

Romania

Monitoring of current reporting on Antena 1, the leading commercial network, and TVR1, the first channel of the public television

TWO TV NETWORKS: TWO REALITIES

Manuela Preoteasa

Executive summary

Two TV networks were monitored in the current report, Antena 1, the leading commercial network in Romania, and TVR1, the first channel of the public television. Antena 1 is the third in terms of all-day rating at national level, while TVR1 is the first, partly due to its almost full technical reach in rural areas. In urban areas, Antena 1 is the second leading channel, followed by TVR1. The monitoring focused on selection and hierarchy of news, reporting angle, balance of information, everything based on newsworthiness criteria from the public interest perspective. More specifically, the neutrality of news items was analyzed based on two indicators: capacity to reflect views of all sides and absence of journalists' opinions.

Quantitatively, in terms of broadcast time, politics dominate both news programmes. But hierarchy of information has the greatest impact and the commercial television is definitely guided by a different agenda than the public one. Zapping on both channels, sometimes the viewer watches two different realities.

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Usual hierarchy of broadcast topics

Antena 1:

1. Children (social aspects and health): abuses against children and social campaigns of supporting expensive surgeries;
2. Accidents (mostly car accidents, but also fires);
3. Domestic politics (a paradox was noticed: usually of secondary interest compared to social issues, domestic politics was the single subject of the prime-time news programme on April 20);
4. Ordinary facts dramatically shot (movie techniques);
5. Show-biz instead of youth dedicated topics;
6. Economic issues with a strong social focus (pensioners' life, conditions of traveling by train, regulations on seaside terraces, wages, credits, counterfeit products);
7. Health (apart from already indicated topics in connection with children, the focus is on pharmaceutical or medical discoveries);
8. Ecology - a few pieces (some close to the economic field, i.e. subsidies for destroying old cars);
9. World affairs (tabloid pieces are predominant).

TVR1

1. Domestic politics (usually broadcast as a group of different categories of items: direct links, footage, interviews);
2. World affairs (serious issues, only a few soft items);
3. Justice and internal affairs (with focus on investigations in big corruption cases);
4. Domestic economy, especially tourism (preparations for May 1 - a national day that is usually spent like a short holiday by the Romanians);
5. Sport (an information campaign started after a football supporter hit a TVR1 cameraman with a chain in the monitored period);
4. Miscellanea (including justice and home affairs);
5. Social protection and healthcare.

Missing topics

Education, youth, environment protection, business coverage, corporate business, responsibility toward consumers, society, environment.

Attitude, format

The attitude of journalists is generally neutral and reporters apply the rules of balancing information. However, respect for private life and presumption of innocence are neglected from time to time. The tone of Antena 1's reporters becomes emotional when covering ordinary facts, in an attempt to make them more attractive, 'sexier', while TVR1's coverage tends to be a bit grey, because of sometimes stereotypical shots. The preferred format varies from one TV network to the other; direct links are frequent on TVR1, while the commercial station broadcasts mostly footage and news items. The latter are not attributed to sources, which makes it difficult to check if they are original items or based on agency reporting.

Reporting on different topics

TVR1 not only starts its programme with domestic politics, but also covers this topic almost twice as much as Antena 1: 29% against 17%. World affairs come first in terms of duration on the public television, while Antena 1 leads in terms of miscellanea (especially car accidents, often placed in the opening part). Economy and social issues seem sufficiently covered on both TV networks, but the quality of the news is considerably weak.

Topics devoted to youth and children are almost nonexistent on TVR1, compared to Antena 1 which broadcast a lot of negative content in this respect in the monitored period.

Politics and big corruption cases

The public television usually covers the main topic of the Jurnal in a series of reports placed at the beginning. Usually, 9 - 10 minutes of domestic politics or coverage of corruption cases is broadcast in the first section, followed by world affairs. Other reports also seem to be grouped in sections. Therefore, the structure of TVR1's evening news programme can be easily identified, following the principles described above. The news programme starts with the day's topic, covered through different types of reports: usually a direct link, followed by footage and/or interviews.

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When an event is on-going, a guest in the studio will offer explanations on the topic in breaks in the direct link; items and interviews provide the background necessary for a complete view of the topic. TVR1's news programme closely follows the day's agenda, but lacks authors' items, meaning original, in-depth reports. Strong in information, the Jurnalul lacks powerful images and a bit of colour. Watching many editions of the evening news, some will have the impression of a well-organised programme, but with some stereotypes, especially in shooting. Exclusive topics were also non-existent in the monitored period.

Topics devoted to education, youth, technologies, consumer interests, environment protection, other business and economic issues (i.e. EU funds, changes as a result of EU accession - subsidies for farmers, etc.) are lacking or rare on both monitored TV networks. Compared to print media, where the thematic range is broader, each of the two monitored TV news programmes seems to walk on the same already tested tracks (each in its own style, but without much originality from one edition to another). Some critics would find a possible explanation in journalists' lack of imagination or simply their laziness, which prevents them from gathering original facts that could tell a story. This hypothesis is strengthened by the broadcasting of relevant in-depth coverage on certain topics by both Antena 1 and TVR1 (i.e. in terms of politics, an item on April 3 on the appointment of a new government: the report gives an in-depth view of the new ministers' background, in an ironic, but neutral way, guiding the viewer to gain complex understanding of the topic; among the general TV networks, TVR1 has become unique in terms of balanced reporting on big corruption cases on the day's agenda). Although isolated, these examples prove that both broadcasters have journalists who are able to provide consistent and relevant content on serious matters.

Justice and home affairs

Justice and home affairs are generously covered by both stations in terms of quantity, but with a significant content difference. Antena 1 looks for film plots and covers those types of abuses (infringements) or accidents that are the most impressive and touching. TVR1's hierarchy indicates priority for corruption cases under investigation, especially big cases, which are placed at the beginning of the programme.

Education, youth

Youth and education are ignored. Antena 1 broadcast only one item about children (presented as human beings with personality and capabilities, not as victims): a music contest for children, 'I want to be a big star', organized by VIP magazine, more a publicity item than a news one. TVR1 broadcast two items devoted to children or youth (i.e. on April 2, an item about a baby recovering from coma, after allegedly being hit by the mother's boyfriend, and a news announcement about two missing children in Brasov, broadcast on April 12).

Abused or ill children and social campaigns

Abused or ill children are the preferred topic in the prime-time news of the *Observer* on the commercial television network Antena 1. On April 2, 2007, three items referring to such children opened the programme. Politics is treated rather superficially; however, it depends on the event. An obvious paradox can be identified with regard to the day April 20 compared to April 24. On April 20, 2007, the resignation of the president of the country, Traian Basescu, was expected, based on the president's stated intention, in the eventuality that the Parliament would vote his impeachment. That day, Antena 1 gave up all other subjects in its prime-time programme and allocated the whole duration of the programme, a total of 43.31 minutes, to a non-existent event: the resignation. Although the president changed his mind, Antena 1 broadcast special coverage made up of live links, interviews and items on the same topic: an expected event that never happened. Waiting for Basescu's live speech at the Cotroceni Presidential Palace, a guest in the studio, the journalist Cristian Tudor Popescu, was present all news programme long, commenting on the topic. On the other hand, the day of April 24 almost ignored politics - this was the day when important elements about the impeachment referendum were decided in Parliament. Despite the relevance of the topic, Antena 1 started its evening news with a social campaign in favour of little Luca, an 8-month child recovering from difficult surgery, financially supported by a foundation within the same group as Antena 1. The type of reporting, a direct link from France, was followed by a series of

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items on human interest topics - a young girl, thrown out of the window by her lover, a doctor, celebrated her sad 18th birthday; an artist sued the Ministry of Culture for an alleged infringement of his copyright; a sponsor of a football club allegedly committed the criminal act of driving with a suspended licence; families evacuated from a building claimed back by the owner; and one of the best infotainment news of the day, "UFOs (unidentified flying objects) have visited us again - at least that is what a citizen in Bacau thought...", as the anchor introduced it. In total, on April 24, 2007, Antena 1 broadcast only 213 seconds of politics (compared to 2599 on April 20, the resignation day). Other interesting data - 40% of the political coverage on April 24 was dedicated to a press conference of Senator Dan Voiculescu, leader of the Conservative Party and initiator of three bills presented all in one item in Observator. Dan Voiculescu used to be the owner of Antena 1, but transferred his interests to his daughters a year ago. The agenda of the same day (April 24, 2007), as covered by TVR1, looks different. The first public channel devoted a 613-second report to the topic of the day, the referendum for the impeachment of the president. A series of items, direct links and interviews were meant to give a comprehensive view of the effects of different regulations passed by MPs, especially as these rules were changed while the game was being played.

Distributed in short items, Antena 1 broadcast a larger number and a broader array of topics, which normally could have been an advantage in terms of information. However, lack of consistency and often newsworthiness makes the news program spectacular in terms of pictures, but irrelevant otherwise. Simulation of public guards' reaction in case of a terrorist attack, accident at a circus (crocodile bites trainer), car accidents, fires (without explanations on potential social effects) remain ordinary facts that happen a thousand times a day all over the world. Infotainment, the show-biz news, part of it devoted to self-promotion, is also part of the prime-time news programme.

Maybe the most interesting tabloidisation of news can be noticed on Antena 1 with regard to world affairs, most of them focusing on everything but politics, business or economy. Apart from information on Iraq and other conflict areas, it is strange facts or events happening worldwide that make the news. A several-

month-old baby in the USA received a recruitment letter to the army, two pensioners traveled several thousands km by taxi to find a new house, a cat walked 800 km to find his masters, etc. Such infotainment pieces are considerably less present on the public channel, but without missing it in full. TVR1 devotes the external affairs section to serious topics, and usually a few colourful items are broadcast at the end of the programme.

Health

Separation of conjoined Romanian twins preparing for risky and complex surgery at a Cleveland hospital in the USA was a topic largely covered by the international media. On Antena 1, the topic was present in almost half of the monitored editions of *Observator*; part of it was presented originally, like an exclusive interview with the grandmother of the twins or a phone report from the USA about preparations for the risky surgery.

Religion

Religion is treated rather from the point of view of alleged irregularities committed by certain priests (healing practices with pecuniary effects, bribe), in the case of Antena 1. Both TV networks cover major religious topics, either domestic or worldwide (i.e. preparations for holly chrism, beatification of Pope John Paul II).

Culture

Cultural coverage is almost completely replaced by show-biz coverage, with very few exceptions (such as a festival of medieval art in Brasov). Considering culture in a broader meaning (including traditions of different ethnic groups), the intention of Julian, the Roman emperor, to ban the marriage of young girls might have impact on society, if it were more than just an intention; in fact, it is very unlikely that the intention will ever be put into practice, therefore such an item rather lacks newsworthiness. A short item about visiting hours of museums in Sibiu, the launch of Paulo Coelho's latest book, a news item about tickets for a Rolling Stones concert in Bucharest, reports about a violin made by Stradivarius or about one that belonged to Enescu¹, the launch of two Romanian music CDs (one of which is a product

¹ George Enescu (1881 - 1955) - Romanian musician, one of the most important 20th century composer

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of a newspaper in the same group, *Jurnalul National*), and an obituary on Kurt Vonnegut's death represent the cultural coverage broadcast by Antena 1 in *Observator* during the monitored days. Paradoxically, this is more (at least in quantitative terms) than what *Jurnal* broadcasts on TVR 1 (the public television has the *Culture* channel, entirely devoted to culture).

Format

If the first channel of TVR uses a lot of direct links (someone will say even when it is not necessary, as it does not bring any added value), original footage and news are used the most by Antena 1. Strangely enough, in both cases, everything seems to be produced in-house, no news agency is cited, although it is obvious that world affairs info cannot be found out without the support of international news networks or other sources. Only one quotation is made in the whole monitored period: a domestic media outlet is cited with regard to Basescu's decision to resign in case the impeachment procedure is voted by the MPs. Therefore, data reflecting the format, as presented in the annex, might be taken with reserve, because of the lack of quotations.

Due to specific coverage (through short items), Antena 1 broadcasts more news items than TVR1 and has considerably less direct links (instead, reporters can often be seen in stand-ups in items). Direct phone calls are rare in both cases; TVR1 uses them more often for reporting by external correspondents. Interviews can take various forms, from a discussion with a guest in the studio, to an exclusive interview, or a series of interviews meant to communicate 'hot' reactions on last minutes events.

Attitude

Usually, political news is balanced and positions of a broad variety of leaders are reflected. Politics has meant less action and more quarrel lately, as often happens when politicians attack one another, so their statements are hunted by journalists to make their reports more colourful, more dramatic. In controversial situations, political and economic coverage reflects the opinions of the other side, as requested by the specific regulations of the National Audiovisual Council (CNA). The limit to intrusion into private life in the case of ordinary people, on the other hand, is

very thin. Victims of accidents are shot in a very aggressive way in Antena 1's items, meant to impress the viewers. TVR1 does not usually broadcast such content; however, it happened in the case of both monitored stations that the attitude, the tone of reporters often became accusing with regard to on-going investigations: abuses of children, robberies, harassment. These topics are often provided by the PR department of the Ministry for Internal Affairs (or the same department at a local police office), and journalists love to integrate such footage in their reports betting on human interest. There is even a joke within the industry: "What has the police shot for today?".

Near a crashed car or smoking area, reporters involuntarily overreact using epithets to describe the car accident they are reporting on as *terrible*, *awful*, or even *'sensational'*. When covering violence, the presumption of innocence is sometimes ignored. If the majority of such coverage can be seen on Antena 1, in the monitored period the first channel of the public television had a campaign entitled 'sports terrorists', where the involvement of the station was more emotional than usual. The campaign was launched after a cameraman working for TVR1 was hit by a football supporter, a 'hooligan', as the journalists named him in their reports. The coverage became therefore unbalanced mostly through the attitude of journalists, sometimes ignoring the presumption of innocence; otherwise the position of the alleged hooligan would have been heard in the reports through the voice of his lawyer.

On one hand, the attitude of the anchor/reporter towards sensational topics can also be felt in the news programme of the commercial TV network: the anchor names as 'a latest hour piece of news' information about the therapeutic properties of a vegetable in curing impotence according to Chinese practices (which are a thousand years old!). Another example, the anchor presents an unlikely hypothesis as a confirmed, doubtless fact: 'Unidentified flying objects have visited us again'. In a different situation, a reporter cannot refrain from describing a car accident with several fatalities as 'spectacular' (Antena 1). The public TVR1 uses technical facilities in excess to compensate for lack of powerful picture, as previously described. The reporter always seems to be on the ground, reporting in stand-ups from locations with no significance for

viewers (the corridors of the Parliament House, although the activity had been closed or not even started). It also happens that the viewer mostly sees the head of the reporter transmitting live from one of the palaces (government, Presidency, Parliament), while the ambiance on the ground does not exist. Rather ignored in political news, stand-up techniques are overused by Antena 1 in different circumstances than TVR1, often to make ordinary situations more attractive. A boomerang effect might emerge in this case: the camera will show the victims of a car accident (even corpses) while they are being taken out of the crashed car or the reporter himself/herself can be seen in the middle of the action, as in tele-shopping clips.

The selection and hierarchy of news mostly follows the public agenda in the case of TVR1 and the criterion of exacerbated human interest on Antena 1.

Moreover, Antena 1 can be suspected of being partisan towards press conferences, initiatives and positions taken by Senator Dan Voiculescu, the leader of the Conservative Party and the father of the main shareholders of the media group. The strategy of the station with regard to prioritization of political coverage sometimes seems confusing, politics being either ignored, or put at the top of priorities (see the case of the days April 20 and April 24, already described), the focus depending on factors that seem external to the public agenda.

Selection and hierarchy - opening news

Some will say that if you have children, you don't want to watch *Observer*, the prime-time news programme on Antena 1. The first topics in *Observer* are usually abused children, missing kids later found dead, or little ones suffering from terrible diseases. A report on a missing little girl, proven later to have been killed, opens the evening news on Antena 1 on April 3, 2007. A similar topic like the day before, followed by a series of similar contents broadcast in the following days of the monitored period. The third topic refers indirectly to the case of a doctor prosecuted for abusing a teenager and the measures taken against him by the professional body and the university where he taught. The case of Dr. Tranca and his alleged victim, the teenager Andreea, was

constantly covered on Antena 1, in the first part of the monitored period. News about a missing child in Hoghiz (in the county of Brasov) also opens the TVR1 journal, but only as a headline. Otherwise, the programme starts with what the anchor calls the event of the day, the appointment of a new government. Changes in the Law on the National Agency of Integrity, an anti-corruption body imperiously requested by the EU, are placed among the top priorities in TVR1's *Jurnal*.

Comparison between Antena 1's *Observator* and TVR1's *Jurnal*

- a few examples -

April 3

As already indicated, on April 3 Antena 1 focuses on the case of a missing little girl in Hogiz, whose corpse was discovered by the police. The news is presented in a tough and almost absurd key. Captured by the police, the murderer was asked by the reporter: 'When did you rape her, before [killing her] or after?' Such questions, meant to touch the viewers, are shocking, while the report lacks in-depth vision, so that the viewer could understand the background, why such things can happen, who is responsible for such abuses against children. Such cases are presented almost every evening on Antena 1, but the causes of such phenomena, the statistics, the potential social and psychological interpretations, are absent. The journalists seem to be interested in nothing else but making the footage as bloody as possible and in recreating the plot.

The topics dominating the second section are focused on religion (christm is prepared, beatification of Pope John Paul II), sexual health, money (bonuses for Easter - large bonuses in state-owned companies whose debts to the public budget were re-scheduled).

The teaser 'latest hour good news' features information about a plant with healing qualities, according to Chinese medicine tips, probably a thousand-year old practice. The fifth item in the second part is one of the best: basically, the topic can be summarized as John marries Marie. It's not just any John (but John John Tiriac, the son of the multimillionaire tennis player Ion Tiriac's, one of the richest people in Romania). Marie is a fashion designer,

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the daughter of an actress. A show-biz news item, ignoring that John John has been under penal investigation for drug possession for over two years now.

This part ends with two other topics referring to kids: the first one regards a social fundraising campaign for a baby that needs surgery, a campaign organized by an NGO from the group *Fundatia Mereu Aproape*; the other one is a news item on Romanian conjoined twins ready to undergo dangerous surgery in the US in June. A new series of headlines makes the link with the third part.

A missing child in Sintesti: "Another missing child, another mister". The father is a suspect in the case and was tested by the police with a lie detector, but he failed the test several times, as he came either drunk, or under the influence of sedative pills. The reporter interviewed him: 'Did the police ask you whether you killed him (the child)', 'Yes, that kind of stuff'. The questions and the answers might seem unbelievable, resembling a Kafkian plot.

No investigative reports, no conclusions, no experts to analyze the behaviour of such criminals. On the contrary, in such a case a reporter focuses on reconstruction of the facts and sometimes uses stand-up to make the report stronger.

On Antena 1, the set up of the new government comes after the stories about children who fell victim to murderers. Coverage of the new government is balanced, consistent and originally presented. The attitude, partly ironic, but keeping neutrality, is supported by interesting background and biographical elements about the members of the cabinet. Although the only interviewee in the footage is the head of government, the PM Calin Popescu Tariceanu, the information seems elaborated. The item is followed by a reporter stand-up in the Parliament House, where the new government is to be voted. Although nothing but the corridor of the building can be seen, the direct link is used by the reporter to introduce recorded statements of political leaders interviewed on the new government. The selection of statements is interesting and relevant. Nevertheless, the footage ends in an amateurish way, with a rumour about the president Basescu which is mentioned with no attributed source and apparently without any documentation.

Politics is represented by only two items, 340 seconds and

160 seconds respectively. The parliamentary vote for the new Tariceanu government is placed in the second position, after the case of the prosecuted doctor. The item is made on a satirical note, the reporter calls the new government 'a bastard one' and shows MPs fighting and throwing objects at one another, the conflict between parties is pointed out. The positions of all parties are presented through statements. The second political topic refers indirectly to politicians, as subjects of criminal charges launched by prosecutors of the National Anticorruption Department (DNA) against the conservative Senator Dan Voiculescu, his daughter Camelia Voiculescu (owner of the media outlet Antena 1) and another conservative politician, George Copos. The main charges are presented, as well as Dan Voiculescu's virulent reaction, who calls the investigation 'an aberration, a cretinism, a stupid thing'. Dan Voiculescu threatens DNA that someone will be found guilty for the launch of the investigation if the charges against him prove to be fake. No position of the DNA on Voiculescu's reaction is presented. On the contrary, the following item starts: 'Daniel Morar Œthe DNA's headĆ is accused by Dan Voiculescu of having asked the Romanian Intelligence Service to inform him about all of Voiculescu's personal and business links to different people'. As evidence, a letter allegedly written by Morar is mentioned, but never shown in front of the camera. Instead of the document, the viewer can see Dan Voiculescu in a press conference reading from the alleged letter of Morar. The latter's position is missing. On the other hand, the tense of the verbs used in the report denotes improbability, doubt: 'He is reported to have said,' 'he allegedly reached the colonel X, etc.' The reporter does not check through independent sources the credibility of such information or the legality of the alleged DNA practices. Instead, the item provides the subjective interpretation as seen by Dan Voiculescu, who is to inform the Abuses Committee in Parliament of the accused practices.

A different approach can be noticed on TVR1 which places the investigation launched by the DNA on Voiculescu's affairs among the top news opening the news programme. TVR 1 broadcasts the accusations, presenting the position of the investigated senator. The item about the alleged letter of the DNA head does not exist on TVR's channel.

Public television: Big corruption cases open the news

TVR 1, April 11: The news of the day is the launch of a criminal investigation in an energy case (165 seconds), an important case of big corruption, where ex-minister Codrut Seres is charged with disruption of domestic economy, treason and economic espionage. The journalist in front of the DNA is reporting on the issue through a live link, in a dialogue with the anchor, who is also shown in a frame. Another investigation covered by TVR1 presents police actions in the case of hooliganism against a TVR cameraman. Again a direct link is established with the reporter on the ground, who is questioned on the topic by the anchor, transmission followed by footage, to describe the context. This report lasted 218 seconds, more than the criminal investigation launched previously.

A series of political reports comes next: installation of the new government, a meeting of the National Liberal Party (again through a live link), a news item quoting President Basescu's interview for a Romanian publication. Other types of reporting: footage on a several-hour-long delay on the railway and then several pieces and news items in the social and financial fields, human trafficking (two different items). Afterwards a series of shorter pieces on rather soft topics is broadcast, soft not necessarily because of the potential impact, but none of these events are presented in-depth (for instance, divergences between the Presidency and Parliament on duty-free regulation). External affairs are represented by soft news items (two American pensioners travelled 4,000 km by taxi to switch residence, verdict on the paternity of Anna Nicole Smith's child pronounced by court).

The same day, in Observator on Antena 1: an ordinary fact becomes the subject of news, but not in just any way - hidden cameras are used to make the topic more spectacular, i.e. a few young people went to the mountains for a barbecue, but a public guard took them for illegal hunters and threatened them with a weapon; they recorded everything using their mobile phone. Although his position is presented in the news, the public guard is pushed with his back against the group of young people. Replies are sent from one to the other, as in a ping-pong game, and that is a constant feature of most TV items that presents

divergent positions. The reporter does not make a serious investigation into the topic, background elements or explanations from experts to help the viewer to understand who made an abuse, who is responsible for a certain fact, if the legal framework was broken and how and all other elements that are compulsory in order to really inform on a topic.

Other items placed in the first section of the news programme follow: a tragic car accident, with four victims; a soft news items about how senators reached their offices when their drivers were on strike, two items about fires in fields, a driver hit by the metallic structure of a crane, a serious fact treated superficially, without any background, like others of the same type, unhealthy conditions in a maternity hospital in Alexandria². Another accident happened in the woods, a 13-year old boy shot himself dead after finding a gun left unsecured by his uncle during a hunting trip; shortly after that, the uncle committed suicide. The reporter suggests suspicions of poaching, but does not elaborate on this angle, so the fact cannot be developed into something that can raise problems; it remains just a sad, but after all common accident.

Antena 1's edition of April 11 does not miss the occasion to reiterate the topic of children-victims. A several-day-old baby just recovered from coma; the baby had allegedly been hit by her mother's lover. Despite the long duration of the item (two minutes), the viewer can't find out what really happened as the subject is focused on the result: the girl has miraculously recovered, her mom wants her back, but the social worker says no way. Instead of digging to find out who was responsible for what happened to the baby and what kind of measures were taken against the suspect, the reporter does nothing but try to get in touch with him and face the aggressive opposition of his brother.

Comparison of the two editions reveals interesting approach angles with regard to a political topic, the withdrawal of the Democrat Party (PD) from the government. While TVR1 notices that the PD members voluntarily resigned from their positions in the cabinet, Antena 1 broadcast a slightly different version. A PD secretary of state refused to resign, so the conclusion of the Antena 1 item was that, in fact, the PD members did not want to leave.

² A city in the south of Romania.

Easter is close and the news programme of the commercial station covers the effects of preparations for the Orthodox holiday in the business field. Antena 1 reports that supermarket sales increased by 30% and tries to convince the viewer of the accuracy of the figure through a reporter's stand-up. An ecology item can be found in this edition: a bear captured by an individual and used for commercial purposes, as a mascot to attract customers, cannot be released, although his master has no authorisation to keep him imprisoned. It is almost redundant to say what Antena 1 starts with on April 12: two children are saved from a fire by some people who become heroes, according to the reporter. Another opening item presents a very drunken driver (alcoholism level of 1.8/thousand), who, questioned by the police, replies using funny colloquial expressions (*'Bai, smechere/Hey, you, wise guy'*); the scene is aimed to create a reality show impression. This topic is followed by one referring to a car accident: a minibus crashed into a Dacia vehicle and the reporter is already on the ground (as the viewer knows well) and shows to the camera the most impressive part of the crashed car. While doing that, he cannot hold his emotions and calls the accident 'sensational', ignoring that four people were killed in the accident. Two items covering hooliganism in sports are followed by a topic from the field of home affairs: a group of Romanians are allegedly the perpetrators of a 1 million Euro robbery in an art gallery in Vienna. The only interviewee is a spokesperson for the police in Vienna, who explains the charges by phone. Nobody speaks on behalf of the defendants.

The rest of the monitored editions on the commercial station continue in the same manner, focusing on producing emotions.

Conclusions

Commercial TV: A regular viewer of the Antena 1 prime-time news program will find little relevance or consistency with regard to the day's agenda. The information is packed with strong sounds and pictures, meant to shock, to bring tears, but nothing more. Footage is predominant, however, and news items are used when the information is presented in brief and/or the reporter

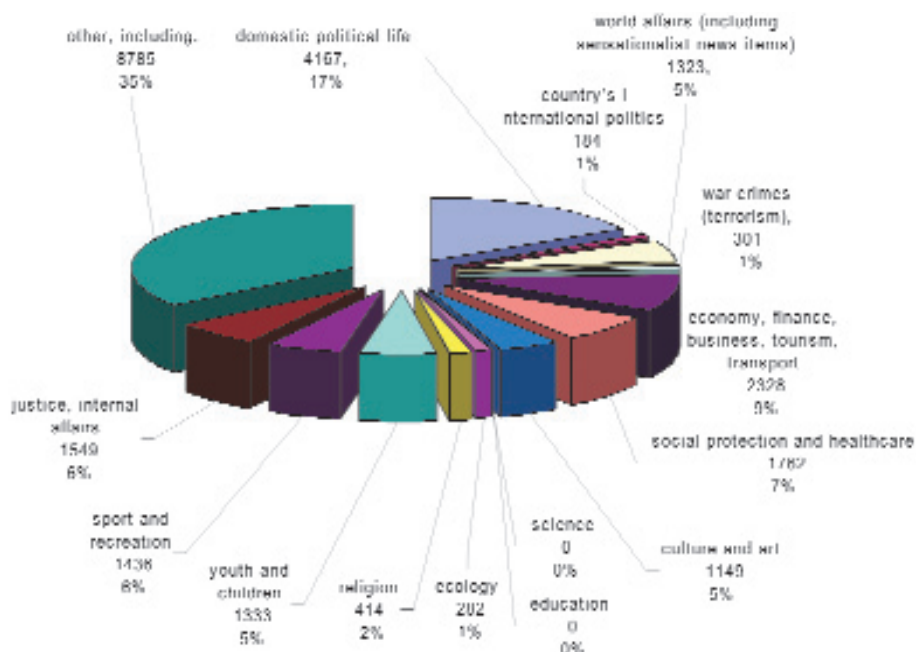
does not have enough picture. Ordinary topics (travel conditions on the railway) are made sexier by shooting with a hidden camera. Other apparently ordinary facts are sold as news: two Romanians won 3 million Euro in the national lottery (the television does not protect their identity, as they accepted to go public). In other cases, the camera tries to recreate the course of the event: a criminal is brought back to the location where he raped a little girl: everything that can shock is best, even if the information falls as a collateral victim.

Public TV: Reading the transcript of TVR1's Jurnal will give the impression of a documented news programme, closely following the day's agenda. Watching is more frustrating as the attractiveness of picture is not that high. How news is 'packaged' is meant neither to be aggressive, nor to pass boredom, except in certain circumstances.

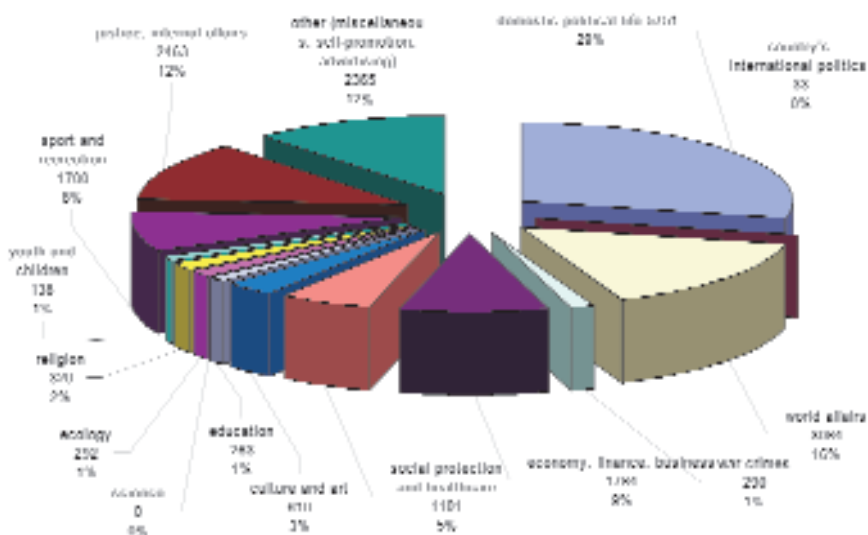
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Statistics

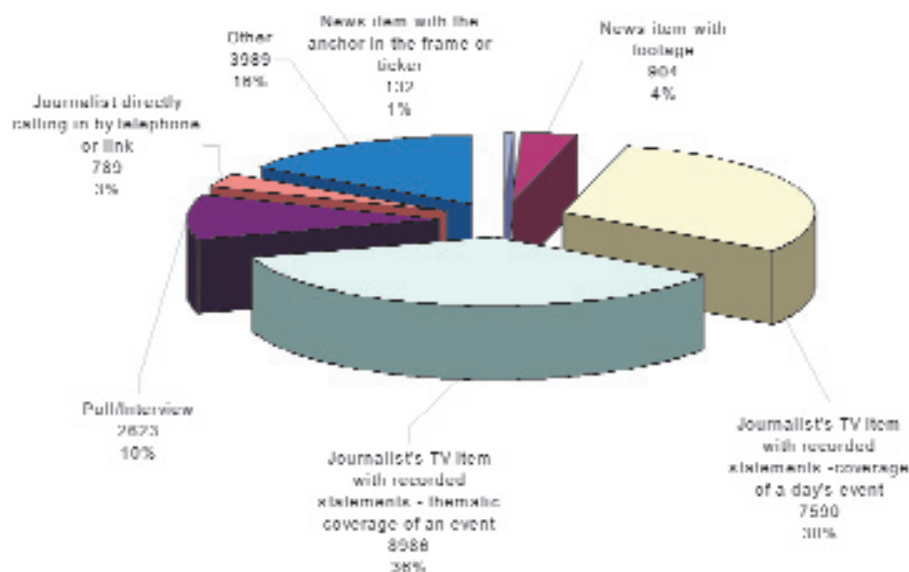
Antena 1 - LENGHT OF ITEM CONTENT



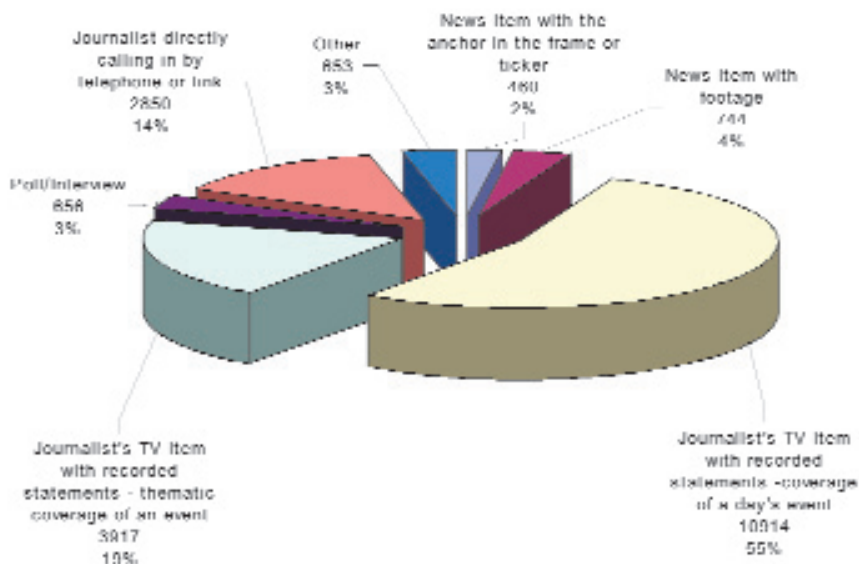
TVR1 - LENGHT OF ITEM CONTENT



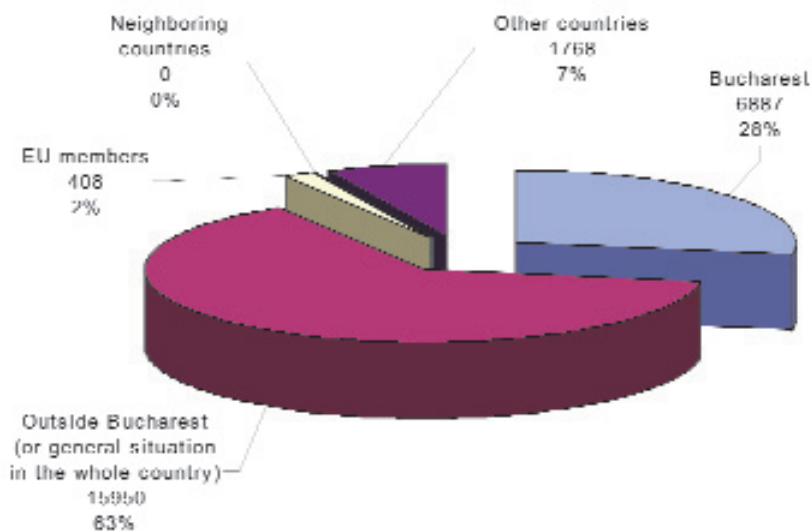
Antena 1 - FORM



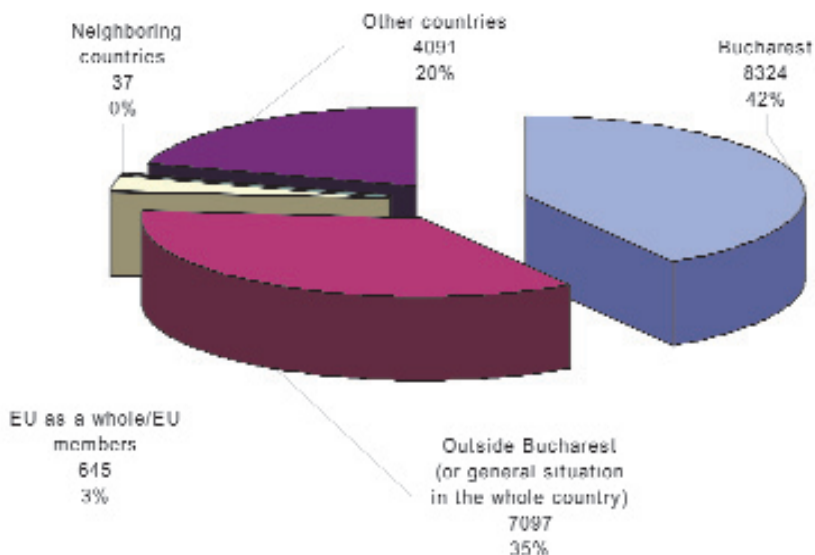
TVR1 - FORM



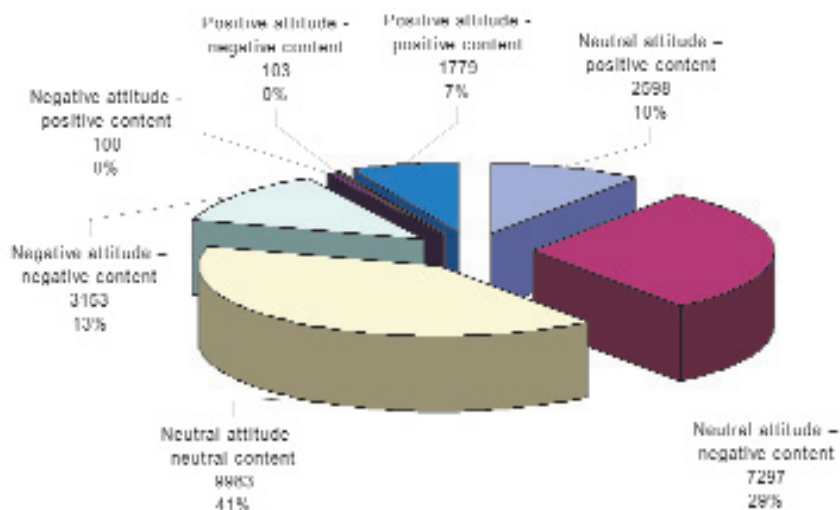
Antena 1 - TERRITORIAL DISTRIBUTION



TVR1 - TERRITORIAL DISTRIBUTION



Antena 1 - EVALUATION OF CONTENT - ORIENTATION TO THE SUBJECT



TVR1 - EVALUATION OF CONTENT - ORIENTATION TO THE SUBJECT

