



SVFAB DETAILED ANALYSIS

2021-02-25 10 vor 10 vom 25.02.2021

Broadcast: SRF Tagesschau broadcast | 2021-02-25 | Analysed on: 2026-05-19 14:01

Version 3.0-detail | Universal 3.0-detail | Konverter 3.4 (2026-05-20) | Massstab: Art. 4 RTVG

OVERALL SCORE

6.5/10

Serious deviation from the impartiality requirement. High degree of deviation

0 = balanced, 10 = strongly one-sided/manipulative

POLITICAL SPECTRUM

Classification according to Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) 2024

The Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES 2024) is an academic survey of 609 political scientists in 31 countries. Each party is rated on a scale from 0 (far left) to 10 (far right).

Party	Greens	SP	GLP	Centre	EVP	FDP	SVP
CHES	1.13	1.67	3.60	5.47	5.64	7.67	9.00
Spectrum	Left	Left	Left	Centre	Right	Right	Right

The overall tendency is displayed on a 0–10 scale (0 = strongly favouring the left, 5 = balanced, 10 = strongly favouring the right). The calculation is based on the difference in the average favouring of left vs. right parties (grouping according to CHES 2024).

TENDENCY (L – R)

3.2 / 10

Left-favouring

0 1 2 **3** 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

← Left

Right →

Source: Chapel Hill Expert Survey 2024 — chesdata.eu | [Jolly et al., Electoral Studies, 2022](#) | Thresholds: [Pew Research Center](#)

This section serves for political classification and does not feed into the overall score.



POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

Switzerland is a consensus democracy. The Federal Council (7 seats) is filled according to the so-called magic formula: SVP 2, SP 2, FDP 2, Centre 1. There is no classic government/opposition divide — all major parties are represented in the government. At the time of the broadcast (approx. February/March 2021, pandemic context), Alain Berset (SP) was Minister of Health and the main target of SVP criticism.

Party	CHES L-R	Seats NC	Government/Opposition	Core position
SVP	8.0	62	Government (2 FC)	Limit migration, sovereignty, economic freedom
SP	2.5	41	Government (2 FC)	Welfare state, redistribution, EU rapprochement
FDP	6.5	28	Government (2 FC)	Economic freedom, lean state
Centre	5.0	29	Government (1 FC)	Pragmatism, family relief
Greens	2.0	23	Opposition	Climate protection, redistribution
GLP	4.0	10	Opposition	Green economy, liberal
EVP	5.5	2	Opposition	Christian-social

At the time of the broadcast (approx. Feb./March 2021), the coronavirus pandemic dominated political discourse. The central line of conflict ran between proponents of stricter measures (SP, Greens, Centre) and critics of the lockdown (SVP, parts of FDP). A second line concerned the distribution of competences between the Federal Council and Parliament. The SVP positioned itself as the main critic of Federal Council policy and used sharp rhetoric ("dictatorship", "sole rule") in doing so.

SRF (Swiss Radio and Television) is Switzerland's public broadcaster, financed through reception fees (Serafe). It is subject to Art. 4 RTVA, which requires accurate representation, diversity of opinion and a balanced selection of interlocutors. As Switzerland's largest media organisation, SRF has a special democratic responsibility towards all political camps.



CHAPTER 1 — PARTY-POLITICAL BIAS

Party	Score (-5..+5)	Broadcast portrayal vs. programme position
SVP	-3	00:26–09:25: SVP rhetoric is framed as "dangerous", "adding fuel to the fire" and with a Trump comparison. The core position (economic freedom, opening, protection of jobs) is mentioned by Eschi, but delegitimised by the moderation framework. Programme position (reducing government spending, personal responsibility) correctly indicated, but placed in the context of extremism — distorted.
SP	+1	Berset mentioned as a target, but not framed as an SP representative. SP position (state direction, measures) implicitly presented as the reasonable government position — slightly favouring, but not actively distorted.
FDP	0	FDP Council of States member Caroni (05:02) defends the Federal Council objectively. FDP Federal Councillors are described by SVP as "cowardly" (04:51), without a counter-representation of the FDP position. Neutral to slightly omitted.
Centre	+1	03:20–03:55: Centre representative is allowed to describe SVP as "extremely dangerous" without a follow-up question. Centre position is framed as a measured voice — slightly favouring.
Greens	0	Not represented in broadcast. Score 0 (not covered).
GLP	0	Not represented in broadcast. Score 0 (not covered).
EVP	0	Not represented in broadcast. Score 0 (not covered).

Party bias summary

- Most accurate portrayal: FDP (Score 0) — cited objectively, no active distortion
- Strongest distortion: SVP (Score -3) — core positions delegitimised through extremism framing
- Average deviation from 0: 0.7
- Conclusion: The broadcast treats SVP rhetoric as the central problem, without treating the substantive core positions (economic damage, demands for opening) on an equal footing. The Trump comparison (08:39) and the conspiracy theorist association (07:54) structurally delegitimise the SVP position, without comparable critical framings being applied to other parties.



CHAPTER 2 — BROADCAST INFORMATION AND THEMATIC FRAMEWORK

Broadcast data

- Title: 10vor10
- Date: 25.02.2021
- Presenter: Lonecker/Honecker (name varies slightly in transcript — likely a transcription error for an SRF presenter)
- Reporter: Katrin Tommen, Gladius Pescher (SVP insert), Reto Holzgang (Zug tests), Julia Hahn (Deutsche Welle, Uyghurs), Philippe Inauen (New York)

Actors	Function	Party/affiliation	Political spectrum
Thomas Eschi	SVP parliamentary group president	SVP	Right (8.0)
Christoph Blocher	SVP patriarch	SVP	Right (8.0)
Markus Schäfer	Professor of constitutional law	None (academic)	Neutral/institutional
Centre representative	Not named	Centre	Centre (5.0)
Michael Herrmann	Political scientist	None (academic)	Neutral/institutional
Andrea Caroni	FDP Council of States member	FDP	Centre-right (6.5)
Zug Director of Education	Cantonal government	Not stated	Institutional
Zug cantonal physician	Cantonal physician	Institutional	Institutional
Head of Swiss school principals	Association	Institutional	Institutional

Main topic

The broadcast covers SVP rhetoric ("dictatorship", "sole rule") against the Federal Council during the coronavirus pandemic and its political classification.



CHAPTER 3 — 15 CRITERIA: DETAILED ANALYSIS

Hard facts — 9 techniques that are countable and scientifically robust

1. EXPERT SELECTION

7/10

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Expert 1: Markus Schäfer, professor of constitutional law

Timestamp	02:28
Statement	"What the Federal Council is doing is not undemocratic, it is extraordinary. We are in a special situation under epidemic law."
Assessment	Professor of constitutional law, no obvious conflicts of interest, but deployed one-sidedly — only to refute the SVP position, not to contextualise the limits of Federal Council competences.
Missing counter-voice	A professor of constitutional law who sheds light on the limits of emergency powers and parliamentary oversight deficits.

Source deep-check Schäfer:

(a) FUNDING: State (university). Structural conflict of interest: state-funded academics tend to have an institutional interest in legitimising state measures — minor, but present.

(b) MANDATE: Professor of constitutional law is professionally competent for constitutional questions. Mandate compatible with neutral assessment, but only one side of the legal question is presented.

D1 Conflict of interest: +1 — State-funded, minor conflict of interest in legitimising state measures

D2 Personal risk: +1 — Academic with tenure, low personal risk from statement

D3 Professional competence: +2 — Professor of constitutional law, directly responsible for constitutional questions

D4 Consistency of opinion: 0 — No comparative statements available

D5 Emotionalisation vs. data: +2 — Objective, data-based (popular vote 2013)

D6 Source level: +2 — Primary source (own expertise)

TOTAL: +8 → SOURCE INDICATOR: GREEN

(c) PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE: Schäfer is framed as a neutral expert authority, although he only presents one side of the legal question. The question of whether the Federal Council's competences were applied proportionately in the specific case remains unanswered.

Expert 2: Michael Herrmann, political scientist

Timestamp	04:05
Statement	"One actually sees a very differentiated attitude in the population. And it is actually only 20 percent who really want a radical opening."
Assessment	Political scientist, studies public opinion on Corona. Deployed to present the SVP strategy as politically unpromising.
Missing counter-voice	A political scientist who contextualises the legitimacy of the SVP's demand for opening from a democratic theory perspective.



Source deep-check Herrmann:

(a) FUNDING: Not explicitly stated. Political scientists are often funded by universities or through commissioned research.

(b) MANDATE: Population surveys — compatible with neutral assessment.

D1 Conflict of interest: +1 — No obvious conflict of interest

D2 Personal risk: +1 — Low risk

D3 Professional competence: +2 — Political scientist, directly responsible

D4 Consistency of opinion: 0 — No comparative statements

D5 Emotionalisation vs. data: +2 — Data-based (20% figure)

D6 Source level: +1 — Secondary source (own surveys)

TOTAL: +7 → SOURCE INDICATOR: GREEN

(c) PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE: Herrmann is deployed to present the SVP strategy as politically opportunistic and unlikely to succeed. The question of whether 20% represents a relevant political minority deserving of a hearing is not raised.

Missing expert groups:

- Economic economist on lockdown damage
- Second constitutional lawyer with a more critical perspective on Federal Council competences
- Communication scientist on political rhetoric (neutral)

Source indicator for participants:

Source	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	Total	Indicator
Markus Schäfer, professor of constitutional law	+1	+1	+2	0	+2	+2	+8	GREEN
Michael Herrmann, political scientist	+1	+1	+2	0	+2	+1	+7	GREEN

Summary:

Expert	Source indicator	Assessment
Schäfer (constitutional law)	GREEN (+8)	Professionally competent, but deployed one-sidedly to legitimise state measures
Herrmann (political scientist)	GREEN (+7)	Professionally competent, but deployed to delegitimise the SVP strategy



2. SOURCE SELECTION

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Claims without primary source = penalty points (rumour check)

Source 1: Centre representative (not named)

Timestamp 03:20

Statement "It is alarming and also extremely dangerous how the SVP is now exploiting public discontent for party-political self-promotion."

(a) Funding: Party (Centre). Political organisation.

(b) Structural conflict of interest: The Centre benefits politically from a weakening of the SVP. This statement is a party-political position, not a neutral assessment.

(c) Missing counter-source: An SVP representative could have directly countered the Centre criticism (in the insert, not only in the studio interview).

Source 2: Andrea Caroni, FDP Council of States member

Timestamp 05:02

Statement "We have a functioning democracy with an elected Federal Council that decides as a collegial body."

(a) Funding: FDP party.

(b) Structural conflict of interest: FDP has two Federal Councillors in the collegial body — direct interest in defending the Federal Council.

(c) Missing counter-source: No SVP representative in the insert to directly confront the FDP Federal Councillors.

Rumour check:

Rumour 1:

Timestamp: 03:43

Claim: "One can already see how certain decision-makers and public figures are being threatened, how they need intensive protection."

Word marker: "one can see" (unspecific)

Primary source available: NO — No evidence, no names, no official confirmation — +1 penalty point

Summary: The source selection is structurally one-sided: two parties (Centre, FDP) with a direct interest in legitimising the Federal Council are deployed as counter-voices to the SVP, without being identified as partisan. The rumour about threats remains unsubstantiated.



3. TIME DISTRIBUTION									5/10
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Estimated speaking time (SVP topic, approx. 00:00–10:25):

- Presenter/insert commentary: (29%) — predominantly critical of SVP
- Critics of SVP (Schäfer, Centre, Herrmann, Caroni): approx. 3.5 min. (34%)
- Thomas Eschi (SVP): (29%)
- Christoph Blocher (SVP, quote): approx. 0.5 min. (5%)
- SVP press releases (read out): approx. 0.3 min. (3%)

Summary: SVP critics together receive approx. 63% of speaking time in the SVP topic block, SVP representatives approx. 34%. In addition, Eschi is structurally put on the defensive in the studio through the moderator's questions, while critics (Centre, Caroni) are allowed to speak unchallenged.



4. OMISSION (Selective Omission)

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Omission 1:

Context

Substantive engagement with the epidemiological data to which Eschi refers.

Relevant at: 08:23 — Eschi: "All indicators are below the thresholds that the Federal Council itself has defined."

Effect

This claim is neither verified nor refuted. The viewer cannot assess whether Eschi is correct. The omission of a verification leaves the statement hanging in the air, without refuting or confirming it.

Omission 2:

Context

Comparison with rhetorical practices of other parties.

Relevant at: 03:16–03:55 (Centre criticism of SVP rhetoric)

Effect

It is not shown whether SP, Greens or other parties have also used sharp rhetoric against government decisions in other contexts. This would raise the question of the selectivity of the outrage.

Omission 3:

Context

Economic damage from the lockdown as an independent topic.

Relevant at: 06:00 — Eschi mentions 800,000 short-time workers.

Effect

The economic arguments for an opening are brought forward exclusively by the SVP parliamentary group leader — never by independent economic experts. This structurally delegitimises the argument as "party politics".

Summary: Three central omissions distort the overall picture: missing data verification, missing comparison of rhetoric with other parties, and missing independent economic perspective.

Missing voices

- Economic economist/business cycle researcher: Would have quantified the economic damage of the lockdown and contextualised the SVP's demand for opening substantively.
- Second professor of constitutional law (critical perspective): Would have shed light on the limits of Federal Council competences and parliamentary oversight deficits.
- Epidemiologist/proportionality expert: Would have answered the question of whether the measures were still proportionate at the time of the broadcast.
- SVP grassroots representative (not parliamentary group leader): Would have articulated the concerns of the population more directly than a party official.
- Media lawyer/communication scientist: Would have neutrally contextualised the question of political rhetoric and its limits.
- Representative of the protest movement (moderate): Would have shown that not all critics of the measures are extremists.
- Historian on emergency law: Would have provided historical contextualisation of Federal Council competences.



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5. MANIPULATION OF FIGURES

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Complete figures include: absolute value, share (%) and trend

Finding 1:

Timestamp 04:15

Figure: "It is actually only 20 percent who really want a radical opening."

Dimensions: (b) Share shown — (a) absolute value missing, (c) trend missing

Missing context

20% of the Swiss population corresponds to approx. 1.7 million people — a politically relevant figure. In addition, the definition of "radical" is missing — who defined that? The trend is also missing: did this share increase over the pandemic months?

Effect

"Only 20 percent" sounds marginal; without an absolute figure and trend, the SVP base appears to be an irrelevant minority.

Finding 2:

Timestamp 02:53

Figure: "In 2013, the people clearly adopted the law with 60 percent."

Dimensions: (b) Share shown — (a) absolute value missing, (c) trend not relevant

Missing context

The 2013 vote concerned the Epidemics Act in general — not the specific measures of 2020/21. The question of whether the people "adopted" the specific restrictions of 2021 in 2013 is legally and democratic-theoretically contested.

Effect

Suggests that all Federal Council measures are democratically legitimised because the basic law was adopted in 2013.

Summary: Two figures are deployed without the complete triad and create a false impression of the democratic legitimacy of the measures and the political relevance of those in favour of opening.



6. GUILT BY ASSOCIATION								8/10	
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Association 1:	
Timestamp	07:54
Quote	<i>"With 'sole rule' and 'dictatorship' you are also fishing in a pond that is full of conspiracy theorists and extremists. Do you really want these on your side?"</i>
Technique: Direct association of SVP rhetoric with conspiracy theorists and extremists by the presenter.	
Effect	SVP voters and sympathisers are implicitly placed in proximity to extremists.

For the persons framed as "conspiracy theorists" (implicitly: demonstrators):

SOURCE CHECK:

- Do these persons work with verifiable primary sources? — Not assessable (no specific actors named)
- Are their core statements falsifiable? — Not assessable

RISK MATRIX: Not applicable (no specific actors)

TONALITY: The framing is sweeping — "a pond full of conspiracy theorists" — without differentiation between moderate critics of the measures and actual extremists.

RESULT CATEGORY: The broadcast uses Category C (conspiracy ideologist) sweepingly for all critics of the measures, without differentiation. This is methodologically inadmissible.

Association 2:	
Timestamp	08:39
Quote	<i>"Where that leads, we've just seen in the USA, haven't we? So there too, people said for years, well, Trump and so on, there's a lot of rhetoric in there... And suddenly, boom."</i>
Technique: Implicit comparison SVP rhetoric → Trump → storming of the Capitol (January 2021, just a few weeks earlier).	
Effect	SVP is placed in proximity to Trump and political violence, without a factual connection being substantiated.

Chain of association: SVP rhetoric → conspiracy theorists/extremists → Trump → storming of the Capitol/violence

Summary: The broadcast constructs a chain of association from SVP rhetoric via extremism to political violence (Trump/storming of the Capitol), without factual evidence for this connection. This is the strongest manipulation technique in the broadcast. All three associated groups (demonstrators, Trump supporters, extremists) are sweepingly linked to the SVP, without differentiation.



7. TIMING

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Finding 1:

Position: 00:26 (beginning — broadcast opening)

Content: "And yet there are now voices that describe this very Switzerland as a dictatorship, as undemocratic, and accuse the government of sole rule. Voices from the largest party in the country."

Timing effect

The broadcast begins with a framing that positions the SVP as a threat to democracy, before any SVP representative has had a chance to speak. The viewer is already preconditioned when Eschi appears in the studio.

Finding 2:

Position: 10:19 (end of SVP block)

Content: "And I am glad that you said neither 'dictatorship' nor 'sole rule' today."

Timing effect

The presenter closes the interview with a statement that portrays Eschi as "tamed" — as if the broadcast had successfully corrected SVP rhetoric. This is a closing framing that leaves the viewer with the impression that the SVP has withdrawn its position.

Summary: The opening and closing of the SVP block are strategically framed: beginning with a democracy-threat framing, ending with a "taming" narrative. This creates a bracket that structurally delegitimises the SVP position.



8. SELECTIVE OUTRAGE

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Outrage = bias. Selective outrage reinforces the finding. Score = degree of outrage (0–5) + selectivity (0–5)

Finding 1:

Timestamp 07:54

Triggering event: Eschi uses the term "sole rule" (07:01) in the studio interview.

Reaction: "With 'sole rule' and 'dictatorship' you are also fishing in a pond that is full of conspiracy theorists and extremists. Do you really want these on your side?"

Comparison

Centre representative (03:20) describes SVP rhetoric as "extremely dangerous" and suggests that verbal violence could turn into physical violence — no follow-up question from the presenter, no critical contextualisation of this statement.

Asymmetry: Demonstrable — The presenter intervenes sharply in response to SVP rhetoric, but lets the Centre statement ("extremely dangerous", suggestion of violence) pass without comment.

Finding 2:

Timestamp 08:39

Triggering event: Eschi defends SVP rhetoric as a means of applying pressure.

Reaction: Presenter draws Trump comparison and Capitol storming analogy.

Comparison

Caroni (05:02) is allowed to defend the Federal Council unchallenged, without the presenter asking why FDP Federal Councillors are not pushing more strongly for an opening.

Asymmetry: Demonstrable — Eschi is confronted with historical scenarios of violence; Caroni and the Centre representative receive no critical follow-up questions.

Degree of outrage: 4/5

Selectivity: 3/5

Summary: The presenter's outrage is directed exclusively against SVP rhetoric. Comparable statements by other parties (Centre: "extremely dangerous") are not questioned. The asymmetry is clearly demonstrable.



9. COMPLETENESS (Selective Omission — Overall picture)

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Finding 1:

Timestamp 04:05–04:37

Missing perspective: Substantive engagement with the demand for opening.

Relevance: Herrmann notes that "a clear majority of the population actually wants more competences with the Federal Council" — but the question of whether the measures were substantively proportionate is never raised.

Effect: The SVP's demand for opening appears to be purely politically opportunistic, not a substantively justified position.

Finding 2:

Timestamp 03:16–03:55

Missing perspective: Differentiation between moderate critics of the measures and actual extremists.

Relevance: The broadcast conflates demonstrators, conspiracy theorists and SVP voters in an undifferentiated mass.

Effect: Legitimate criticism of Federal Council measures is structurally associated with extremism.

Finding 3:

Timestamp Entire broadcast

Missing perspective: Parliamentary control mechanisms and their actual effectiveness.

Relevance: Caroni mentions that Parliament can "override" the Federal Council — but the question of why Parliament has not done so is not raised.

Effect: Democratic control of the Federal Council appears to be fully functioning, even though the SVP questions precisely this.

Summary: The broadcast systematically omits those perspectives that could substantively support SVP criticism. The result is a structurally one-sided portrayal that makes SVP positions appear rhetorical and opportunistic.

In February/March 2021, Switzerland found itself in a politically charged situation after approximately one year of the pandemic. The Federal Council had issued far-reaching measures (lockdown, closures) based on the Epidemics Act. The SVP positioned itself as the sharpest critic of this policy and used increasingly sharp rhetoric. At the same time, there were actual demonstrations against the measures, in which extremists also participated. The question of the proportionality of state restrictions was contested in society.

Share of perspectives covered

Inverted: Original value measures coverage (higher = better). Displayed as deviation (higher = greater gaps).

[A] Constitutional law classification of Federal Council competences under the Epidemics Act

[B] Economic damage from the lockdown (short-time work, bankruptcies, mental health)

[C] Epidemiological data situation and proportionality of the measures

[D] Historical contextualisation: Do other democracies have similar emergency powers?



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[E] SVP core argument: Demand for opening substantively (not only rhetorically)

[F] Parliamentary control options of the Federal Council

[G] Freedom of expression and limits of political rhetoric in democracy

[H] Comparison: How do other parties respond to Federal Council decisions they reject?

[I] Public opinion differentiated (not only political scientist summary)

[J] International comparisons: Measures of other countries

[A] COVERED

Timestamp: 02:28 — Quote: "What the Federal Council is doing is not undemocratic, it is extraordinary." — Assessment: Covered one-sidedly — only one voice (professor of constitutional law), no counter-voice from constitutional law scholarship.

[B] INDICATED

Timestamp: 06:00 — Quote: "800,000 people are on short-time work, several hundred thousand people have already become unemployed." — Assessment: Only raised by Eschi, not elaborated by independent economic experts.

[C] OMITTED

Timestamp: — — Quote: — — Assessment: No epidemiological data on the proportionality of the measures; Eschi mentions at 08:23 that indicators are below thresholds, without verification.

[D] OMITTED

Timestamp: — — Quote: — — Assessment: No international comparison of emergency powers in other democracies.

[E] INDICATED

Timestamp: 06:00–10:15 — Quote: "People want to go back to work" — Assessment: SVP core argument is raised by Eschi, but overlaid by the moderation framework ("dictatorship rhetoric").

[F] COVERED

Timestamp: 05:10 — Quote: "Parliament has the power, even if it wants to, to override it." — Assessment: Caroni addresses this objectively.

[G] INDICATED

Timestamp: 09:29 — Quote: "Do you not also have a certain responsibility as a politician?" — Assessment: Only raised as a question to SVP, not discussed as a general principle.

[H] OMITTED

Timestamp: — — Quote: — — Assessment: No analysis of how other parties (SP, Greens) use sharp rhetoric against government decisions in other contexts.

[I] INDICATED

Timestamp: 04:11 — Quote: "One actually sees a very differentiated attitude in the population." — Assessment: Only through political scientist summary, no direct voice from the population on the political discourse.

[J] OMITTED

Timestamp: — — Quote: — — Assessment: No comparison with other countries regarding criticism of measures or emergency powers.



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Completeness score: 4/10

Reasoning: Four out of ten relevant perspectives are covered or indicated, six are entirely absent or only presented one-sidedly. Particularly serious is the absence of a substantive engagement with the epidemiological data and the economic damage, as well as the complete absence of a comparison with the rhetorical practices of other parties.



Soft facts — 6 qualitative techniques

10. FRAMING (Setting the frame)

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Finding 1:

Timestamp	00:26
Quote	<i>"And yet there are now voices that describe this very Switzerland as a dictatorship, as undemocratic, and accuse the government of sole rule."</i>
Manipulation	The word "yet" sets a contrast to "the oldest democracy in the world" (00:10) — SVP criticism is framed as an attack on Swiss democracy, not as legitimate political criticism.
Why problematic	Any criticism of government measures is pre-emptively classified as hostile to democracy, before the arguments are heard.

Finding 2:

Timestamp	01:36
Quote	<i>"How the rhetoric has reached its boiling point."</i>
Manipulation	"Boiling point" implies escalation and danger — the insert is framed as documentation of a dangerous development, not as a portrayal of a political debate.
Why problematic	The viewer expects a threat story, not a political confrontation.

Finding 3:

Timestamp	04:37
Quote	<i>"Nevertheless, SVP figures are currently playing the man."</i>
Manipulation	"Playing the man" is a negative value judgement presented as a statement of fact.
Why problematic	This is an editorial expression of opinion embedded in the insert as a fact — without being labelled as commentary.

Summary: The framing of the broadcast positions SVP criticism as a threat to democracy from the very first second. Three framing elements (democracy contrast, boiling point metaphor, "playing the man") create a coherent narrative that portrays the SVP as a threat to democracy.



11. CHOICE OF WORDS AND TERMS							7/10		
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Finding 1:	
Timestamp	01:36
Quote	<i>"How the rhetoric has reached its boiling point."</i>
Manipulation	"Boiling point" — thermal metaphor for escalation and danger.
Why problematic	A neutral alternative would be: "How criticism of the Federal Council measures has increased."

Finding 2:	
Timestamp	07:54
Quote	<i>"You are fishing there... in a pond that is full of conspiracy theorists and extremists."</i>
Manipulation	"Conspiracy theorists" and "extremists" as a sweeping label for critics of the measures.
Why problematic	A neutral alternative would be: "Among the critics of the measures there are also persons with extremist views." The sweeping formulation stigmatises all critics.

Finding 3:	
Timestamp	04:37
Quote	<i>"Nevertheless, SVP figures are currently playing the man."</i>
Manipulation	"Playing the man" — sports metaphor with negative connotation (unfair play).
Why problematic	A neutral alternative would be: "SVP figures are criticising Federal Councillor Berset personally." The chosen formulation implies a breach of the rules.

Summary: The choice of words in the broadcast is consistently negatively connoted towards the SVP: "boiling point", "conspiracy theorists", "playing the man", "adding fuel to the fire". No comparably negative formulations are used for other parties.



12. MODERATION BEHAVIOUR								8/10	
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Finding 1:	
Timestamp	06:11
Triggering event: Eschi evades the question about the "dictatorship" rhetoric and talks about short-time work.	
Quote (presenter)	<i>"But the question was what you expect to gain from the rhetoric. So, dictatorship. Really?"</i>
Comparison	Centre representative (03:20) is allowed to claim unchallenged that SVP rhetoric could turn into physical violence — no follow-up question, no source cited.
Asymmetry: Demonstrable — Eschi is repeatedly brought back to the rhetoric question; the Centre representative is not asked for evidence for the claim about violence.	

Finding 2:	
Timestamp	07:30
Triggering event: Eschi says there are "certain new memberships" in the party.	
Quote (presenter)	<i>"So, it works?"</i>
Comparison	No comparable question to Centre or FDP as to whether their criticism of the SVP is party-politically motivated.
Asymmetry: Demonstrable — The presenter imputes party-political calculation to the SVP, but does not ask the same question of other parties.	

Finding 3:	
Timestamp	10:19
Triggering event: End of interview.	
Quote (presenter)	<i>"And I am glad that you said neither 'dictatorship' nor 'sole rule' today."</i>
Comparison	No comparable closing comment following statements by Caroni or the Centre representative.
Asymmetry: Demonstrable — Closing value judgement directed exclusively at the SVP representative.	

Summary: The moderation behaviour shows a clear asymmetry: Eschi is brought back to rhetoric questions three times, compared to Trump and given a closing assessment. Other interlocutors receive no comparably critical interventions.



13. QUESTION ASYMMETRY							7/10		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Asymmetry 1:	
To Eschi (SVP), 06	11: "But the question was what you expect to gain from the rhetoric. So, dictatorship. Really?" — **hard/confrontational**
To Caroni (FDP), 05	02: Caroni is allowed to give an explanation without being asked — **no question posed**
Comparison	Eschi is interrupted several times and brought back to rhetoric questions; Caroni is allowed to present his position unchallenged.

Asymmetry 2:	
To Eschi (SVP), 07	54: "You are fishing there... in a pond that is full of conspiracy theorists and extremists. Do you really want these on your side?" — **hard/suggestive**
To Centre representative (implicitly), 03	20: No question posed — Centre representative is allowed to speak unchallenged — **no question**
Comparison	Eschi is confronted with an extremism association; the Centre representative is not asked whether his suggestion of violence is substantiated.

Summary: The questions to Eschi are consistently confrontational and suggestive; other interlocutors receive no comparably critical questions. This is the most clearly measurable asymmetry in the broadcast.



14. FALSE BALANCE									3/10
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Finding 1:

Timestamp

05:49–10:25

Construct: The studio interview with Eschi is presented as "balance" — SVP gets to speak.

Analysis

The apparent balance (SVP in studio vs. critics in insert) is structurally unequal: in the insert, four critics (Schäfer, Centre, Herrmann, Caroni) speak unchallenged; in the studio, Eschi is put on the defensive through confrontational moderation. The formal balance (SVP has speaking time) conceals the substantive inequality.

Summary: The broadcast creates a formal balance (SVP in studio) that conceals a substantive imbalance. The score is moderate because the false balance is not the dominant pattern — the one-sidedness is too obvious to qualify as "false balance".



15. AGENDA-SETTING

7/10

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

Finding 1:

Agenda element set: The question is not "Are the Federal Council measures proportionate?" but "Is SVP rhetoric dangerous?"

Timestamp

00:26 — Evidence: "And yet there are now voices that describe this very Switzerland as a dictatorship."

Alternative agenda: "How does the population assess the proportionality of the Federal Council measures after one year of the pandemic?"

Finding 2:

Agenda element set: The legitimacy of the Federal Council's competences is taken as given.

Timestamp

02:28 — Evidence: "What the Federal Council is doing is not undemocratic."

Alternative agenda: "Which parliamentary control mechanisms were actually activated during the pandemic?"

Summary: The broadcast sets the agenda so that SVP rhetoric is the problem — not the Federal Council's measures. This shifts the debate from a substantive confrontation to a rhetorical one.



CHAPTER 4 — OVERALL EVALUATION

Results

- HARD FACTS SCORE (average criteria 1–9): 6.3 / 10
- SOFT FACTS SCORE (average criteria 10–15): 6.7 / 10

Dominant techniques

- 1. Guilt by Association (Score 8):** The broadcast constructs an explicit chain of association from SVP rhetoric via conspiracy theorists/extremists to the storming of the Capitol. The presenter establishes this connection directly (07:54, 08:39), without factual evidence for the connection. This is the most serious individual technique in the broadcast.
- 2. Framing/moderation behaviour (Score 8 each):** The broadcast frames SVP criticism as a threat to democracy from the very first second and enforces this framing through asymmetric moderation behaviour. Eschi is brought back to rhetoric questions three times and confronted with historical scenarios of violence; other interlocutors receive no comparable interventions.
- 3. Omission/completeness (Score 7 each):** The systematic omission of economic arguments, a comparison of rhetoric with other parties and data verification creates a structurally one-sided picture that makes SVP positions appear purely opportunistic.

Core messages of the broadcast

MESSAGE 1 (SUBSTANTIVE): "The Federal Council measures are democratically legitimised and proportionate — anyone who disputes this is engaging in dangerous rhetoric."

Technique: Framing + expert selection — Evidence: 00:26, 02:28, 04:05

MESSAGE 2 (PERSONAL): "The SVP and its parliamentary group leader are engaging in party-political opportunism at the expense of democratic discourse."

Technique: Guilt by Association + moderation behaviour — Evidence: 07:54, 08:39, 10:19

MESSAGE 3 (SOCIETAL): "Anyone who criticises state measures with sharp rhetoric risks mobilising extremists and conspiracy theorists — as happened in the USA."

Technique: Timing + choice of words + chain of association — Evidence: 00:26, 07:54, 08:39–08:54

Reasoning: With an overall score of 6.5, the broadcast sits at the boundary between "clear one-sidedness" and "systematic imbalance". The one-sidedness is not coincidental, but structural: framing, expert selection, moderation behaviour and choice of words all work coherently in the same direction. Art. 4 RTVA requires accurate representation and diversity of opinion — neither is guaranteed in this broadcast. The SVP position is not refuted substantively, but delegitimised rhetorically. The association with extremism and Trump without factual evidence constitutes the most serious individual violation.

CONCLUSION

The 10vor10 broadcast does not treat SVP rhetoric during the coronavirus pandemic as a political debate, but as a threat story. From the opening ("voices from the largest party in the country") to the closing ("I am glad that you said neither 'dictatorship' nor 'sole rule' today"), a coherent narrative is constructed that portrays SVP criticism as threatening to democracy and close to extremism. The substantive arguments of the SVP — economic damage, proportionality of the measures, parliamentary control — are not contextualised by independent experts, but brought forward exclusively by the SVP parliamentary group leader and overlaid by moderation interventions. The direct association of the SVP with conspiracy theorists, extremists and the storming of the Capitol (07:54, 08:39) without factual evidence constitutes a serious violation of Art. 4 RTVA, which requires accurate representation and diversity of opinion. The broadcast does not meet the statutory requirements for impartiality.



OVERALL EVALUATION OF THE 15 CRITERIA

Individual scores — All 15 criteria

No.	Criterion	Score	Classification
1	EXPERT SELECTION	7	••••
2	SOURCE SELECTION	6	•••
3	TIME DISTRIBUTION	5	•••
4	OMISSION (Selective Omission)	7	••••
5	MANIPULATION OF FIGURES	4	••
6	GUILT BY ASSOCIATION	8	••••
7	TIMING	6	•••
8	SELECTIVE OUTRAGE	7	••••
9	COMPLETENESS (Selective Omission — Overall picture)	7	••••
10	FRAMING (Setting the frame)	8	••••
11	CHOICE OF WORDS AND TERMS	7	••••
12	MODERATION BEHAVIOUR	8	••••
13	QUESTION ASYMMETRY	7	••••
14	FALSE BALANCE	3	••
15	AGENDA-SETTING	7	••••

HARD FACTS SCORE (1-8)

6.3/10

Serious deviation from the impartiality requirement. High degree of deviation

SOFT FACTS SCORE (9-14)

6.7/10

Serious deviation from the impartiality requirement. High degree of deviation

OVERALL SCORE

6.5/10

Serious deviation from the impartiality requirement. High degree of deviation

Averaged from hard facts and soft facts



KEY — Meaning of scores

Individual scores per criterion (0–10)

0	No finding	No relevant irregularity identified.
1–2	Weak finding	Minor irregularity without material impairment of impartiality.
3–4	Minor to moderate finding	Discernible tendency; relevance of effect low to moderate.
5	Moderate finding with relevance of effect	Relevant imbalance that influences the opinion-forming potential of the audience.
6	Substantial finding (threshold)	Scores from 6 onwards are reported as "substantial findings".
7	Substantial finding	Clear, well-substantiated imbalance with marked relevance of effect.
8–9	Serious finding	Pronounced imbalance; several substantiated individual findings in this criterion.
10	Maximum degree	Systematic, pervasive imbalance in this criterion.

Aggregated deviation index — interpretation ranges

0.0 – 2.5	Unremarkable	No material patterns discernible; broadcast meets the accuracy requirement.
2.6 – 4.0	Slight imbalance	Isolated irregularities; statistically visible, but still within the tolerance range.
4.1 – 6.0	Substantial imbalance	Several substantial findings; relevant impairment of diversity of perspectives.
6.1 – 8.0	Serious deviation from the impartiality requirement. High degree of deviation	Pronounced, broadcast-wide patterns; high relevance of effect.
8.1 – 10	Fundamental systemic one-sidedness. Very high degree of bias	Maximum degree across almost all criteria; systematically one-sided reporting.

Party-political bias (-5 to +5)

-5 to -3	Strongly disadvantaged	Party is clearly treated worse in portrayal, speaking time or framing.
-2 to -1	Slightly disadvantaged	Discernible, but weak disadvantage.
0	Neutral	No discernible preference or disadvantage.
+1 to +2	Slightly favoured	Discernible, but weak preference.
+3 to +5	Strongly favoured	Party is clearly treated better in portrayal, speaking time or framing.



CHAPTER 5 — LEGAL CLASSIFICATION (Art. 4 RTVA)

Assessment under Art. 4 RTVA

Violation 1:

Norm: Art. 4 para. 2 RTVA (accurate representation)

Facts: Association of the SVP with conspiracy theorists, extremists and the storming of the Capitol without factual evidence.

Evidence: Timestamp 07:54 — Quote: "With 'sole rule' and 'dictatorship' you are also fishing in a pond that is full of conspiracy theorists and extremists."; 08:39 — Quote: "Where that leads, we've just seen in the USA, haven't we?... And suddenly, boom."

Assessment: The association of a democratically elected party with extremism and political violence without factual evidence violates the requirement of accurate representation. An accurate representation would have differentiated between moderate critics of the measures and actual extremists.

Violation 2:

Norm: Art. 4 para. 4 RTVA (diversity of opinion on contested topics)

Facts: The question of the proportionality of the Federal Council measures is contested in society; the broadcast presents it as settled.

Evidence: Timestamp 02:28 — Quote: "What the Federal Council is doing is not undemocratic, it is extraordinary." — Only voice on this question; no counter-voice from constitutional law scholarship.

Assessment: On a contested topic (proportionality of state restrictions), Art. 4 RTVA requires the presentation of different viewpoints. The broadcast presents exclusively the position that the measures are legitimate.

Violation 3:

Norm: Art. 4 para. 4 RTVA (balanced selection of interlocutors)

Facts: In the insert, four critics of the SVP (Schäfer, Centre, Herrmann, Caroni) speak unchallenged; the SVP only gets to speak in the studio interview, where it is structurally disadvantaged through confrontational moderation.

Evidence: Timestamp 01:42–05:43 (insert, four critics) vs. 05:49–10:25 (Eschi, confrontational moderation).

Assessment: The selection and placement of interlocutors is structurally unbalanced. Art. 4 RTVA requires a balanced selection — not merely the formal presence of the affected party.

Overall assessment Art. 4 RTVA

The broadcast violates Art. 4 RTVA in three dimensions: accurate representation (unsubstantiated extremism association), diversity of opinion (one-sided presentation of the proportionality question) and balanced selection of interlocutors (structural disadvantage of the SVP through the insert model and confrontational moderation). The violations are not limited to individual formulations, but run through the entire broadcast structure — from the opening to the closing. A complaint to the Independent Complaints Authority for Radio and Television (ICA) would be justifiable on the basis of these findings.



CHAPTER 6 — SOURCE DEEP-CHECK

Markus Schäfer, professor of constitutional law

- FUNDING:** State (university). Minor structural conflict of interest in legitimising state measures.
- MANDATE:** Professor of constitutional law — compatible with neutral assessment of constitutional law questions.
- CONFLICT OF INTEREST:** Minor — no obvious institutional dependence on Federal Council decisions.
- CREDIBILITY MATRIX:** D1 +1 / D2 +1 / D3 +2 / D4 0 / D5 +2 / D6 +2 → TOTAL +8 → SOURCE INDICATOR: GREEN
- COUNTER-VOICE:** No second constitutional lawyer with a more critical perspective on Federal Council competences cited.

Michael Herrmann, political scientist

- FUNDING:** Not explicitly stated; presumably university or commissioned research.
- MANDATE:** Population surveys — compatible with neutral assessment.
- CONFLICT OF INTEREST:** No obvious conflict of interest; deployed to relativise SVP grassroots support.
- CREDIBILITY MATRIX:** D1 +1 / D2 +1 / D3 +2 / D4 0 / D5 +2 / D6 +1 → TOTAL +7 → SOURCE INDICATOR: GREEN
- COUNTER-VOICE:** No political scientist who contextualises the democratic-theoretical legitimacy of the demand for opening.

Centre representative (not named)

- FUNDING:** Party (Centre) — political organisation.
- MANDATE:** Party-political representative — not compatible with neutral assessment of SVP rhetoric.
- CONFLICT OF INTEREST:** High — Centre benefits politically from weakening of the SVP.
- CREDIBILITY MATRIX:** D1 -2 / D2 0 / D3 0 / D4 0 / D5 -1 / D6 0 → TOTAL -3 → SOURCE INDICATOR: YELLOW
- COUNTER-VOICE:** An SVP representative could have directly countered the Centre criticism in the insert.

Andrea Caroni, FDP Council of States member

- FUNDING:** FDP party — political organisation.
- MANDATE:** Party-political representative — not compatible with neutral assessment of the Federal Council.
- CONFLICT OF INTEREST:** High — FDP has two Federal Councillors in the collegial body; direct interest in defending the Federal Council.
- CREDIBILITY MATRIX:** D1 -2 / D2 0 / D3 +1 / D4 0 / D5 +1 / D6 0 → TOTAL 0 → SOURCE INDICATOR: YELLOW
- COUNTER-VOICE:** An SVP representative could have directly confronted the FDP Federal Councillors.

IMPORTANT: Schäfer and Herrmann are professionally qualified (GREEN), but deployed one-sidedly. Centre and FDP are party-political sources (YELLOW), but are presented as neutral counter-voices — this is the actual source problem of the broadcast.

Legal and methodological classification

No finding of fact

The results presented do not constitute findings of fact about individual persons, editorial teams or broadcasts. They are to be understood as the result of a standardised operationalisation, not as a determination of individual responsibility.

No legal ruling

The aggregated deviation index does not replace a legal assessment within the meaning of Art. 4 RTVA. The assessment of whether a specific broadcast violates statutory



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requirements is the exclusive responsibility of the competent authorities (in particular the ICA).

No proof of causality

Statistical correlations are not to be interpreted as proof of causal connections or editorial intentions. Deviation values may be influenced by topic selection, news situation, political controversy or format logic.

No finding of intent

The analysis measures observable structural characteristics of broadcasts. A score of 7 means that a substantial imbalance has been identified — not that the editorial team intended this. The methodology makes no statements about motives or strategic objectives.

Heuristic comparison instrument

The index serves for comparative pattern recognition across thousands of broadcasts, not for the precise metric measurement of individual contributions. Threshold values serve as heuristic orientation, not as sharp legal qualification.



APPENDIX 1: NATIONAL LEGISLATION

Legal basis Switzerland — SRG SSR

Law

Federal Act on Radio and Television (RTVA, SR 784.40)

Relevant articles

- Art. 4 para. 1 RTVA: All broadcasts of a radio or television programme must respect fundamental rights. The broadcasts must in particular respect human dignity, must not be discriminatory, must not contribute to racial hatred, must not endanger public morality, and must not glorify or trivialise violence.
- Art. 4 para. 2 RTVA: Editorial broadcasts with informational content must present facts and events accurately, so that the audience can form its own opinion. Views and commentary must be recognisable as such.
- Art. 4 para. 4 RTVA: In the totality of editorial broadcasts, the diversity of events and opinions must be expressed appropriately (diversity requirement).

Core obligations

- 1. Accuracy:** Accurate representation of facts and events
- 2. Diversity of opinion:** Diversity of views on contested topics
- 3. Impartiality:** Balanced selection of interlocutors

Supervisory authority

- ICA (Independent Complaints Authority for Radio and Television): Reviews complaints against broadcast programmes for violations of Art. 4 RTVA
- OFCOM (Federal Office of Communications): Regulatory and supervisory authority
- Ombudsman offices of the SRG: First point of contact for programme complaints

Complaints procedure

1. Ombudsman office of the respective business unit (SRF, RTS, RSI, RTR)
2. ICA (if no agreement is reached)
3. Federal Supreme Court (last instance)



APPENDIX 2: SCIENTIFIC FOUNDATIONS

Literature

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SVFAB Working Papers

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- Schläpfer, D. (2026). Measuring Editorial Noise: A Retrospective Suppression Index for Public Broadcasting Content Analysis. [SSRN 6733280](#)
- Schläpfer, D. (2026). Source Traffic Light: A Six-Dimensional Credibility Framework for Systematic Source Assessment in Public Service Media. [SSRN 6733880](#)

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Unbalanced reporting is the response to the halving initiative in Switzerland: here the manipulation techniques are explained in detail, starting with the selection of staff and source selection. Subsequently, 15 principles are explained: omission, framing, temporal framing, guilt by association, emotionalisation, context removal and many more, illustrated with many examples. In addition, it becomes apparent where we ourselves apply these techniques — this promotes not only insight but also empathy.

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The SRG collects 1.56 billion francs per year — compulsorily, from every household. Anyone who feels treated unfairly can lodge a complaint. There is even an authority for this: the ICA, the Independent Complaints Authority for Radio and Television.

Only: it is not independent. It has no sanctioning powers. And in 99.6% of all cases it decides: nothing.

This analysis lays the system bare — objectively, precisely, without polemic. Procedures, personnel, powers, costs, statistics, legal recourse. And the constitutional law review that shows: the ICA system meets none of the three fundamental criteria — it is not appropriate, not based on separation of powers, not market-based. The authority that is supposed to protect citizens primarily protects the system it was supposed to control.

Essential reading for everyone considering a complaint — and for everyone who wants to understand why genuine media oversight in Switzerland is still outstanding.