelna» 300 latus/ha	21.jan.13	Zaļā zeme	
120	Viens no mežu pārdošanas iemesliem - augstais zemes nodoklis	22.jan.13	Zaļā zeme	

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1	"Al Jazeera" vēsta par pārmērīgu mežu izciršanu Latvijā	04.feb.11	Financenet	440
2	LVM ziedo miljonāra izklaidei, daudzbērnu ģimenēm - pīga	07.feb.11	Ziņas	48
3	"Latvijas valsts meži", ziedojot miljonus, atbalsta ar ZZS saistītos	13.feb.11	Ziņas	131
4	Valsts mežus apsaimnieko videi nedraudzīgi	10.jūn.11	Zaļā zeme	169
5	Mežu atjaunošanas rādītāji Latvijā nav spīdoši	10.jūn.11	Zaļā zeme	9
6	Latvijas mežu iznīcināšana	10.jūn.11	Zaļā zeme	990
7	Mežu iznīcināšana: Meži tiek atjaunoti pa roku galam	12.jūn.11	Zaļā zeme	134
8	Īvāns: Dūklava rosinātās izmaiņas Meža likumā ir izlaupītāju sapnis	20.jūn.11	Zaļā zeme	432
9	Tuksnesis var pārklāt Latviju	27.jūn.11	Zaļā zeme	513
10	Valsts meži plātās ar datiem, kas neraksturo labu mežsaimniecību	30.jūn.11	Zaļā zeme	145
11	Par mežu iznīcināšanu aģitējot LVM apmaksāta amatpersona	30.jūn.11	Zaļā zeme	97
12	Zinātnieki: Mediji veido mežsaimniecības kritizēšanas kampaņu	30.jūn.11	Zaļā zeme	19
13	Iznīcinātos mežus dāvina rallijam un futbolam	04.jūl.11	Zaļā zeme	313
14	Aiz restēm par mežu postīšanu!	11.jūl.11	Zaļā zeme	92
15	Mežu likumi tiek rakstīti ar "Latvijas valsts mežu" roku	18.jūl.11	Zaļā zeme	149
16	Ar "Latvijas valsts mežiem" piesārņo apkārtni	24.jūl.11	Ziņas	46
17	Piedzīvojam lielākos mežu ciršanas apmērus; Sabiedrības satraukumam ir pamats	26.jūl.11	Zaļā zeme	374
18	700 dižkoki par vienu minūti	31.jūl.11	Zaļā zeme	19
19	Politīkiem bail runāt atklāti par mežiem	08.aug.11	Zaļā zeme	295
20	Par meža un melu politiku	08.aug.11	Zaļā zeme	82
21	Saskaitīts - Rēzeknes ceļam upurēs 879 kokus	11.aug.11	Zaļā zeme	169
22	Latvijas Valsts meži paslepus mēģina diriģēt kampaņu pret kritizētājiem	15.aug.11	Zaļā zeme	288
23	Mežu iznīcināšana: Ašeradens domā, ka meži jācērt vēl vairāk	30.aug.11	Zaļā zeme	327
24	Jāmaina attieksme pret mežiem	03.sep.11	Zaļā zeme	140
25	Mežu iznīcināšana - nekustamo īpašumu	05.sep.11	Zaļā zeme	196

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26	Mežu liktenis prezidenta rokās	08.sep.11	Zaļā zeme	116
27	ZZS neredz mežu iznīcināšanu	13.sep.11	Zaļā zeme	253
28	Dūklava pēdējā agonija: izvēlas mežu uzraugu bez konkursa	26.sep.11	Zaļā zeme	213
29	Mežam palīgā aicina KNAB un VK	27.sep.11	Zaļā zeme	53
30	Valsts mežu filmā nav neviena dzīva koka	29.sep.11	Zaļā zeme	330
31	Video: kailcirtes Kurzemē	05.okt.11	Zaļā zeme	92
32	Ministrs represējis padotos	26.okt.11	Zaļā zeme	121
33	Rēzeknes-Gulbenes mežu iznīcināšanas ceļa projekts turpinās	07.dec.11	Zaļā zeme	14
34	LVM ziedo četrus miljonus, tautas sports paliek bez atbalsta	08.jan.12	Ziņas	58
35	Starptautiskā petīcijā prasa apturēt mežu izciršanu Latvijā	20.mar.12	Zaļā zeme	630
36	18 000 pret mežu iznīcināšanu; Dombrovskis problēmu neredz	21.mar.12	Zaļā zeme	382
37	Jauniete no Kanādas vērsīsies ES pret mežu iznīcināšanu Latvijā	23.mar.12	Zaļā zeme	261
38	Mežu kooperatīvi – uzmanības novēršana no izciršanas sērgas	05.jūl.12	Zaļā zeme	104
39	Valsts mežu «labo darbu kampaņa» ir pārspīlēta	23.nov.12	Zaļā zeme	255
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2	LVM iegādājas desmit 'Latvijas finiera' akcijas	09.feb.11	Bizness	
3	Lielākie valsts uzņēmumi – ziedotāji: LVM, "Latvenergo", LDz, RS un LHZB	11.feb.11	Ziņas	
4	Latvijas Valsts meži ziedojot atbalsta ar ZZS saistītas organizācijas	13.feb.11	Ziņas	116
5	Laikraksts: mežizstrādē pērn rekordu gads	23.feb.11	Bizness	
6	Pārskatis mežu nozares attīstību pēdējos 20 gados	25.feb.11	Bizness	
7	Kampars: kokrūpniecība ir stabils pamats tautsaimniecības izaugsmei	25.feb.11	Bizness	
8	Laikraksts: valsts mežu peļņa pērn ap 72 miljoniem latu	01.mar.11	Bizness	
9	Kurināmās koksnes eksports pērn audzis par 38,2%	06.mar.11	Bizness	
10	Mežiniekiem un biologiem atšķirīgi viedokļi par mežu apsaimniekošanas kvalitāti	19.mar.11	Bizness	136
11	FSC sertifikāta apturēšana LVM nav negatīvi ietekmējusi koksnes eksportu	20.mar.11	Bizness	
12	LVM centīsies iegūt gan FSC, gan PEFC sertifikātu	21.mar.11	Bizness	
13	Mežu zinātnieks: neaiztiekot mežsaimniecības pamatus, mežu izciršana nedraud	29.mar.11	Bizness	
14	Dūklavs uzskata par loģisku ideju samazināt cērtamo koku caurmēru	01.apr.11	Bizness	
15	Vides NVO kritizē Valsts mežu dienesta reorganizācijas ieceres	14.apr.11	Ziņas	23
16	Valsts mežos šogad būs rekordliels stādu skaits – 32 miljoni	16.apr.11	Ziņas	
17	Edgars Kraučuks: Vai 2011.gads būs visu laiku labākais meža nozares eksportam?	10.mai.11	Bizness	
18	'Sveza' gatavo 'otro atnākšanu'	12.mai.11	Bizness	
19	Akcijas 'Skābeklis' noslēgumā aicina ikkatru iestādīt pa kokam	13.mai.11	Ziņas	
20	Pirmajā ceturksnī meža nozares eksports veidojis 274,802 miljonus latu	17.mai.11	Bizness	
21	Meža dienās' iestāda 360 000 koku	08.jūn.11	Ziņas	
22	LVM pērn nopelnījuši 78,3 miljonus latu; valstij dividendēs maksās 51,7 miljonu latu	28.jūn.11	Bizness	
23	Latvijas mežzinātnieki: Viedoklis diskusijā par Latvijas mežu apsaimniekošanas praksi	29.jūn.11	Ziņas	153
24	VMD dati liecina par Latvijas meža resursu pieaugumu	30.jūn.11	Ziņas	
25	Pēteris Strautiņš: ciršanas apjomu samazināšana uz pusi – bīstams eksperiments ar ekonomiku	11.jūl.11	Bizness	

26	Jānis Bertrāns: Meža nozarē darbu varētu zaudēt ap 40 000 cilvēku	12.jūl.11	Bizness	
27	'Latvijas valsts meži' pirmo reizi saņem PEFC sertifikātu	12.jūl.11	Bizness	
28	'Latvijas Valsts meži' šogad cer uz vismaz 59 miljonu latu peļņu	14.jūl.11	Bizness	
29	Mārtiņš Andžs: Varam atgriezties pie brutālas mežu zagšanas	14.jūl.11	Ziņas	170
30	LVM līdz 2014.gadam plāno stādu audzēšanas jaudas palielināt līdz 60 miljoniem stādu gadā	15.jūl.11	Bizness	
31	'Latvijas Finieris' nākamgad cer dubultot bērza saplākšņa eksportu uz Japānu	22.jūl.11	Bizness	
32	Japāņi nolūkojuši Latvijā būvētās koka mājas	22.jūl.11	Bizness	
33	Latvijas Valsts meži šogad plāno par piektdaļu mazāku apgrozījumu	22.jūl.11	Bizness	
34	LVM šogad cirtīs par 700 000 kubikmetru mazāk	23.jūl.11	Bizness	
35	Pieaug no dēļiem un skaidām ražotās produkcijas eksports	01.aug.11	Bizness	
36	Saplākšņa imports Latvijā palielinājies par 91%	02.aug.11	Bizness	
37	'Latvijas valsts meži' sāk piegādāt PEFC sertificētu koksni	03.aug.11	Bizness	
38	Jurgis Jansons: Latvijas meži – mīti un realitāte	04.aug.11	Ziņas	202
39	LVM būvēs meža ceļus Vidzemē par 4,5 miljoniem latu	16.aug.11	Ziņas	
40	Valsts mežu Ziemeļkurzemes mežniecība saņem PEFC sertifikātu	25.aug.11	Bizness	
41	Šogad LLU meža zinātnēs rekordliels studētgrībētāju skaits	25.aug.11	Ziņas	
42	Raidījums: atsākas mēģinājumi iegūt 'Latvijas Finiera' akcijas	04.sep.11	Bizness	
43	Atsaukums par kļūdaini pausto informāciju un Saeimas deputāta Uģa Rotberga atklātā vēstule	08.sep.11	Ziņas	
44	Skat, kā izskatās izcirstie Latvijas valsts meži!	13.sep.11	Acuļieci nieks	27
45	LLU meži esot nepieciešami pētniecībai un mācībām	19.sep.11	Ziņas	
46	VMD vadītājs: Neviens fakts neliecina par meža resursu pārtērēšanu	04.okt.11	Bizness	
47	Jaunais Meža dienesta vadītājs: pret LVM vērsta kritika pārsvarā ir nepamatota	05.okt.11	Bizness	
48	VMD šefs: Latvijā problēmu ar mežu pārlietu lielu izcirstānu nav	10.okt.11	Bizness	
49	Videoanimācijā skaidro valsts mežu apsaimniekošanu	13.okt.11	Ziņas	
50	Asociācijas 'Latvijas Koks' uzņēmumu apgrozījums pārsniedzis pirmskrīzes rekordus	21.okt.11	Bizness	
51	Straujuma: 'Latvijas valsts meži' jāatstāj Zemkopības ministrijas pārraudzībā	07.nov.11	Bizness	
52	Raidījums: 'Latvijas Valsts meži' šogad steigušies ziedot LOK agrāk nekā citus gadus	13.nov.11	Ziņas	
53	Efektīvas pārvaldības gada balvu iegūst LVM, Valsts kase un Siguldas pašvaldība	02.dec.11	Bizness	

54	No darba 'Latvijas Valsts mežu' valdē atbrīvots Boldiševičs, Tiesnesis un Brūvelis	09.dec.11	Bizness	
55	'Rīgas meži' būvēs 3 miljonus latu vērtu kokapstrādes ražotni	15.dec.11	Bizness	
56	Edgars Ivanovs: Latvijas zaļais zelts - šodien un rīt	09.jan.12	Aculiecinieks	
57	Zinātnieku un uzņēmēju kopīgajos pētījumos ieguldīti vairāk nekā divi miljoni latu	11.jan.12	Bizness	
58	Kurināmās koksnes eksports desmit mēnešos pērn audzis par 8,2%	14.jan.12	Bizness	
59	Valsts meži: iedzīvotāji Ziemassvētku eglītes izvēlē mežos bijuši atbildīgi	21.jan.12	Ziņas	
60	Pērn meža attīstībā LVM ieguldījis 9,35 miljonus latu	31.jan.12	Bizness	
61	Pērn sasniegts meža nozares eksporta vērtības pēdējo 20 gadu rekords	03.feb.12	Bizness	
62	Valdība uz gadu atliek lēmumu par koku ciršanas apjoma noteikšanas principiem	14.feb.12	Bizness	
63	Uzdod 'Latvijas valsts mežiem' palielināt meža zemes iegādes apjomu	21.feb.12	Bizness	
64	Laikraksts: mežu ceļiem šogad atvēlēs 30 miljonus latu	22.feb.12	Bizness	
65	Usmas pagastā valsts mežā nelikumīgi izcērt 81 koku	01.mar.12	Ziņas	1
66	Mežaparkā atklās izstādi 'Iepazīsties-Koks!'	02.mar.12	Ziņas	
67	'Latvijas Valsts mežu' provizoriskais apgrozījums pērn sasniedz 214 miljonus latu; peļņa – 49 miljoni latu	09.mar.12	Bizness	
68	Privātie īpašnieki sāk izrādīt interesi par iespēju pārdot savus mežus LVM	27.mar.12	Bizness	
69	LVM: mežsaimnieku interese par mežu pārdošanas iespējām ir liela, sevišķi Latgalē	04.apr.12	Bizness	
70	Aptauja: vilinošākie lieli darba devēji – 'Latvijas Valsts meži', 'Latvenergo' un 'Latvijas dzelzceļš'	17.apr.12	Bizness	
71	Atvēl deviņdesmit tūkstošus meža nozares tēla spodrināšanai	22.apr.12	Ziņas	
72	'Latvijas Valsts meži' kultūras atbalstam nākamgad atvēlēs mazāk naudas	27.apr.12	Kultūra	
73	LVM šogad mežu iegādei tērējuši 65,6 tūkstošus latu	12.mai.12	Bizness	
74	Latvijas Finiera' apgrozījums pērn - 118,55 miljoni latu	31.mai.12	Bizness	
75	Lauksaimnieki neizpratnē par Saeimas centieniem bremsēt meža īpašnieku kooperāciju	21.jūn.12	Bizness	
76	Atklās 'Latvijas Valsts mežu' dabas sporta zāli	17.jūl.12	Novados	
77	Eksperts: Latvijas meža vērtību ir iespējams palielināt aptuveni 2,5 reizes	09.aug.12	Bizness	
78	Latvijas meža produkcijas eksports turpina augt	20.aug.12	Bizness	
79	Rīkos diskusiju par meža nozares izaicinājumiem nākotnē	27.aug.12	Bizness	
80	Latvijas celulozes un makulatūras eksports palielinājies par 46,8%	29.sep.12	Bizness	

81	Avīze: valdība nedod zaļo gaismu trešajam mēģinājumam būvēt celulozes rūpnīcu Latvijā	22.okt.12	Bizness	
82	Sports no LVM ziedojumiem šogad saņems par vienu miljonu latu mazāk	30.okt.12	Ziņas	
83	Latvijas Finieris' Igaunijā atklāj atjaunoto bērza saplākšņa rūpnīcu	08.nov.12	Ziņas	
84	'Latvijas Finieris' zemniekiem piedāvās atbalsta programmu aizaugušās zemes apmežošanai	12.nov.12	Bizness	
85	Pērn lielākais apgrozījums - tirdzniecības nozarē; lielākā peļņa - enerģētikā	22.nov.12	Bizness	
86	'Latvijas Valsts meži' izstrādās krājas kopšanas cirtes par četriem miljoniem latu	22.nov.12	Bizness	
87	Kokapstrādes nozares līderis pēc apgrozījuma pērn - 'Latvijas Finieris'	29.nov.12	Bizness	
88	Par Ziemassvētku eglītes neatļautu ciršanu mežos draud ar cietumsodu	03.dec.12	Novados	
89	Apalkoku importa vērtība augusi uz pusi	26.dec.12	Bizness	
90	Aculiecinieks: Ķengaragā nozāģēti vairāki bērzi un ducis ābeļu	08.jan.13	Aculiecinieks	51
91	LVM šefa Strīpnieka algu samazina no 8880 līdz 4640 latiem	16.jan.13	Bizness	
92	Investors: Valsts īstenotā meža uzpiršanas programma ļauj uzlabot LVM pozīcijas	19.jan.13	Bizness	16
93	Snieglauze valsts mežos izpostījusi 200 000 kubikmetru koku	23.jan.13	Ziņas	

Annex 4. All negative articles found in DELFI.lv

	Title of the article	Date	Section	No.of comments
1	Al Jazeera English' pauž bažas par Latvijas mežu nākotni	03.feb.11	Ziņas	215
2	Latvijas Valsts meži ziedojot atbalsta ar ZZS saistītas organizācijas	13.feb.11	Ziņas	116
3	Vides NVO kritizē Valsts mežu dienesta reorganizācijas ieceres	14.apr.11	Ziņas	23
4	Mārtiņš Andžs: Varam atgriezties pie brutālas mežu zagšanas	14.jūl.11	Ziņas	170
5	Skat, kā izskatās izcirstie Latvijas valsts meži!	13.sep.11	Aculiecinieks	27
6	Usmas pagastā valsts mežā nelikumīgi izcērt 81 koku	01.mar.12	Ziņas	1
7	Aculiecinieks: Ķengaragā nozāģēti vairāki bērzi un ducis ābeļu	08.jan.13	Aculiecinieks	51
8	Investors: Valsts īstenotā meža uzpirkšanas programma ļauj uzlabot LVM pozīcijas	19.jan.13	Bizness	16
				619

Annex 5. All articles found in DELFI.ee

	Title of the article	Date	Section	Comments
1	RMK teeb turismitalu ümber lageraie	21.01.2013	Eesti	27
2	Kohalike lageraie-vastase protesti vastu tunneb huvi ka Greenpeace	21.01.2013	Elu	18
3	VIDEO ja FOTOD: Mustjõel avaldati meelt, et RMK ei korraldaks kodumetsas lageraieid	20.01.2013	Eesti	60
4	RMK-ga võitlev küla korraldab meelevalduse	19.01.2013	Elu	42
5	RMK: Me ei ole raieid ära jätnud põhjusel, et see kellelegi ei meeldi	09.01.2013	Eesti	
6	Kohalikud: RMK võtab küla tuule ja müra eest kaitsva metsa jõuga maha	09.01.2013	Elu	81
7	Eesti puitmajade eksportijad on Euroopas ühed edukamad	02.01.2013	Eesti	
8	RMK-s kaotavad kevadel kümned inimesed töö	29.12.2012	Eesti	
9	RMK tuleva aasta eelarve kogumaht on üle 144 miljoni euro	14.12.2012	Majandus	
10	Mobiilirakendus juhatab metsa kuuse järele	05.12.2012	Eesti	
11	TÄISMAHUS: Taevaskoja juhtum tõi esile looduse kaitsmise puudused	05.12.2012	Eesti	
12	TÄISMAHUS: Ehitajad sonkisid üles Taevaskoja kaitseala	30.11.2012	Eesti	
13	RMK roogib Keila-Joa ripp silla tabalukkudest puhtaks	14.11.2012	Tarbija	
14	Vastukaja: Metsaomanike toetusraha ei kao	31.10.2012	Arvamus	
15	RMK üheksa kuu kasum vähenes aastaga 16,6 miljonile eurole	29.10.2012	Majandus	
16	RMK piirkonna juht kibedalt: Tegeleme Ida-Virumaal koduaedade kaunistamisega	22.10.2012	Elu	
17	RMK juhi üllatav palgatõus kinnitati vaikival üksmeel	15.10.2012	Majandus	
18	Lageraie ähvardab Mustjõe kõrtsitalu jätta tuulte ja müra meelevalda	03.10.2012	Eesti	
19	Parimad rohemajanduse edendajad on ABB, Pajumäe talu ja RMK	03.10.2012	Majandus	
20	Pillapalu külateed said kauaoodatud kruusakatte	22.09.2012	Eesti	
21	Jürgen Ligi: RMK juhi 15-protsendiline palgatõus 7000 euroni ei ole õiglane	18.09.2012	Eesti	
22	Tõenäoliselt ootab teisigi RMK juhatuse liikmeid ees palga tõstmine	14.09.2012	Majandus	
23	DELFI VIDEO: 6000-eurost palka teeniv RMK juht sai 15-protsendilise palgatõusu	13.09.2012	Eesti	
24	RMK juhi Aigar Kallase palk tõuseb 30 protsendi võrra	13.09.2012	Majandus	
25	Metsavedu muudab Pillapalu külateed läbimatuks	10.09.2012	Eesti	19
26	Ratturid läbisid uue ja rekordpika RMK	30.08.2012	Teadus ja	

	matkatee 23 tunniga		Loodus	
27	Lugeja: väiketootjate ainuke võimalus on ennast haigeks rabada ja töötulemus võileivahinnaga maha müüa	15.08.2012	Eesti	
28	Riigi nälg dividendide järele tõukab RMK-d börsi poole	30.07.2012	Majandus	
29	RMK avas 370 kilomeetrit pika kogu Eestit läbiva matkatee	15.07.2012	Eesti	
30	FOTOD ja VIDEO: Puhkajaterohke nädalavahetus puhkealasad ära ei risustanud	09.07.2012	Eesti	
31	RMK otsib uut juhatuse esimeest	15.06.2012	Eesti	
32	FOTOD: Rimi kliendid ostsid metsa poolteist tuhat uut puud	24.05.2012	Majandus	
33	Kurikaelad on imeilusa Oru pargi sihikule võtnud	25.04.2012	Elu	
34	Riik võtab kaitse alla hulga kuiva metsa	12.04.2012	Eesti	
35	Riigil on 27 miljoni eest liigseid maju	04.04.2012	Majandus	
36	TABEL: RMK-l kulus eelmisel aastal juhtkonna tasudeks vaid 0,7 protsenti kasumist	02.04.2012	Majandus	
37	Juhan Partsile elu õpetanud pensionär sai küttepuude raieloa	22.03.2012	Eesti	
38	Sopi metsavahi onni juurest leiti 12 mürsku	01.03.2012	Krimi	
39	Saaremaa tuntuim loodusrada on ohtlik ja jääb tänava ilmselt suletuks	22.02.2012	Elu	
40	Pensionäri isalik sõnum minister Partsile: "Poiss, sa ei tunne elu!"	01.02.2012	Eesti	
41	Riigimetsa varastatud 2700 tihumeetrit	27.01.2012	Krimi	
42	Professori hinnang: RMK on seadust rikkunud	27.01.2012	Eesti	17
43	Riigiametnike MTÜ-d – kolm ohtu maksuameti näitel	20.01.2012	Eesti	
44	RMK nõukokku võib Indrek Raudse asemel minna Tõnis Lukas	19.01.2012	Eesti	
45	se metsa küttepuid tegema? Oleks see vaid nii lihtne...	12.01.2012	Eesti	
46	Riigimetsa lageraielankidelt saab ise küttepuitu varuda	11.01.2012	Eesti	
47	Keskkonnaministeerium: meil ei ole andmeid, et RMK oleks seadust rikkunud	06.01.2012	Eesti	
48	Prokuratuur kaalub RMK spordiklubi asjus menetluse alustamist	06.01.2012	Eesti	
49	RMK juht kandis oma MTÜ-le kümneid tuhandeid eurosid	05.01.2012	Eesti	171
50	Torm murdis Kaali järve juures kolm jalakat	28.12.2011	Eesti	
51	Kuuski saab kasvatada ka põllul nagu kartuleid	23.12.2011	Eesti	
52	Kuusevargad pillasid põgenedes sae metsa	16.12.2011	Krimi	
53	FOTOD: President ehtis RMK kingitud kuuske	13.12.2011	Eesti	
54	Tualettide puudus ajab sohvruid metsa alla	09.12.2011	Eesti	
55	FOTOD: Riigikogu sai endale kuuse	02.12.2011	Eesti	
56	Kalle Mälberg : Miks jõulukuused kukuvad?	29.11.2011	Arvamus	
57	Ruum kuivi küttepuid maksab vähemalt 40 eurot	28.10.2011	Tarbija	

58	RMK lõi mobiilse metsainfo rakenduse	16.09.2011	e-Eesti	
59	Metsa-aasta ootab arvutijoonistusi	01.09.2011	e-Eesti	
60	FOTOD: Metsaalused täituvad jätkuvalt prügiga	10.07.2011	Eesti	
61	Karuputke Eestisse ja meie ametnikeni jõudmisest	07.07.2011	Arvamus	
62	Keskkonnainspeksioon: igal pool ei tohi mootorsõidukiga sõita	29.06.2011	Krimi	
63	Õigusrikkujad saavad üldkasuliku tööna riigimetsa korrastada	18.05.2011	Eesti	
64	Mullu külastati riigimetsa puhkealaid 1,57 miljonil korral	13.05.2011	Eesti	
65	RMK läheb üle paberivabale metsamajandamisele	12.05.2011	e-Eesti	
66	Üle 4000 õpilase istutab täna riigimetsa	06.05.2011	Eesti	
67	Tänavu istutatakse riigimetsa 13 miljonit puud	15.04.2011	Eesti	
68	Täna vaigivad Eesti riigimetsades raiemasinad	15.04.2011	Eesti	
69	Veiko Eltermann: Kas metsa peab koristama?	14.04.2011	Arvamus	
70	Miljoni euro eest kaardistati tuhanded Eesti ja Läti pärandkultuuri objektid	23.03.2011	Eesti	
71	Veiko Eltermann: Metsas ei tööta äriks	19.02.2011	Arvamus	
72	Riigimetsast toodi mullu välja 137 tonni prügi	09.02.2011	Eesti	

Annex 6. All negative articles found in DELFI.ee

	Title of the article	Date	Section	No.of comments
1	RMK teeb turismitalu ümber lageraie	21.01.2013	Eesti	27
2	Kohalike lageraie-vastase protesti vastu tunneb huvi ka Greenpeace	21.01.2013	Elu	18
3	VIDEO ja FOTOD: Mustjõel avaldati meelt, et RMK ei korraldaks kodumetsas lageraiet	20.01.2013	Eesti	60
4	RMK-ga võitlev küla korraldab meelevalduse	19.01.2013	Elu	42
5	Kohalikud: RMK võtab küla tuule ja müra eest kaitsva metsa jõuga maha	09.01.2013	Elu	81
6	Metsavedu muudab Pillapalu külateed läbimatuks	10.09.2012	Eesti	19
7	Professori hinnang: RMK on seadust rikkunud	27.01.2012	Eesti	17
8	RMK juht kandis oma MTÜ-le kümneid tuhandeid eurosid	05.01.2012	Eesti	171
				435

Annex 7. Survey questions

Q 1 - Lūdzu norādiet savu dzimumu

Q 2 - Lūdzu norādiet savu vecumu

Q 3 - Lūdzu norādiet savu iegūto izglītību

Q 4 - Cik bieži Jūs lasiet ziņas Delfi.lv?

Q 5 - Cik bieži Jūs lasiet ziņas Tvnet.lv?

Q 6 - Vai Jūs esiet lasījuši Tvnet.lv sadaļu "Zaļā zeme"?

Q 7 - Vai Jūs esiet ievērojis, ka kādā no interneta portāliem raksti ir neobjektīvi, attainojot kādu situāciju vai notikumu vienpusīgi?

Q 8 - Vai Jūs esiet redzējis 2011.gadā iznākušo TV kanāla Al Jazeera veidoto filmu "Latvia's Pulp Fiction"?

Q 9 - Vai Jūs domājat, ka Latvijas mežos notiek pārmērīga izciršana?

Q 10 - Vai Jūs domājat, ka interneta portāli spēj ietekmēt cilvēku viedokli par situāciju Latvijas meža nozarē un mežos?

Q 11 - Ja Jūs neko nezinātu vai maz zinātu par Latvijas meža nozari, ko Jūs domātu, redzot šādus Tvnet.lv rakstu nosaukumus: "Mežu iznīcināšana: Meži tiek atjaunoti pa roku galam," "Tuksnesis var pārklāt Latviju," "Valsts meži plātās ar datiem, kas neraksturo labu mežsaimniecību," "Iznīcinātos mežus dāvina rallijam un futbolam," "Politikājiem bail runāt atklāti par mežiem," "Mežu iznīcināšana - nekustamo īpašumu burbulis Nr. 2," "Valsts mežu filmā nav neviena dzīva koka."
(Vairāki atbilžu varianti ir iespējami)

Q 12 - Vai Jūs piekrītat apgalvojumam, ka interneta portāli veido negatīvu priekšstatu par meža nozari Latvijā?

Maģistra darbs „Interneta mediju ietekme uz sabiedrisko domu par meža nozari Latvijā un Igaunijā” izstrādāts LU Humanitāro zinātņu fakultātē.

Ar savu parakstu apliecinu, ka pētījums veikts patstāvīgi, izmantoti tikai tajā norādītie informācijas avoti un iesniegtā darba elektroniskā kopija atbilst izdrukai.

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Recenzents:
Prof. Biruta Sloka

Darbs iesniegts Humanitāro zinātņu fakultātē

Lietvede: Liene Kalviša _____
/paraksts/

Darbs aizstāvēts maģistra gala pārbaudījuma komisijas sēdē _____
protokols nr. _____, vērtējums _____

Komisijas sekretāre: lektore Inese Runce _____
/paraksts/