

Executive Summary/Abstract

Structure and content of the SRG television programmes 2015

- **Context of Research**

In the course of the television programme analysis in Switzerland by order of the Federal Office of Communication (OFCOM) in 2015, the seven television programmes of SRG SSR were analysed using a quantitative content analysis. The study was conducted by the company GöfaK Medienforschung, Potsdam/Germany, under the direction of Prof. Joachim Trebbe (Freie Universität Berlin) and in cooperation with the Department for Communication and Media Research, Fribourg/Switzerland.

- **Sample and Method**

The seven programmes SRF 1, SRF zwei, SRF info, RTS Un, RTS Deux, RSI LA 1, and RSI LA 2 were recorded in full over the course of one natural calendar week in spring and autumn, respectively, and were then coded in a multistage process on programme as well as article level with regard to programme and topic structures, regional focus and further quality characteristics. In total, 2,353 recorded hours of broadcasting material were analysed.

- **Programme Structure**

The programmes dedicate between 79 percent and 93 percent of an average 24-hour day to editorial content, while up to 21 percent of the daily broadcasting time (i.e. more than five hours per day) is used for broadcasting commercials and advertising their own programmes. Furthermore, the programmes of SRG SSR show high synergy effects. All in all, up to 43 percent of a broadcasting day is filled with reruns or adoptions from one of the other programmes of SRG SSR. When it comes to SRF info, this procedure is part of the programme concept: here, 88 percent of all broadcasts are reruns or adoptions.

The proportional values for television reporting in the broadest sense – in this study referred to as television journalism – vary between 26 percent (RSI LA 2) and 42 percent (RTS Deux, RSI LA 1) for the French- and Italian-speaking programmes. Programmes from German-speaking Switzerland are structured in a special way: the highest percentage of reporting can be found for SRF 1 (42 percent), while SRF zwei accounts for the lowest amount (12 percent). SRF info is unrivalled in this regard with 77 percent of reporting.

The most important means for journalistic reporting are news broadcasts. Especially RTS Un and RSI LA1 stand out in this respect, since 17 and 23 percent of their daily broadcasting time are spent on news broadcasts, respectively. SRF info has a special standing with 40 percent of news broadcasts daily, while SRF 1 and SRF zwei put greater emphasis on other TV formats of television journalism such as magazine programmes and reports.

The entertainment sector is dominated by movies, especially film productions, and television series. Shows and game formats are particularly relevant for prime time broadcasting between 6 and 11 pm (e.g. for SRF 1 and RSI LA 1).

- **Topic Structure**

Among the most important thematic category of all broadcasts of television journalism is the category of unpolitical topics that refer to all societal areas. Religion, academics, media, economy and culture provide most of the material for journalistic reporting in almost all programmes. Politics and controversial societal topics rank first only for RSI LA 1 and SRF info with 18 percent and 38 percent, respectively. This is mostly due to the high percentages of broadcasting time dedicated to news reporting of these two programmes. In general, news reporting on all seven programmes is characterized by up-to-the-minute, politically relevant reporting in a narrower sense (i.e. laws, votes/elections, factual issues, legislation, and parties). The equation is: more broadcasting time dedicated to news equals more broadcasting time dedicated to politics and controversial societal issues. Besides political news reporting that focusses on domestic political issues in Switzerland, foreign affairs plays an essential role in news reporting.

Compared to the already mentioned issues, human-touch reporting about celebrities, criminality, and individual human destinies are less relevant on a quantitative level. These issues account for approximately the same percentages of the total broadcasting time as sports, consumer, and service issues (between 1 percent and 5 percent).

- **Regional reporting and dimensioning**

Most of the regional focus of all seven programmes expectedly refer to the respective regions from which the specific programmes are broadcast. Up to 59 percent of the French-speaking broadcasts with regional elements focus on the French-speaking part of Switzerland. Comparative figures for German- and Italian-speaking Switzerland amount to 42 percent (SRF) and 45 percent (RSI), respectively. Further important points of reference for all programmes are Switzerland as federal government, as well as government and parliament institutions in the German-speaking part of Switzerland. One-fifth of all contributions in the French-speaking programmes refer to the German-speaking region, while 3 percent refer to the Italian-speaking region of Switzerland. With regard to RSI, even up to 27 percent of the contributions refer to the German-speaking region (LA 2), and 9 percent refer to western Switzerland (LA 1). Additionally, one in ten contributions of the SRF refers to western Switzerland, while up to 6 percent of the contributions refer to Italian-speaking parts of Switzerland. Explicit references to the Rhaeto-Romanic community were identified in broadcasts of SRF 1 and SRF info with 3 percent and 4 percent, respectively, and RSI LA 1 and RSI LA 2 (1 percent and 7 percent, respectively).

An in-depth analysis of regional dimensioning in news reporting of all programmes identified the high relevance of regional actors and events for journalistic discussion of other Swiss regions. Compared to the predecessor study, a minor increase in the discussion of these other regions of Switzerland as well as a constantly high importance of the German-speaking part of Switzerland can be identified in the programmes of SRG SSR.