

High diversity in a post-socialist Nordic country: News repertoires in Estonia

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Abstract:

This article presents the Estonian part of an international study on news use and outlines nine Estonian news media repertoires. Based on a Q-methodological approach, the analysis indicates that news practices are highly fragmented in Estonia, since nine different clusters of news preferences were distinguished in the sample of 36 respondents. It appears that television and online news are in strong competition with each other. The ability to compare the news preferences of different individuals is based on two factors: how important the quality of news sources is for users (quality journalism content vs. social media news), and at what geographical level the news interest appears, with the focus on international, national, regional or hyper-local news.

Keywords: cross-media, news consumption, news audiences, news repertoires, Q methodology, democratic engagement, Estonia

Introduction: the Estonian media system and general patterns of media use

At the beginning of the 1990s, when Estonia gained its independence from the Soviet Union, the country's media landscape, together with Estonian society as a whole, started to change radically (Hoyer *et al.*, 1993; Lauristin & Vihalemm, 2002). From a former strictly controlled media system in the service of the Communist Party, it developed into a liberal dual media system in the service of society and media owners. While in the new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) the news media fluctuate between volatility and hybridization (Mancini, 2015: 25), in Estonia a relatively stable media system has developed. This developmental trajectory was supported by the general liberal attitude among the population in the 1990s and by the strong tradition of monitoring media developments.

Audience studies in Estonia began in the early 1960s, complemented with content and textual analyses and experimental studies on message reception: studies that were

conducted on the basis of the structural functionalist approach have had a great influence on journalism practices in Estonia (Opermann and Vihalemm, 2017: 28).

Currently the Estonian media are characterized by a high degree of freedom, relatively high levels of trust, a relatively strong public media service, liberal media policies and a moderately developed self-regulatory system of journalism (European Journalism Centre). Characterising media systems in the Baltic countries in terms of the dimensions identified by Daniel Hallin and Paolo Mancini (2004), Henrik Örnebring came to the conclusion that Estonia is most similar to the liberal system (Örnebring, 2011: 30). Peruško with her colleagues added that in media usage the Estonian population follow the northern pattern of media use, while the structural variables of the Estonian media system follow the European mainstream model (Peruško *et al.*, 2013). Roger Blum reached similar conclusions in his analysis (2014), in which he classified Estonia with Germany, France, Austria and the UK in the public service model, where public service broadcasting has great influence in determining the character of the media system. Mancini's (2015) conclusion was that the Estonian media model is the most Westernized model among CEE countries: "the Estonian media system seems to be driven by commercial considerations and consumer demands, rather than by political agendas" (Mancini, 2015: 30).

The Estonian media market, serving a population of only 1.3 million inhabitants, is one of the smallest in Europe. But it is rich in channels and is characterised by diversity (World Press Trends, 2010, Television 2013): Estonians have the choice of a number of different newspapers, magazines, web portals, and TV and radio programmes in their own language. Estonia has a strong reading tradition and the biggest newspapers produce quality content daily in print and online (the biggest daily, *Postimees*, the weekly newspapers *Eesti Ekspress* and *Maaleht*, the national daily *Eesti Päevaleht*, the business paper *Äripäev*, etc.). The biggest tabloid, *Õhtuleht*, is noted for its strong opinions and sports pages. The biggest online media brands, *postimees.ee* and *delfi.ee*, reach almost two-thirds of the population and offer content for every taste (Gemius, 2016). The news interest among the Estonian population is relatively high: more than 61% say that they follow news every day or even more frequently (Vihalemm and Kõuts, 2017).

Method of study

Previous research has indicated that the main socio-demographic characteristics differentiating media use patterns in Estonia are age and nationality, and to a lesser extent, the respondents' educational level (Lauristin and Vihalemm, 2002; Vihalemm *et al.*, 2012). Nevertheless, recently there has been a levelling off in media consumption and growing individualisation of media usage patterns is apparent (Vihalemm and Kõuts, 2017). The news practices are rather weakly determined by the respondents' socio-demographic characteristics, and are more related to personal interests and life courses.

A representative survey from 2014 distinguished between six types of general media users in Estonia: 1) multi-active users of traditional media (16 per cent of respondents), 2) active users of online media (13%), 3) moderately active users of traditional media (22%), 4)

moderately active users of traditional and online media (18%), 5) users of only online media (14%), and 6) passive media users (17%) (Vihalemm and Kõuts, 2017). In 2014 the majority of the Estonian population followed news more on the internet than through traditional news sources. The internet, with its endless opportunities and innumerable news pages, provides higher diversity in the media menus of users, and it is often not possible to capture these diverse patterns through questionnaires.

The study reported in this article complements previous quantitative studies and provides an opportunity to fully distinguish distinct media usage clusters. The fieldwork for this comparative news consumption study (see the introduction chapter in this special section by Nossek *et al.*, 2017) took place in Estonia in October and November 2014¹, and was based on the Q-methodology and in-depth interviews that followed the Danish example (Kobbernagel and Schrøder, 2016). The Q sample consisted of 36 cards with different news platforms and formats (every card for a particular news channel) and the cards were translated into Estonian language. Because of the small media market several Q cards indicated to only one channel available in the country (e.g. there is only one national TV news bulletin on a public service channel), and thus the Q sets compiled by the respondents were loaded with significance for the researchers knowing the content and specifics of the news channels in Estonia.

Compared to other participating countries, the scale used for the sorting the Q cards was smaller (a seven-point scale²), but the analytical techniques allow for comparisons with other participating countries on the interpretative level. In addition to the Q card sorting, the researchers recorded verbal think-aloud comments given by respondents during the sorting, and after the sorting exercise respondents filled out questionnaires about their political and social engagement. This instrument was used to relate news repertoires to the respondents' participative practices, since the assumption behind the study was that different news practices may be related to different kinds of participatory potential (Dahlgren, 2009, Kõuts-Klemm, 2013). The complete questionnaire can be seen in the introduction article in this special section.

A total of 96 respondents participated, while 36 were selected based on the study guidelines for further analysis (Table 1). The age groups were not balanced in quantitative terms, since the oldest group was the smallest in the sample. The interest in younger age groups in this study was based on the fact that the oldest respondents had rather traditional media usage patterns that have been rather well-studied (Vihalemm and Kõuts, 2017), but the news preferences among younger groups required more attention.

Table 1: Respondents in the Estonian sample by age and gender

Age	Male	Female	Total
18-34	7	5	12
35-60	8	8	16
61+	3	5	8
Total	18	18	36

As background information about the respondents, their educational level (secondary or higher education) and places of residence (capital city, other bigger city or outside the big cities) were registered. There was little variation in the level of education in the Estonian sample, because the educational level of the Estonian population is generally rather high (Estonian Human Development Report, 2014/2015). The place of residence showed no direct connection to the media use patterns (Vihalemm and Kõuts, 2017), but it can appear as a determinant of economic inequality: the regional disparities expressed in incomes and GDP rates are rather high in Estonia (Estonian Human Development Report, 2014/2015).

Before the results of the analysis are described, one brief remark about the study design in Estonian language has to be made. Since the task for the respondents was to sort media channels into different “boxes” based on the importance of the channels as news sources, it is important to bear in mind a small linguistic discrepancy. While the English noun “news” has a strong connection to the “content produced as the result of the journalistic work process”, in Estonian the noun “news [*uudis*]” is used in everyday contexts rather in a broader sense: it describes pieces of information that are new, and often related to the personal sphere; news is not necessarily connected with journalism. Thus the channels preferred for news can be specified only with the help of comments given by respondents to determine whether the news in a social media channel like Facebook means only journalistic news or if the new information can be related to personal sources.

After the data collection the factor analysis (principal component method) was applied following the guidelines laid out in Kobbernagel and Schrøder (2016).

Nine repertoires distinguished among Estonian respondents: highly fragmented news practices

The factor analysis in relation to the Estonian sample revealed nine factors, which explain 87.9 % of the total variance. Every component represents at least two respondents’ media repertoires with high primary loadings, and only one respondent did not fit the model. The nine repertoires are given in the table below, and the five most and least important channels are listed for every repertoire (Table 2). After a brief overview, I will highlight some novel combinations that have not appeared in large scale surveys (see Vihalemm and Kõuts, 2017).

Table 2: Top five and bottom five news channels in nine media repertoires distinguished in the Estonian sample

Label of the repertoire	Most important news media (TOP-5)	Least important news media
1. Serious quality news interest on national and international	TV news from international providers; Online news from international news providers; National daily quality newspaper online; National PSB online news; National	Local media, Twitter, TV texts, blogs, news received by email or SMS

levels	quality magazine or weekly online	
2. Prevailing interest in local news with slight interest in infotainment on a national level	National TV news bulletin on a commercial channel; National daily tabloid newspaper, print; Local weekly/monthly news publication, print; TV current affairs, light; Local daily newspaper, print	Professional and political party magazines, commercial radio, PSB radio
3. A combination of serious news and infotainment news on a national level	National daily quality newspaper, print; Free newspaper, print; National TV news bulletin on a public service channel; National TV news bulletin on a commercial channel; TV current affairs, light	Any online and social media, international media
4. Interest in serious local and national news	Radio news on PSB channel; Local daily newspaper, print; Local daily newspaper, online; National TV news on a public service channel; Radio current affairs	Blogs; born-online news media; tabloid newspaper, online; commercial TV news
5. Mainstream online news channels in combination with Facebook	Radio news by commercial radio; National tabloid newspaper, online; National quality newspaper, online; Free daily newspaper, online; News on Facebook	PSB news (radio, TV, online), international providers
6. Broadcasting news and talk interest	National TV news bulletin on a commercial channel; Radio current affairs; Free newspaper, online; TV current affairs, serious; Radio news as a part of general public service radio	Print newspapers, international news providers, aggregators
7. Specialized and selective repertoire based on individual interests	National TV news bulletin on a public service channel; News via news aggregators; TV current affairs, light; TV current affairs, serious; National quality newspaper online	Local media, print and online; Twitter; Text-TV; online video-sharing media
8. News in social media "if I have to..."	News on Facebook; Radio news on commercial radio; News distributed by online video-sharing media; News on other social media; National daily quality newspaper, print	International news providers, local media
9. Highly selective quality news media orientation	News on Twitter; National quality newspaper, online; Local/regional daily newspaper, print; News on other social media; Read national PSB online news	TV and radio current affairs, international TV news providers, free online newspaper, tabloid press

In **Repertoire 1**, there is a clear orientation to serious quality information and an interest in international affairs. This orientation is open to events on a national level, as well as to

events happening around the world. This repertoire also features the highest quality news media available in the country, although media usage is not limited to a particular media outlet; rather, it combines online, print and broadcasting channels. Characteristic of this repertoire is a low rating of local media in the media menu and an avoidance of all kinds of free information that is supposedly a result of campaigns (e.g. the local municipal TV channel, free daily and freely available party and city council press). Respondents in this group choose their media repertoire and media outlets in terms of traditional journalistic selection processes and in this sense can be described as having a rather traditional news orientation: they consider news to be the result of journalistic work.

In their selections, they are rather critical and the trustworthiness of a channel is very important to them. Their content preferences are clear and they consciously search for particular content. Their work or interests also lead them to follow international news.

I work a lot with internet content in English. I have no time to follow news with suspicious content (EST35, male, 37 years, higher education, larger city).

In terms of participation, respondents from this repertoire thought that they were well informed, and had formed their opinions and world-views and discussed news with others, although real political engagement was less important to them as they usually did not have time for it.

This repertoire describes the media usage of six respondents and all of them lived in the capital city, which explains their lack of interest in local matters.

Repertoire number two (a prevailing interest in local news with a slight interest in infotainment on a national level) is characterised by the high usage of different channels that provide local information, including both printed and online local newspapers and other publications. Local newspapers are distributed on two levels in Estonia: on a national level as ordinary newspapers distributed on a daily basis, and in smaller geographical areas, i.e. on a municipal level, in the form of information bulletins that are distributed for free to every household. Additionally, this group have contact with national news mainly via commercial TV magazines that tend to be rather superficial in character. It is clear that they prefer information in the Estonian language only, since international news providers are ranked low in their media repertoire. One respondent explained:

It would be interesting to follow international news, but I cannot really speak English or other foreign languages. In my school years, we were only pressured to learn Russian (EST34, female, 64 years, secondary education, provincial city).

Compared to the fourth repertoire, where local and national news interests are combined in a similar way (see below), in the second repertoire news interest is guided more by the

participants' interest in human interest-related topics and not by a particular interest in politics or current affairs, as is the case in the fourth repertoire.

Repertoire 2 comprises the media usage of five respondents, two of whom belong to the oldest age group (61+), who live in smaller towns in Estonia. All of the other respondents outside this age group are more than 40 years old and live in the country-side. In terms of education, all five respondents belong to the group with primary/secondary education (9 or 12 years of schooling), which is more or less the minimum in Estonia.

Their social and political activity focuses on local issues. They live in rather small communities, have close ties with other community members, and are not involved in party politics, but rather in civic participation (organising community events, talking with people about local municipality topics etc.). Their cultural participation is relatively high, as it also forms an aspect of community life.

The third media repertoire (a combination of serious and infotainment news on a national level) combines traditional news channels, i.e. printed newspapers and broadcast news, which function on a national level. We can label this combination of news media as traditional, since online channels are ranked low in this news media menu. Respondents know that social media channels exist but have little contact with these channels. One respondent said:

Oh, I remember now! My daughter showed me Twitter. If her daughter travels in other countries, she posts on Twitter and sometimes my daughter shows me this (EST13, female, 75 years, secondary education, capital city).

This rather "traditional" combination of media channels is a result of media-using habits that have formed over many years. Respondents use these channels because they trust them: basically, their experiences support their feeling that these channels can be trusted.

Postimees, Eesti Päevaleht and Eesti Ekspress – I think these newspapers are the most important players in the Estonian media landscape. They are serious and trustworthy. I trust information I read in those newspapers (EST23, female, 45 years, secondary education, large city).

This media repertoire was characteristic of two of the oldest female respondents from the capital city region and one 45-year-old female respondent from a small town.

In terms of the data collected through the supplementary questionnaire, for those who did not use social media or online channels, the information provided in relation to participation in news coverage was rather weak. The participants tended to choose the option "that they talk with other people about media news".

The respondents attributed importance to their family members and participated in cultural activities (theatre, concerts, museums and reading books). Expressing their opinions or talking about politics was not their cup of tea:

I am so old already. My opinion doesn't matter any more. (EST13, female, 75 years, secondary education, capital city).

Repertoire number four (interest in serious local and national news) combines a number of different TV, radio and talk show programmes and news productions with serious content through various editions of printed and online newspapers. The common element for all members of this media repertoire is an interest in the quality of the information, on both local and national levels. They discredit both social media and infotainment broadcasting programs.

Of the five respondents who share this media repertoire, four are male and only one female. They represent all age groups, with one respondent between 18 and 34, three respondents between 35 and 60, and one respondent older than 61 years of age. They live in smaller towns and have all completed secondary education.

Based on the questionnaire, we can conclude that the news stimulates this group of people to think and talk about society. Media provide alternative interpretations and a stage for discussions.

It is a really funny/strange place this world. I talk a lot with friends about events we read or hear about through the media (EST22, male, 23 years, secondary education, provincial city).

Typically, the participants in this group are not otherwise active and do not participate in politics, culture or community work. However, one respondent claims that he is very interested in politics (51-year-old male respondent EST16). He participates in mediated ways: mass media content allows at least for participation on a conceptual/thought level. By following different media channels, it is possible to hear or read about different views and this provides a basis for comprehensive discussions. One respondent expresses the idea that it provides an opportunity to participate:

I have had a lot of work and will probably have just as much in the near future. But I have to follow political matters. I think I should find time for party politics soon. I was active many years ago and it is important to me (EST4, male, 48 years, secondary education, large city).

In **the fifth media repertoire** (mainstream online news channels in combination with Facebook), all mainstream online channels in Estonia (delfi.ee, postimees.ee and

ohtuleht.ee) are combined. Facebook has a relatively high position in the repertoire of this group of respondents.

In Facebook I clicked on the “Like” button of *Delfi* and *Õhtuleht* [*the first one is the biggest news portal in Estonia, and the other is an online version of a national tabloid newspaper – R.K.*]. They are the quickest in delivering news stories. Then I see immediately what the breaking news is each day (EST31, male, 18 years, in secondary school, provincial city).

In this group, at least two printed newspapers are usually delivered to the respondents’ homes or work places, providing contact with and allowing them to check the content of printed newspapers as well. No specific orientation towards national or local news is evident. The respondents’ regular contact with news media appears to be fairly frequent as they said they check the news via mobile devices at every free moment. A very important characteristic of this media usage pattern is the absence of TV in the media menu. In fact, this group attributes no importance to contact with PSB channels. They are oriented to quick accounts of the news and do not focus much on longer discussions or analyses of events.

I like to have quick overviews of what is happening. Information should be delivered as quickly as possible. /.../ I have an interest in local news as well, but I have no channels to get this news. /.../ But it is OK. I can live without local news (EST27, male, 27 years, secondary education, provincial city).

This group is made up of two younger male respondents (in the age group 18-34) and one 50-year-old female respondent. They live in provincial areas and have all completed secondary schooling.

Based on the information provided in response to the questionnaire, we can say that for this group participative options of social media were not very important, and in the list regarding their participation in news coverage they had selected fewer options. Their political participation was absent as well – on all questions they marked “not at all important” – while news events were only occasionally a reason for discussions in the work place or with friends.

The sixth repertoire is labelled “broadcasting news and talk interest”: TV news and talk shows focused on current affairs and the analysis of contemporary politics dominate this media repertoire, and analytical content broadcast through radio programmes is also important. Respondents who formed this repertoire do not read much, and all printed papers are rated rather negatively, and online reading is also said to be unimportant. The combination shows that these users prefer media content that can be consumed relatively passively, via one-sided information reception channels. They have contact with printed

news only via professional and political party magazines, which are usually delivered to their homes for free as a result of their status as members of organisations or clients of a corporation. This type of news consumption is biased and does not give a balanced overview of national politics and current affairs.

In contrast to the fourth repertoire, where broadcasting news is given top priority, in the sixth repertoire news and talk through broadcasting channels dominate the category almost entirely.

I am not really interested in the news. But I watch TV after work and listen to the radio when driving to work: that is not really stressful for me. I don't like to concentrate on the news: that would be stressful for me (EST11, male, 46 years, secondary education, provincial city).

I am very interested in what happens in Estonia. I have a lot of time to watch TV and read and we have the radio on in my work place almost all of the time. I am well informed /.../ I have no idea what kind of channels other countries have. I cannot speak English (EST5, female, 55 years, secondary education, provincial city).

This repertoire represents the news media combinations of two respondents, one male respondent aged 46 and a female respondent aged 55. They live in smaller towns and have completed their secondary education.

For both respondents, political and social participation was not important at all. They lived in their usual social environment, where family and close friends were important. One respondent explained his world as a trajectory "from home to work and back home". They were not interested in talking about political matters or in commenting or expressing their opinions. One respondent made this humble observation during the interview:

What do I know about those [*political – R.K*] things?! I am not so smart. We have many other well-educated and intelligent people in Estonia. They can say how things should be. I do not know. /.../ I have nothing to say. Why should I write to a newspaper? Journalists are smart; they know and they write (EST5, female, 55 years, secondary education, provincial city).

The seventh repertoire (specialized and selective repertoire based on individual interests) is highly selective; it consists of channels where respondents could choose content that represented their individual interests freely. They have no interest in pre-selections made by professional journalists; they prefer selections offered by search robots or algorithms. Their orientation towards local, national or even international affairs is not clear. Rather, they seek content related to their work and social activities, irrespective of the level of coverage. It seems that their need to be informed about national matters does not occur on

a daily basis. In terms of TV discussions, they tend to follow analyses and generalisations about events and processes rather than breaking news. In this media repertoire, no importance is attributed to any PSB channel.

I follow news that is directly related to me and my interests. For example: kids, young people, schools, hobbies, social events for youth [*she works as a youth adviser – R.K*] (EST33, female, 40 years, higher education, large city).

This repertoire encompasses three female respondents aged 39, 40 and 43 (35-60 age bracket) who live in cities.

They were not very active in the expression of their opinions or the sharing of news on social media, nor were they active participants in political or cultural activities. Only meeting friends and self-development (attending lectures or other informative events, and reading) drew the attention of these respondents.

Social media dominate **the eighth media repertoire** (labelled as social media news “if I have to...”) with personal content created by the users themselves to create highly personalised options. This group have contact with professional journalistic productions through Facebook news sharing, national daily newspapers delivered to their homes and through alternative news channels for particular groups or communities (free daily newspapers that contain news related to particular cities; local monthly news publications that are usually delivered free to the homes of all who live in the area of a local municipality). In this case, many pre-selections are made by others, while this group tends not to be interested in mainstream news channels in Estonia. They lack an interest in news and they have contact with news only “if I have to” (as one respondent explained).

We have many printed newspapers delivered to the office every day. I look at them all. But it is substitution or replacement: I cannot find other meaningful activities if I have a short break in my work (EST7, female, 24 years, higher education, capital city).

I do not read any newspaper or online news. I don’t care. Maybe once a week I read something. It is a waste of time (EST8, male, 37 years, higher education, capital city).

This repertoire comprises the media usage of two respondents: a 24-year-old female and a 37-year-old male. They live in bigger cities and both have university degrees.

Neither respondent was politically active, their daily activities were restricted to friends and family, and in terms of activities outside of the home, they both frequently attended sports events, but not cultural events. They had no need to express their opinions on social or other media.

The ninth media repertoire (highly selective quality news orientation) can be described as an alternative repertoire. It consists of many “not-usual” news channels, such as Twitter and blogs. Twitter does not have a broad user community in Estonia. While Facebook is for the masses, Twitter is seen as a channel aimed at communities with specialized interests (i.e. particular politicians, culture and public administration), including journalists. Other social media, such as Instagram, LinkedIn and Pinterest as well as blogs offer news stories to particular groups. This repertoire’s connection to broader public issues is created via quality news media, but not through an orientation to the daily news; rather, this repertoire favours discussions, opinions and generalisations provided by these news media. The respondents who belong to this group do not listen to the radio, do not watch news on TV and show little interest in local news.

Compared to the seventh repertoire, in this repertoire journalistic content has more importance. The in-depth interviews and the questionnaire show that for these people news media are the basis for participative actions: opinion formation, commenting and discussions based on the news. Sharing and recommending quality content is an option that is often used by respondents.

The online news feed is a rather formal, superficial thing. If my friend shares some news, I am sure it is worth a read and some thought. A friend wouldn’t mess with unimportant news. My friends are normal guys. I can trust their tastes and judgements (EST36, female, 25 years, secondary education, provincial city).

Two respondents in the Estonian sample represented this media repertoire: one female aged 25 and one male aged 19. They both lived in rural areas of southern Estonia and had completed their secondary education. Their cultural and social activity was high and they participated in political activities to some extent (e.g. signing petitions).

The Estonian news repertoire universe

The fact that we were able to identify nine different news consumption repertoires involving 36 respondents indicates a process of ongoing fragmentation in audiences’ news practices, an observation which is reinforced by the results of recent studies in many countries (e.g. Webster & Ksiazek, 2012; Vihalemm *et al.*, 2012). The composition of the groups indicated that the different repertoires were not homogeneous in terms of socio-demographic characteristics: we were able to support the hypothesis that news interests are determined by individual interests and life matters.

Nevertheless, the news universe of the Estonian respondents shows some systematic patterns. The news repertoires involve clear participation manifestations: interest in news at different societal levels and attitudes towards social and/or political participation were

connected. Those who are more interested in news indicate higher engagement levels in their explanations why they follow the news.

We can visualise the news universe of Estonian respondents with the help of two axes (see **Figure 1**). One dimension (the y-axis) distinguishes levels of interest: the events that were interesting for the respondents were associated with international or national levels, or narrower levels such as the local community level or only the social group level (family and nearest friends). The other dimension (x-axis) distinguishes preferences and/or expectations of content, asking if news should result from journalistic work and be represented in rather serious forms, or through more commercial journalistic work, or in the form of infotainment, or if it is better for one to make selections oneself or allow selections to be made by robots/algorithms.

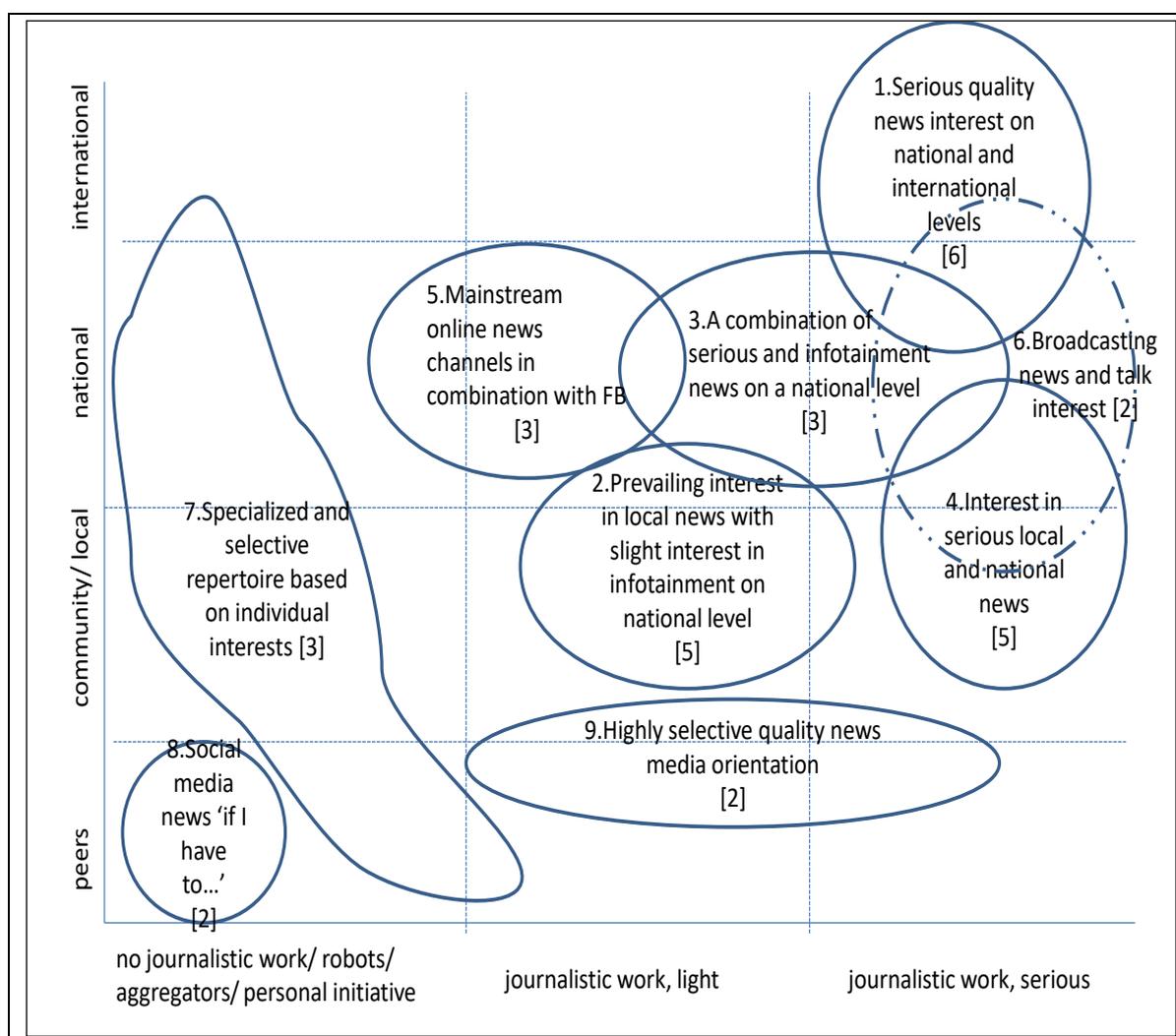


Figure 1 News repertoire universe among Estonian respondents (the number of respondents are given in brackets)

In **Figure 1** we can see that the repertoires distinguished among Estonian respondents combine news channels with local and/ or national-international orientation and journalism

content delivered in light or serious forms. Two of the nine media repertoires (7th “Specialized and selective repertoire based on individual interest” and 8th “News in social media ‘if I have to...’”) indicate no interest in traditional news, and the respondents’ comments allow us to conclude that these two media repertoires provide a rather weak basis for participation in democracy.

From a media systems theoretical perspective it can be said that the fragmentation of media use is well suited to a hyper-complex society: it enables individuals to be connected to media communication in very diverse ways (Kõuts-Klemm 2013: 62). If individuals are informed via different channels, those who are connected can realize this in terms of their participation at specific moments (Dahlgren 2009). However, those who do not want to be connected or informed are more problematic, especially those who consciously give a low priority to the universe of news.

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Notes:

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² Following the guidelines of the comparative research project, the Estonian respondents were asked to sort the media channels on the list (the Q sample, which consisted of 36 different news platforms and formats) on the grid based on the importance of particular channels for the respondents. The Q cards were translated into Estonian. A seven-point scale was used for the sorting of the news channels: from '+3' (plays a role in my life) to '-3' (does not play a role in my life). The Estonian scale was shorter than other countries used, because in the test phase it appeared that the longer scale was not well managed by the respondents.