

Krimis crossing borders: Localizing SOKO in Austria

A content and production analysis of the transnational SOKO format

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ABSTRACT

The Austrian SOKO series represents the result of a transnational collaboration between Austrian public service broadcaster ORF and German PSB ZDF. Depicting fictional crime stories, the SOKO format originated in Germany and was later adapted in Austria, in the form of SOKO Kitzbühel and SOKO Donau. This thesis explored how this scripted TV format travelled to Austria, was translated to the respective TV market, and customized through localizations and representations of Austrian characteristics. As previous studies on format adaptation, transnationalization and localization have shown, the TV format industry is a popular field of academic research. However, the combination of a content analysis of the SOKO series together with a production and industry study has not been sufficiently analyzed, leaving motives for format adaptations, insights into transnational collaborations of PSBs and justifications for the way the Austrian SOKOs were developed and created unanswered. A comparative content analysis was instrumentalized to examine selected episodes of the Austrian and German SOKO editions in order to identify similarities and differences between them to subsequently see how the Austrian adaptation manifests itself. The analysis has revealed that except for structural features in the episodes, there are no commonalities between German and Austrian SOKOs, as they show individual characters, independent narratives, and a distinction through localization and the inclusion of humor and Austrian dialects. The second research was dedicated to the conduct of five semi-structured expert interviews with exclusive informants of the ORF, ZDF and responsible production companies of the Austrian SOKOs. Topic for the interviews were the collaboration between PSBs, the adaptation process, peculiarities of the Austrian SOKOs, and differences between the Austrian and German SOKOs. The key findings include a solid cooperation between ORF and ZDF, with the latter having a say in the development of the Austrian SOKOs, nonetheless ensuring creative freedom, and the idea that the SOKOs should convey local color for a transnational audience. The study concludes with the finding that the localizations of the Austrian SOKOs manage to convey a piece of cultural identity and create a homelike feeling for the Austrians and for the Germans an exotic insight into their neighboring country. Moreover, transnational productions contribute not only to the enhancement of national TV broadcasters but also in terms of a larger shared audience.

KEYWORDS: *TV series, transnational TV production, franchises, collaboration of public service broadcasters, expression of locality*

Table of Contents

1	INTRODUCTION	1
1.1	AIM AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS	2
1.2	SOCIETAL AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE.....	3
2	THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	5
2.1	CULTURAL GLOBALIZATION AS THE MOTOR FOR TRANSNATIONAL PRODUCTIONS	5
2.2	TELEVISION FORMATS – DEFINITIONS.....	7
2.3	FORMAT TRADE MARKET FACILITATING ADAPTATIONS	8
2.4	THE ADAPTATION OF FORMATS	9
2.4.1	Purchasing a format’s rights	10
2.4.2	Processes of adaptation.....	10
2.5	LOCALIZATION OF THE FORMAT AND CULTURAL IDENTITY	12
2.6	MEDIA SYSTEMS: PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTERS IN AUSTRIA AND GERMANY	14
2.6.1	The audience’s preference.....	15
2.7	CHAPTER SUMMARY	16
3	METHOD	17
3.1	RESEARCH DESIGN	17
3.2	COMPARATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS	18
3.2.1	Sampling	19
3.2.2	Data Analysis.....	19
3.3	INTERVIEW STUDY.....	20
3.3.1	Method of data collection	21
3.3.2	Sample	22
3.3.3	Data collection	23
3.3.4	Data analysis	24
3.4	QUALITY CRITERIA.....	24
4	RESULTS	26
4.1	CONTENT ANALYSIS OF SOKO EPISODES	26
4.1.1	Fixed elements of all editions	26
4.1.2	Differences.....	29
4.2	CONCLUSION AND INTERPRETATION.....	35
4.3	PRODUCTION STUDY	36
4.3.1	Collaboration between broadcasters and production companies.....	36
4.3.2	Close work relationship and shared audiences.....	40
4.3.3	The experts’ perception of the Austrian SOKOs	41
4.3.4	Objective of producing Austrian SOKOs.....	44
4.4	CONCLUSION AND INTERPRETATION.....	46
5	CONCLUSIONS	48
5.1	THEORETICAL AND SOCIETAL IMPLICATIONS	50
5.2	LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS	50
6	REFERENCES	52

APPENDIX A 56
APPENDIX B 65
APPENDIX C 68

1 Introduction

National television schedules are loaded with programs and series that derive from national, transnational, or international productions. Where nationally broadcasted TV shows have their origin, is not always obvious anymore. Instead, it is common practice across borders for the production and development of programs, leading to a more inter- and transnational TV program industry. As a result, domestic TV schedules include programs that were incorporated through a so-called *format adaptation* of the original show. Such an adaptation involves a TV show being translated to another country for the purpose of corresponding with the respective audience (Waisbord, 2004). Consequently, the establishment of TV programs becomes more transnational, because domestic TV broadcasters and production companies tend to use international resources, to enhance transnational relationships and to benefit from a globalized media world.

TV programs in the German-speaking show a multitude of fictional crime and detective series or, in German, *Krimi(s)* ("Rekord-Einschaltquoten", 2021). One of these consistent program items on German and Austrian television is the SOKO series. The SOKOs, invented by Dieter Schenk, were first broadcasted in 1979 and introduced as SOKO 5113. Schenk, a police officer, could be reached at his police station by the extension number 5113, hence SOKO 5113 (Fischer, 2020). In 2015, this first edition of the series was renamed to SOKO München and with a run of 42 years until 2020 it was the longest-running series in the German-speaking area. Several SOKO editions were established over the years and resulted in a total of eleven SOKOs, three of which are Austrian editions. SOKO Kitzbühel as the first Austrian edition was introduced in 2001, followed by SOKO Donau in 2005 and the latest edition SOKO Linz will be released in 2022 (Seyringer, 2021). The SOKO series thematizes fictional crime and detective stories that are investigated and solved during one episode by a police special commission (in German *Sonderkommission* = SOKO). The focus of this TV program lies on entertainment and suspense and embeds local characteristics by being set in various cities, thereby showing the respective cityscape with resident investigators. The different cities act as name carriers for the editions. The umbrella term SOKO comprises several versions, all of which contain numerous unrelated episodes that form several seasons. Every episode deals with a capital crime that is ideally solved within an episode lasting approximately 43 minutes. In Germany, the German and Austrian SOKOs are broadcast on ZDF from Monday to Friday at 6 p.m. On the Austrian ORF, the Austrian SOKOs are broadcast on Tuesdays at 8:15 or 9:15 p.m. There is no dedicated slot for the German SOKOs on ORF, but Austrian viewers can also receive the ZDF channel.

Interesting about this format is every edition's uniqueness, although all are based on one original German version. Additionally, the Austrian versions are co-produced by the Austrian public service broadcaster ORF (Österreichischer Rundfunk) and German PSBs ZDF (Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen) (APA OTS, 2005). Considering the growth of the SOKO editions and their transnational

production background, a need has grown to explore the Austrian adaptations and how they resemble, replicate to, or even differ from the German versions. Given the lack of knowledge about production conditions, reasons for adaptations and their creation, the SOKO series and its transnational production represent an unexplored field. This examination is expected to shed light on the characteristics of the Austrian SOKOs and how they differ from the German SOKOs, as well as on the transnational collaboration that seems to act as a key function for the development and production of the Austrian SOKOs. To identify differences from the original, it is not enough to study existing literature on format adaptations, since this would offer non-specific information of previously studied adaptation processes but would not describe the modifications and customizations of the SOKO format to characteristics of Austria. Researching the SOKO format is therefore to respond to the problem of not yet knowing well enough about the adaptations from a German to an Austrian tv program by finding out, among other things, how differently the programs are localised and how they address the respective audiences accordingly (Chaume, 2019).

1.1 Aim and research questions

Seeing the Austrian versions as results of adaptations of the German program, one must ask how this format travelled to Austria, which elements from the original program were adopted and in which way they were adapted. Therefore, the aim of this research is to advance an understanding of similarities and differences between the German original SOKO series, and the Austrian adaptations. The comparison of the German and the Austrian SOKOs acts as an important means to identify which narrative elements are present in the versions to then compare them and determine commonalities and differences. This way, it is possible to find out what has been adopted through an adaptation and constitutes as essential parts of the original format, and which other elements were modified by cultural and national customization into the new territory Austria. Such customizations may for instance manifest in localizing a program by including nation-specific features. Furthermore, the conditions of producing the Austrian series, the production relations between broadcasters and production companies and the process of developing the series considering the adaptation present other main research aims. This leads to two research objectives.

Firstly, it should be identified how the adaptation of the German SOKO series to the Austrian SOKOs manifested, how they distinguish from the German versions, presumably through ways of localization, and the incorporation of local color and cultural features. The second objective is scrutinizing the production of the Austrian SOKOs to first identify which decisions led to the adaptation and secondly what aspects were relevant to consider in order to produce a series that is based on a transnational collaboration.

To emphasize the aim of this research and to make a clear division between the research objectives and the subsequent research methods and based on the context stated above, one

overarching research question and two sub-questions were developed, each of which will structure and lead its own study.

RQ: How did the SOKO series travel to Austria and how did it get adapted there?

SQ1: To what extent are similarities and differences present between the German SOKO series and the Austrian adaptations and how are they manifested?

SQ 2: Which decisions led to the format adaptations and what aspects did they contain?

Whereas the main RQ represents an overall objective, SQ1 specifically deals with the content, composition and look of German and Austrian SOKOs. SQ2 is dedicated to the circumstances and processes that led to and created the Austrian SOKOs.

1.2 Societal and scientific relevance

A ubiquitous interest in researching the transnational television industry and formats firstly stems from the multiplicity of ways in which adaptations can be performed and end in different products, and secondly from the nature of production companies and broadcasters that decide how to work with or change programs, which is mostly country- and culture-specific (see Keinonen, 2016, 2017). An analysis of national or local characteristics within the Austrian SOKOs on the one hand, and an industry study that scrutinizes the production processes and practices of production companies and public service broadcasters on the other, will together constitute a new study in the field of format adaptation studies.

Regarding the scientific significance of this work, it must be said that it attempts to conduct unprecedented research on a format and its franchises, which should help to learn more about transnational television productions, the cooperation between public broadcasters and the underlying rationale for the expansion of this format series. By conducting this research, I would like to contribute to the research field in several ways. Firstly, I would like to emphasize that the industry of television and formats is a combination as well as an interrelationship on a national and international level. This notion makes clear that the industry can be considered as both, a global and local one. Secondly, doing this empirical research brings insides into the transnational TV production field to enlarge the ongoing discussion about format adaptations, especially in reference to cultural adaptations. The interplay between local and transnational and between German and Austrian should be explored to gain knowledge about the Austrian format market and the cultural adaptation of the SOKOs. This new knowledge could represent a valuable contribution for producers or broadcasters and their future ideas for developing TV franchises. From a societal point of view, the transnationalization of TV formats could raise questions if globalized formats would lead to a cultural affiliation or to a loss of national cultures. Moreover, adaptations of international formats could

result in many countries broadcasting the same formats potentially leading to a decrease of diversity. Referring to the SOKOs, an interesting aspect is whether German and Austrian cultures are presented similarly and if the audiences of the SOKOs perceive a convergence of Germany with Austria or whether there is a cultural border.

To date, almost no work has been done that examines and compares, firstly, the characteristics, content elements and elements that may have been taken over by an adaptation in the adapted version of a series, and secondly, a production study that justifies the adaptation process, the decisions behind it and examines the cooperation between public broadcasters and series producers. However, comprehensive research on format adaptations has been done by Jensen (2009), Adriaens and Biltereyst (2012), van Keulen and Krijnen (2014), Mikos (2015) and Villegas-Simon and Soto-Sanfiel (2021); on transnationalization by Esser (2007), Chalaby (2015); on localization by Esser (2016) and on (cultural) globalization for example by Waisbord (2004), Moran (2013), Havens (2019). Increasingly, format adaptations have been studied in terms of how they are localised, appeal to national audiences, reflect cultural identity and how this can be seen in the context of transnational productions because of cultural globalization. There is however a lack of research about transnational TV format productions between Austrian and German broadcasters.

Chapter 2 presents a theoretical framework containing elaborations of relevant research, and conceptualizations. The methods of data collection, research and analysis are described in Chapter 3. This is followed by the presentation and interpretation of the results in Chapter 4, that are subsequently concluded and summarized in Chapter 5, which also contains an overview of limitations and suggestions for future research.

2 Theoretical Framework

This chapter presents a framework of theories, concepts and for this research suitable approaches, including various point of views on the TV format industry, transnationalization and globalization, format adaptation, cultural identity together with localization, and public service broadcasters PSBs, which are all put in relation to the research objective. The focus of this research lies on the from Germany originating TV show SOKO series, which was adopted and adapted by the Austrian PSB ORF. To understand the process that the TV program has undergone, it is crucial to present theoretical concepts that will make adaptation processes and the circumstances in the globalized TV format trade market as well as the role of the PSBs comprehensible. Furthermore, the notion of localization will be elaborated, as it represents an important aspect regarding the establishing of the SOKO series in Austria at different locales.

To repeat, the research objective consists in understanding adaptation processes and how formats can be localized in new territories, and what the role of PSBs is in a transnational TV industry.

2.1 Cultural globalization as the motor for transnational productions

The focus lies on a format that is broadcasted on German and Austrian public television. The fact that TV shows of all genres and regardless of their country of origin can be broadcasted in central European countries is a result of cultural globalization. Acknowledging the many definitions and explanations the term globalization comprises, this thesis works with the description that clarifies globalization as “a process of increasingly worldwide interactions among individual persons, groups, and institutions across nation-state boundaries” (Sankowski, 2011, p. 450). Globalization is thus an ongoing process that initiated a shift of working methods and ideas whose implementations were limited to a country to an internationalized level that enabled actions, trades, and exchange of material and intellectual goods to take place on a state-borders’ unlimited interaction system. Globalization was and is not only with regards to vital consumption commodities a significant development, but also to the cultural industry concerning the beginning of the television era and the flow of programs as well as the initial start of trading formats (Waisbord, 2004; Moran, 2013).

Television, understood as shows and programs being broadcasted, started around 1950 and was performed by countries around the globe that could afford this new technology (Havens, 2006, as cited in Havens, 2019). As the television era started, it was introduced as an exciting phenomenon, which acted very globally, as it surpassed national borders and benefitted from knowledge or techniques of other countries. Television was also controlled by governments and helped preserve subjects like cultural policies (Havens, 2019). Considering that television arose simultaneously in different parts of the world, a global development took place, acting as a consolidation for a global collaboration in the television industry, which would eventually lead to an industry of formats and

format trading. The globalization of the TV industry led to two major issues within the bigger debate. Firstly, the question emerged as to what causes the enforced travelling of TV shows and secondly, what effect do foreign shows have on a local audience (Havens, 2019). While the *United Nation's Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)* was worrying that the increase of globalized television could lead to an imbalance in the exchange of international TV programs, this exchange constituted an enrichment of every country's local TV programming (Havens, 2019). However, more international entertainment programs that were viewed locally have always sparked unresolved issues of whether it could lead to a repression of a national culture (Havens, 2019). Cultural globalization as a promoter for the flow of international TV programs, is connected to the concept of cultural imperialism which conveys a capitalist world where people should benefit from and utilize foreign TV programs (Havens, 2019). Cultural imperialism led to more concern that national and local programs would be replaced by imported ones (Esser, 2007). It was proven however, that domestic audiences do like local and locally produced shows, which reinforced the belief of producers and broadcasters that the national cultures were too important, so there should not be any fear that national culture would be displaced (Esser, 2007).

Those points are relevant for the research objective of this thesis, as cultural globalization was responsible for format-flow on international grounds (Havens, 2019). This international flow of programs has resulted in programs from different countries being watched in different recipient nations, and in an, at least one-way, exchange of culture in the form of television programs. It has also led to an increase in the number of programs being viewed in different countries (Moran, 2009b; Oren & Shahaf, 2012). Those flows however, have also led to national broadcasters and production companies getting the chance to distribute their programs in the form of formats internationally (Moran, 2013). This relates to the SOKO series to such an extent that its Austrian adaptation can be acknowledged as the result of the preceding cultural globalization. The question whether the adoption of globalized formats is a threat to national cultures, cannot be answered with consensus, since academics debate about the supersession of national culture by globalized formats (Esser, 2007). However, for this thesis, I am suggesting, to look at the possibility that a format adaptation can enhance a national culture or local peculiarities, by localizing a format so that it that mirrors the diversity and the characteristics of a territory (see Adriaens & Biltreyst, 2012; Mikos, 2015). The expression of a local culture or the representation of an identity type within formats is the objective of this research and will therefore be discussed further. However, the industry of format adaptations emerged due to globalization which initiated an international way of collaborating.

Globalization relates closely to transnationalization which, regarding television, describes the interactions of countries which go beyond a national state border and enable deals between countries that are not only national matters anymore (Esser, 2002). One could see the Austrian SOKO

adaptation as a result of the transnational development, as it allowed its emergence and further existence (Chalaby, 2015, p.461). Following Esser (2007) transnationalization should be seen as a determining characteristic in European television, which became relevant in the 1980s and has been defining programming and TV consumption. Transnationalization acts as an umbrella term for all developments that have been taking place, especially in the European television market, including “broadcasting processes”, and “the worldwide expansion of audiovisual companies, their channel and programme offerings and practices” (Esser, 2007, p.166). Transnational productions have been increasing in number due to cultural globalization and the growth in cultural products such as TV programs and their international travels. Broadcasters were thus also empowered to collaborate cross-border (Esser, 2007). While the phenomenon of format adaptation is thus a result of media globalization and is enhancing transnational collaboration, an adaptation is yet a very national process, since its aim lies in localizing an international format to its national or local peculiarities and domestic audience (Adriaens & Biltreyst, 2012).

2.2 Television formats – Definitions

As of the 1990s television formats started to become research objectives for media scholars (Moran, 2013; Keinonen, 2017). Sparked by the increasing practice of adapting formats, scholars have been researching the field of formats and its ability to undergo adaptations or remakes (Keinonen, 2017). What a TV format consists of, how it can be defined or how it should be in order to be categorized as such, has since then been discussed and resulted in various definitions (Fusco & Perrotta, 2004; Keinonen, 2017; Havens, 2019). This difficulty in understanding a format may also be explained by different conceptions of what a format is. Whereas it is claimed that every show can become a format, if someone pays for it, others say that one cannot copyright beliefs or intentions, as intellectual property (Chalaby, 2011).

One definition sees a format “as an original explanatory structure of any type of show, accomplished in a detailed and exhaustive articulation of its sequential and thematic phases”, that allows to be modified and transformed through practices such as an adaptation (Fusco & Perrotta, 2008, p.91). A format is therefore seen as an overarching term for a composition of elements that can manifest themselves in a series, a show, or a remake (Havens, 2019). A format is however also always an economic unity, comprising internal negotiations regarding its protection, resale, or production (Fusco & Perrotta, 2008). That means that a format is accompanied by underlying discussions, also when it is understood as an umbrella term for content-related aspects such as various narration forms or TV genres (Fusco & Perrotta, 2008).

Another approach on a format’s definition refers to two main characteristics a format must comprise, a “distinctive narrative dimension” and a quality that allows them to be handled transnationally (Chalaby, 2011). In accordance with that, a program is inevitably transformed into a

format when it is transferred to another country in the course of an adaptation. As Rodrigue (2008) explains “a format is not a product, it is a vehicle which enables an idea to cross boundaries, cultures, and so on, and to be localized in every place where it stops” (as cited in Chalaby, 2011, p.295). Formats are like conceptions of a TV program, permitted to be adapted (Chalaby, 2016). Moran (2015) reinforces this view as he describes that a format “is a complex, multiple entity or package consisting of a miscellany of different but overlapping cultural and commercial knowledges” (p.689). A format is thus an outer adaptable and versatile frame that is not precisely the same in any adaptation and thus cannot be defined exactly. Formats, as an overarching term for various kinds of shows, can thus differ in nature and genre. Reality TV formats, factual and entertainment formats including talent competitions are the main genres according to Chalaby (2011). In reference to its nature, one can distinguish between unscripted and scripted formats. The latter are formats that are based on a script, thus a scripted program (Chalaby, 2016). Scripted TV shows are programs that operate with an underlying script, in which the plots and everything that is included in the series is set down. Scripted formats are mostly series like soap operas or telenovelas of any genre (Chalaby, 2016). Producing scripted formats is more expensive than unscripted ones such as reality formats, because a lot of know-how contained in the scripts comes along (Chalaby, 2016). Waisbord (2004) supports this thought by claiming that the adaptation of a scripted and fictional program as a format is difficult, because a script brings along a specific cultural notion that needs to be adjusted in the new territory. In reference to the SOKO series which represents a fictional, scripted series, it means that, if it gets adapted, it must travel together with the script. Furthermore, when adapting a scripted format attention must be paid on the narrative of the format and on the changes that accompany a format when it is being adapted (Villegas-Simon & Soto-Sanfiel, 2021). Therefore, the customization of a program depends on genre, content, and the country in which the format is adapted.

2.3 Format trade market facilitating adaptations

After the broadcasting business was mostly concentrated on radio programs at first, the practice of trading formats that could be broadcasted started to arise (Chalaby, 2011). From the 1950s onwards, trading included American TV formats that were brought to Europe, Australia, and parts of South America (Chalaby, 2011). A few years later the era of format-flow started in the 1980s and 1990s when factors such as “privatization, liberalization, and deregulation” stopped a very narrow television industry that was mostly a matter of one respective nation rather than an international industry (Waisbord, 2004, p.360). Mikos (2015) supports this by arguing that the development of TV formats and the increase of formats on national TV channels in Europe in the 1990s did not originate from national producers or broadcasters, but most of the formats were bought and picked up at international television markets where licensed formats could get obtained for a national adaptation. Also, Waisbord (2004) argues that through the commercialization of

television, Australia, New Zealand and European countries were able to amplify their national TV production companies.

Simultaneously a notion developed, regarding a country's national TV and national culture, conveying that Hollywood programs should not be adapted to a big extent in order to not suppress national cultures, considering the fact that American TV programs would display a different cultural conception (Waisbord, 2004). On the other hand, formats such as *Big Brother*, *Survivor*, *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?* or *Pop Idol* emerged and revolutionized the trade market as they became global hits (Chalaby, 2011), travelled quickly around the world, and were adapted in various countries (Chalaby, 2012). Those reality TV formats contained drama, were well received from the audience, and consequently adapted by various countries and subsequently distributed around the world (Chalaby, 2016). As of 2004, western European companies such as Britain's *Celador and Pearson*, Holland's *Endemol*, or Sweden's *Strix television* were dominating the reality TV format business, which proved that formats were no longer U.S. American originals that only arrived in Europe by means of an adaptation (Waisbord, 2004). Furthermore, format trade involves for instance commissioned productions and the import of programs, implying that there is a transfer of format power and rights between licensor and licensee (Altmeyden et al., 2007). That goes hand in hand with the adaptation practice, as formats were initially developed to be adjusted (Chalaby, 2011), after they have been acquired, suggesting seeing a format as a unity that allows change and adaptation, although each particular format conserves its main concept and intention. Supported by Bondebjerg (2016), who recognizes cultural exchange at "local, national and global levels" as necessary for a functioning transnational relationship between states, one should acknowledge the TV format trade and the concomitant relationship between states or institutions should be seen as a natural outcome of the EU, as it promotes such collaboration.

2.4 The adaptation of formats

To recap, an adaptation of a format demands that programs and shows are formatted, to be transformed into a format. At this point, three questions emerge. Firstly, how does the adaptation of a TV format work, secondly what does such an adaptation entail and thirdly, how are adaptations manifested in new territories? The following pages are devoted to these questions, which are particularly important to answer because they form the basis for the subsequent production research, which will have to clarify how these adaptation processes were carried out in the specific example of the Austrian SOKO adaptation and what they entailed.

Generally spoken, a TV format containing a "universal or de-nationalized program template" allows it to be adapted, by customizing for a domestic market in order to be seen by "specific audiences in local or national contexts" (Moran, 2009b, pp.115-116). One reason for adapting programs might be a program's popularity, which makes it interesting for a broadcaster in terms of

good ratings (Chalaby, 2012). The main aim is, however, to implement a program to a new territory, to subsequently adjust it there. As Waisbord (2004) states, an adaptation means the adjustment of a format to its domestic audience. Such a customization is necessary when a format is introduced to a new broadcasting area and a new audience and to adapt the format to cultural peculiarities. However, before customizing a format, it needs to be acquired.

2.4.1 Purchasing a format's rights

Using ideas or obtaining inspiration that derived from other formats is a common phenomenon in the television format industry (Waisbord, 2004). It must be ensured that formats are not being copied without giving the original owner or creator legitimate recognition. Therefore, the adaptation of formats demands the acquisition of a licensed format, meaning that a broadcaster buys the license of a format which contains a product whose creation is attributable to an intangible property, namely the idea of the format (Chalaby, 2012). Such an acquisition is called franchising (Esser, 2013). Considering that the Austrian SOKOs are produced in cooperation between the German and Austrian PSBs, the question of the format rights holder arises. This matter will be addressed during the production study, since it must be clarified who owns the rights of the Austrian SOKOs and how the PSBs have determined those rights within the collaboration.

Generally, broadcasters that buy a TV format's rights can benefit from an already developed show (also its script) and format that has already paved the way in terms of success (Chalaby, 2016). A format can however also be adapted which would entail a discussion over the elements contained in a format, specifically if those elements must undergo a modification in order to meet the cultural identity demands (Villegas-Simon & Soto-Sanfiel, 2021). Regardless of previous success, the adaptation of a scripted format always depends on the production team and the local broadcaster that acquires the format (Chalaby, 2016). It will have to be clarified whether the script was included for the SOKO series and how these components were settled in the end.

2.4.2 Processes of adaptation

Having explained what formats are and how the format trade market started, it is now crucial to look at what can be done with formats or rather what is being done by means of an adaptation. In general, adaptation or adapting means to adjust something. According to Moran (2009b), an adaptation process involves someone currently owning a format's license and a second party that wants to purchase this license, the latter located where the format will be adapted in. While the licensor is an expert of the format and regarding its transfer to another territory, the licensee has knowledge about the specific audience to which the adapted format will be introduced to (Moran, 2009b). Although it does not represent common practice in adaptation processes, the example of *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?* still shows an interesting collaboration of licensor and

licensee, as the former gave precise instructions on how to customize the format for the Indian market, to recreate a successful and very similar version to the original (Moran, 2009b). Esser (2007) emphasizes on that as she explains that the purchasing broadcasters of the world's famous quiz show, or also *The Weakest Link*, buy whole packages that include production expertise and software, tailored onto those specific formats and their styles.

Not as stringent as this one-on-one copying method, is the "closed adaptation", that describes the practice of producing a resemblance of the original format, based on the literal translation (Moran, 2009b, p.119). A more common way of adapting formats is the "open adaptation", a translation and interpretation based on the poetics of a format, meaning style and form-related components within the format such as "staging, shooting, editing and sound [...] storytelling", that can be assigned to the overarching term of *linguistic codes* (Moran, 2009b, pp.119-120). Additionally, two other major factors need to be considered when translating a format, namely *intertextual codes*, and *cultural codes* (Heylen, 1994, as cited in Moran, 2009b, p.120). The latter can be defined as the poetics of a format that contains several manipulable components, which can be operated by altering, replacing, including, or excluding. An essential element constitutes the look of a format, that can be modified by assigning cultural visuals to it, to customize it in the respective country. While it is important to give a format a significant national look to address the national audience, the format should not be cluttered with cultural elements, as it could become a generally "bland show" otherwise (Spenser, 2006, as cited in Moran, 2009b, p.120). Moreover, cultural codes also relate to the localization of a format, which will be discussed below.

Furthermore, a format can also be adjusted on an intertextual level, which refers to "television production industries" meaning that the production of a format also must adapt to a certain milieu that includes different production practices (Moran, 2009b, p.120). Secondly, the intertextual level can also manifest regarding genres, implying that some shows allow an adjustment more easily than others and thirdly to television cultures and persons that are knowledgeable about that and therefore consulted during adaptations (Moran, 2009b, pp.120-121). Intertextual codes thus represent various aspects that can best be dealt with and answered in a production study, since it needs experts of this industry to answer intertextual related questions with regards to the Austrian SOKO adaptation. The adaptation of a format however also comprises the transfer of the so-called format or production *bible* (Chalaby, 2011; Esser, 2010). The bible bears its name because of its valuable and incomparably insightful information for instance about how to produce the program, how the funding could work, how scripts, shooting sets and casts should look like or what they should contain (Chalaby, 2011; Esser, 2010), which basically represents the franchised product (Esser, 2013). This appears to be an essential component for the transfer of the format and the development in the new country. In the case of the SOKO series, this bible could include knowledge

about where to set up the production, how to fund it, where to shoot episodes, and how main characters, criminal cases and locations should be depicted. The subsequent production study will clarify whether this bible was used in the adaptation process.

As previous work on adaptation has shown (Adriaens & Biltreyst, 2012), the process of adaptation can allow freedom, meaning that elements, as described in the bible, are not only adopted one-to-one, but other elements are redeveloped as well. An adaptation can also be highly influenced by television conventions prevailing in countries (Villegas-Simon & Soto-Sanfiel, 2021). Regarding the SOKOs, I presume a limited amount of adopted elements from the original German series, and a generally more open adaptation, which can be explained by the following apparent aspects: All SOKO versions carry the same name, that is SOKO in combination with the city's name, where the particular adaptation is located. Moreover, the basic idea of all SOKOs seems to be a similar one, namely that a team of police inspectors investigates crimes. The analysis will reveal whether the adoption of original elements was merely superficial, or whether there are aspects of content, main characters or production that have been copied from the German to the Austrian program. Although there are several aspects that need to be considered when adapting a format, there is however no universal rule which elements of the original TV program to keep, adopt or omit. While the adaptation of an entertainment or talent show is easier to adapt because contestants and presenters can be replaced in an uncomplicated manner, fictional shows, such as the SOKO series, demand greater attention when they are adapted (Mikos, 2015).

2.5 Localization of the format and cultural identity

The aspect of localization in regards with the Austrian SOKO series is relevant because it relates to the locations, where SOKO Kitzbühel and SOKO Donau were placed. According to Esser (2016) the *local* in localization refers to the perception of TV formats that are adapted *locally* and to audiences that are created by the broadcaster by offering a local format. The notion that formats get localized in order to correspond with a national culture and identity has been expressed by various scholars (see Moran, 2009b; van Keulen & Krijnen, 2014; Villegas-Simon & Soto-Sanfiel, 2021). A localized show is also associated with standards, values and opinions of the local audience, thus social-cultural aspects that can be designated as cultural identity. Those aspects need to be taken into consideration when a format is adapted. After all, a format is also adapted to be successful, which is why the producers, broadcasters and experts involved in the adaptation process must be aware of a national identity. An identity comprises cultural aspects of a national territory, which is why literature often refers to cultural and national identity (see Villegas-Simon & Soto-Sanfiel, 2021). Also, cultural disparities between European countries shape individual national identities (Dougherty, 2006). In terms of identity-related aspects, the concepts of *local* and *localization* present crucial factors during an adaptation. According to Moran (1998) local identities in the form of local culture,

are fundamentally existent in a nation and work against cultural globalization, since they cannot be repressed as easily as feared (as cited in Esser, 2007). This closely relates to the fact that by adapting a format to a national culture, this very culture is taken up and therefore a connection between format, national identity and audience is established on a national level, instead of being displaced by a culture that accompanies the format (Waisbord, 2004; Moran, 2009b). However, the format owes its existence to a global market and transnational business. The argument that Waisbord (2004) raises, on formats being local and global, supports the view on the SOKO format. It presumes that the format will not replace local cultures with 'international cultures', but that the SOKO adaptations embrace an Austrian identity. It is therefore suggestive to examine the concept of localization of the Austrian SOKOs to see how the editions have been adapted to the locality or nation and what kind of cultural identity is conveyed through them.

Adriaens and Biltereyst (2012) describe cultural identity in reference to a Flemish format adaptation, as a concept that comprises Flemish language and local settings. Those are used to increase a recognizability of Flemish identity. Here, the issue of the *Austrian* identity is relevant. The standards, values and opinions of a local audience are *here* understood as a reference to elements that are present in the Austrian SOKO series and firstly represent a picture of Austria in various ways, and secondly offer the audience something Austrian, that can be conveyed through local colors or demonstrations on a national level. Cultural identity can also be received as a term comprising "a set of symbols and practices belonging to a particular country or region" (Tomlinson, 2003, as cited in Villegas-Simon & Soto-Sanfiel, 2021, p.1458). Therefore, it is thus utilized as a concept that can be manifested through settings encompassing locations, environment and local places, characters and their personalities or private affairs, used language including dialects and conversational tone. Consequently, cultural identity addresses elements by which one can perceive and identify something Austrian - something national or local. Cultural identity should be present in an adapted series because it is intended to appeal to local viewers, and because an Austrian - again national or local - image can be conveyed, also cross-border. As Hall (1990) claims, cultures are constantly changing and are "hybrid at any point in time" (as cited in Esser, 2016, p.21). Such hybrid cultures are expected to be found in the Austrian SOKOs, illustrated, or expressed inter alia through looks, locations, places with recognition value, places known to Austrians and Germans in Austria and the language with its dialects. According to van Keulen and Krijnen (2014) localized formats have the aim of being adapted in a manner that corresponds with the culture and the identity of a nation. Acknowledging the Austrian SOKOs as a format that travelled to Austria by means of an adaptation, its localization, and the approach of identifying and representing cultural identity are aspects that will be addressed in the further course of the thesis. It should be stated that *here*, localization and the national and cultural identity are closely related.

2.6 Media systems: Public service broadcasters in Austria and Germany

To recap, TV programs and the origin or format were explained, as well as the process of format adaptation. Those elaborations were important because the subject of this study is the TV series SOKO, the adaptation that is subject to the analysis. In the following, the focus lies on PSBs. Collaborations between broadcasters can differ, depending on their cultural and media systemic characteristics. Jensen (2009) presents a comparison of a format adaptation by elaborating on differences and similarities the original version (Danish) and the adapted version (Australian) contain. The original follows Danish cultural significations and a media system that is oriented on public service, whereas the adapted version was produced on another continent, Australia, that is characterized by a more liberal and commercial-oriented broadcasting system (Jensen, 2009). This is also the case for the SOKO series in terms of the broadcasting system that oversees commissioning the production. Following Jensen's (2009) suggestion of looking closely at "media systemic conditions" of the local broadcaster that is adapting a format, it is a core element of this study to consult the side of the broadcaster (p.184).

A co-production of television and film is defined as a merged production of at least two international production crews, implying that funding is received from "more than one nation" (Havens, 2019, p.35). Important to mention here is that an international co-production also implies an expansion of the market where the end product will be consumed (Havens, 2019). According to Havens (2019) European co-productions started to grow in the 1980s and 1990s. The transnational collaboration of the Austrian and German PSB have been existing for centuries and are a result of the transnationalization of the TV industry (ORF wie wir, 2017). Whereas transnational productions describe a collaboration of production companies or broadcasters, cross-border adaptations imply the adaptation of a TV format or a show that originates in a country and gets adapted in another country (Chalaby, 2012).

The television industry in Austria is very much characterized by the biggest PSB ORF, that is also dominating the market and can be seen as public service oriented. The ORF operates to a big extent on the TV advertising market and is inter alia funded by broadcasting fees (Verband Österreichischer Privatsender). The ORF in Austria represents a broadcaster of a relatively small country, compared to Germany. International co-productions, such as the transnational one with the German PSB ZDF, offers the ORF to gain recognition and expand the distribution of some of their own programs (ORF wie wir, 2017). The ORF has been co-producing with the ZDF since 1984, creating various international programs for German-speaking audiences (ORF wie wir, 2017). Mjøs (2011) also states that the ZDF (founded in 1963) dominates the German-speaking area in terms of cross-nationally produced formats and counts as collaboration partner of the Austrian PSB, which is also the case regarding the SOKO series. Esser (2007) reinforces those statements, as she offers an

overview of television markets in Europe and international series, that shows that neighboring countries in Europe, especially those that share a language like Germany and Austria, also share formats, by importing the neighbor's contents. The table shows that Austria had one to two co-productions with Germany (at this time in 2007) and imported 7 German, thus foreign, programs (Esser, 2007, p.179). As Bondebjerg (2016) highlights, European PSBs are characterized by a high number of co-productions and Germany therefore does not only play a powerful role in the television industry in Europe but also as a co-production partner for Austria.

According to Mjøs (2011), European PSBs operate in trans-national collaborations or co-production with each other to sustain profitable businesses. In reference to the ORF and ZDF responsible for the SOKO series, one could argue that their trans-national collaboration is not only a way to create new formats together but to also benefit from each other's reach and funds. McFayden et al. (1998) also emphasize that producing series in an inter- or transnational co-production brings advantages such as shared production costs, the expansion of the audience and entry into a new television market. The study of McFayden et al. (1998) shows that production companies justify co-productions by being able to use foreign locations.

To conclude, the Austrian PSB ORF uses cross-border collaborations with the German PSB ZDF to enhance its status and reach in the television industry by co-producing series. At the same time, similar cultural and media systemic characteristics between Germany and Austria benefit their collaboration. The decision of the German and Austrian PSBs to co-produce the series is presumed to have multiple reasons, which are likely to bring advantages for both countries.

2.6.1 The audience's preference

An interesting issue with regards to format adaptations is, whether an audience prefers the domestic and local version of a show or the same show's version from another country. Waisbord (2004) claims that the audience favors the respective national version of a show. This is the fundamental basis of the whole format trade business (Waisbord, 2004). In order to offer the public a format that suits their national and cultural preferences, it must first be bought to be adapted in the respective country. Correspondingly, one could make the assertion that the Austrian audience prefers the Austrian SOKOs over the German SOKOs. Concerning some other German formats, yet relating to the Austrian SOKOs, a study done by media scholars of the University Würzburg confirms that a reason for watching a domestic format is the relation that exists between an audience and a locality (Weber, 2020). It is mentioned that motives like mountain panoramas in the south of Germany, where various German crime series are set, make a format attractive and popular. This refers to SOKO Kitzbühel, as Kitzbühel is located in the Alps. Moreover, the study revealed that the local color of a format, in German *Lokalkolorit*, is a significant reason for an audience to watch a format, because it conveys more than the crime case itself (Weber, 2020). Straubhaar (1991)

supports this concept, by referring to that viewers of a program can develop a homey-feeling, when they recognize that scenes and images in the show reflect on features of their identity (as cited in, Van Keulen & Krijnen, 2014).

It is also interesting which audience the broadcaster of the adapted format has in mind. As the literature indicates a format that is localized is naturally tailored for the national audience (see Moran, 2009b; van Keulen & Krijnen, 2014; Villegas-Simon & Soto-Sanfiel, 2021). In reference to the SOKO series, one might expect that the Austrian SOKOs were made for the Austrian audience. Esser (2007) however, states differently, as she explains that the “local adaptation is not carried out with a national or nation state audience in mind” (p.23). This statement rather suggests believing that the broadcasters in charge of the localization of a format have both, the local audience as well as foreign audiences in mind, as long as the foreign one is able to receive the program on TV. State borders thus do not represent frontiers or limits to a locally produced show. In reference to the SOKO series this aspect is especially interesting, given the fact that the Austrian SOKO shows are co-produced by the Austrian and German PSBs ORF and ZDF. I therefore presume that this research will show that one result of the transnational cooperation of the broadcasters is a larger audience, that is not limited to an Austrian audience.

2.7 Chapter summary

This chapter revealed that cultural globalization originally led to the television industry becoming more international in terms of broadcasting and production of formats and programs. It also became clear that a format cannot be defined precisely but can include a wide variety of TV programs that are bought as adaptations and then adjusted to country-specific and cultural characteristics. However, the acquisition of a format, the adaptation and the accompanying trans- or international relationship between production companies or broadcasters depends on the respective countries and media systems.

3 Method

This chapter presents the selection of methods used to collect and analyze data with, including a justification for those choices. It is explained why and how the combination of two qualitative research methods is suitable for answering the research questions, followed by a description of how the research and analysis methods were instrumentalized to conduct the research.

3.1 Research design

The aim of this research is to investigate how the adaptation of the German SOKO series to the Austrian SOKOs manifested itself, by analysing the Austrian and two German versions of the format, followed by the consultation of experts who have been either relevant decision-makers regarding the adaptation process or have been responsible for the creation and development of the Austrian editions. The adaptation process from a German format to an Austrian series needs to be investigated to understand required steps that had to be accomplished within a transnational collaboration. By asking *How did the format travel to Austria and how did it get adapted there?* those objectives can be researched.

To answer the question appropriately, a qualitative research approach seemed to be most suitable. As a scientifically broad term, qualitative studies are “interdisciplinary, interpretive, political and theoretical in nature” (Brennen, 2017, p.4). Different to quantitative approaches that seek to quantify numbers and analyze variables and their relation, qualitative approaches allow to work with experiences and knowledge of people and their beliefs as well as with data that contains meanings and significant implications (Bryman, 2012). Qualitative attempts include research methods such as interviewing or content analysis of data. Especially a combination of qualitative methods offers the researcher to enhance the accuracy of each research (Brennen, 2017). An essential trait of qualitative approaches is that the researcher appreciates the different contexts that are offered and seeks to understand the connections between various forms of media and society (Brennen, 2017), which relates to this research as creations and decisions TV industry representatives are analyzed.

This thesis comprises two studies that complement each other, each study guided by a sub-question. The first study has, by means of a comparative content analysis, examined how the adaptation manifested in the Austrian SOKO and was guided by the question *To what extent are similarities and differences present between the German SOKO series and the Austrian adaptations and how are they manifested?* The second study was carried by the question *Which decisions led to the format adaptations and what aspects did they contain?* and consisted of a production study completed by conducting five expert in-depth interviews.

A content analysis of different versions of the SOKO series, offered a suitable method to compare characters, settings, structure, and used language. By concentrating on data deriving from

episodes, elements and their presentation that are supposedly important in an adaptation or that are subject to change, could be analyzed. While the content analysis delivered insightful findings and was indispensable for the first part of the thesis, questions about the original idea of the adaptation and its realization, the development process of the Austrian format versions and decisions regarding adopting and adapting elements could have only been answered by means of another method, a production study. By conducting semi-structured interviews with experts, answers to format-relevant decision-making processes and information regarding the emergence and development of the different format editions and the collaboration of the broadcasters were obtained. Driven by the limited literature on the SOKO subject, the expertise of individuals working at the Austrian PSB, the German PSB and the production companies producing the Austrian SOKOs was relied upon. These two research methods complemented each other sufficiently, which is why this research was only possible by using the combination of both methods. That allowed, to first identify the various forms of presentation from within the audio-visual data, to then obtain justifications and explanations for these decisions and creation processes.

3.2 Comparative content analysis

This first research was dedicated to a qualitative content analysis of episodes from 4 versions of the SOKO series. The leading question asks which similarities and differences are present between the German SOKOs and the Austrian SOKO adaptations, implying whether there are similarities or differences to the original version. A content analysis presents a suitable method for analysing audio-visual data, as it is used for exploring categories that constitute the material consist of, while trying to comprehend the elemental meaning (Matthews & Ross, 2010).

Qualitative content analysis introduces a very broad term including various analysis approaches and techniques. A content analysis enables one to make “an accurate description of the content”, may it be textual, audio or also visual data (Bergman, 2010, p. 385). One can also define content analysis as a method for analysing material to detect underlying themes from within the data (Bryman, 2012). This style of analysis also allows the researcher to interpret the material subjectively (Julien, 2012). A descriptive content analysis, the method used here, allows a structured identification and detection of elements present in the data, that are relevant for answering the research question (Neuendorf, 2017). Moreover, a content analysis allows one to examine all variables, thus elements added to categories, as they naturally arise from within the material (Neuendorf, 2017). Furthermore, this method enables the researcher to review and describe content-based findings and their relationship with each other.

When comparatively analysing qualitative data, an important consideration is to reduce the amount of data to filter out what is essential, by assigning single units of the data to categories and subcategories (Schreier, 2013). This structuring process is called coding, where main categories

including subcategories are created on the basis of which all data can be analyzed in a systematic way (Schreier, 2013). The analysis was both “concept-driven” and “data-driven”, implying that the analysis allowed a flexible arrangement of the coding frame (Schreier, 2013, p.171). Since an extensive description of the analysis objects constitute an essential feature of this analysis method, the combination of both categorization approaches seemed beneficial. The concept-driven approach helped formulate the main categories deriving from Moran’s (2009b) program elements, and the data-driven one approves the inclusion of sub-categories that derive from topics within the data itself.

Here, the material consisted of audio-visual material deriving from episodes of the SOKO series. The episodes were analyzed by means of a descriptive content analysis which was then followed by a comparison of the findings. The necessity of doing a comparative content analysis originates in the nature of the research question. The aim was trying to find out similarities and differences between the versions and furthermore peculiarities of each version.

3.2.1 Sampling

The four versions SOKO Kitzbühel, SOKO Donau, SOKO München and SOKO Hamburg have been comparatively analyzed. To determine which elements from the original German versions are present in the Austrian SOKOs, which characters appear, how the criminal cases are structured and what the episodes contain, episodes of SOKO München were selected. SOKO Hamburg as one of the latest SOKO additions (released in 2018), seemed appropriate to be selected to find out whether this new release shares commonalities with the original German version. Considering SOKO Hamburg’s late release, it was reasonable to select the other versions’ seasons that were released in 2018 or at least around that time. To be precise, season 17 of SOKO Kitzbühel was selected, released in December 2017, but broadcasted for the majority in 2018 (no season of Kitzbühel premiered in 2018). Season 14 of SOKO Donau was selected, which first appeared in 2018. The initial plan was also to select season 44 of SOKO München, which was released in 2018, but since it was not publicly available to watch, season 43 from 2017 was selected instead. Of each of those seasons, the first five episodes, thus a total of 20 episodes were analyzed. By choosing five consecutive episodes of each season, a sufficient perception of how each season is built up, how the structure within the episodes is composed and whether the episodes’ content is continuous, was obtained. With each episode lasting between 43-45 minutes the total amount of data resulted in 14,48 hours of viewing and analysing audio-visual material. A table containing the episodes’ titles, lengths, release dates and the responsible production companies can be found in the Appendix A.

3.2.2 Data Analysis

Every episode was analyzed to detect differences and similarities of the four SOKO editions.

The usage of the coding frame containing categories and “mutually exclusive” subcategories is the core element of a content analysis, according to Schreier (2013, p.175). The first step of the analysis was to create a flexible set of categories to which individual scenes, characters and structure-related occurrences that needed to be identified in the episodes, could be entered. In reference to Moran’s (2009b) program elements (see 2.4.2), categories were created that comprise elements which are usually adjusted in format adaptations such as *Characters, Structure of the story, Humorous Elements, Representation of locality/ local features* and *language related aspects*. The subsequent conceptualization phase demanded variables to be created (Neuendorf, 2017), which were inspired by Moran’s (2009b) *linguistic codes*. Here, linguistic codes are categories for manipulable elements such as “staging, shooting, editing, sound [...] storytelling” (Moran, 2009b, p.120) that represent the differently presented elements in the episodes. Those codes represent thus the main categories of the coding frame and refer to the structure of each episode in terms of storyline, the main characters that appear, mostly consisting of police investigators and police employees, the inclusion of private aspects of main characters, the settings in which each episode takes place, the use of language and linguistic peculiarities and the inclusion of humorous elements. Using the coding frame, enabled to determine which of the elements were present/ not present and in what way or to what extent they were used in the episodes. Moreover, the category *Inclusion of private aspects* did not derive from theory, was yet added. All those categories carried several subcategories that derived naturally according to the nature of the main category. *Intertextual* and *cultural codes* (see 2.4.2) were not utilized.

The coding process of the content analysis comprised several rounds of which the first round consisted of viewing the selected episodes and observing how the episodes are built up, which actions follow upon each other and what kind of conversations are going on between which characters. In addition, every other aspect worth comparing or mentioning was indicated in the coding document. The coding-sheets, one created for each episode, include the coding frame to which all units of analysis coded in the various (sub)categories were entered. An exemplary coding frame as used in the analysis can be reviewed in Appendix A.

3.3 Interview study

After having analyzed similarities and differences within the episodes and how the Austrian SOKOs are localized, the interview study complements the research by justifying how the adaptation and the use or omission of elements came about, hence the sub-research question what decisions led to the format adaptation and what aspects it contained. This part of the study concentrated on questions regarding the adaptation process, the initial idea behind it and its initial goal, the broadcasters’ collaboration and how manifested itself, decisions that led to the adaptation of the SOKO format, and the development and creation of the Austrian SOKO editions and how they were

achieved. Those aspects present the research objective of the production study that manifested in an interview research. To understand those production-related processes and decision-makings, expert interviews were conducted with producers and decision-makers involved in the production of the SOKO series.

Production studies can be difficult to conduct because they depend on experts representing the respective industries. To explore the production of a TV format including its development process and the responsible broadcaster I, the researcher, had to remain flexible when requesting interviews, considering that the chosen experts simply could not be replaced (Bruun, 2016).

3.3.1 Method of data collection

The conduct of in-depth interviews presents a suitable research method in qualitative studies for obtaining information. The in-depth aspect refers to the researcher's urge to gain deeper knowledge from the participants, than surveys or regular conversations would allow to obtain (Johnson, 2011). Interviewing as a method for data collection strives to learn about the context and the purpose behind the information, expertise, or opinion of the interviewees (Brennen, 2017). By conducting in-depth interviews, I sought to explore more than the obvious and to investigate in a certain field, where only specific individuals are known as knowledgeable. Therefore, the purpose of the in-depth interviews was not only to gain insights and more than commonly known information, but to also ask specific experts who can be classified as "exclusive informants" (Bruun, 2016, p.134) because of their "irreplaceable knowledge" (Keinonen, 2017, p.997). Moreover, interviewing exclusive informants in the field of media production has the advantage of acquiring knowledge that helps directly to answer the research question because the informants can deliver an exclusive expertise combined with a subjective view on the business and their specific role in the production industry (Bruun, 2016).

The interviews were of a semi-structured nature, meaning that a detailed question catalogue was designed and adapted respectively for every interviewee. All questions, however, derived from the general topic list for the interviews (see Appendix B). Semi-structured interviews are therefore partly guided by the topic list, yet flexible and open for unprepared follow up questions by the researcher or answers by the interviewees that introduce new topics. The determined structure of the interview however manifests itself also in a way that the same questions are asked all interviewees in the same way (Brennen, 2017; Matthews & Ross, 2010). Furthermore, the interviews were considered factual interviews, because the overarching goal was to obtain answers regarding facts of the adaptation and production processes and not so much about the interview's personal experiences of social phenomena (Brennen, 2017). Those interviews were subsequently analyzed by means of a thematic analysis.

3.3.2 Sample

The interview partners were selected through, what Matthews and Ross (2010) call, purposive sampling, meaning that the people were selected because they possess characteristics, and knowledge of the research object that are necessary to answer the research question. Furthermore, one interviewee was recruited through personal contact. The interviewees represent experts in the field of production of TV formats, creating and developing TV formats, and regarding the work of a PSB and the collaboration between such. The term expert refers to the occupation of the interview candidates, which suggests that they have knowledge and insights into the production and development of the research subject. The selection of experts was therefore based on a targeted search for these people.

Through an internet search, it was possible to find the people who have an obvious connection with the SOKO format. Originally, four people were contacted: the head of programming at ORF, the person responsible for SOKOs at ZDF, the producer of SOKO Kitzbühel and the producer of SOKO Donau. Another person was approached through a personal contact, who recommended to contact another editor at ORF. Two editors were also recommended by ZDF, one of whom replied. After getting in contact with several possible interview partners, the final sample consisting of five experts was created. The set comprises the two producers of the Austrian formats, an editor from ZDF, the head of the department for film and television at ORF and the former head of the same department at ORF, who was directly involved in the founding of the SOKO Donau version. An overview can be seen in the table below.

Table 3.3.2.1

List of interview partners

Interview Participants	Occupations	Conducted on	Relation to the SOKO Format
Heinrich Mis	Former head of the ORF TV main department television film (located in Austria)	19.4.2021	Significantly involved in the development of the SOKO Donau version.
Heinrich Ambrosch	Chief Executive Officer of the film and TV series production company <i>Satel Film</i> (located in Austria)	21.4.2021	Since 2007 producer of SOKO Donau.
Katharina Schenk	Current head of the ORF TV main department television film (located in Austria)	26.4.2021	Responsible for all Austrian SOKO versions.

Silvia Lambri	TV editor at German public service broadcaster ZDF (located in Germany)	27.4.2021	Responsible editor for SOKO Donau since 2004.
Florian Gebhardt	Chief Executive Officer of the film and TV series production company <i>Gebhardt Productions</i> (located in Austria)	28.4.2021	Since 2016/ 2017 Producer of SOKO Kitzbühel and since 2020 SOKO Linz.

3.3.3 Data collection

Before the conduct of interviews, the interviewees were given a consent form, affirming their agreement to the recording of the interview and the further use of the data, which was signed and returned by two of the participants and verbally confirmed by the others at the beginning of the interview. Moreover, they have agreed to their real names and professional occupation being used. The interviews were conducted in German, as the best result could be achieved by talking to the participants in their native language. With interview durations ranging between 40 and 54 minutes, the total interview duration is 240 minutes and 51 seconds, which makes an average duration of 48 minutes per interview. Given my residence in the Netherlands, it was difficult to meet the experts in person which is why all interviews were conducted through video conferencing, as can be seen in the table above. The interview started with a brief acknowledgement of their participation in the study and a short introduction of myself including my goal as a researcher.

As the second sub question demands, the decisions that led to this format adaptation and the aspects it contained were the overarching topics of the interview research. In line with the semi-structured nature of the interviews, some questions for instance on how the television industry has developed in the German-speaking area and how the popularity of the crime series, or SOKOs, can be explained, were addressed to all the experts at the beginning. Other questions aimed at the respective expertise of the interviewee, for example regarding the production of SOKO Kitzbühel or SOKO Donau and were addressed to the respective producers. Nevertheless, production-related questions that regard the broadcasters and their editors as well, were also addressed to the other experts. Questions concerning the PSBs ORF and ZDF, and their collaboration were also discussed with all participants.

In reference to the topic of adaptation, the interview guide partially included aspects that derived from the results of the content analysis. Issues concerning the initial idea of the adaptation, the responsible decision-makers behind it and considerable elements regarding an adaptation did not originate from the content analysis but were also discussed with the experts. As results of the analysis revealed, special features of the Austrian versions manifested themselves as linguistic peculiarities, the inclusion of private side-stories of the main characters or the presentation of the local setting. Hence, all experts were addressed with the adaptation theme after the results have

been operationalized into the following topics: *special features and peculiarities of the Austrian SOKOs, national/regional Austrian aspects present in the SOKOs, differences between the Austrian and German SOKOs*, and one question that asked whether they would see the adaptation of the SOKO series as a method that would allow the representation of a nation's culture.

Furthermore, the topic list comprised questions regarding a new SOKO edition, SOKO Linz which replaces SOKO Kitzbühel (Forst, 2021). According to Seyringer (2021) and Forst (2021), this series is currently in production under the direction of the production company Gebhardt productions, which also produced SOKO Kitzbühel. This development implies the creation of a new SOKO extension and an interesting aspect in terms of format adaptations, as it is the third Austrian SOKO version, and was therefore addressed to all experts.

A limitation of the interview study was for instance that internal information on the financing of the new SOKO Linz could not be disclosed due to company internal policies.

3.3.4 Data analysis

After the interviews had been completed, they were transcribed with the help of computer software. The five transcripts represent the data that was subsequently analyzed by means of a thematic analysis. This method was particularly suitable, because it allowed the researcher to eliminate information from the data that is not specifically important for the research question and to highlight the main findings, all done by coding the data. The aim of the thematic analysis is to recognize and determine relevant information in the data and to reflect on those themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The coding was conducted by using the analysis software Atlas.ti. According to Braun and Clarke's (2006) approach, the first coding round included the creation of initial codes that identified relevant aspects for the research objective. This included a systematic search through all the data until everything slightly relevant was coded, resulting in a total amount of 222 codes. The second coding round demanded a close look at all codes to identify which codes could constitute one theme or subcategory. This included mergers of codes and the allocation of less important codes to a *miscellaneous* theme. In the third round, the subcategories were, in reference to their contents and relation with each other, added to four final main themes.

3.4 Quality criteria

A qualitative content analysis relies majorly on the abilities and the interpretation of the researcher which raises the issue of assumption of credibility and reliability of the results (Silverman, 2011). It is almost impossible that two researchers doing the same research will receive the same results. A qualitative study can however be reliable, as the same research methods regarding one objective, will lead to similar results (Matthews & Ross, 2010). Making the various stages of this study transparent in this chapter, contributes to the reliability of the research (Silverman, 2011).

Furthermore, I as a researcher aimed at creating trustworthy and credible results, by analysing the material iterative (Julien, 2012). Throughout the whole coding and analysis process, I remained a critically thinking researcher.

4 Results

In this chapter the findings of both research parts, thus the content analysis of selected SOKO episodes as well as the thematic analysis of the interview transcripts representing the production study will be presented and discussed. With the research questions in mind, the completed analyses are now followed by the presentation of the results in combination with interpretations.

4.1 Content Analysis of SOKO episodes

The comparative content analysis revealed elements in the episodes that can be considered as common features of all four SOKO versions as well as distinguishing and characterizing aspects of each respective version.

4.1.1 Fixed elements of all editions

A common feature of all four SOKO editions is for instance the designated length of the episodes, which ranges from 43:03 to 43:55 minutes. This length sets the time frame for a format that embraces the same idea and thus represents another common feature. A team of investigators is solving a crime within one episode. Those common features introduce two similarities. Self-contained plots within the episodes and the structure of the storyline.

4.1.1.1 Intro of the seasons

The analysis showed that the intros of the four SOKOs have the same purpose, namely, to introduce both the city where the police department is located and the main characters. The intro of SOKO Kitzbühel lasts for 27 seconds, and the intro of the other three versions lasts 30 second. By including shots of sightseeing spots and of, for the respective city typical images, the audience gets a first impression of the location where the respective SOKO team is situated. In the intro of SOKO Donau, the parliament, the Danube River, and police boats, can be seen besides characters. SOKO Kitzbühel's intro offers views on the alpine mountain panorama (see Figure 1), a shot of Kitzbühel city from a bird's-eye view and impressions of rural areas. The intro of SOKO München also includes some perspectives of Munich such as the city hall and the statue of Bavaria in front of its hall of fame. SOKO Hamburg's intro offers shots of watersides, the harbor, port cranes and Hamburg's Speicherstadt. Whereas SOKO Donau and SOKO Hamburg show its proximity to watersides, SOKO Kitzbühel conveys a rural area surrounded by mountains and SOKO München is characterized by the impressions of the city. SOKO Donau, SOKO München and SOKO Hamburg furthermore end with a shot of the whole team together (Figure 1, 3,4), followed by the SOKO logo with the respective city. Due to the change of colonels in SOKO Donau in episode 4, a new group picture replaced the old one (F. 2). Only SOKO Kitzbühel does not include an image of the gathered crew (F. 5).

Figure 1

SOKO Donau, Season 14, Episode 1 *The truth dies last*



Timestamp: 00:25

retrieved from Flimmit.com



Timestamp: 00:28

Figure 2

SOKO Donau, Season 14, Episode 5 *To the blood*



Timestamp: 00:25

Retrieved from Flimmit.com

Figure 3

SOKO München Season 43, Episode 1 *The guilt of the fathers*



Timestamp: 00:25

Retrieved from zdf.de



Timestamp: 00:29

Figure 4

SOKO Hamburg Season 1, Episode 1 *Fallen Angel*



Timestamp: 00:26

Retrieved from Amazon Prime



Timestamp: 00:30

Figure 5

SOKO Kitzbühel, Season 17, Episode 1 *To good neighbourliness*



Timestamp 00:24

Retrieved from Flimmit.com

4.1.1.2 Self-contained plot

An overarching similarity of all episodes, regardless of their country of production, is the self-contained plot within every episode, meaning that the storyline ended at the end of every episode and was not continued in the next episode. This finding emerged, when all episodes were coded but no connections could be found between the crime-solving storylines of the consecutive episodes of every season. Every episode conveys the impression that the workday of police investigators begins, as the episode begins and ends again by the end of the episode. Storylines regarding the characters, however, can continue beyond an episode's end, meaning that the relationship of main characters does not start at zero at the beginning of a new episode. To exemplify, two main characters from SOKO Kitzbühel Major Pokorny and Major Roither have an affair from the first episode onwards, that gets picked up again in all five episodes.

4.1.1.3 Structural principles of the episodes

While the underlying principle is that police investigators are solving a crime, the similarity of the structure is only superficial. The analysis revealed the structure of the episodes, comprising, apart from the intro, the following scenes: inspection of the crime scene that is often accompanied

by observing a murder victim (exceptions were detected in SOKO Hamburg S.1, E.1 where the alleged murder victim survives and is transferred to the hospital; and in SOKO Munich S.43, E.4 where the team of police inspectors did not actually go to the crime scene); Interrogation of witnesses; Meetings at the police station that includes discussions of the crime case, and interrogations of witnesses and suspects.

To illustrate that the beginning of the episodes is also not the same, regardless of the version, two examples are briefly explained. While episode 5 of SOKO Kitzbühel begins with hobby detectives Kofler and Schönberg stopping a confused person from jumping off a bridge who is subsequently being interrogated at the police station and admits that he allegedly killed someone, episode 5 of SOKO Hamburg begins with one of the main characters, chief inspector Schütz, being off duty at an event at the gun club while an orating man on stage is being shot in the head.

Overall, one can say that the general idea of solving a capital crime that involves interrogations of the witnesses and suspects, the search for evidence, research work, investigations around the area where the crime took place could be detected in all episodes. Episode 3 of SOKO München focused on a child kidnapping, which shows that it is not only the discovery of a body that determines an episode. However, a corpse of the alleged kidnapper was also found during the episode, meaning that the discovery of a body also depicts an element that is present everywhere. However, the structure of each episode did not follow the exact same scheme. The analysis showed that the structure of the episodes differs in various elements such as the time that the investigators spend at the police station and the order of finding evidence. To exemplify that the content of the first episodes is not copied but newly created for each episode, including different episode titles, Appendix A presents a table of titles and short summaries.

4.1.2 Differences

The analysis revealed more differences than common features between the versions, leading to the preliminary conclusion that there are few fixed or adopted elements from the original SOKO München. The level of localization in every SOKO edition is high, implying that the locations presented are crucial for the individual versions. While structural elements remain the same, other program elements, in the sense of Moran (2009b; see 3.2.2), are manifestly different. While the overarching relevance of the inclusion locations is important to all editions, each SOKO differs from the others aesthetically, as every environment is characteristic, and in the composition of characters and cultural differences such as the use of dialects and humor or private narratives.

4.1.2.1 Austrian dialect and humorous elements

Although the language used in all episodes is German, differences regarding Austrian dialects were detected. The analysis showed that dialects and the inclusion of specific phrases typical for

Austria or Germany have been used, respectively to the location of each edition. As Austrian people don't speak standard high German, incorporating dialects was a natural response and furthermore a way of representing local peculiarities or the national "Austrian" at least linguistically. A concrete example is the chief inspector Kroisleitner of the SOKO Kitzbühel team, who represents a person that speaks in an "Austrian" dialect. The analysis showed that an Austrian way of talking is always present in SOKO Kitzbühel and SOKO Donau, and for example emphasized by colonel Dirnberger as he was talking on the phone using an Austrian slang word that the person on the other line could not even understand which is why Dirnberger explained it. The use of a dialect was also present in SOKO as the characters of forensic doctor Weissenböck, and chief inspector Ainfachnur talked in a Bavarian accent. The analysis also revealed references regarding the relation between Austria and Germany, often manifested as sarcastic comments and quips between the main characters. One scene shows group inspector Steininger being lost with the car in Vienna, when Major Ribarski asks ironically "Am I the German [Piefke] or what?". *Piefke* is a slightly pejorative word, mostly used by Austrians and by commenting in this way, Ribarski is alluding to the fact that he is not from Vienna but from Germany. Moreover, sarcastic comments such as "well great" can be heard especially in SOKO Donau, when something goes wrong.

4.1.2.2 Main characters and team constellation

There are significant differences between main characters of the German versus the Austrian versions, but also between all German characters, and all Austrian characters.

SOKO Kitzbühel

As the analysis shows, the main characters of all SOKOs are characterizing the respective versions. The four SOKOs comprise different constellations of main characters (see Appendix A). As a first, the team in SOKO Kitzbühel consist of two Majors, one chief inspector, one forensic doctor and two remaining characters Kofler a chef of a local restaurant and countess Schönberg, resulting in six main characters. The two personas, no employees of police, are nevertheless involved in solving the crime as they are hobby detectives and either somehow involved in the crime case or simply interested. For instance, season 17 episode 3 shows the involvement of Kofler in the crime, as he is infiltrated in an undercover investigation on a camp side, as he recognizes his fish supplier as the culprit. Another involvement of hobby detective countess Schönberg is incorporated in the episode, by in season 17 episode 2, hobby detective countess Schönberg is included in the episode, as she requests the police inspectors to investigate how a friend of hers could have become a victim of a poisoning attack.

Whereas the two Majors mostly investigate together, meaning they interrogate suspects and witnesses, drive to crime scenes and guide the investigation process, the chief inspector Kroisleitner

often does office work at the police station in combination with investigations that he does on his own. The analysis revealed however, that all processes within an investigation such as interrogations and the search for evidence are done by all three of the inspectors and that there is no superior boss giving instructions. The forensic doctor either appears at her workplace of forensic medicine or she is present at the crime scene, determining the cause of death. In case the police officers are gathering information about the cause of death from the forensic doctor, a corpse is on the examination table in the forensic department.

SOKO Donau

On the contrary, SOKO Donau presents a different set of characters. Under the leadership of Colonel Dirnberger, three inspectors investigate, usually in pairs, but sometimes in threes. It also happens that Penny Lanz works on her own and interrogates witnesses, which also happens in Kitzbühel, where Chief Inspector Kroisleitner sometimes investigates alone. In episode 4, Colonel Dirnberger retires as head of the police and introduces his successor, Colonel Henriette Wolf. In none of the other three SOKOs is a female person the boss. What stands out is the German main character Major Carl Ribarski, who works well integrated with the colleagues, but differs from the others because of his way of speaking High German. Ribarski gives the impression of being calm but, if necessary, strict, and dominant. He seems to be a leading role in interrogations as he has a very authoritative character. Dr. Franziska Beck is also a character originating from Germany and the forensic doctor. She works at the police station, which means she is involved closely together with the police inspectors and the forensic experts. She furthermore appears on the crime scenes and gives first estimations about cause of deaths. Together with the forensic expert she works in an office at the police station and consults the police inspectors on how to possibly solve the crime in a very engaged, excited, and interested work ethic.

SOKO München

The analysis showed that the SOKO München team comprises the most team members with a total of eight main characters, who appeared alternating, meaning that not every episode showed the same police inspectors. The first Chief inspector Arthur Bauer, however, was present in every episode, representing the leading role in the investigations and the head of the team. Just as in SOKO Donau and SOKO Kitzbühel, this version's team also contains a forensic doctor and additionally a forensic expert. This expert, just as in SOKO Donau, appears both on crime scenes to search for traces and in an office on the police station to analyze evidence.

SOKO Hamburg

At first the analysis did not reveal whether a head of department was present in the team, because no clear order was given to an inspector, yet chief inspector Jan Köhler appeared to be the

boss. A clear distinction from the other teams are two characters who took on pure office work such as research and IT related tasks but did not take on any field service. In the other SOKO teams, the inspectors' activities were always alternating between office and outside work. In the other SOKO teams, those who did office work were also on duty outside. A clear distinction in this version is the absence of a forensic scientist and a forensic investigator. Here, as well as in the other SOKOs, mostly couples of two investigate together, although some inspectors did a solo operation from time to time.

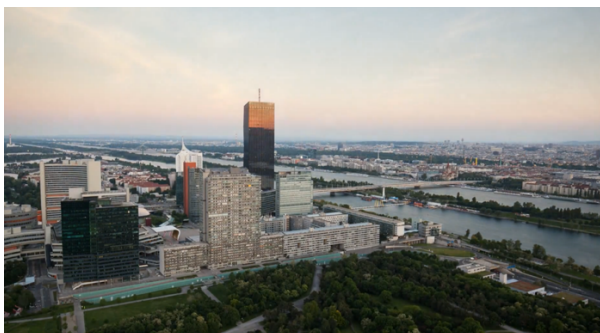
Concluding, the analysis showed that in SOKO Kitzbühel and SOKO Donau there was more light banter between the main characters than in the other versions. While in SOKO Munich Arthur Bauer could be clearly identified as the boss because of the central position in which he handed out orders and the seriousness he radiated, in SOKO Hamburg there was no hierarchy between the colleagues. In SOKO Hamburg, however, especially in the first three episodes, there was little chemistry between the main characters, who behaved rather neutrally towards each other, even if they were always friendly. Besides SOKO Hamburg, no version had designated office workers. Neither the chiefs of the various SOKOs, nor the forensic doctors, the forensic investigators, or the individual Majors and chief inspectors are set up in the same way. Neither do the characters who work in the same function represent the same gender or the same work ethic.

4.1.2.3 Setting

The analysis has shown that locations and settings are emphasized differently. They reveal, however, how the respective SOKO versions have been localized. Firstly, the police station and its surroundings are shown at least once per episode in SOKO Donau (F.6) and SOKO Hamburg (F.7), whereas in SOKO Kitzbühel the police station is not shown at all and in SOKO Munich it is shown only once, when a scene showed the detectives leaving the building. SOKO Donau's police station is located at the Danube, hence the shot on the water with the police building on the other waterfront (F.7).

Figure 6

SOKO Donau, Season 14, Episode 1 *The truth dies last* (Retrieved from Flimmit.com)



Timestamp: 00:35



Timestamp: 39:14

Figure 7

SOKO Hamburg Season 1, Episode 1 *Fallen Angel*



Timestamp: 15:08

Retrieved from Amazon Prime

SOKO Hamburg Season 1, Episode 5 *Right in the heart*



Timestamp: 04:04

Secondly, by showing the cities, landscape (F.8) and the surroundings, the respective crime scene and environment are displayed which suggests where the detectives are investigating. While several shots of the city or the countryside could be detected in SOKO Kitzbühel, Donau and Hamburg, SOKO München offers few impressions of the city. There is, however, another kind of localization that takes place by showing places or settings that convey local or regional particularities.

Figure 8

SOKO Kitzbühel, Season 17, Episode 1 *To good neighbourliness*



Timestamp 04:07

Retrieved from Flimmit.com



Timestamp 04:13

While episode 2 of SOKO Hamburg is set on the typical countryside that is surrounding Hamburg (F.9), a castle in Styria (F.11) is the subject of SOKO Donau and the scene is set when the investigators accidentally come across an alleged murder case there. Also, SOKO München displays a city's characteristic, by including the Munich Oktoberfest¹ into an episode (F.10).

¹ The Munich Oktoberfest is an annual beer festival including fairs that attracts thousands of visitors.

Figure 9

SOKO Hamburg Season 1, Episode 2 *Deadly harvest*



Timestamp: 00:36

Retrieved from Amazon Prime



Timestamp: 07:57

Figure 10

SOKO München Season 43, Episode 4 *A Tent of Murder*



Timestamp 08:15

Retrieved from zdf.de

Figure 11

SOKO Donau, Season 14, Episode 1 *To the blood*



Timestamp: 13:09

Retrieved from Flimmit.com

The analysis showed that all four SOKOs display different environments and settings firstly because the SOKOs are in different locations and secondly because all episodes present different stories. A significant difference between SOKO Kitzbühel and the other three SOKOs is that this one is much more rural. While the analysis showed that in SOKO Donau, Munich and Hamburg, houses, cities and urban areas are depicted more, in Kitzbühel the emphasis is on the mountains, the rural surroundings, but of course also on the town of Kitzbühel.

4.1.2.4 Inclusion of private aspects

A distinctive characteristic was detected in SOKO Kitzbühel, where the characters Kofler and Schönberg appear as involved hobby detectives. This element is neither found in the other versions, nor can it be compared. Their inclusion introduces a storyline that conveys a family-like character constellation. Private aspects were furthermore detected in scenes that contained chief inspector Kroisleitner going to Kofler's restaurant where he would meet him and Schönberg, to discuss the crime case with them. This narrative strand presumably also serves as a link between the viewer and the investigators since the hobby detectives present themselves as curious normal citizens who are interested in crime. Moreover, SOKO Kitzbühel carries more in terms of the characters' private life, as the affair between Major Pokorny and Roither is visualized by showing them together at one's

home.

In SOKO Hamburg, private aspects of the main characters are played with in that Chief Inspector Schütz is on a private trip in two of the five episodes when someone is murdered, and he therefore must investigate partly in his private environment. It is, however, necessary to highlight that there is no overlap of private involvement in the episodes. What does stand out, however, as already mentioned, is the thematization of the hobby detectives in SOKO Kitzbühel, with whom the investigators have a relationship. In SOKO Donau there is a moment when the retirement of the colonel is discussed, which moves his team to tears, but which does not reflect a moment in any of the other SOKO versions.

4.2 Conclusion and interpretation

The analysis revealed that the Austrian investigation teams are a bit more relaxed compared to the German teams, however showing fingertip sensitivity. Apart from the use of dialects in the Austrian SOKOs, the visual component is a standout, offering visual variety due to their different settings, such as Styria, different locations in Vienna and Kitzbühel with its panorama.

Concerning the research question asking about similarities and differences and how the adaptation manifested itself, it is important to emphasize the adoption of structural elements, the intro that introduces the locations and the self-contained plot. Those features of all SOKOs refer more to the principles of the series, rather than to adapted program elements, and suggest seeing the Austrian SOKOs as an open adaptation. The loose adaptation is evident as program elements were not copied or translated for the Austrian SOKOs but were designed newly. Considering the localizations of the SOKO versions in Vienna and the surrounding area, and in Kitzbühel, it can be concluded that the audience is addressed by the characteristics and built-in cultural narratives present in the selected locations in such a way that something specifically Austrian is presented to them, that counts as part of cultural identity (see Ch. 2.5). Local cultures in the Austrian versions are visually and verbally expressed and are supposedly representing Austrian colors that correspond with an audience. Moreover, no standardization across borders was determined, but an emphasis on national and cultural identity. The predominant differences suggest that the intention with the Austrian adaptations was not to copy German SOKOs, but to present new stories with individual characters and Austrian flair. How the Austrian SOKOs were created and what the adaptations generally entailed, is *inter alia*, answered in the following.

4.3 Production Study

Four themes emerged throughout the thematic analysis of the interviews, whereby it must be highlighted that the aim of the interviews was to obtain the experts' answers to specific questions. The first theme is dedicated to the ongoing collaboration of public service broadcasters ORF and ZDF. The second theme deals with the production of the Austrian SOKO versions which includes the type of production, the creation of episodes, and the funding of the production. The third theme addresses the adaptation process and various elements that were considered and influenced during this process. The last theme presents the experts' insights into how the characteristics of the Austrian SOKO editions were developed. Together, the results demonstrate a well-functioning cooperation between PSBs, freedom in development, and the intention of creating new content.

4.3.1 Collaboration between broadcasters and production companies

The Austrian SOKO editions SOKO Kitzbühel (2001-2021), SOKO Donau (2005-) and SOKO Linz (currently in production, 2022-) are products of a collaboration between public service broadcasters ORF and ZDF. To be more precise, this collaboration is the cornerstone of the Austrian versions, since the first episode of SOKO Kitzbühel appeared in 2001. The Austrian SOKOs have always been designed, developed, and produced based on the collaboration of the broadcasters. As explained by Heinrich Mis, the former head of the ORF TV main department television film states the collaboration between the Austrian and German broadcasters has been existing for centuries, which allowed them to create and develop joint productions of any kind.

Well, the collaboration has metaphorically been going on for a hundred years, so there are great cultural contributions [...] then it was said okay, ZDF invented this SOKO series and one Austrian producer suggested to ORF and ZDF that we could make [SOKO] Kitzbühel.²
(Heinrich Mis)

The analysis showed that this long-lasting and well-functioning collaboration is the basis for the realization of the Austrian editions of the format. The collaboration manifests itself on different levels, according to which the relationship between PSB and PSB, or PSB and production company also arises. The interviews confirmed that the relatively small size of Austria as a TV production country benefits from the cross-borders collaborations with the German PSB. This co-production entails shared production costs, a bigger range of audience and therefore an advantage for the Austrian PSB and producers, just as claimed by Mjøs (2011) and McFayden et al. (1998) (see 2.6).

4.3.1.1 Production relations and funding

The production of the Austrian SOKOs constitutes a versatile and essential part in the process

² All quotations have been translated from German to English.

of the adaptation. The aspects of financing, the nature of the production relationships and the work on the individual seasons and episodes of the series represent aspects that must be considered when adapting the format or founding the new Austrian versions. Two production companies are responsible for the production of the Austrian series. Between the companies and the broadcasters ZDF and ORF exist different production relations, which is necessary to explain for clarity reasons. Gebhardt productions was producing SOKO Kitzbühel (2016-2021; 2001-2016 beo-film) by being commissioned through the ORF and ZDF. This means that the ORF commissioned and oversaw the production. The type of commission regarding SOKO Kitzbühel is illustrated by the producer Florian Gebhardt:

In my time it was a 100 percent commissioned production where there was a direct commissioning relationship from us to ORF and ORF had a co-production agreement with ZDF. [...] Commissioned production means you can repeat the program as often as you like and sell it to all countries - you don't have to divide anything up. In a production where a producer brings money, it is divided differently. (Gebhardt)

Especially in terms of funding the production relation matters, since the commissioned production implies that Gebhardt Productions was not ordered to apply for funding by the state of Austria for example. The funding of SOKO Kitzbühel was thus a responsibility of the PSBs, but it did not include financial support by federal states of Austria. But that is how it was with SOKO Donau, where the production relations are different. SOKO Donau is not based on a commissioned production, but the production company Satel Film is a cooperation partner of ORF and ZDF and acts as a binding link in this triangular relationship with the two PSBs. As a co-producer, Satel Film is obliged to apply for funding and is thus co-financing the series. That means that the ORF is not fully in charge, but that the company Satel Film must provide 25-30% of the total financing for the series in co-production together with ORF and ZDF³. As ORF's head of the TV and film department, Schenk, explains:

SOKO Donau is by construction a co-production between ORF ZDF and Satel Film, funded by RTR⁴, just to be complete and SOKO Kitzbühel was a direct co-production between ZDF and ORF. ORF is in charge and SOKO Linz will be the same construction, ORF and ZDF will also be directly involved, so that differs a bit, because in the case of the RTR-funded production, the production company is also currently an equal partner, there are three parties. (Schenk)

The request for funding and the resulting receipt of money from Austrian federal states is

³ See Appendix C, Figure 8 for an overview of the funding of SOKO Donau.

⁴ Rundfunk und Telekom Regulierungs-GmbH, <https://www.rtr.at/rtr/footer/impressum.de.html>

important to mention because it closely relates to the selection of filming locations. SOKO Kitzbühel is only filmed in Kitzbühel and the surrounding area (due to the lack of state subsidies). Satel Film is however co-financing the production which includes requesting funding from federal states in Austria that consequently determined the shooting location for SOKO Donau. Filming SOKO Donau takes place in Vienna, Upper Austria, Lower Austria, and Styria. The production conditions thus pave the way for financing and in turn, it determines the choice of locations, depending on what federal states have financially contributed.

4.3.1.2 Reasons for establishing the first Austrian SOKO

In reference to the sub question that asks which decisions led to the format adaptation, the interviews revealed several reasons for developing Austrian SOKOs. One reason for founding the Austrian SOKOs was the cooperation between the broadcasters, which had and has a financial advantage because both broadcasters contribute financially. The initial idea was to create new SOKO versions that should be inspired but not replicated by the original German version. It has already been explained that a format adaptation strives to be successful (Moran, 2009b). Additionally, a reason for adapting a format can also be its previous success (Chalaby, 2012). The advantage of using the idea that derived from a successful German series to develop successful Austrian SOKOs presents another reason for creating SOKO Kitzbühel as the first Austrian SOKO was. Based on this, the CEOs of the beo-film production company, Helmuth Dimko and Peter Hajek, together with ZDF and ORF, implemented the idea of a new Austrian program in 2001. Inspired by pre-existing collaborations between the PSBs, establishing the first Austrian SOKO did not involve any complicated new tasks. After the series ran successfully and was well received by viewers, the second Austrian version, SOKO Donau, was released in 2005. Building on the success of SOKO Kitzbühel, ORF, together with ZDF and the production company Satel Film (at that time led by the director Michael Wolkenstein) expanded the SOKO family. This was intended to stand out from the existing SOKOs, which is why the Marine Police were implemented and SOKO Donau was founded, which at that time was on the water even more than today.

4.3.1.3 Control of the co-producer and broadcaster ZDF

The analyses revealed that the collaboration of the broadcasters entails requirements with regards to the production of the Austrian SOKO versions, as well as advantages and that also the ZDF has a say in the production of the Austrian SOKOs. From a financial point of view, it is a pure advantage for two broadcasters to collaborate because there is more start-up capital. But the cooperation between the broadcasters is also an established collaboration that has existed for decades and therefore offers a reliable production environment. With respect to transnationalization that initiated cross-border collaborations, one can see that Austria and Germany made use of this

way of collaborating and co-producing early on (Esser, 2007). As can be seen from the interviews, the Austrian SOKOs would not exist if they were not based on the cooperation of the broadcasters.

However, the analysis revealed that ZDF has control over the Austrian SOKOs, as it sets requirements. The ZDF has direct influence on the content of the Austrian SOKOs' episodes, as editors of the ZDF work closely together with editors of the ORF with regards to the creation of episodes. Both broadcasters thus agree on the content and the individual plots, the characters, the settings and on the portrayal of violence. As a matter of fact, all existing SOKO versions, also the Austrian ones, run on the German channel ZDF, whereas the Austrian channel ORF only shows the Austrian SOKOs. While the SOKO series runs as an early evening program on the ZDF, it constitutes a main evening program on the ORF. The head of the ORF TV main department television film, Katharina Schenk explains the difference as follows:

The difference is of course a program that is broadcast in the early evening, is subject to a bit different rules than a program that is broadcast in the main evening. That means that the ZDF looks of course more on the fact that violence is not shown too graphically. For us [the ORF], it's the main evening program, so it's approved for ages 12 and up. (Schenk)

The different timeslots affect therefore the design and creation of each episode, regardless of the version, as it requires the content to be adapted in accordance with the youth protection guidelines. According to the "State Treaty on the Protection of Human Dignity and the Protection of Minors in Broadcasting and Telemedia," ZDF is obligated to protect children and young people by broadcasting harmful content that for example glorifies violence only after a certain time. This results in episodes that are generally less harmful, yet could, according to the ORF, be more violent given the fact that the episodes are shown later at night on the ORF.

Moreover, ZDF also has a say in the selection of the main characters, which leads to the fact that a German investigator has been part of the SOKO Donau team since the beginning. Individuals of an audience also prefer to see elements such as characters in a format that lets themselves identify with (van Keulen & Krijnen, 2014). Accordingly, the integration of a German investigator into the Austrian SOKO Donau team is an essential element of the transnational co-production, due to the increase in the number of viewers. In their position as co-producers, ZDF can justifiably request the inclusion of a German main character for the reason of presenting an identification figure for the German audience. The ZDF's editor Silvia Lambri stated that the German character is the drawing card, the sympathetic figure and one personified link between Austria and Germany. The inclusion of a German character in the team will also be continued in SOKO Linz. ZDF, as co-producer and co-responsible broadcaster, thus ensures that German viewers of SOKO Donau and SOKO Linz can relate to the main characters because of their country of origin.

This presents a discussion point between the broadcasters that should not be underestimated. It shows the close work relationship between the respective editors of ZDF and ORF regarding the creation of episodes that must fulfil certain requirements.

4.3.2 Close work relationship and shared audiences

As previously explained, the broadcasters ZDF and ORF share a close work relationship concerning the creation of the Austrian episodes. To repeat, SOKO Donau is co-produced by the ORF, ZDF and the Austrian production company Satel Film, whereas SOKO Kitzbühel and SOKO Linz, are commissioned by the ORF and ZDF produced by Gebhardt productions, which means that the company is not a direct co-producer, as it does not have to bring in any funding itself. Their work relationship manifests on different levels including tasks that are necessary to fulfil for creating episodes and seasons for the Austrian SOKOs. The different production relations, however, do not influence carrying out those tasks. Silvia Lambri, ZDF's editor and responsible for the Austrian SOKOs, explains how editors from ORF and ZDF work closely together to create and edit each episode.

Yes, yes yes exactly there is an editor on each side and there are mixed author teams, meaning that we have authors from both countries who write the episodes, and it is or all decisions are made collectively. Every single, every single book is discussed together, there are always joint book sessions. [...] so, this is really a joint development, a joint work, casts are decided together, we have German and Austrian directors, we have, so everything is a combination. (Lambri)

This insight into the creation and development processes reveals that the collaboration of the broadcasters manifests even on a microlevel of production. That demonstrates that the transnational relationship of the ORF and ZDF encompasses work sessions, where editors of both broadcasters together with authors, dramatic advisors and directors first need to develop stories and furthermore agree on all other elements that an episode entails. This creative team, including various occupations, is also formed through cooperation between broadcasters and the respective production companies. Proposals come from both sides, from which they then select the group of employees. ZDF's editor Silvia Lambri also emphasizes on the creative freedom that ORF and ZDF give her and the team, in the sense that they don't give any guidelines for stories, plots or storylines. One specific task of the editor is to overlook the process of screenwriting to detect dialogues or words and phrases that are planned on being articulated in an Austrian dialect. The Austrian language is characterized by dialects (see 4.1.2.1) which are expressed by certain characters in SOKO Donau and SOKO Kitzbühel. The editor Lambri must regulate the use of Austrian dialects since the Austrian episodes must always be understood by the German audience as well.

This relates to the bigger audience, comprising Germans and Austrians, which can be

understood as a direct impact of the transnational collaboration. Usually, formats are adapted for a national audience (Moran, 2009b). One would therefore assume that the Austrian SOKO series tries to reach an Austrian audience. The interviewees however explained that a significant consequence of the collaboration between ZDF and ORF is the increase of the audience. The Austrian SOKOs are created not only for a local Austrian audience, but both PSBs target an international audience. The adjustment of the format to a domestic audience (see Waisbord, 2004), contained a partitioned adaptation to domestic Austrian and German audiences. This means that the PSBs aim on achieving more transnational overlaps between German and Austrian audiences and an approximation in a cultural context. The cross-border audience thus exceeds the principles put forward by Moran (2009b) and Waisbord (2004) that a format is adapted for the domestic audience. From shared audiences followed shared work tasks, performed by editors from both PSBs on a micro level. Moran's (2009b) program template was used here in terms of the basic idea of the format, name, length, and structure in the episodes, but not in terms of content or characters.

4.3.3 The experts' perception of the Austrian SOKOs

This thesis initially considers the SOKO series and the different versions as adaptations from one original German format. Referring to this, the interviewees revealed various descriptions for Austrian *adaptations*. All experts expressed that they would not consider the Austrian SOKOs as adaptations but ascribe to them an equivalent position that can be seen as a sister format, franchise, expansion, or spin-off. The experts agreed that only a few elements were adopted from the elements of the original German format. Before explaining these elements, examples from the experts' designations are given. Producer of SOKO Donau, Heinrich Ambrosch expresses his expertise regarding the format adaptation as follows:

We never thought about, for example, taking the original format of SOKO München and saying, ok, how do we change this figure, how do we change this character, we never did that because there are so many crime stories, so it's not a classic format adaptation where I think about how I can translate a certain character. (Ambrosch)

In reference to Moran's (2009b) elaborations on linguistic codes which provide knowledge about program elements of a show, the interviews revealed that the creation of the Austrian SOKO format presents clear contrasts compared to theory. Ambrosch rather suggests perceiving the Austrian versions as an expansion and a further development of the original SOKO series, rather than an adaptation, which he furthermore explains by saying that they did not copy the stories of earlier episodes, neither the characters nor did the ORF or his production company Satel Film purchase the format rights. This point of view was supported by Florian Gehbardt, producer of SOKO Kitzbühel and SOKO Linz, as he said that the Austrian SOKOs are not the result of an adaptation of the original

format:

I also think that this is not a format adaptation, yes, because this is actually a [pause] a format and simply a series in different variations, yes. [...] and in the format adaptation [short pause], which is very close to a remake, you take a lot of the character traits, yes, and transfer them to one place, and that doesn't happen at all in SOKO. (Gebhardt)

What stands out is that the experts agree that the format was not copied in the sense of a remake. Contrary to Moran's (2009b) description of close or open adaptations (see 2.4.2), no stories were copied here, regardless of which of the Austrian versions. In reference to the transnational aspect, those statements support the notion that this is not a successful format adaptation, but rather an ongoing collaboration that keeps the format and its different versions alive in different settings and with different narratives and unique characters. This confirms the results of the content analysis, which showed that characters are unique, stories are not copied and other elements such as the intros and the inclusion of private elements are not replicated but reinvented for each episode and for each SOKO version.

The results of the content analysis were also confirmed by ZDF's editor responsible for SOKO Donau, Lambri, who once again emphasized the uniqueness of each episode and referred to the Austrian versions as spin-offs:

That is completely independent of each other. So, by adaptation I understand something completely different. [...] It's an Austrian SOKO format, it's a spin-off [in German *Ableger*], it's we have two Austrian SOKOs, two Austrian spin-offs of the SOKO format. (Lambri)

In German, a spin-off [*Ableger*] is a product that has been outsourced from another work. Lambri refers to the Austrian SOKOs as spin-offs because their idea is based on the idea of the previous SOKOs, such as SOKO München. As a counterargument to the term "spin-off", it can be argued that no character from the original German SOKO München was taken away and re-situated in one of the Austrian SOKOs, as a spin-off would require. Contrary to "spin-off", head of the department for film and television Katharina Schenk emphasizes that the Austrian SOKOs cannot be considered spin-offs, but rather franchises. The expert supports Ambrosch's statement about not buying the format rights of the original SOKO series, but that long-lasting collaboration of ORF and ZDF led to the mutual decision of producing a series together that presents a franchise program of the original. The interviews showed that although the experts did not use the same designation for the Austrian versions, they were nevertheless unanimous in their rejection of the Austrian SOKOs as an adaptation of the German format. Regarding transnational cooperation, it can be emphasized once again that it means that national borders do not stop or limit close cooperation and that the

German-speaking area flows more together regarding the production of series. Furthermore, not buying the formats' rights furthermore contradicts the usual adaptation method, where rights need to be acquired to adapt the format (see 2.4.1).

4.3.3.1 Rare amount of fixed elements

The experts' view on the Austrian SOKOs was once more expressed regarding fixed elements that were initially expected to be adopted from the original SOKO format. The sub question that asks what kind of aspects the format adaptation contains. This refers to elements from within the Austrian SOKOs that were for instance copied from the German original series. As the interviewees explain, the only elements that are copied or rather used for the Austrian SOKOs are the length of the episode that ranged between 43-45 minutes and the title of the series displaying SOKO in combination with a location. Furthermore, the experts emphasized that the biggest common feature of all SOKO versions is that they underlie the *umbrella brand* ZDF. The producer of SOKO Donau, Heinrich Ambrosch, sums up what he understands as the commonalities between the German and Austrian SOKOs: "Here with the SOKO format, basically the idea is taken over, so to speak. You agree on a format length, on a certain number of episodes and you make a crime thriller" (Ambrosch). As can be seen, the expert refers to the general idea of the series as a common feature. He also addresses the format length as a common feature, that was fixed by the ZDF for the original SOKO series, on which the ORF together with Ambrosch and his production company Satel Film agreed on and continued consequently.

Florian Gebhardt, producer of SOKO Kitzbühel and SOKO Linz supports this thought by summing up the fixed elements deriving from the original German SOKO series as follows:

Yeah, so what we adopt is, we [the SOKO editions] investigate felonies, yeah, it's a mostly a whodunit story, yeah, we solve the criminal case in one episode, and we don't have a horizontal criminal case narrative over a whole season where a criminal case is only investigated over one season. We are located in a region or a city, and the SOKOs are called like that so that they can be distinguished easily, and we have the organizational structure that the real police have in the Criminal Investigation Department. (Gebhardt)

Seen from the producer's perspective, the Austrian SOKOs are not subject to the usual method of format adaptations as elaborated in chapter 2.4.2, because they do not show translated characters, scenes or adopted content-related aspects which are based on a format bible.

The interviews revealed that the only elements the Austrian SOKOs share with the German SOKOs are partly the broadcasting places, partly the financiers and the whole audience. As elaborated above (1.2), the Austrian SOKOs are broadcast alternately with episodes of German versions on ZDF from Monday to Friday at 6 p.m., meaning that the SOKO Donau and SOKO Kitzbühel

share the broadcaster ZDF with German versions such as SOKO München and SOKO Hamburg. Moreover, the fact that the ZDF is involved in financing the Austrian versions as a co-producer presents a commonality with the German SOKOs. Finally, the audience is shared by all the existing SOKOs, as the Austrians can also watch the German SOKOs, as ZDF can be received in Austria. Besides those common features, the episode length and the title, the general idea of crime solving is a shared characteristic between all elements. The experts referred to a story according to a *Whodunit* principle, which means that the episodes usually contain stories with a team of inspectors who are investigating capital crimes and catch the culprit whereby the case is solved, and the episode ends (Oxford University Press, 2021). This confirms the results of the content analysis regarding the structure of episodes, implying that they show a self-contained story that ends with the end of the episode without being continued in the following episode.

Contrary to the initial expectation that the Austrian SOKOs would contain elements from the original format, SOKO München, the interviews revealed the invalidation of this assumption, as almost no aspects were copied. One exception are the similar structural elements within episodes, that are, however, inspired by the everyday life of a police task force, as Florian Gebhardt, producer of SOKO Kitzbühel and SOKO Linz, explains. Components deriving from real police stations are in that sense borrowed from the original version. This confirms the results of the content analysis, which showed that neither the main characters, occupations, private backgrounds, nor the individual episode stories or humorous elements were adopted, neither in the Austrian versions nor between the German and Austrian SOKOs. According to ZDF's editor of SOKO Donau, Lambri, there is no scheme according to which each SOKO version was designed. Every single SOKO is developed from scratch, which opposes the idea of a strict adaptation, but rather supports the open, flexible adaptation (see 2.4.2).

4.3.4 Objective of producing Austrian SOKOs

Coming back to the sub question that asks what the format adaptation contains, the interview furthermore revealed how the placement of a new SOKO version can be justified. As mentioned in the introduction, SOKO Linz will replace SOKO Kitzbühel after 20 years which has, according to the experts, been decided by the PSBs, considering they constitute the basis for the existence of the Austrian SOKOs. The interviews showed that presenting new facets in a TV series is acknowledged as interesting and exciting. For creating new characters and developing new episodes, a new and innovative location presents a promising start for a new SOKO. Contrary to the initial expectations that the Austrian SOKOs would be adaptations, the creation of the new SOKO Linz series shows that all elements have been reinvented and that great attention has been paid to the composition of the characters so as not to repeat roles that already exist in other SOKOs. ORF's head of the television and film department Katharina Schenk emphasizes that the development of a new

expansion of the SOKO format, that is supposed to replace another SOKO version, demands to create something that cannot be compared easily with the previous edition. As well as Florian Gebhardt, producer of SOKO Kitzbühel and SOKO Linz, Schenk justified the selection of Linz as the setting for a new SOKO as follows:

Linz is a city [...] of contrasts, of diversity. [...] It has, so to speak, both this modern in the direction of start-ups, Ars Electronica⁵ is there. You have all those digital assets, but you also have industry at the same time. [...] It is also relatively close to the border triangle of Germany, the Czech Republic and Austria, and it was these considerations that led us to say that we would set it up in Linz in order to maintain this proximity - I think it's 80 km to the German border - this proximity to Germany. At the same time, to open up another corner in the direction of the Czech Republic and to be in an area that is really, I would almost say diametrically opposed to Kitzbühel, yes. (Schenk)

Localizing the new SOKO version at a place that does not resemble any other city, shows that the goal of the creators is to not replicate the original SOKO version. The interviews revealed that the new SOKO series was chosen because of its particularities, such as milieus and different culturally influenced areas, its urbanity, versatility, and its proximity to the three-country corner. Here, too, the transnationalization of the production is evident, as SOKO Linz will be a central series in which German and even Czech police will also be involved in the investigation. This cross-border connection once again emphasizes the international relationship and will at the same time ensure that German and Austrian audiences are presented with new and interesting episodes, and one could also assume that the series will even be seen in the Czech Republic.

Moreover, this proves that the characters and other elements are not translated from the German original version, instead the aim clearly lies in distinguishing this new version from existing SOKOs versions.

4.3.4.1 Localization

The interviews confirmed that the localization of the individual SOKOs, i.e. the placement of the episodes in selected areas and locations, is what makes the respective series edition so distinctive. In addition, the local color (*Lokalkolorit*) is captured in the selected locations, which means that the stories in the episodes are adapted to the local red. As an example, it was mentioned that in SOKO Donau stories are told about smuggling transports, which represents a realistic event on the Danube. Localization to individual locations can thus include narratives and proves that its aim lies on representing the local and real-life inspired events. The German editor of SOKO Donau,

⁵ Ars Electronica Centre is a modern museum for technology and inventions located in Linz.
<https://ars.electronica.art/center/de/>

Lambri, emphasized on the inclusion of Vienna-typical sightseeing spots like St. Stephen's cathedral and local features such as the visit at a *Heuriger*, thus for the surrounding are of Vienna very typical wine taverna, or the shooting location on a castle that presents a characteristic of Styria. Episodes that contain Viennese coffeehouse stories are also a common way of including a local color. Certain locations and the presentation of particularities of these places and cities are the essence of SOKO Donau and act as an outlet for cultural input. The inclusion of cultural aspects, expressed through sights and settings connoted with Vienna or Austria, is an essential part because in this way something new, interesting, local, and identifiable is created. The Austrian SOKOs thus get localized by building episodic stories and integrating local settings and scenes that are typical for that respective area, the example of the episode in Styria (4.1.2.3).

As the head of the department for film and television at ORF, Katharina Schenk, explained the milieu that an episode represents is the method with which a local color and local peculiarities can be expressed. In reference to SOKO Kitzbühel, the main location is the city Kitzbühel with its surrounding mountains and the rural environment. The inclusion of many shots of this landscape entails a representation of the setting and has two effects. As the expert says, SOKO Kitzbühel offers something visual with its alpine panorama. Since the invention of this SOKO version, the setting and the inclusion of the hobby detectives Hannes Kofler and Countess Schönberg, have been the unique selling point. The setting can even offer an escapism-like feeling to viewers, especially German viewers. But also because of the visual quality and the effort that goes into going to Kitzbühel to produce there, in other words the production value, the Austrian versions stand out on a visual level.

4.4 Conclusion and interpretation

The interviews show that the intention of creating the Austrian SOKOs did not lie in replicating the original series SOKO München. It was rather the goal, to combine exciting crime stories with interesting settings that represent respective locales. This relates to the concept of cultural identity, as the inclusion of local settings and Austrian dialects represent social-cultural aspects that can be associated with Austria (see Ch. 2.5, Villegas-Simon & Soto-Sanfiel, 2021). A format bible, as explained in Ch. 2.4.2, was not used in the development processes of the Austrian SOKOs, due to the ongoing cooperation between the PSBs that includes joint work sessions where all relevant elements for the SOKO series are discussed. An important aspect regarding the acquisition of format rights (see Chalaby, 2012) was brought up by the producer of SOKO Donau, revealing that neither the rights of the SOKO format nor any existing scripts were purchased. However, the transnational collaboration was and is the ultimate opportunity for Austria to be connected to a larger market and to produce a series with a large PSB, thereby increasing the audience. Also, in terms of financing, the Austrian side of the production could benefit from the co-operation considering the funding from Germany (see Ch. 2.6, Havens, 2019). The choice of locations for the Austrian SOKOs depend to a big

extent on state funding. Consequently, the way SOKO episodes are localized is influenced by the receipt of funds, not only by screenwriters and editors. The underlying idea of localization, to adapt the series to the local audience (Esser, 2016) and thereby representing cultural identity is partly defined by the circumstances of production. In terms of production costs, however, it seems logical to obtain state financial support and then decide where to shoot and develop stories that convey local color and local peculiarities of the respective locale.

5 Conclusions

In this chapter, the research questions will be answered, by highlighting the main findings of this study. The questions that guided the research are once again presented.

RQ: How did the SOKO series travel to Austria and how did it get adapted there?

SQ 1: To what extent are similarities and differences present between the German SOKO series and the Austrian adaptations and how are they manifested?

SQ 2: Which decisions led to the format adaptations and what aspects did they contain?

This study focused on two major objectives. First, the Austrian adaptations of the SOKO format were examined to find similarities and differences that would highlight overlaps between the original format and the adaptations. Secondly, decisions and actions fulfilled by responsible professionals of the PSBs ORF and ZDF, and the production companies Satel Film (SOKO Donau) and Gebhardt productions (SOKO Kitzbühel, SOKO Linz) were explored, to understand what the adaptations entailed and how the localizations of those were initially approached. The question of how the format travelled to Austria results in various aspects. A major finding is that the transnational industry, initiated through cultural globalization, is the origin of the cross-border collaboration (e.g., Esser 2002; Chalaby, 2015). The Austrian SOKO editions SOKO Kitzbühel (2001-2021) and SOKO Donau (2005 -) – excluding SOKO Linz (launch in 2022) – constitute successful, newly developed series inspired by the German original SOKO München/ 5113 and are a result of fruitful and long-standing collaborations between the PSBs ORF and ZDF. The solid cooperation, successful previous SOKO editions in Germany and the intention to build a transnational level for new SOKO franchises that would feature Austrian investigator teams, led to the travel of the format.

The Austrian SOKOs run on Austrian and German television channels and are consumed by a transnational audience. The interviews revealed that the shared cross-border audience is a natural consequence of the broadcaster's collaboration, which, according to Mjøs (2011) European PSBs do to sustain profitable businesses. This implies, however, that the adaptations, which are usually adjusted for national audiences (e.g., Moran, 2009b), address more than sheer national viewers. Therefore, the localizations of the Austrian SOKO versions present another main result. Selecting locations, environments as well as including typical Austrian images and particularities plays an important role in the creation of the SOKOs and therefore in the representation. Conveying Austrian cultural characteristics had on the one hand the aim of producing a homey-feeling for the Austrian audience (see van Keulen & Krijnen, 2014), and was on the other hand used to offer exoticism and contrast to the German viewers. In the sense of Bondebjerg (2016) a cultural and transnational exchange between Austria and Germany takes place through the Austrian SOKOs.

In reference to the first sub-question must be clarified, that only few overlaps between the Austrian and German SOKOs were found which led to the view that these Austrian versions are less of an adaptation in the sense of a transfer of stories, characters, and other program elements (Moran, 2009b) but more of an open and flexible adaptation. The content analysis revealed that there are no communalities in terms of linguistic codes (Moran, 2009b) and that there is no connection between the individual SOKO editions that could indicate that one version is derived from the other. The second sub-question revealed many answers, one of which was the explicit rejection of the term adaptation on the part of the interviewees. Considering that the experts referred to the Austrian SOKOs as franchises, spin-offs or expansions, the term format adaptation did not seem appropriate anymore. Instead, the special feature of the Austrian SOKOs lies in the adoption of the idea, which is subsequently expressed in its own creation with newly invented story lines, newly developed characters and in the uniqueness of the setting and the language. The representation of Austrian culture is illustrated through different ways of localization which convey an Austrian atmosphere, a local color, and offer a high amount of value of the visible (in German *Schauwert*). Considering the misleading term adaptation, I suggest calling the Austrian SOKOs *franchises* instead of adaptations. *Franchises*, as licensed and tradable formats, presents a suitable designation, because it allows the individual SOKO versions to coexist on one level (Esser, 2013). An open adaptation in the sense of Moran (2009b), in which the concept of the series is transferred, also applies to the classification *franchises*. One exception, however, is the acquisition of format rights, which was not required due to the cooperation between the PSBs. Although Esser (2013) claims that franchising includes the purchase of format rights, the production of the Austrian SOKO constitutes an exception considering the shared production responsibilities and costs between the PSBs and – in the case of SOKO Donau – the production company Satel Film.

As McFayden et al. (1998) claimed, producing transnationally can be justified with the extension of foreign locations. The creation of Austrian franchises corresponds to this statement as they present new expansions of one format that introduces new cities, locations, characters, storylines, and new local colors to the overarching SOKO family. In the sense of Rodrigue (2008, as cited in Chalaby, 2011), a format should be seen as a vehicle that, in this case, crossed the border from Germany to Austria and settled there in the form of an expansion of the German original SOKO program. Referring to the overarching research question, one can now acknowledge the collaboration of the broadcasters in this hybrid form as the motor for the Austrian SOKO production. What made the format travel, was consequently a solid, successful cooperation between broadcasters, representing a transnational relationship and suggesting the acknowledgement of transnationalization as a determining characteristic in European television (Esser, 2007).

5.1 Theoretical and societal implications

This research brings the specific case of SOKO formats into the academic field of television format and transnationalization studies. The study delivered insights into SOKO formats, the comparison between Austrian and German SOKOs, the collaboration of PSBs ZDF and ORF, the production relations between PSBs and production companies, the objective for producing Austrian SOKOs and the development and creation of the series. It contributes to the scholarly debate by offering new perspectives on the transnational relations of television stations and on the peculiar form of adaptation or rather collaborative creation of the Austrian SOKOs. The results of the study do not confirm a pure adaptation study as it was done by Mikos (2012), who examined *Stromberg*, the German adaptation of the American show *The Office*. Inspired by the research from Adriaens and Biltereyst (2015), this thesis also advanced the knowledge of practicalities within the development and production processes of the Austrian SOKO series and especially regarding the role of the public service broadcasters. With reference to format trading and the license transfer that is necessary for importing a format (Altmeyden et al., 2007), the acquirement of the SOKO series to Austria did not comply the elaborations of e.g., Esser (2013) or Chalaby (2016). Nevertheless, this work has generated internal information about the format and production-related facts with and experts' insights into the origins and development of the Austrian SOKO series. Defining the Austrian SOKOs as franchises could imply for future research, that the way of acquiring a format's license for format adaptations, spin-offs and franchises could change and constitute more of a lively collaboration and joint cross-border tasks.

The results of the study also introduce societal implications. As has been explained, the target audience crosses borders and includes Austrian and German viewers. It was clarified that in the case of the SOKO series there is no suppression of national culture, but rather an emphasis on it. The way the SOKOs are localized in Austria and convey local color invites viewers to look at Austrian cultural and national aspects through the television series' binoculars. A transnational audience is offered more than purely national programming due to the cooperation of the PSBs, which indicates that in this regard national borders are easily crossed.

5.2 Limitations and suggestions

This research was conducted professionally, precisely and under supervision. Despite all efforts and rule-following, qualitative studies always have a subjectivity in their conduct. By not working with exact measurements and numbers, the results of a qualitative study can never be 100% replicated by another researcher. This fact should be seen as the first limitation to this study. Secondly, coding the data for the content analysis and thematic analysis was only done by myself. In bigger research, coding processes are usually managed by at least two scholars, who ensure that the results are reliable. However, the conduct of interviews generated invaluable knowledge that

suggests including those in further studies as well, instead of focusing on pure content analyses of TV formats. Moreover, from analyzing 20 episodes of the SOKO series one can never conclude all SOKO episodes that exist. In the future, an analysis of more episodes could reveal how program elements change over the seasons. The analysis was also limited as it only reflects a certain genre of TV formats and series. The results can therefore not be generalized to unscripted series. Further limitations occurred in the search for interview partners, as not all the requested experts answered or were available.

Further research I suggest working with content analysis methods in combination with production studies, to fully understand how a series or a TV format is put together before questioning the underlying production conditions and relations, and the decisions made. exploring the production relations and decisions that have been made. Further studies should continue analyzing TV formats and its franchises to see when and how transnational cooperation can emerge and what preconditions are needed for that. I would not characterize a united Europe in the sense of an increase in transnational television projects as a process that erases national cultures. Rather, it highlights individual cultures and brings them closer to different territories, which not only expands the national television industry and broadcasters, but also transnational audiences.

6 References

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Appendix A

Content Analysis: Exemplary Presentation of a Coding Frame

Category	Subcategory	Unit of analysis Quote/ Description of scene
Characters	Investigating officers (on the crime case)	Major Roither and Pokorny arrive at crime scene and Chief inspector Kroisleitner is there already to inform them. (SOKO Kitzbühel)
		Major Ribarski, district inspector Steininger and group inspector Lanz arrive together at the crime scene. (SOKO Donau)
	Office worker	Chief inspector Gundlach and detective superintendent Aladag are at the office doing research and provide information about autopsy. (SOKO Hamburg)
	Leading role in investigating	First Chief inspector Bauer, conveys authority, seems calm. (SOKO München)
		Colonel Wolf decides who to send to the crime scene, for example the forensic scientist Franz Wolfahrt. (SOKO Donau)
	Forensic medical specialist	Dr. Franziska Beck is present at crime scene analyzing how the victim was killed. (SOKO Donau)
		Dr. Weissenböck informs chief inspector Hahn about cause of the death at the forensic medicine office. (SOKO München)
		Dr. Löckner informs the two majors about cause of death at her forensic medicine office (dead body on the dissection table). (SOKO Kitzbühel)
	Forensic scientist	Frank Wolfahrt informs colonel in his and Dr. Beck's office about evidence at crime scene. (SOKO Donau)
		Billi Curio informs Morgenstern and Renner about blood trails and fingerprints found at the crime scene. (SOKO München)
	Solo effort of an officer	Group inspector Lanz also works on her own by driving to the victim's office. (SOKO Donau)

		Chief inspector Schütz goes alone to some places to look for evidence. (SOKO Hamburg)
Structure of the story	Intro	Whole crew appears in a group before the intro ends in a picture of the river Danube with SOKO Donau in the foreground. (SOKO Donau)
	Start of storyline	Episode starts with the discussion of a new case in the colonel's office including all inspectors, the forensic employees, and the public prosecutor. (SOKO Donau)
	End of Storyline	Episode ends with Schütz and Köhler talking about having a beer. Testorp is furthermore giving a girl self-defense classes. (SOKO Hamburg)
	Finding of the body	The three inspectors come to the dead body within the first 5 minutes. Included the forensic expert and the forensic doctor. (SOKO Donau)
		Dead body is found in an underground garage. (SOKO München)
	Interrogating witnesses	Major Roither and Pokorny ask witnesses together in the witnesses' home. (SOKO Kitzbühel)
		Group Inspector Lanz takes over sensitive conversation with sole witness. (SOKO Donau)
	Meetings at the police station	All inspectors discuss the case. District inspector Steininger, group inspector Lanz and major Ribarski inform the colonel about what exactly happened. (SOKO Donau)
		Chief inspector Schütz, Köhler, Aladag and Gundlach discuss the case and the evidence they have collected. (SOKO Hamburg)
		Ainfachnur as well as Renner come with new details to the first chief Bauer. (SOKO München)
Talk in interrogation room	Testorp and Köhler interrogate one suspect in the interrogation room which has windows to the police offices but is kept quite dark and neutral. (SOKO Hamburg)	
	Inspectors are sitting on the opposite site of the person that is being interrogated. (SOKO Kitzbühel)	

		Chief inspector Ainfachnur interrogates a suspect and Renner is also there. From the other side of the mirrored wall, first chief inspector Bauer and detective superintendent Bischoff are watching it. (SOKO München)
	Self-contained episodes	Episodes start with new titles, topics, stories that do not relate to the preceding episodes.
Inclusion of private aspects	Background information of main characters	Major Roither and Pokorny have an affair about which the other colleagues don't know. They call it friends with benefits. (SOKO Kitzbühel)
		Major Pokorny and Roither are spending their lunch break eating in Hannes' restaurant. This way, Hannes gets snippets of intern case-related information. (SOKO Kitzbühel)
		Between Major Pokorny and Roither, the atmosphere shows innuendos about private or personal characteristics. E.g., Pokorny says that major Roither is often not relaxed enough. (SOKO Kitzbühel)
	Character is in crime story involved	Chief inspector Schütz drives to the countryside, meets friends, and drinks and plays cards with them in a bar, when a murder happens close by and in his group of friends. (SOKO Hamburg)
		Group inspector Lanz witnesses an alleged crime while jogging. (SOKO Donau)
Countess Schönberg and chef Kofler are hiking as they find a man who tries to jump off a bridge, because he has allegedly committed a murder. (SOKO Kitzbühel)		
Humorous elements	Sarcastic comments	Major Ribarski jokes about the yoga teacher that the colonel has mentioned earlier. (SOKO Donau)
		Testorp makes a sarcastic reference to Köhler's bachelor party. (SOKO Hamburg)
	Funny, weird moments	Morgenstern does Yoga in the office. (SOKO München)
		Chief inspector Kroisleitner makes himself a big platter of bread and bacon and is called to work before he can eat it. This story runs through the

		entire episode. It seems as if he never has time to eat and the snack is eaten by his colleagues major Pokorny and Roither and hidden so that Kroisleiter doesn't notice. (SOKO Kitzbühel)
Local features: city, countryside	Shot of the peculiarity of the location	Episode starts with shots of the harbor, the city. (SOKO Hamburg)
		Shots of Munich and the Oktoberfest. (SOKO München)
		Shot out of the police station onto the Danube River with the DC tower in Vienna in the background. (SOKO Donau)
	Environment	Episode starts with a shot on the mountain panorama. One can see a lake and mountains in the background. (SOKO Kitzbühel)
		Shots of the lakeside, woods, mountains to show what the story is about and where the case might be located. (SOKO Donau)
Language	Dialect	Insults on Austrian are audible "Are you stupid?" ("Bist du deppert"). (SOKO Donau)
		Chief inspector Ainfachnur and Dr. Weissenböck speak with a Bavarian accent.
	Conversational tone (between the main characters)	Inspectors talk sober and impersonal to each other, but they approach each other with the first name. (SOKO Hamburg)
		Tone between the inspectors is joking, friendly, but also familiar and without holding back. (SOKO Kitzbühel)

Table 1A*List of analyzed episodes*

SOKO Edition	Season, Episode	Title	Length	Release Date ORF/ ZDF	Producer
SOKO Kitzbühel	S. 17, E. 1	To good neighbourliness	43:00	ZDF: 22.12.2017	Gebhardt Productions
SOKO Kitzbühel	S. 17, E. 2	Murder in instalments	43:00	ZDF: 29.12.2017	Gebhardt Productions
SOKO Kitzbühel	S. 17, E. 3	No Way Back	43:00	ZDF: 5.1.2018	Gebhardt Productions
SOKO Kitzbühel	S. 17, E. 4	Dark Waters	43:00	ZDF: 12.1.2018	Gebhardt Productions
SOKO Kitzbühel	S. 17, E. 5	Black Heart	43:00	ZDF: 26.1.2018	Gebhardt Productions
SOKO Donau	S. 14, E. 1	The truth dies last	43:00	ORF: 13.11.2018	Satel Film
SOKO Donau	S. 14, E. 2	Voices	43:00	ORF: 20.11.2018	Satel Film
SOKO Donau	S. 14, E. 3	Death in a Taxi	43:00	ORF: 27.11.2018	Satel Film
SOKO Donau	S. 14, E. 4	Old Indians	44:00	ORF: 4.12.2018	Satel Film
SOKO Donau	S. 14, E. 5	To the Blood	43:00	ORF: 11.12.2018	Satel Film
SOKO München	S. 43, E. 1	The guilt of the fathers	44:00	ZDF: 11.9.2017	UFA Productions
SOKO München	S. 43, E. 2	The investigating judge	44:00	ZDF: 18.9.2017	UFA Productions
SOKO München	S. 43, E. 3	Dolls of Pasing	44:00	ZDF: 25.9.2017	UFA Productions
SOKO München	S. 43, E. 4	A tent of murder	43:00	ZDF: 2.10.2017	UFA Productions
SOKO München	S. 43, E. 5	Night watch	44:00	ZDF: 9.10.2017	UFA Productions
SOKO Hamburg	S. 1, E. 1	Fallen Angel	43:00	ZDF: 27.3.2018	Network Movie
SOKO Hamburg	S. 1, E. 2	Deadly harvest	43:00	ZDF: 3.4.2018	Network Movie
SOKO Hamburg	S. 1, E. 3	Bachelor party	44:00	ZDF: 10.4.2018	Network Movie
SOKO Hamburg	S. 1, E. 4	Hansa Harmonia	44:00	ZDF: 17.4.2018	Network Movie
SOKO Hamburg	S. 1, E. 5	Right in the heart	43:00	ZDF: 24.4.2018	Network Movie

Lists of characters that appeared in the analyzed episodes

Table 2A

SOKO Kitzbühel Season 17

Character Name	Persona	Nationality	Present in
Lukas Roither	Major	Austrian	Episode 1-5
Nina Pokorny	Major	Austrian	Episode 1-5
Alois Kroisleitner, "Kreusi"	Chef inspector	Austrian; very strong "Austrian" accent	Episode 1-5
Dr. Stefanie Löckner	Forensic doctor	Austrian	Episode 2-5
Hannes Kofler	Hobby detective and chef in the restaurant <i>Pöchlerner Stuben</i> in Kitzbühel.	Austrian	Episode 1-5
Countess (Gräfin) Vera Schönberg	Hobby detective	Austrian/ German	Episode 1-5

Table 3A

SOKO Donau, Season 14

Character Name	Persona	Nationality	Present in
Otto Dirnberger	Colonel (Oberst)	Austrian	Episode 1-5. He retires in episode 4.
Dr. Henriette Wolf	Colonel (Oberst)	Austrian	Episode 5. She follows Dirnberger as colonel.
Carl Ribarski	Major	German	Episode 1-5
Penny Lanz	Group inspector (Gruppeninspektor)	Austrian	Episode 1-5
Simon Steininger	Districtinspector (Bezirksinspektor)	Austrian	Episode 1-5
Franz Wolfhahrt	Forensic scientist	Austrian	Episode 1-5
Dr. Franziska Beck	Forensic doctor	German	Episode 1-5

Dr. Paul Seiler	Public prosecutor	Austrian	Episode 1 and 5
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Table 4A

SOKO München, Season 43

Character Name	Persona	Nationality	Present in
Arthur Bauer	First Chief inspector (Kriminalhauptkommissar)	German	Episode 1-5
Theo Renner	Chief inspector	German	Episode 1-5
Katharina Hahn	Chief inspector (Kriminalhauptkommissar)	German	Episode 1, 3
Dominik Morgenstern	Chief inspector (Kriminaloberkommissar)	German	Episode 1-5
Antonia "Toni" Bischoff	Detective superintendent (Kriminalkommissarin)	German	Episode 2, 4, 5
Franz Ainfachnur	Chief inspector (Kriminaloberkommissar)	German	Episode 1, 2, 4,5
Dr. Weissenböck	Forensic doctor	German	Episode 1-4
Billi Curio	Forensic scientist	German	Episode 1, 2, 4,5

Table 5A

SOKO Hamburg, Season 1, 2018

Character Name	Persona	Nationality	Present in
Lena Testorp	Chief inspector (Kriminalhauptkommissar)	German	Episode 1-5
Oskar Schütz	Chief inspector (Kriminalhauptkommissar)	German	Episode 1-5
Jan Köhler	Chief inspector (Kriminalhauptkommissar)	German	Episode 1-5
Cem Aladag	Detective superintendent and IT expert	German	Episode 1-5
Maria Gundlach	Chief inspector (Kriminaloberkommissar)	German	Episode 1-5

Table 6A

Content summaries of first four SOKO episodes

Edition	Season, Episode	Original German title / translated title	Content Summary
SOKO Kitzbühel	S. 17, E. 1	<i>Auf gute Nachbarschaft/ To good neighbourliness</i>	A dead man is discovered in his neighbour's pit. It turns out that the dead man, named Erwin Merk, liked to search for objects with his metal detector and had dug up the gardens of some of his neighbours, which is why he had a fight with another neighbour and was generally not very popular. The two main detectives, major Pokorny and major Roither, investigate the immediate neighbourhood and try to find out the motive for the murder. It turns out that other neighbours of the dead man were trying to conceal a murder that had happened a long time ago, and that Erwin merk became aware of it and had to die because of it. The cook Hannes Kofler and the countess Schönberg investigate on their own and even look for clues at the police station. In addition, the love affair between the main investigators becomes clear in this episode.
SOKO Donau	S. 14, E. 1	<i>Die Wahrheit stirbt zuletzt / The truth dies last</i>	Penny Lanz is a witness to two alleged crimes, which turn out to be just happenings by the action artist Rafael Holzmann. When the artist's colleague, cameraman Andi Bauer, is found dead in his car, the situation changes, and it looks as if Penny Lanz had something to do with it. The two actors in the performance Tanja and Erik, are questioned as witnesses and it turns out that Rafael is planning a new action, namely, to chain himself up in front of a running camera and stream it live in order to set an example, because he thinks that people lack civil courage. In the end it turns out that the live stream is a fake and that Rafael used this time to kill Andi because he wanted to leave the team and leave Vienna.

SOKO München	S. 34, E. 1	<i>Die Schuld der Väter/ The guilt of the fathers</i>	When the 17-year-old girl, Sophie Quernheim, is found dead, someone immediately gets into the focus of the suspects, namely the father of a murder victim who was killed 33 years ago, but whose murderer was never proven or convicted. A subsequent DNA analysis proved that Sophie's father, Lutz Quernheim, was the murderer 33 years ago, but the law forbids him to be charged again, so he remains at large. While everything looks as if the father of the older murder victim, Wolfgang Mahler, has taken revenge, another lead opens up and Sophie's former employer, who is also Lutz Quernheim's lawyer, becomes the target of the investigators. He had a relationship with Sophie that led to his hanging, which is why Sophie had to die.
SOKO Hamburg	S. 1, E. 1	<i>Gefallener Engel/ Fallen angel</i>	You see a woman, Nadja Engel, buying a burger at a snack bar, then going into an apartment building and shortly afterwards falling or jumping from a balcony. The victim survives and is guarded in hospital by investigator Lena Testorp, who asks her how the accident happened. It turns out that she lives a rather sad life, as her son died some time ago and she has sought shelter with her affair, a neighbour in the same house. The investigators now suspect the victim's husband. But a co-worker of Nadja Engel's company is also suspected because he was guilty of something at the company. When the investigators want to question Nadja Engel's lover, they discover that he is dead in his flat. Later it turns out that Nadja Engel was the one who killed her lover out of anger. Afterwards she jumped from the balcony, which explains the alleged attempted murder.

Appendix B

Interview Topic List

General, open questions

- What is your profession? Where do you work?
- What is your connection or relation to the SOKO formats?

Television Industry

- How do you think the industry of TV formats has changed in Austria in the last 10-20 years?
- What would you say leads to popularity in a TV format?
 - Popularity of the SOKO format
- Do you have insights in the audience of the SOKO formats?
 - Target audience
 - Which audience is trying to be reached?
 - Does the Austrian audience differ from the German audience?
- Are the German versions of the SOKO series also popular in Austria?

The format and its adaptations

- Initial idea of adapting the German SOKO format.
 - What was the initial goal?
 - Replication of the German version?
- What did this adaptation entail or consist of?
- What was important to consider when adapting a format from Germany?
- In relation to the format itself: Where was the focus on?
- Which elements were most important to consider?
- What needed to be changed?
- What would you say is the special feature that the Austrian adaptations show?

Production of SOKO Kitzbühel, SOKO Donau

- Decisions that led to the first adaptation SOKO Kitzbühel and the second adaptation SOKO Donau.
 - Aim or goal of this first edition.

- Who was in charge of it?
- Reasons for choosing Kitzbühel & Donau?
 - Local funding
 - Film tourism
- Adaptation of elements regarding character, narrative, story line
- Production processes
 - Funding and financing
- Reasons for cancellation of SOKO Kitzbühel after 20 years?
- Reasons for different name of SOKO Donau in Germany (SOKO Wien)?

Latest production: SOKO Linz

- Development of a new series SOKO Linz
- How was the decision for Linz made and which elements were decisive?
- What were the requirements for the new season?
- In what way do economic conditions or cultural conditions play a role for the decision of choosing Linz as the new location for the series?
- In what way was the factor of connecting the border triangle Austria, Germany, and Czech Republic decisive?
- How important are tourist-related effects of the series?
- Adaptation of elements regarding character, narrative, story line
- Production processes
 - Funding and financing

Collaboration between the public service broadcasters

- How did this collaboration of ZDF and ORF start?
- From whom did the collaboration start?
- Who had the initial idea of the collaboration?
- Why is the production based on this collaboration of the broadcasters?
- Advantages or disadvantages of the collaboration
 - What does it all entail?
- Requirements to fulfil set by the German broadcaster (for the Austrian broadcaster or the production companies)?
- How is this cooperation expressed with regard to the production of the formats?

- How does the development of a program work?
 - Especially with regards to the SOKO format.
- Does it mean the ZDF and ORF adjust all SOKO versions to another?
- Which broadcaster has more decision-making-power in this relationship?
- What kind of influence does the Austrian broadcaster have on the Austrian production Companies SATEL Film and Gebhardt Productions that are producing the formats?

The Austrian SOKOs

- Difference to German versions
- How are national/ regional Austrian aspects transported in the Austrian SOKO versions?
- Is an adaptation of a TV format a good way to represent a local or national cultures of a country well?
- What would you say is special about the Austrian formats?
- Where do the peculiarities of the series lie?
- Are the two local version specifically different from the German versions and if, how?
- What was important to keep in mind when creating both SOKO versions?
- Would you say that the Austrian SOKO formats contributed to emphasizing Austrian culture or local culture?
- Would you say that it was (one of) the goals to have the formats convey and communicate local Austrian culture?

Appendix C

Coding Frame Thematic Analysis

Codes	Categories/ Sub-themes	Themes
Collaboration between broadcasters exists for a long time already	Public service broadcasters ZDF, ORF	Collaboration of broadcasters
Requirements by broadcasters		
Youth protection regarding episodes		
Broadcaster has to agree		
Advantages through broadcasters		
Discussion over elements		
Decision by broadcaster		
Different broadcasting slots	Broadcasting	
Different version of same episode		
Repeated broadcastings		
SOKO important program item		
Episodes' content must fit the broadcasting slots		
Collaboration between broadcasters and production company	Type of Collaborations	
Collaboration between broadcasters		
SOKO Donau owned by production firm		
ORF is in charge		
Collaboration between editors		

Different production relation		
Production company as connection		
No Austrian SOKOs without collaboration between broadcasters	Essence of Collaboration	
Freedom regarding creation of SOKOs		
Advertisement as discussion point		
Selection of production company	Decision-making	Production of the format
Production company decides		
Sale of the format		
Commissioned production	Type of production	
No commissioned production		
Sustainable long-standing production		
Difference in financing but same collaboration		
SOKO Donau owned by production firm		
Producer of SOKO Donau		
Authors working on the stories	Creation of the episodes	
Job of editor		
Good creative team		
Crossover episode		
Financing/ funding	Financing	

Film Fond Wien		
Financing by federal states		
Regional support		
Financing from ZDF		
Financing from ORF		
Location depending on financing		
No financing from Tyrol		
Producer brings financial contribution		
Reason for shooting in federal states		
Invention of SOKO Kitzbühel	Initial idea/ invention of the format	The "Adaptation" process and its origin
Invention of SOKO Donau		
Invention of SOKO Linz		
Initial idea		
General idea of the format		
SOKO München as first edition		
Original idea of SOKO Donau		
Urge to create something new		
<i>Krimi</i> genre		
Popularity of format and justification		

Development of series	Development of the format and the different editions	
Development of the stories		
Development of SOKO Donau		
Development of SOKO Linz		
Content-related decisions		
“Ableger”	Various names for the Austrian “adaptation”	
Sister version		
Expansion of the format		
Spin-off		
Franchise		
Name of SOKO Donau		
SOKO as an autonomous format	Independent Format	
Self-contained narrative		
Horizontal narrative		
No adaptation		
No adoption of German elements		
No adjustments of elements		
Audience likes diversity and decides	Audience	
Audience accepts German investigator		




Different audiences		
Viewership and target audience		
Transnational programs bigger audiences		
Popularity of the format and justification		
Entertainment	Common features of all SOKOs / adopted elements	
Self-contained narrative		
Length of episode		
Umbrella brand		
Investigator team also define the series		
German investigator in Austrian team as driving force, popular figure and connecting point	Characters	
Logical reason why Germans are in Austria		
Team spirit		
Not too much private stories about main characters		
Production value	Localization	Characteristics of the (Austrian) versions
Local color "Lokalkolorit"		
Local color through language		
The local is defining the series		
View value		


Kitzbühel well known	Shooting Locations/ Regions	
Alpine region		
Mix of shooting locations		
Location is defining		
Visual offer to audience		
Austrian cultural elements	Peculiarities	
Clichés about Austrians or Germans		
Milieu stories in Vienna		
Difference in mentality		
Humor		
Peculiarity of showing city		
Recognition value		
Water theme in SOKO Donau		
Austrian elements seen in language	Language	
Dialect should not be too present		
Language aspects		

Figure 8
Composition of funding of SOKO Donau, Season 14

Kategorie	Serie
Produktionsunternehmen	Satel Film GmbH
Gesamtherstellungskosten	€ 11.535.117
Förderungssumme	€ 2.507.019
Fernsehsender	ORF (Österreichischer Rundfunk), ZDF (Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen)
Länge	16 x 43,3
Jahr	2018
Förderinstitutionen	FERNSEHFONDS AUSTRIA, Filmfonds Wien, Land Niederösterreich, Land Oberösterreich, Cine Styria, Stadt Graz

Soko Donau / 14. Staffel



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Source: RTR Homepage <https://www.rtr.at/migration/filmarchiv/241c0f7ec86a4366ae3115cfd9acbf49> retrieved 21.05.21

This screenshot stems from the website of the Broadcasting and telecommunication and regulatory Ltd. (In German *Rundfunk und Telekom Regulierungs-GmbH*, RTR). Here you can see the total costs of € 11,535,117 to produce the 14th season of SOKO Donau. A total of 16 episodes of 43 minutes each were produced in 2018 and funded with € 2,507,019 by Fernsehfond Austria, Filmfond Wien, by the federal states Land Oberösterreich and Land Niederösterreich, Cine Styria and Graz city. The difference of €9,028,098 is the sum that will be divided between ORF and ZDF in an approximate calculation of 40% to 30% and thus remains with the broadcaster as production costs.