Representation
of President Valdas Adamkus

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Abstract. This article aims to review the representation of former Lithuanian president Valdas Adamkus in a number of US and UK online publications between 1998 and 2011. To achieve this, the following topics are discussed: political communication with the authorities and the press, writing tendencies in individual essays and main topics related to the president. Additionally, a list of all used publications is provided alongside the findings.

This type of study has never been done before. It is significant as it portrays the representation of President Valdas Adamkus in the most important publications in the world during a crucial time, when Lithuania was seeking recognition in the international arena, i.e. aiming to join NATO and the EU. The practical part of this work evaluates the President’s position on various topics, and theoretical consequences that his views might have caused Lithuania. Additionally, it assesses how the aforementioned publications portrayed not just Valdas Adamkus, but also our country, since the image of the head of state is often identified with the image of his or her country. The research results have revealed that selected publications provided their audience with very limited information about the Lithuanian President. His portrayal appears fairly shallow and incomplete, focusing mainly on his personality. However, they highlight the President’s aspiration to join NATO
and the EU. As expected, the portrayal of the Lithuanian leader differs in various publications.

This article consists of the following: an introduction, subsections on political communication, the meaning and importance of political image and the media as a key participant in political communication. Since this article focuses on Valdas Adamkus, a brief summary of his biography, work and achievements will be provided. Systemised research results will be discussed in the practical part of this article. Research findings and bibliography will be presented in the end.  

Keywords: reflection, image, presentation, periodic literature, political communication, president, representation, foreign policy.

Introduction

Article 24 of the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania, the country’s most important document signed in 1992, describes the powers granted to the head of state on a national level and some aspects of foreign policy. The first part of the article states that “The President decides the basic issues of foreign policy and, together with the Government, conducts foreign policy” (The Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania, 1992). Therefore, Lithuania’s image greatly depends on the portrayal of the President, one of the state’s key figures, in foreign media. The President represents the country; therefore, his image is often identified with the country’s image. The way the president is represented in the foreign media may influence that country’s political decisions on Lithuania. It may also provide foreign media readers with more information about Lithuania.

More information can be found in the research article “Lithuanian events portrayed in “The Times” newspaper: the link between political and heritage communication” by Ramunė Rubinaitė (2010, www.journalism.vu.lt, No.3), where she examines the representation of Lithuanian affairs and country’s public figures over the 200 year period of “The Times“ publications.

The foreign policy representation level (or the “reality level”) does not directly relate to the event representation level (“virtual level”).
Scientific studies have shown that the media, especially internet media, can effectively influence political life and operates on micro and macro levels. Twenty-first century society is influenced by modern day technology, which empowers the media to create a new cultural, social and political space. The impact of the media is defined by a set of values, norms and regulations (Renckstorf, 1996; Alexander, 1998). The same topic was discussed on several occasions by American scientist Murray Edelman. In his monograph “Constructing the Political Spectacle”, Edelman states that “leaders are powerful symbols, which distract people from taking care of their welfare and attract their attention to constructed events” (Edelman, 2002: 50). According to French philosopher Jean Baudrillard, a conclusion can be drawn that nowadays reality becomes a simulacrum, because everything in the world is constructed including events, personal qualities of the leaders and their beliefs. Therefore, the leader’s image is constructed. Political rhetoric is one of the measures used in the process. Lithuanian scientist Renata Matkevičienė states that construction of political reality defines presidential rhetoric. Also, key political issues and events help construct the elected president’s relationship with other state institutions. In broader terms, this quote can be expanded to say that it is not just the relationship with other state institutions that is constructed, but also the relationship with the international community. The president’s image is constructed, shaped and simulated for the eyes of international community. People will remember it the way it was presented by the media. This is natural as they do not have other sources of information available, unless they witness certain events themselves.

Thus, the mass media influences the country’s interior affairs, which in turn affect the foreign affairs (Malek, 1997: 4). This is why it is important to find out how Valdas Adamkus was portrayed by the American and British press over the course of his two terms as President (1998–2003 and 2004–2008) and to provide findings, explaining how the Lithuanian President was perceived by the international community and which events were important at the time. The international community represents the audience that had access to the publications.
analysed in this article. Perhaps, the President’s situation is unique as he lived in the US for over forty years and held US citizenship, which he renounced in January 1998. Valdas Adamkus was active in the Lithuanian emigrants’ community and its political activities, holding the post of vice-president of “Santaros- viesos” Federation between 1958 and 1965, and becoming its chairman in 1967. The President also held protests in the US against the occupation of Lithuania and organised various petitions. He also organised and participated in a number of sports events. While living in the US, Valdas Adamkus helped the Vilnius University library to acquire the latest scientific literature and assisted in organising placements for Lithuanian scientists in the US.

The following American newspapers were examined: “The New York Times”, “The Huffington Post”, “The Washington Times”, “Chicago Tribune” and “Los Angeles Times”. According to media experts, these newspapers are considered among the most important in the US, as they cover both national and international news. The following British newspapers were chosen for this research: “The Guardian”, “Daily Mail”, “Daily Telegraph” and “Financial Times”. They were chosen applying the same criteria that was used for the US newspapers. The articles mentioning Valdas Adamkus were analysed employing theoretical analytical, generalisation, synthesis, systematic analysis and empirical document and content analysis methods. Foreign Lithuanian press was not examined, as this research aimed to analyse only press in English, published in English speaking countries.

Addressing the concept of political communication, its origins and development, the importance of politicians’ image and the aspects and consequences of media’s involvement in political communication, is very important for this research. In order to better reveal the topic of this research, the details of the President’s biography will also be highlighted.

This type of study has never been done before. It is significant as it portrays the representation of president Valdas Adamkus in the most important publications in the world during a crucial time, when Lithuania was seeking recognition in the international arena, i.e. aiming
to join NATO and the EU. The practical part of this work evaluates the President’s position on various topics, and theoretical consequences that his views might have caused Lithuania. Additionally, it assesses how the aforementioned publications portrayed not just Valdas Adamkus, but also our country.

The Features of the President’s Biography

It has been 96 years since Lithuania declared its independence. During this time Lithuania has had eight presidents, including the current head of state Dalia Grybauskaitė. Half of them have ruled the country since Lithuania restored its independence on 11 March 1990. Valdas Adamkus is unique, because he previously held foreign citizenship and served two terms as President.

Valdas Adamkus was born into a family of civil servants on 3 November 1926. During World War II Adamkus joined the Lithuanian Freedom Fighters’ Union. He fled to Germany together with his family in 1944, but returned shortly after to join the Lithuanian troops. Adamkus served as a translator at his battalion headquarters. When Soviet troops attacked Kretinga, Adamkus got on board of a freight train and fled to Germany once again. There he graduated from the Lithuanian Gymnasium.

In 1949 the future President emigrated to the United States of America. At first he worked at a car parts factory in Chicago and later as a draftsman in an engineering firm. Adamkus graduated with a Degree of Civil Engineering from Illinois Institute of Technology.

In early 70’s Valdas Adamkus was invited to work for a newly established US federal environmental institution, the US Environment Protection Agency (EPA). In 1969-1971 he served as the head of the Environment Research Centre. Later he was appointed deputy administrator of the US EPA Region 5 (Midwest Region). In 1981, he was promoted to regional administrator of the US EPA Midwest Region, despite the fact that he did not belong to any political party. Generally, this position was held by the members of the ruling party.
Adamkus joined the group of ten regional administrators of the EPA, who were offered to keep their post by the new federal government after each US presidential election.

During the years of perestroika Adamkus’s visits to his homeland became more frequent. When Lithuania regained its independence, Valdas Adamkus encouraged Washington to recognise Lithuania as an independent country on a diplomatic level. Over the course of the events of 13 January 1991, mass media sources in the US (and around the world) actively followed what was going on in Lithuania.

In 1992-1993, when Valdas Adamkus returned to his homeland, he headed the election campaign of presidential candidate Stasys Lozoraitis (former Lithuanian ambassador) in Lithuania. However, Algirdas Mykolas Brazauskas, the former leader of the communist party, won the election.

After five years, Adamkus decided to run for presidency. He won the election and was inaugurated on 26 February 1998. Adamkus promoted the idea of the rapid modernisation of Lithuania and worked consistently towards its implementation.

In 2002 President Adamkus decided to run for a second term; however he lost to Rolandas Paksas in the second round of the election. Paksas was impeached and removed from office in 2004, and Adamkus decided to run for presidency once again. Valdas Adamkus was re-elected for another five-year term. Under Adamkus’s presidency, Lithuania joined NATO and the EU (a referendum was held in 2003). President Adamkus, together with Poland’s President Aleksander Kwasniewski, served as a mediator during Ukraine’s political crisis in 2004. Adamkus has always stood against the big powers’ aggression towards weaker states. As a result, he travelled to Georgia together with Polish President Lech Kaczyński to express their support in August 2008. In 2009, Adamkus, together with other European academics, signed an open letter titled “Europe Must Stand Up For Georgia”. The letter condemned Russian intervention in Georgia.

Valdas Adamkus has a number of awards on a national and international level. In 2003 Valdas Adamkus was named UNESCO
Goodwill Ambassador for the Construction of Knowledge Societies in recognition of his promotion of social development, international university cooperation, management of water resources, preservation of cultural heritage and environment. This title is held by only 42 individuals in the whole world. It made Lithuania more recognisable among other UNESCO Member States. Valdas Adamkus was named “European of the Year 2007” at the prestigious European Voice Awards.¹.

Political Communication Process Components

This article covers all three components of political communication: the media (online newspapers), the authority (President Valdas Adamkus) and the public (the newspaper audience). A politician's image often becomes more important than their achievements or activities, while political rhetoric is viewed as one of the main factors forming this image. As new technology evolves, the influence of the media also changes. Previously, journalists mostly served as watchdogs, but now they have the power to influence political agenda, political decisions and the formation of public opinion. In other words, acquiring new political and social powers, the media plays an active role in political communication.

According to Lithuanian political scientist Lauras Bielinis, only in politics does communication become one of the main tools for expressing and implementing one's will. This is why politics and politicians could not exist without communication. Bielinis notes that “the opinion of the press often bears more significance than the decisions of authorities”, as “it affects public opinion - the key factor defining political influence”.

As a leader and one of the most important political figures, the president holds a very unique position in the context of political communication. Compared to an ordinary politician, he always gets more attention from the media. Therefore, it is easier for the President to

stay connected to both the mass media and the citizens they represent. There is a public interest in learning more about the President. The public has the right to know everything about the president’s actions, behaviour, comments he makes and how they might affect his decisions in the future. The President’s public affairs affect country’s domestic and foreign policies and may lead to presidential re-election, determine how the President is viewed by the international community.

Over the last century, the president of a country has become a key figure in political rhetoric. He seeks to reach an audience through his speeches and win people to his side. Since the audience has no direct contact with the president, this is where the media comes in. It forms public opinion about their leader. Adamkus’s communication with English speaking countries’ media (the US and the UK) is very important for the purpose of this article. Through this communication the President tried to create a positive image himself and, most importantly, of a country, seeking to join NATO and the EU. Adamkus stressed the desire of a small country, which spent half a century as a part of the Soviet Union, to be finally heard in the international arena. At the same time, the majority of the publications talked about the President’s personality. When interviewed by American journalists, the President focused on the problems and achievements of his country, rather than trying to be in the spotlight. So, in this particular example, Valdas Adamkus used communication to draw attention to the situation in Lithuania, rather than to his personal goals.

Although the UK is located closer to Lithuania compared to the US, when talking about political communication, it is not geographical distance, but the political relationship and shared common ties between the President and other foreign states that matter. For example, Adamkus’s communication with the US media was frequent and successful, because of his ties with this country and the years he spent there. It drew the international society’s attention to Lithuania, its problems and its challenges. Active communication with the US possibly helped Lithuania join NATO and the EU so promptly and increased the amount of support from George Bush. Compared to UK politicians, Bush provided Lithuania with greater support.
The Politician and His Image

Using political rhetoric criterion, Bielinis sets six most prominent characteristics used to describe a politician’s image: biological, communicative, sociological, mythological, professional and contextual. President Valdas Adamkus falls under the sociological image characteristic. His main personal features include attention to family and peaceful relationships, openness, paying attention to his opponents and the ability to listen and understand others. This type of politician would never offend their opponent, opts for diplomatic problem solving and emphasizes national values and moral principles. Additionally, they value the importance of harmony, reaching consensus and productive cooperation. The strange thing is, that based on the description of a successful political image, provided by Lithuanian scientists in 1997, Valdas Adamkus had very little chance of getting elected because he was barely known to the Lithuanian public (Renčliauskaitė, 2008). However, he not only won the election, but managed to maintain a very high rating. Later, image building experts came to conclusion that Adamkus managed to maintain his high rating, because he has a very strong charisma, which was formed while living in the western world. He appeared as a reliable and intelligent person, who is willing to listen to the public. The image of the President, a political leader, always depends on their charisma. After all, political image-making in its essence is ones ability to convey information through their speech, whether directly or indirectly, and through specific actions or general behaviour (Čepelevskis, 2006).

Rhetoric is considered one of the components of political image. A politician’s speech has an impact on how he is perceived by the public. In broad terms, rhetoric could be described as the art of persuasion (Šuminas, Vernickaitė, 2010). Renata Matkevičienė highlights political rhetoric in her publication “Images of the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania in Inaugural Speeches of the Presidents of the Republic of Lithuania”. According to Matkevičienė, the representation of power, ideas and the ways to implement them and political activities – all define political rhetoric. American literary theorist and philosopher Kenneth
Burke states that political rhetoric is used to manipulate people’s beliefs and its main function is to use words to form people’s views and affect their decisions (Šuminas, Vernickaitė, 2010). When describing the President’s rhetoric, Matkevičienė believes that his manner of speaking has many layers to it. It is almost like “triple communication”: the President interacts as a politician, as a regular person and as the head of an institution. The public has access to the President’s rhetoric through the official statements, comments and interviews (Matkevičienė, 2011). Bielinis claims that political communication cannot be neutral or viewed as a simple interaction between people. It is used to express someone’s will and implement their powers. So, rhetoric often serves as a foundation for leadership, which is often conveyed through speech. Public speaking skills are essential for modern presidents (Šuminas, Vernickaitė, 2010). Lithuanian philosopher and political analyst Kęstutis Girnius believes that the politics of a small country (for example, Lithuania) are highly dependent on the presidential rhetoric, the leader’s ability to sound special.

In 2009, at the end of Adamkus’s second term as president, the Lithuanian daily newspaper “Lietuvos žinios” organised a round table discussion asking whether Valdas Adamkus was a western president. Lithuanian publicist Saulius Spurga noted that the President had managed to restore the country’s image in addition to maintaining his own. Lithuania’s reputation suffered after the impeachment of Rolandas Paksas and Adamkus could not participate in the Davos Summit as a result. This only confirms that the image of the country partly depends on the portrayal of the head of state in the foreign media. So, the image of the President and their country are almost inseparable. Lithuanian writer Vytautas Rubavičius agrees that “a country’s foreign policy is, first of all, shaped by its image, and only then – interests”. Political analyst Kęstutis Girnius believes that the President’s ratings were strong until Dalia Grybauskaitė appeared on the Lithuanian political scene. This implies that her political image is completely different. On the other hand, Adamkus wanted to be good to everyone and only hear positive feedback about his work. He avoided decisions, which would potentially damage his reputation (Medalinskas, 2009).
According to Professor Doris Garber of the University of Illinois, although a president cannot control the media, he can influence it by doing the following: determining the news agenda and highlighting the main events, organising press conferences, welcoming celebrities and delivering speeches at international organisations, attending summits, holding meetings with other world leaders, speaking regularly on the radio (or television – author’s remark) and giving interviews to selected journalists (Bonafede, 1997). This helps the President to influence and improve their portrayal in the national and foreign media. For example, Valdas Adamkus often visited neighbouring countries and the US; attended summits after Lithuania joined NATO and the EU and meetings with other world leaders, especially favouring the US.

The Media as an Active Participant in Political Communication

Nowadays mass media is regarded as the fourth power. The founder of modern conservatism, Irish philosopher and political analyst Edmund Burke introduced this term at the end of 18th century referring to the emerging press. He also recognised the importance of the press in the development of liberal democracy. The sources of mass media did not only report the political news, they acted as a watchdog against the abuse of power. Historically, the media was viewed as a fundamental democratic tool (McNair, 1999).

At a conference held at Vilnius University in 2009, Bielinis stated that the actions of the government were becoming increasingly paralysed by the media. The authorities struggle to make decisions without ensuring the media’s approval and representative authorities’ role becomes limited to legitimising decisions. In other words, political events are being initiated and led by the media.

Nowadays, politicians’ responsibilities are not just limited to decision making and ensuring their orders are being followed. Political communication is becoming more and more important while the media takes an active part in politics. “The media determines the political agendas of the political elite”, notes American communication theorist Denis McQuail in his publication “The Influence and Effects
of Mass Media”. “It is clear that the media sets out a daily agenda for politicians and political parties, increasingly responding to a common understanding on what needs to be done” (Graber, 1994).

Agenda-setting theory argues that mass media sources can effectively choose to pay more attention to certain problems while ignoring the others (Nevinskaitė, 2011). A study carried out by Max McCombs and Donald Shaw on the 1968 presidential election revealed that the perception of the election’s agenda by the respondents (voters) and the media was almost identical. The public agreed with the most important election issues, which were raised by the media. This statement is the core of the theory. The researchers focused on two elements: information and access to it. When analysing the election agenda, set out by the media, McCombs and Shaw tried to establish the connection between the issues that local residents thought were important and the information provided by the media over the course of the elections. The study showed that the press and the media do not reflect reality; they filter and shape it. The media’s concentration on a few issues and subjects leads the public to perceive those issues as more important than others. Overall, the agenda-setting theory highlights the persuasive role of the media.

This idea is also reflected in the statement of the Pulitzer Prize winner Jon Franklin: “The means of mass communication cannot always control what people think, but they can control what people think about”. Therefore, it is not the content of the message, but the place and time of its announcement that matter. The more the media concentrates on a certain issue, the more the public thinks it is important and should be addressed (Nevinskaitė, 2011). Priming theory explains the consequences of agenda-setting: people make decisions without analysing the information they possess. The information provided by the media seems important when making certain decisions. This is how public opinion is formed, when the media puts a certain question on the agenda. It is important to note that online news readers have a different agenda compared to the hard cover newspaper audience (Nevinskaitė, 2011). This was confirmed by “The New York Times” survey comparing
its traditional and online audiences. However, more articles are read in the newspapers compared to other publications, while newspapers are often read by the less educated audience. Therefore, the survey results cannot be applied to a higher-educated audience. Professor Miriam J. Metzeger of the University of California concludes that the media lost its power to set one general agenda, all due to alternative news and fragmentation of the audience, leading to inconsistencies.

To sum up, the media serves the following political functions in the process of political communication: firstly, the media is an important source of political information; secondly, the media affects the processes of persuasion and decision-making directly, or indirectly; and finally, the media presents persuasive information, encouraging certain behaviour or political activity (Matkevičienė, 2005). In his publication “The President, Congress and the Media in Global Affairs”, American journalist and political analyst Dom Bonafede notes that the media no longer performs the function of a mirror to politicians, but instead is society’s driving force. Modern media can be perceived as:

- a forum for public debate;
- an instrument to influence popular opinion;
- a catalyst for social, cultural and political movements;
- a channel for diplomatic relations;
- a vehicle by which government agencies speak to one another;
- a conduit, through which many of our perspectives are filtered.

Research Results and Their Discussion

“The New York Times”

“The New York Times” first mentions Valdas Adamkus in 1983, when he worked for the Environment Protection Agency in Chicago. However, this research focuses only on publications from 1998 onwards. The Lithuanian President was mentioned in “The New York Times” twenty-one times. Many articles present his biography in great detail mentioning his emigration to the US and highlighting his efforts in joining NATO and the EU. Two articles mention conflicts between
the President and former Prime Ministers Gediminas Vagnorius and Rolandas Paksas, which led to their resignation. Another article was written by Adamkus himself and stresses the importance of lifelong learning. The publications also talk about his work as a mediator in Ukraine and the President’s harsh comments towards Russia, when it opposed the NATO membership of the Baltic States. Several posts note Adamkus’s victory in the Lithuanian Presidential elections.

Additionally, “The New York Times” published an interview with Valdas Adamkus. This interview addressed the key questions of the time. It focused on current affairs, without going into too much detail. The questions were very clear. Adamkus’s responses were short, concise and laconic, covering only main issues. Perhaps his answers could have been more detailed. This interview reveals Adamkus’s communication style: refraining from expressing specific opinions or evaluations, focusing on his expectations instead of discussing current political facts in detail.

The main criteria used to analyse the President’s presentational style includes: the tone of the text, its genre, the title’s connotation (positive, negative or neutral), information source (personal/news agency), the President’s quotes and the nature of the essay (events, occasions, review, analytical).

The programme of the Government of the Republic of Lithuanian in 1998-2012 focused on: NATO and the EU membership and Lithuania’s establishment within these organisations, developing partnerships with other Member States, cooperation with Baltic and Northern European states, maintaining good bilateral relations with neighbouring countries, especially Poland, development of the existing markets and searching for new ones, promotion of stability and democratic development in the East, support for democratic reforms in Ukraine, Russia and South Caucasus countries, support for social and economic development in the Kaliningrad Region, which belongs to Russian Federation, participation in international missions and organisations, strengthening of Lithuania’s foreign policy, further cooperation between the Lithuanian state institutions and foreign Lithuanian communities,
strengthening economic diplomacy, development of a common EU energy policy, EU enlargement to the East, evaluation of the crimes of totalitarian regime on the EU level, development of the transatlantic partnership between the US and the EU and its enhancement.

Lithuania’s home affairs have also changed over this period: three different Presidents (Valdas Adamkus, Rolandas Paksas and Dalia Grybauskaitė), seven changes of government, four changes of Parliament and closing down of Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant.

**Table 1.** The President’s portrayal in “The New York Times”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Key Topics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998–2003</td>
<td>Winning the Lithuanian presidential election; signing the NATO Treaty; Presidential order empowering Irena Degutienė to serve temporarily as a Prime Minister; proposing Conservative leader Andrius Kubilius for the post of Prime Minister; conflicts between Valdas Adamkus, Rolandas Paksas and Gediminas Vagnorius; presidential veto on the law imposing a ban on former KGB officials holding posts in public and private sectors; statements regarding the Russian opposition to NATO expansion; meeting Vladimir Putin; losing to Rolandas Paksas in the presidential election; stressing the importance of life-long learning; re-election for the second presidential term; Adamkus’s first interview with “The New York Times”; remarks on the NATO membership; George Bush’s visit to Lithuania.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004 – July 2009</td>
<td>President’s thoughts on basketball; winning the presidential election; serving as a mediator during Ukraine’s political crisis (two publications); remarks on the subject of the US military in Iraq; remarks on the relationship with Russia; petitioning Pope Benedict XVI to save Our Lady of Vilnius Church in New York from closing down; protests against the decisions of the Lithuanian Parliament on austerity measures and the President’s inaction, briefly explained by the Presidential Spokesperson.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“The Huffington Post”

Over the aforementioned period, “The Huffington Post” mentions Valdas Adamkus three times. All three publications cover his second term as President. Adamkus often spoke about Russia and its actions and politics, and that is what “The Huffington Post” focused on. Whenever Adamkus disagreed with Russian policies, he made it known to the public. Adamkus is presented as a pro-American president, a determined and consistent politician, who is Western-oriented and supports freedom and democracy (especially in Afghanistan, Iraq and Belarus). The fact that Lithuania received special attention from President Bush is also highlighted.

Table 2. The President’s portrayal in “The Huffington Post”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Key Topics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998–2003</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004 – July 2009</td>
<td>Issues in Georgia; a parade of foreign leaders in the US, where Valdas Adamkus met with George Bush; upcoming negotiations between Russia and the EU.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“The Washington Post”

“The Washington Post” mentions Valdas Adamkus six times. The newspaper mainly focused on the President’s second term and his aims to join NATO. This is further confirmed by the quote taken from Adamkus’s interview to “Radio Svoboda”: “I will be surprised and disappointed if we are not invited to join NATO during the Prague summit. We have worked very hard and meet all the set criteria”. The President believed that NATO membership would give not just Lithuania, but all Baltic states, the sense of security and serve as a counterweight to Russia. Two of the publications mention Adamkus’s work as a mediator in Ukraine. The President hopes that Ukraine will also join NATO. The newspaper portrays the President’s scepticism towards neighbouring Russia, when
Talking about the sale of “Mažeikių Nafta”. The President thinks that Moscow is trying to get revenge, because the oil company was sold to Polish investors. According to him, Russia’s “Gazprom” deal with Serbia, which was signed later, was meant to harm the economy of the Baltic states (including Lithuania).

**Table 3.** The President’s portrayal in “The Washington Post”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Key Topics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998–2003</td>
<td>Visit to the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, DC, where Valdas Adamkus met with the Vice President of the United States Dick Cheney and the Secretary of State Colin L. Powell; Lithuania’s ambitions to join NATO.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004 – July 2009</td>
<td>Serving as a mediator during Ukraine’s political crisis (2 publications); KGB’s atrocities in Lithuania; “Gazprom” deal between Russia and Serbia.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Los Angeles Times”

The “Los Angeles Times” mentions Valdas Adamkus eleven times. The “Los Angeles Times” briefly covered Adamkus’s first term as a President, only mentioning his work as a mediator during Ukraine’s political crisis of all the later events. On several occasions the “Los Angeles Times” wrote about Lithuania’s efforts in joining NATO and the country’s other achievements (four publications); The article describing Adamkus’s loss to Paksas in the presidential election, also expresses hope that Adamkus will be re-elected. It was suggested that his loss was the result of a weak political campaign. Details of Adamkus’s biography are mentioned on a number of occasions. The President’s relationship with Russia is barely discussed, apart from a note on the planned meeting with Vladimir Putin in Moscow. Adamkus constantly refers to his ambition to maintain good relationships with the neighbouring countries.
Table 4. Valdas Adamkus and the “Los Angeles” Times.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998–2003</td>
<td>Running in the presidential election; winning the Lithuanian presidential election (two posts); renunciation of US citizenship; a meeting between the President of Germany and the Presidents of four former Soviet republics (including Adamkus) in Gniezno, Poland; Lithuania’s achievements 10 years after the restoration of its independence and the President’s thoughts on it; the efforts of the Baltic states to join NATO; the death of the Lithuanian poet Bernardas Brazdžionis and Adamkus’s expressed compassion to his family; competing with Rolandas Paksas in the upcoming presidential election; Adamkus losing the election to Paksas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004 – July 2009</td>
<td>Adamkus visits Ukraine to work as a mediator during Ukraine’s political crisis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Chicago Tribune”

Overall, the “Chicago Tribune” mentions Valdas Adamkus twenty-four times. However, uneven distribution of these articles over the years is obvious. During Adamkus’s first term as a President, the “Chicago Tribune” wrote about him on twenty-two occasions, while only two publications cover his second presidential term. It is if the newspaper “forgot” about him. Special interest is paid to the beginning of Adamkus’s first term as President in 1998. This period is discussed on six occasions. Generally, this year (1998) stands out because of the overall number of publications (twelve) mentioning Adamkus and their variety. Most of the articles are fairly substantial in size and aimed at reviewing the President’s actions. One of them serves the purpose of discrediting Valdas Adamkus and is titled “Prodigal President”. The author appeared surprised by Adamkus’s victory and stressed the fact that the President never apologised for emigrating and serving a foreign government. He stated that Adamkus seemed somewhat dismayed and tired of all the references to his emigration. Additionally, the President’s language received negative reviews, his thoughts being deemed
incoherent. The author emphasized the President’s mistakes. Allegedly, he made some comments about the “Russian enclave of Kaliningrad”, that caused a stir. Later, Adamkus denied having given the interview. To

Table 5. The President’s Portrayal in the “Chicago Tribune”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Key Topics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998–2003</td>
<td>Adamkus’s victory in the Lithuanian presidential election; an introduction to the newly-elected President; an interview with Valdas Adamkus; visit to Chicago; another visit to Chicago (visits to The Central America Committee and breakfast at The Council on Foreign Relations); meeting fellow Lithuanians upon return to Chicago and celebrating the victory at the presidential election; Adamkus’s thoughts on the Lithuanian economy; the President’s inauguration; discussing the possibilities of NATO membership with George Bush; a conflict between Valdas Adamkus and Gediminas Vagnorius; sale of Adamkus family home in Chicago; appointment of US Army Colonel Jonas Krankaitis as Commander of Lithuanian Armed Forces; Adamkus’s relationship with the State Senator for Illinois Dick Durbin and speculations that Adamkus might still be enjoying social benefits in the US; interview with the “Chicago Tribune” three and a half years into the term; running for second presidential term; Adamkus writes a report, which lead to resignation of one of the administrators of the Environmental Protection Agency; celebrating 10 years since Lithuania regained its independence; Baltic states seeking NATO membership; Adamkus proposes the introduction of new transit visa cards with built in magnetic strips, made to ease the visa process for people of Kaliningrad; an unexpected loss at the presidential election.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004 – July 2009</td>
<td>Valdas Adamkus attends the funeral of Pope John Paul II in Vatican; the President is mentioned in the “From Chicago, with clout” column. It talks about people, who became famous when they left Chicago.</td>
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finish off the article, the author branded Adamkus a career bureaucrat, adding that “only people like Valdas Adamkus can return home again, or maybe they had never left” (Prodigal..., 1998). This is probably the most negative publication found in the American press. One of its readers was especially upset. He wrote to the “Chicago Tribune” accusing the author of doing a disservice to Valdas Adamkus, who he believes to be a very talented man. He added that the article lacked respect and was very surprised that the President was portrayed in such a negative way. The author quoted people who only saw Adamkus once or twice in their lives. Therefore, there is an obvious lack of understanding of politics or sense of humour in their words.

On different occasions the “Chicago Tribune” often referred to Adamkus as a former Chicagoan. His portrayal wasn’t purely official; instead the newspaper used the words of the President’s friends to describe him. They wholeheartedly praised him. The “Chicago Tribune” often mentions the details of Adamkus’s biography, his work for the EPA and loyalty to Lithuania. Valdas Adamkus is portrayed as NATO expansion supporter, who wants Lithuania to join the EU as well. Similarly to the previous newspapers, the “Chicago Tribune” talks about Russia’s stance against NATO’s expansion. Therefore, Adamkus’s attitude towards Russia remains tough and sceptical.

![Picture 1. The Number of Publications in 1998-2003.](image-url)
The diagram shows that during the time of Adamkus’s first term as a President, he was barely mentioned in British online newspapers. Just two publications mention his name in relation to the loss of the presidential election to Paksas and the expansion of a British insurance giant to Lithuania. Thus, all the activities and achievements of Valdas Adamkus between 1998 and 2003 were left unnoticed. Compared to the British press, the American press wrote a lot more about his first years of presidency highlighting the main events of that period and changes in Lithuania’s foreign policies.

“The Guardian”

“The Guardian” mentions Valdas Adamkus eleven times. It is worth mentioning, that Adamkus’s first presidency term was left “unnoticed”

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<th>Year</th>
<th>Key Topics</th>
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<td>2004 – July 2009</td>
<td>Impeachment of Rolandas Paksas; competing with Artūras Paulauskas in the new presidential election; the President is mentioned in the “Lithuania factfile” article; Adamkus wins the first round of presidential election; Adamkus wins the second round of presidential election; acting as a mediator during Ukraine’s crisis; Vladimir Putin invites the Presidents of Baltic states to attend the commemoration of the 60th anniversary of WWII victory in Moscow; the President declines the invitation; President Adamkus travels to Moscow; during a formal dinner with Russia’s officials Adamkus condemns Russia for attacking Georgia; Adamkus opposes Dmitry Medvedev’s plans to dislocate “Iskander-M” missile polygon in Kaliningrad; Adamkus signs an open letter “Europe Must Stand Up For Georgia”. His name is listed alongside 12 other European academics, who signed it.</td>
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and mentioned just once. However, it tells very little about the President’s achievements. Overall, this newspaper portrays Valdas Adamkus as an advocate for democracy, willing to protect weak states. It shows his strong position against Russia’s increasingly expansive and aggressive policies. It was confirmed when the President publicly addressed these concerns, expressed his support for Georgia and announced his decision to decline the invitation to commemorate the 60th anniversary of WWII victory in Moscow. Two further articles discuss the latter announcement. “The Guardian” talked about the Lithuanian presidential election on four occasions. Support for Valdas Adamkus was obvious, as Paksas’s efforts were labelled “an upset victory” by the newspaper.

“Daily Mail” and “The Daily Telegraph”

The “Daily Mail” mentions Valdas Adamkus twice over the course of his presidency. The President is only briefly mentioned; therefore we can conclude that the “Daily Mail” showed little interest in the Lithuanian President and his affairs. His first term was not covered apart from an article mentioning a large UK insurance company’s plans to operate in Lithuania. It seems that the only thing that was highlighted over the period of his second term was the fact, that President Adamkus is an emigrant. Since the “Daily Mail” is widely regarded as yellow press, the lack of publications suggests that the President has not said or done

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<th>Year</th>
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<td>1998–2003</td>
<td>British insurance giant CGNU expands to Lithuania. These plans were made after talks were held with Valdas Adamkus.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004 – July 2009</td>
<td>An essay on Lembit Opik and his family history. Opik is a British politician of Estonian origin, a member of the Liberal Democrats and former MP. Valdas Adamkus is referred to as an emigrant President.</td>
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anything scandalous. Otherwise, Adamkus would have received far more attention. Although both Adamkus and Paksas had very distinct election campaigns, The “Daily Mail” appears to be more interested in the private lives of scandalous politicians, rather than their politics.

“The Daily Telegraph” mentioned Valdas Adamkus six times in 2004-2008. So, the President’s first term is once again left unnoticed. “The Daily Telegraph” provides very little information on Valdas Adamkus and only mentions his age. However, President Adamkus remains categorical towards Russia and his opponent Rolandas Paksas. When Paksas decided to run for presidency again, Adamkus commented as follows: “Paksas spat in the face of the nation” (Ousted..., 2004). It becomes clear that President Adamkus is never afraid to speak his mind and openly criticise Moscow. He stands against the renewal of negotiations with Russia and believes that going along with its policies will only let it destroy European values yet again.

**Table 8.** The President’s Portrayal in “The Daily Telegraph”.

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<th>Year</th>
<th>Key Topics</th>
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<td>1998–2003</td>
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<td>2004 – July 2009</td>
<td>Rolandas Paksas’s decision to run in the presidential election after his impeachment and Adamkus’s comments on the matter; Adamkus wins the election in the first round and promises to bring Lithuania back to normal following Paksas’s impeachment; Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma asks Adamkus to act as a mediator during the negotiations in Ukraine; the release of a photo book capturing the Queen of England’s visits to the capitals of the Baltic states; Queen Elizabeth II meets President Adamkus in Vilnius; Russia cuts off oil supply to the Czech Republic, after the Czech Republic allows the deployment of the US missiles on its territory. Adamkus calls this decision “unequivocally political”; Adamkus opposes further negotiations with Russia.</td>
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The “Financial Times” mentions Valdas Adamkus eighteen times. The “Financial Times” only wrote about the President’s second term. Notably, the “Financial Times” draws readers’ attention to Lithuanian history, especially the events that followed WWII and the unavoidable Soviet influence. The articles mention Adamkus’s criticism of Russia, its

Table 9. The Portrayal of Valdas Adamkus in the “Financial Times”.

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<th>Year</th>
<th>Key Topics</th>
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<td>1998–2003</td>
<td>Acting as a mediator during negotiations in Ukraine; Adamkus’s thoughts on the years after the WWII; Adamkus declines the invitation to commemorate the 60th anniversary of WWII victory in Moscow; Adamkus meets with the US Secretary of State in Vilnius; the relationship between Russia and the Baltic sates; George Bush’s support for the Baltic states; Adamkus shares his disapproval of Russia’s energy policy in an interview with the “Financial Times”; Adamkus makes an informal proposal to establish a Democracy Fund to support political, cultural and social projects in the Eastern European region; collapse of the Lithuanian government; the President’s disappointment with the Maastricht criteria stopping our country from introducing the Euro; Angela Merkel invites Valdas Adamkus to join her as an advisor during the meeting with Polish President Lech Kaczynski; the President expresses concerns in relation to Russia’s economic boom, which could increase its dominance; discussions of the Baltic-Polish nuclear power plant project; Adamkus travels to Washington to meet with George Bush; President Adamkus opposes the renewal of negotiations between Russia and the EU (two publications); Adamkus opposes EU requirements to close the Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant; the Lithuanian President shows his support for Ukraine (two publications).</td>
</tr>
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</table>
ambition to dominate, the Kremlin’s oil and gas price manipulations and Russia’s threats to use economic pressure against the Baltic states. Unlike other publications, on three occasions the “Financial Times” mentions the Lithuanian President’s criticism of the EU. It includes the topics of Russia’s negotiations with the EU, the Maastricht criteria stopping our country from introducing the euro and closing down of the Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant. The “Financial Times” provided its audience with a different portrayal of Valdas Adamkus. The newspaper wrote about Adamkus’s biography and gave these articles more of a personal touch. The President is portrayed as an excellent negotiator and mediator, who strives to spread democracy and cares about other former Soviet states (Ukraine and Georgia). Adamkus always puts his nation first and has little concern for what the international society might say. He proved this by declining Vladimir Putin’s invitation to commemorate the 60th anniversary of WWII victory in Moscow, choosing instead to “stay at home with the Lithuanian nation” (History…, 2005). Three articles mention meetings with high-ranking US officials, including George Bush, and show that President Adamkus shares closer ties with the US than the UK. The “Financial Times” shows that the President is not afraid to speak his mind against Russia and its policies, even if those policies are supported by other EU Member States. President
Adamkus always stressed that Lithuania seeks to establish a constructive relationship with Moscow; however Moscow never expressed the desire to cooperate.

The diagram shows that the British showed more interest in the President’s second term compared to the Americans. The number of American publications was twice as low. Perhaps, this can be explained by the fact that the US online media coverage focused on Lithuania’s membership in NATO and the EU. Since Lithuania became a member of these organisations, covering this topic lost its relevance, as the main objective had been achieved. Furthermore, as Adamkus’s term neared its end the interest in the President also declined. This period is important, because of the events in Ukraine and Georgia, and negotiations between Russia and the EU. These topics were interesting to the British press.

**Conclusions**


Both the US and UK online press introduced Valdas Adamkus to the international community and shared the details of his biography. On the other hand, the President’s decisions on Lithuania’s foreign and domestic policies were barely covered. The foreign media focused on his personality rather than achievements. In respect to political communication, Adamkus’s work agenda was considered interesting as long as it covered major international events. Adamkus’s two presidency terms received different levels of attention. Notably, the coverage of Valdas Adamkus and his political actions reflected the priorities of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania. However, when talking to the American and the British press, Adamkus was not pursuing any personal goals, but seeking to benefit his country, where all official communication channels had been closed for half a century.
American online media covered President Adamkus twice as much and in more detail compared to the UK. Overall, Valdas Adamkus was mentioned on seventy-six occasions in the US media and on thirty-nine in the UK. This might have been influenced by the fact that Adamkus immigrated to the US, held US citizenship and lived there for almost fifty years. Another assumption is possible; perhaps, the US online media has high interest in the country’s relationship with the EU, the Baltic States and Lithuania’s relations with its eastern neighbours.

Unlike the British newspapers, the American media emphasized Adamkus’s ties with the US and especially Chicago, where he used to live. Additionally, he is often introduced as a “former Chicagoan”, referencing his biography details and past work at the EPA.

The British press barely mentions Adamkus during his first presidency term, while the US media often wrote about the President’s efforts in joining NATO and the EU.

No separate publications on Valdas Adamkus were found in the British newspapers. Therefore, we can assume that his personality was not of much interest to the British. “The New York Times” published their interview with Valdas Adamkus, while the “Chicago Tribune” interviewed the President twice. They talk about the President’s views on domestic and international politics, his western approach, democratic qualities, constructive relationship with neighbouring countries, fight for justice and strong character. On the other hand, Adamkus has the ability to talk long and hard about the same topic, avoid words with strong connotations and refrain from detailed comments, when asked about controversial topics.

Overall, the US media portrays Adamkus in a very positive way. Two critical articles were mentioned, however they represent the author’s thoughts, rather than facts. Instead of being positive, the British media’s approach could be best described as neutral. The President was mentioned in a number of British online articles, but their main focus was not on him. Both the US and UK publications, note Adamkus’s criticism towards Russia, his work as a mediator in Ukraine and support for Georgia.
The positive portrayal of President Adamkus in the US online newspapers, a well-established public opinion, a clear political agenda and Adamkus’s close ties with the US might have prompted the process of joining NATO and the EU for our country. It should not be forgotten that George Bush openly supported Lithuania’s membership in these organisations.

Research revealed that foreign media showed interest in Valdas Adamkus as long as he was president. Since 2009, the number of articles mentioning Valdas Adamkus has significantly declined. Out of all the newspapers analysed, three American and three British newspapers mentioned Adamkus in the period between July 2009 (Dalia Grybauskaitė’s inauguration) and 2011.

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Agnė Grinevičiūtė

Santrauka


Tyrimo rezultatai atskleidžia, kad pasirinktų leidinių auditorija supažindina su Lietuvos vadovu, tačiau, nors jis vaizduojamas neišsамiai, gana paviršutiniškai, nukrypstant į Valdo Adamkaus asmenybę, vis dėlto akcentuojami Prezidento siektai įsilieti į NATO ir ES. Kaip ir reikia tikėtis, Lietuvos lyderis nagrinėtų šalių leidiniuose pateikiamas skirtingai.


Esmėnai žodžiai: atspindėjimas, įvaizdis, pateikimas, periodinė spauda, politikos komunikacija, prezidentas, reprezentacija, užsienio politika.
About the author

Agnė Grinevičiūtė finished Pasvalys Petras Vileišis gymnasium with merit in 2009. Her BA thesis as a student of journalism focused on “The Representation of President Valdas Adamkus in the online press of the USA and Great Britain in 1998–2012”. The thesis was done under a supervision of doc. dr. Andrius Vaišnys. Agnė is a contributor to the newspaper of Vilnius University “Universitas Vilnensis”.