

Variables	Holsti's R
Medium	1.00
Length	0.93
Placement	0.97
Journalistic genre	0.78
Collective attribution	0.67
Collective action	0.62
Compromise	0.81
Understanding	0.75
Power Struggle	0.81
Accusation	0.78
Winning and Losing	0.88
Inability	0.75
Failure	0.87

Note. For item wordings see description in the text above.

Table 4.2. Intercoder Reliability

4.2.3. Procedure

The relevant material was collected by researching online data-bases and online archives as well as in libraries. The title and the first paragraph of all articles within the relevant sections of the selected newspaper issues were read. Based on this information, a decision was made as to whether an article was relevant or not. The newscasts were taken from online archives. Four students of mass communication at the University of Zurich coded the material. Three sessions of coder training took place in April 2007. An additional training session for the content analysis of television newscasts was conducted in September 2007. Coding was done at computer workstations at the University of Zurich from May 2007 until October 2007. The data material was randomly distributed across time and coders in order to reduce systematic biases. An online platform was set up to facilitate the communication among the coders and the author. Potential difficulties in the coding process were therefore transparent and traceable. Moreover, the online platform was used to supply the coders with information and current updates.

4.3. Results

Based on the content analysis data, this study investigated how the mass media in the German-speaking part of Switzerland present political decision-making processes. More precisely, the role of discord and references to procedural inefficiency were investigated. The analysis takes a comparative perspective over institutions, newspaper types, time, television vs. press, and nations. Based on the comparative approach, it was probed whether characteristics of the presentation of political processes are rather stable or invariant as regards time, media types, or nations. Section 4.3.1 describes findings on how the media present political decision-making processes. In Section 4.3.2, the relationship between the variables is investigated in order to derive characteristic patterns of media presentations of political processes.

4.3.1. Characteristics of the Media's Presentations of Political Processes

Because media information on political processes might differ with respect to the institutional affiliation of procedures, this study compares the media's presentation of political decision-making processes within the executive and the legislative branch. Overall, 62 percent of articles in the Swiss newspapers provide information about political decision-making procedures within the executive branch, whereas 38 percent of articles present processes taking place within the legislative branch. A comparison between the different newspaper types showed that the focus on governmental procedures is particularly strong in the Swiss tabloid: 82 percent of articles in the tabloid refer to decision-making procedures in the government. In contrast, 56 percent of articles in the broadsheet and 59 percent of articles in the regional newspaper refer to the executive. In television, 54 percent of all newscasts focus on the government compared to 55 percent of newscasts that present parliamentary processes. In line with this study's definition of political processes as day-to-day discussions of possible solutions to political problems and decision-making within the government, the parliament, or the political administration, the most dominant actor type in the media are elected officials. More precisely, 99 percent of articles about government and 93 percent of articles of articles about parliament included references to political actors, followed by non-elected political actors (20 and 25 percent respectively).

In order to investigate how the Swiss newspapers and television newscasts present political decision-making processes, media attention to several process aspects was analyzed. The findings showed that the presentation of political processes is partly contingent upon whether the articles refer to the executive or the legislative branch. Hence, Table 4.3 presents the percentage of articles referring to different aspects of political decision-making processes and compares press articles about the parliament with press articles about the government. The significance of the differences between the institutions was tested with the Chi-Square difference test. The