DIVERSE SOCIETY, DIVERSE PERCEPTIONS:
The challenge for public service media to 
(re)connect with their audience

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RESEARCH QUESTIONS

► Fading citizen support towards PSM leads to …
  ● How and why do people use/do not use PSM?
  ● How do they evaluate PSM?
  ● On what assumptions are their evaluations based?

► How to retain PSM’s legitimacy?
  ► Recommendations for PSM strategies
FRAMEWORK

Reasons for media usage and choice:

- Uses and gratifications approach (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1973; Ruggiero, 2000)
- Ritualized media usage (Rubin, 1984)
- Schemata (Rummelhart, 1984) and decision heuristic (Marewski, Galesic, Gigerenzer, & Hartmann, 2009)
- Concept of civic duty (Poindexter & McCombs, 2001)
- Media literacy (Livingstone, 2004)
AUSTRIA

► Sharing the same language and a similar culture with Germany
► All of its media face strong foreign competition
► No commercial TV until 2002
► Therefore: Austrian PSM, ORF, still in strong position
► But (like other European PSM): also decreasing market shares (Künzler, Puppis, & Steinmaurer, 2011)
MULTI-METHOD DESIGN

- Representative telephone survey  
  N=1,000  
  in 2009

- Paper-pencil-survey in experimental design (N=90)  
  in 2011

- Interviews (N=24)  
  in 2015

- Three of four people (76%) attest importance of PSM for themselves
- Even more (81%) attest PSM importance for society  
  (Latzl & Troxler, 2010)

- Decreasing PSM usage

- Attribution towards PSM: informative, serious, reliable  
  (Neumüller & Gonser, 2013)

- Differing in gender, age (18–70+), education;
  Ø duration: 41 minutes
"[…] when I come to think of the internet, networks, groups and forums, I must say that public service media are not necessary any longer."
(m | 27 | mid)

"I’m glad that I do not have to pay fees at the moment […]. I pay for UPC and therefore also for ORF anyway."
(f | 22 | low)

"My day starts with orf.at, where I get most of the information from that I need for the day."
(m | 33 | low)

"Frequently, postings by Armin Wolf appear in my Facebook timeline because many of my friends like them."
(f | 26 | mid)
ORF news anchor **Armin Wolf** is widely known and respected as top journalist. His (private) engagement in **social media** appears to be a promoting factor.

"The person I'm following most attentively on **Facebook** and **Twitter** is Armin Wolf."

(f | 34 | high)

"Frequently, postings by Armin Wolf appear in my **Facebook** timeline because many of my friends like them. When I read them I often think: “That’s exciting or interesting!” which occasionally makes me click on some statistics or other things he mentions."

(f | 26 | mid)
"In my opinion, there must be public service media and it is okay if we have to pay for them."
(m | 59 | mid)

"Public service media have the duty to inform the public which they more or less fulfill."
(m | 62 | high)

"In the evening I like to watch Niederösterreich Heute or Wien Heute, if my wife joins me."
(m | 76 | high)

“Public service media like ORF TV or radio are to some extent influenced by politics.”
(f | 52 | high)
CONCLUSION: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PSM

► Explain shift from PSB to PSM: highly popular online services are not yet recognized as financed by fees. *This measure could contribute to enhancing audience’s willingness to pay fees.*

► Increase “Armin Wolf factor”: develop a professional social media strategy instead of relying on a (privately motivated) one man show. *This measure could contribute to reaching young audiences and to a better labelling of viral content as PSM content.*
“Public Value goes international”