

When in Rome, do as the Romans do - also in TV usage

Different countries vary in many ways. People from southern countries for example are known to have a fiery temperament and are very hospitable, whereas the population of northern countries is claimed to be reserved. Not many people would disagree with the saying “When in Rome, do as the Romans do”. How it is reflected in the media usage behavior is shown in the following graph using data from various projects and studies of GfK Telecontrol AG and its customers.

The graph shows the TV rating curve in % in the course of the day in Greece, Cyprus and Switzerland. These countries were chosen because all data was collected by the same measurement system (GfK Telecontrol's Mediawatch). Because the length of the measurement period and the universes of the three projects varied the least in the target group of the 15-44 year old, this group was chosen for the graph. The selected measurement period was 20th June – 5th July 2009. Like this, all results can be compared rationally¹.

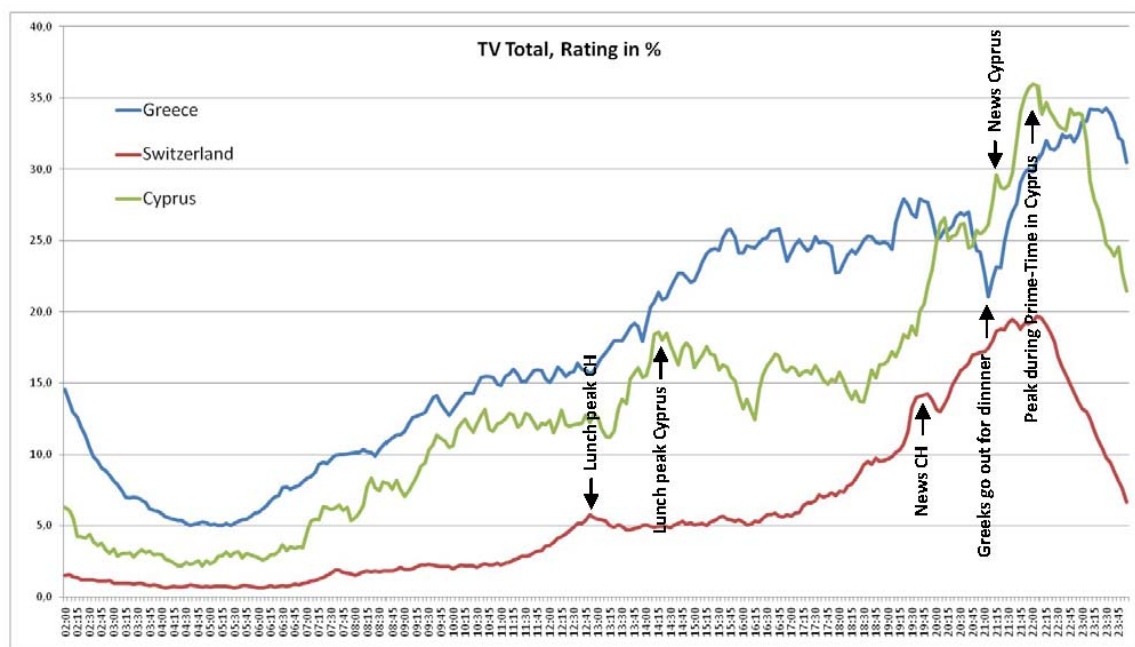


Fig. 1: Source: Mediapulse AG, WatchMedia, GfK Telecontrol AG

The results show quite obviously that the variations in the daily routines are reflected in the TV usage behavior. For example, TV consumption in the morning is much higher in

¹ Admittedly, the projects still vary in issues like sample recruitment or sample size and are therefore not 100% comparable.

Greece and Cyprus than in Switzerland. In Greece and Cyprus, TV is much more an accompanying medium. The population in Switzerland, in comparison, watches TV mainly in the evening.

The constantly increasing curve without significant peaks suggests that in Greece TV is not a selectively used medium. This is reflected in the programme structure: the four largest channels differ only marginal in their format. However, the sudden decrease in reach at around 21:00h is very interesting. This can be explained as the Greeks like going out for dinner even during the week. This is reflected in the TV usage figures as not in all restaurants and bars TVs are available. What is also striking in Greece is the high TV usage during the night.

In Cyprus it is also very common to switch on the TV first thing in the morning. But in comparison to Greece Cypriots are more selective, which is reflected in the slight increases of usage at lunchtime (around 14:00h) and again in the evening. At around 19:30h, usage increases dramatically and peaks at 21:30h (prime-time). The programme structure can also be linked to the usage curve: at 21:30h the news programmes finish on most channels. Thereafter, an advertising block is shown followed by the most popular series.

Surprisingly, Switzerland has a similar structure to Cyprus though slightly brought forward and on a lower level with significantly less fluctuation. The Swiss are famous for their rationality and moderation. These traits are also reflected in their TV usage behavior. Lunchtime is usually at around 12:30h so 1,5 hours ahead of the Cypriots.

In Switzerland, TV is mainly being consumed after work, which is reflected in the increasing usage curve in the evening. The Swiss audience is also known for its selectiveness. The peak from 19:30h to 20:00h confirms this as the main news programme "Tagesschau" with adjoining weather service "Meteo" are shown at that time. The question whether these cultural differences shown in TV are also reflected in the radio usage behavior will be answered in one of the next newsletters.

The GfK Telecontrol AG

The GfK Telecontrol AG is a wholly-owned subsidiary of GfK AG in Nuremberg, Germany – the fifth-largest market research company in the world. Located in Switzerland, the GfK Telecontrol AG is a good example of "Swiss Quality": its products GfK Telecontrol and GfK Mediawatch – both of which are in-house GfK Telecontrol AG developments – have been in use in a total of 28 countries worldwide for 22 years. The Swiss Broadcasting Company, in particular, has been using Telecontrol since 1985 to survey TV viewing habits and Radiocontrol or the Mediawatch since 2001 to survey radio listening habits. However, Telecontrol or the Mediawatch are also used worldwide to survey TV and radio consumption in Germany, Austria, Cyprus, Greece, many Eastern European and Asian countries like Romania, Bulgaria, Armenia, Ukraine, Georgia and India and other countries.

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