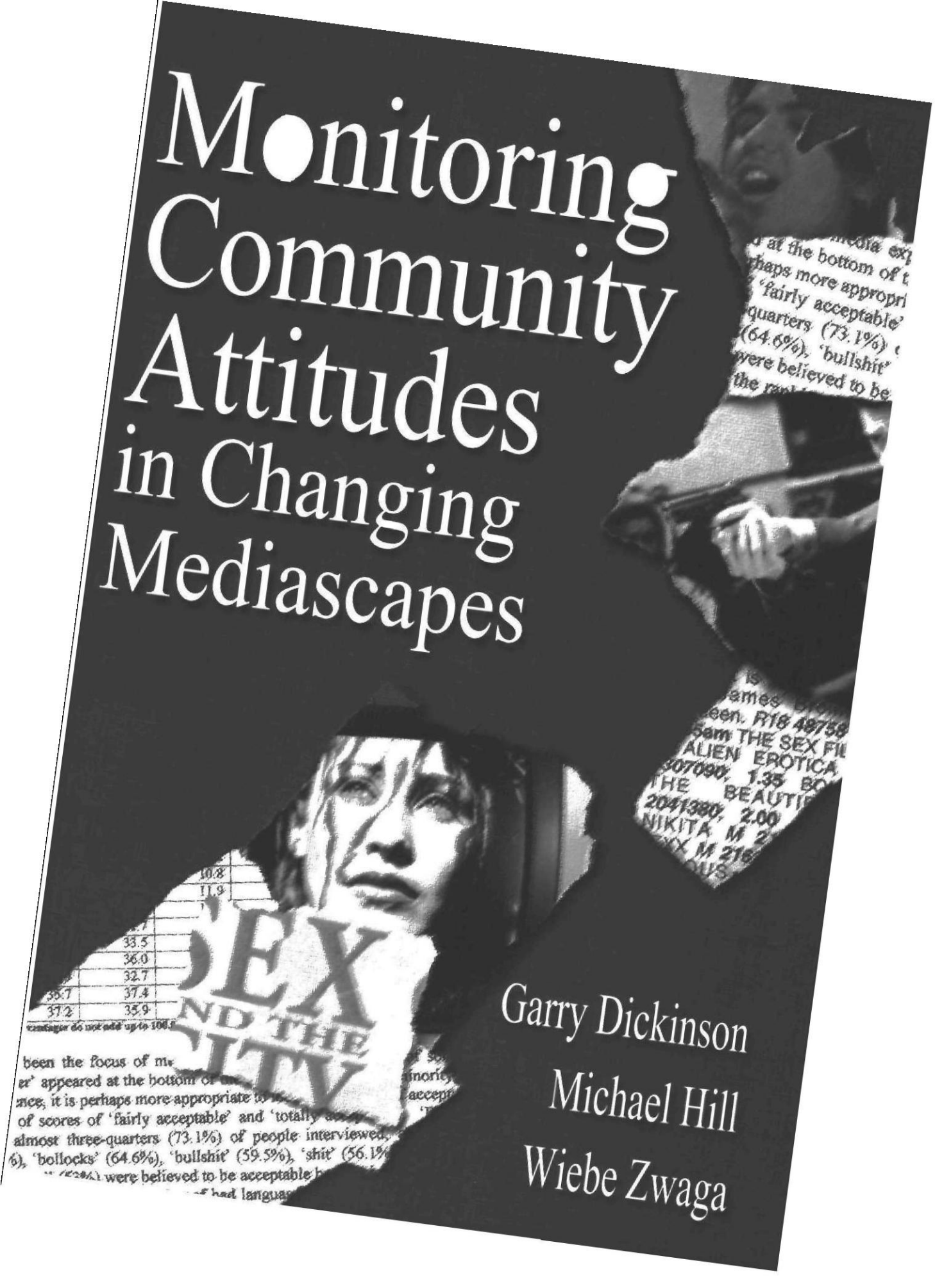
Monitoring Community Attitudes in Changing Mediascapes



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Broadcasting Standards Authority

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Wiebe E.R. Zwaga

Foreword

Researching matters relating to standards in broadcasting is one of the statutory functions of the Broadcasting Standards Authority. The authority is also required to publish its research findings.

Despite the pressure at times on its resources, the Authority regards its research programme as central. It is vital when the Authority carries out its other functions of determining complaints and revising the various Codes of Broadcasting Practice.

Broadcasters are required under the legislation to maintain in their programmes, among other matters, standards which are consistent with the observance of good taste and decency. The Authority expects broadcasters to take into consideration current community norms when applying this standard. The Authority regards it as essential that it reflect community standards when determining complaints which allege that this standard is breached.

Research into community attitudes is one of the ways by which the Authority determines community norms. It is important to be aware of attitudes towards such matters as the use of questionable or blasphemous language, or depiction of sexual behaviour.

The research outlined in this monograph, and the findings noted, now provide a basis which can be applied both in the determination of complaints and when approving revisions to the Codes of Practice.

The Authority is aware that attitudes to standards issues may change over time. It is reassured from this research, nevertheless, that attitudes have not changed fundamentally over the past ten years. Similar words still raise hackles, and there remains a concern that broadcasts be seen to be fair and balanced.

An important issue arising from this research is the need, as perceived by the respondents, to protect children. Because of the unequivocal manner in which this was recorded as

the central broadcasting standards issue, it will be the focus of the Authority's ongoing research programme.

I commend this thoughtful report to readers as an example of thoroughly planned and well executed research.

Sam Maling
Chairperson
Broadcasting Standards Authority

Introduction

The functions of the Broadcasting Standards Authority

The Broadcasting Standards Authority (the Authority) is an independent statutory body set up under the Broadcasting Act 1989. The functions of the Authority are set out in s.21 of the Act. They include:

s.21(1) The functions of the Authority shall be –

(a) To receive and determine complaints...

...

(c) To publicise its procedures in relation to complaints; and

(d) To issue to any or all broadcasters, advisory opinions relating to broadcasting standards and ethical conduct in broadcasting; and

(e) To encourage the development and observance by broadcasters of codes of broadcasting practice appropriate to the type of broadcasting undertaken by such broadcasters in relation to –

(i) The protection of children;

(ii) The portrayal of violence;

(iii) Fair and accurate programmes and procedures for correcting factual errors and redressing unfairness;

(iv) Safeguards against the portrayal of persons in programmes in a manner that encourages the denigration of, or the discrimination against, sections of the community on account of sex, race, age, disability or occupational status or as a consequence of legitimate expression of religious, cultural or political beliefs;

(v) Restrictions on the promotion of liquor;

(vi) Presentation of appropriate warnings in respect of programmes that have been classified as suitable only for particular audiences;

...

(h) To conduct research and publish findings on matters relating to standards in broadcasting.

Determining complaints about broadcasting standards

Most of the Authority's work is concerned with complaints. The complaints procedure is set out in the Act. It details the process whereby formal complaints must be made first to broadcasters in writing within 20 working days of the programme going to air. Where there is dissatisfaction with the decision of the broadcaster or the action taken, the complainant can refer the complaint to the Authority for investigation and review. Complainants must be told of this right of referral when the broadcaster responds to the formal complaint.

Privacy complaints, however, can be made directly to the Authority. The Authority can then either decline or uphold the complaint. When the Authority upholds a complaint, it can apply sanctions, which include ordering an on-air statement of correction or apology or removing all broadcasting or all advertising from the air for up to 24 hours. It may also award costs to the Crown of up to $5,000. In respect of privacy claims, the Authority can award compensation up to $5,000. Its decisions can be appealed to the High Court.

Section 4 of the Act spells out the programme standards which broadcasters have to maintain:

s.4 (1)Every broadcaster is responsible for maintaining in its programmes and presentation, standards which are consistent with –
(a) The observance of good taste and decency; and
(b) The maintenance of law and order; and
(c) The privacy of the individual; and
(d) The principle that when controversial issues of public importance are discussed, reasonable efforts are made, or reasonable opportunities are given, to present significant points of view either in the same programme or in other programmes within the period of current interest; and
(e) Any approved code of broadcasting practice applying to the programmes.

Section 21(e) of the Act requires the Authority to encourage the development of codes of broadcasting 'appropriate to the type of broadcasting undertaken'. When the Authority was established in 1989, it approved codes of practice for free-to-air television and radio broadcasters followed by a Pay Television Code in 1992. The Pay Television Code and Radio Code have recently been reviewed, and a review is currently in progress for free-to-air television. There are also codes that regulate the Portrayal of Violence, the Promotion of Liquor, and Election Advertisements.

The complaints referred to the Authority can be broadly classified in the following categories: good taste and decency; balance, fairness and accuracy; privacy; alcohol promotion; violence; sexism; and racism. During the period from 1 January 1990 to 30 June 1999, the Authority issued 1,303 decisions. The table below shows the relative distribution of decisions by complaints category.

Broadcasting Standards Authority decisions by complaints category

Complaints category	% of total decisions
Balance, Fairness and Accuracy	42.9
Good Taste and Decency	31.5
Alcohol Promotion	9.1
Privacy	8.0
Sexism	0.8
Violence	4.8
Racism	1.5
Other	1.5
Total	**100.0 (N=1303)**

Balance, fairness and accuracy complaints top the list with 42.9 per cent, followed by good taste and decency complaints on 31.5 per cent. The remaining quarter or so of complaints are made up of complaints about alcohol promotion (9.1%), privacy (8.0%), violence (4.8%), racism (1.5%) and sexism (0.8%).

Compared with the other complaint categories, the increase in balance, fairness and accuracy complaints – both in relative and absolute terms – has been quite remarkable. Whereas they constituted just over a third of all complaints in the period between 1994–1996, by 1997–1999 they made up half of all complaints. The relative number of complaints about good taste and decency has remained the same over this period.

Privacy complaints, while still a relatively small category, show a substantial increase in the past three years. Complaints about alcohol promotion have declined in recent years since the 1993 Amendment to the Broadcasting Act transferred the jurisdiction on most aspects of alcohol advertising to the Advertising Standards Authority Inc., an industry-funded body.

Researching community attitudes towards broadcasting standards

As research is one of the Authority's statutory functions, it has commissioned public opinion research on a range of broadcasting standards matters. Since 1990, the Authority has commissioned five major community attitude surveys. In chronological order, these surveys were:

- *Survey of Community Attitudes and Perception on Violence on Television* (1990)

- *Public Opinion Research on Alcohol Advertising on Radio and Television* (1992)
- *Perceptions of 'Good Taste and Decency' in Television and Radio Broadcasting* (1993)
- *Community Attitudes to Adult Material on Pay Television* (1997)
- *Broadcasting Standards Authority Public Awareness Survey* (1998).

In the last ten years, the Authority's research agenda was formulated to address the standards issues as they arose, but also sought to survey public opinion about specific broadcasting standards issues and changes in broadcasting practice, such as the introduction of new technologies. The public opinion research commissioned by the Authority is in the public domain, and as such is intended to serve both broadcasters and the general public. The main purpose of the Authority's engagement in research is to understand public opinion, which the Authority perceives as being both constant and changing.

Through the established tools of public opinion measurement, the Authority is able to learn about trends in community attitudes, thus enabling a representative voice of viewers and listeners to be heard when it interprets the *Codes of Broadcasting Practice* in determining complaints. This type of research has also assisted the Authority to develop the parameters when reviewing *Codes of Broadcasting Practice*.

An important aspect of the Authority's research activity is the monitoring of research by similar agencies overseas, as well as maintaining close links with them. These agencies include the Australian Broadcasting Authority (ABA) and its predecessor the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal (ABT), and in Britain the Broadcasting Standards Commission (BSC) and the Independent Television Commission (ITC).

While the responsibilities assigned to these agencies diverge – for instance, the ABA is an independent federal statutory authority which plans the availability of segments of the broadcasting services bands as well as having responsibility for programming – all of them conduct research into standards of broadcasting. This research provides valuable comparative parameters for research undertaken in New Zealand.

Examples of research undertaken overseas include studies of television usage by the ABT in 1993, of children's viewing habits by the ABA in 1996, and on the community's views about television and radio content by the ABA in 1997. The latter asked questions on areas of viewer and listener concern and elicited responses on such issues as suitability of programmes for children, sex and nudity, and violence.

In Britain the BSC, which is a statutory body regulating both standards of taste and fairness in broadcasting, commissioned similar research in 1996 into areas including violence, sexual content, and privacy, and in 1998 it published the findings of a study into attitudes towards bad language. As part of its research agenda the ITC conducts annual surveys of public attitudes to television: these, among other topics, investigate viewing habits, viewer assessment of overall standards, evaluations of fairness and bias, and causes of offence.

Together these overseas research sources provide valuable insight into the design of the New Zealand studies and into the different weightings which are given in other countries to areas of viewer and listener response.

Outline of the research monograph

This research monograph, *Monitoring Community Attitudes in Changing Mediascapes*, reports the findings of a national survey of public attitudes concerning issues of broadcasting standards which was conducted in March–April 1999.

Chapter One provides the context for *Monitoring Community Attitudes in Changing Mediascapes* by discussing the broadcasting standards research conducted in New Zealand during the last decade.

Chapter Two reports the findings of the qualitative phase – the focus group research. Consistent with the objective of the focus group research to explore the language of participants when they talk about broadcasting standards, this chapter gives an in-depth account of the ways in which people express themselves about broadcasting standards issues.

Chapter Three provides a first-level analysis of the findings obtained through the national survey. This chapter gives a general overview of the responses solicited, focusing on a statistical breakdown of the main variables of age, sex and parental status. This chapter then presents a further statistical refinement by cluster analysis. As a form of multivariate analysis, the cluster analysis charts people on a statistical map according to how they have responded to particular questions. It enables researchers to identify respondent profiles which bring out the more refined characteristics of attitudes towards broadcasting standards issues.

Finally, the Appendix conveys the methodological procedures which steered *Monitoring Community Attitudes in Changing Mediascapes* through the fieldwork. In essence, the study employed two methodological instruments. Focus groups were used in the qualitative phase of the research, and a national survey involving 1,000 randomly selected households was used for quantitative measurement.

1

The Context: New Zealand Research on Broadcasting Standards

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a broad context for the analysis and interpretation of the research findings presented later in the monograph. The chapter begins with a brief summary of the debate surrounding broadcasting in the deregulated environment – if that is the appropriate label to capture the changes within broadcasting in New Zealand which began in 1989.

The chapter then proceeds to a discussion of research on broadcasting standards commissioned by the Authority since 1990. This review confines itself to public opinion research on such broadcasting standards issues as violence, alcohol promotion, good taste and decency, and 'adult programming' on Pay TV.

The debate about broadcasting

Considering the Authority's role in maintaining broadcasting standards, this almost inevitably leads into a broader debate about broadcasting. During the last ten years or so, this debate has been essentially about the pros and cons of the deregulated environment of broadcasting in New Zealand. In other words, the debate has been over such issues as the question of (foreign) ownership and the apparent commercialisation of the media, the perceived demise of public broadcasting, and the provision of local content programming, especially for children.

The Authority is reminded of this broader debate in the community about broadcasting through its daily incoming correspondence. This correspondence often touches on the wider issues concerning the environment of broadcasting, all of which fall outside its jurisdiction. However, what can be observed is that many relate the changes in broadcasting during the last decade to a general decline in broadcasting quality, or more specifically the erosion of programme standards. While this is not the place to discuss the broader community concerns about broadcasting, people's perception of declining

programme standards merits further attention, as it appears to be a recurring theme in the study of the role of broadcasting in society.

Moral panics and the 'effects' of the media

The metaphor of moral panic has been often employed to describe and analyse particular events in society where seemingly deviant behaviour emerges and, subsequently, causes are attributed to the origins of that behaviour.

Historically, broadcasting content has periodically been the subject of moral panics. Broadcasting has at times been singled out as lying at the root of a particular social problem. In this context, for instance, juvenile delinquency has been related to the amount of violence appearing on television screens, and the increase in sexual promiscuity has been blamed on the sexually permissive attitudes being aired on the media.

In New Zealand as in other countries, the media have been assigned a causal influence in episodes of criminal or deviant behaviour and are thus intimately linked with the origin of moral panics.[1] To give selected examples, in nineteenth century New Zealand, larrikinism was sometimes attributed to 'indecent' literature, and one outcome of this association was the Offensive Publications Act of 1892. Similarly, with the arrival of the cinema, moral concern led to the 1916 Cinematograph Film Censorship Act. Perhaps the most protracted moral panic in New Zealand occurred in 1954 when, in response to a scandal in the Hutt Valley over adolescent immorality, and to the Parker–Hulme murder trial, the Mazengarb Report prefigured changes in the Amendment to the Indecent Publications Act.

The rise of television in the 1960s led to concerns about television and film violence which were reflected in the provisions of the 1961 Broadcasting Act. In 1963 the Indecent Publications Tribunal redefined the concept of 'indecency'. During the 1970s and early 1980s, Patricia Bartlett and the Society for the Promotion of Community Standards played the respective roles of moral entrepreneur and moral crusader. More recent concerns over the media in New Zealand and other countries have tended to focus more specifically on video recordings. The most notable example of this focus in Britain was the publicity surrounding 'video nasties' as a result of the Jamie Bulger murder trial in 1993.

While the media are thus frequently the targets of moral panics, it should not be overlooked that they are also the vehicle through whose agency such panics are spread and amplified. Most recently this has followed the pattern of the print media – once the principal accused of moral panics – contributing to public concern by highlighting the claimed excesses of the electronic media.

Alternatively, rather than being seen as a cause of problematic social behaviour, the decline in broadcasting standards has been perceived as symptomatic of a decline in

community standards generally. Such judgements are often accompanied with notions that a decline in broadcasting standards serves to sanction undesirable behaviour found in the wider community. In fact, the media are seen to glorify such unwelcome behaviour. The shared contention in these appraisals is that the media have a discernible effect. The broadcasting media, because of their ubiquitous presence in society, mould the minds and hearts of citizens, particularly the more 'vulnerable' members. The ways in which vulnerability are defined are not always that clear. It would be a common truism to say that those who are perceived to be vulnerable are always somebody other than oneself. However, the social consensus is that young, impressionable minds are almost always seen as needing some form of protection from the media.

Researchers involved in investigating the community expectations of broadcasting standards have to take cognisance of the arguments surrounding the perceived effects of the media. First, the debate as to whether broadcasting content has an effect on people may refer to a more generalised community concern about the broadcast media. Second, the question regarding the (social) effects of broadcasting lies at the heart of why many societies administer a broadcasting standards regime.

As the following discussion in this chapter demonstrates, public concern about broadcasting standards has been predominantly expressed through such issues as screen violence, the portrayal of sex and nudity, and language – more specifically swearing and blasphemy. Over the last ten years the Authority has, at regular intervals, commissioned research to measure public attitudes towards screen violence, sex and nudity and offensive language. The first of these public opinion surveys was conducted in 1990 and entailed a national survey of community attitudes and perceptions of violence on television.

1990 violence on television survey

The 1990 *Survey of Community Attitudes and Perception of Violence on Television* was conducted by Research International New Zealand. It comprised a national telephone survey of 670 randomly selected individuals aged 17 and older. This sample included a rural booster sample of 70 thus allowing for comparisons to be made between urban and rural New Zealand. In addition, a separate questionnaire was administered to 100 teenagers aged 13–16 years old. For comparative reasons, however, this section will confine itself to the survey data obtained from the adult population.

The public opinion research, modelled on an earlier study conducted by the Public Policy Research Centre for the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal in 1989, was partly motivated by the Authority's intention to work with television broadcasters in New Zealand to develop a Code of Broadcasting Practice for the Portrayal of Violence. The objectives of the research were fivefold and set out to:

- Investigate public attitudes towards the portrayal and presentation of screen violence, identifying what is perceived as violence and how it is categorised;

- Determine the level of community concern regarding violence on television;
- Examine the relationship between perception of violence and television viewing habits;
- Identify the perceived effects of televised violence and who are considered to be most at risk;
- Determine the level of public knowledge and awareness of existing regulation of television content.

The findings can be summarised as follows. Almost half of the people interviewed (47%) raised television violence as an issue of concern without being prompted. Concern about violence was followed by the amount of advertising (18%), nudity and/or sex scenes (13%), and 'bad language' (10%).

When prompted, however, 76 per cent were concerned about the amount of violence shown, with 53 per cent believing that there was 'too much' violence on television. The concern about the amount of violence outranked abusive language (54%), nudity/sex scenes (41%), and alcohol promotion (26%). The distinction between fictional violence and factual violence as shown in news and current affairs was hardly made. Individual identification – as measured by whether or not one was personally upset with the type of violence shown – was an important factor for those interviewed.

Age, gender and religiosity were the important variables, with the demographic composite of elderly women holding strong religious beliefs displaying the greatest levels of concern about television violence. Overall, there were no significant differences between urban and rural respondents, apart from the fact that rural respondents tended to be less concerned about fictional violence than factual violence. Urban respondents were more concerned about violence on television irrespective of such contextual considerations.

Not all violence on television was seen as unacceptable. Sixty-nine per cent believed that there were circumstances in which it was justified to show violence. As long as violence in news programmes was not presented in a sensational or spectacular way, people generally believed that violence in the news was justified. Violence in fictional programmes sufficiently removed from reality, for instance in cartoons and comedies, was also largely accepted. Similarly, violence was considered justifiable in television programmes when it was important to the story-line.

While controls on the time a broadcast was screened made violent content justifiable for many of the respondents, only 37 per cent – including 42 per cent of people with children under sixteen years of age – believed that 'Adults Only' programmes should begin before 8:30pm. Slightly over two-thirds (68%) of respondents believed that violence during the news programmes should be screened later at night.

Twenty-six per cent of all adults reported that they had turned off the set or had switched channels to avoid watching violence. Six in ten adults with children under sixteen years of age living in their household said that they controlled their children's exposure to screen violence. Older teenagers were given a much greater freedom. Generally speaking, people wanted to have the freedom to make their own viewing decisions, but also believed that there ought to be some controls on the screening of violent content. Almost everyone (94%) believed that parents should control the viewing habits of their children.

A clear majority of respondents (82%) believed that children – including teenagers – would be affected by television violence, with 48 per cent specifically citing younger children as being vulnerable. Fifteen per cent believed that violent programming affected everybody. Desensitisation, or making violence more acceptable, was listed as the predominant effect of viewing violent content. Inviting imitation, or copying violent acts, was also seen as an effect, particularly for younger viewers. Sleep disturbance in the form of nightmares was cited as well. Again, young children were seen to be most likely to be affected by this.

Finally, the 1990 study found that 51 per cent of respondents were not aware of the Authority a year after its establishment. Thirty-seven per cent were aware of the Authority and knew its function, and another 12 per cent were aware of its existence, but not of its function.

The issue of screen violence posed an interesting paradox between articulated attitudes and reported behaviour. Although it evoked a considerable amount of concern, this concern did not translate into active avoidance of violent programming or into calls for violence to be removed from television altogether. The overall finding emerged that violence on television ought to be kept within acceptable levels without removing the freedom of choice of those wanting to watch it. This was, however, accompanied by the proviso that young children needed to be protected from screen violence as they were perceived to be most vulnerable to it.

1992 alcohol advertising on radio and television survey

The 1992 *Public Opinion Research on Alcohol Advertising on Radio and Television* studied community perceptions of and attitudes towards alcohol advertising in broadcasting. Earlier that year, the Authority had released a new set of rules governing alcohol promotion on radio and television. The research was designed to evaluate the new regime by means of a public opinion survey. This survey also included questions on the advertising of gambling, and two questions on violence intended to replicate information obtained from the 1990 survey.

This section will only discuss the findings with respect to questions on violence contained in the 1992 survey, because (alcohol) advertising is longer a matter for the Authority as

its jurisdiction on advertising was transferred to the Advertising Standards Authority Inc., an industry-funded body, by a 1993 Amendment to the Broadcasting Act. For the items on violence, Research International New Zealand surveyed 504 people aged seventeen and older who were randomly selected from the telephone directory. The findings are briefly summarised below.

Forty-two per cent of respondents spontaneously mentioned violence on television as a concern, compared to 46 per cent in 1990. Nudity and/or sex scenes elicited the concern of 15 per cent of respondents, followed by 'too much advertising' (13%) and bad language (4%).

After prompting, 73 per cent of the respondents said that they were concerned about the amount of screen violence, compared to 75 per cent in 1990. Just under half (45%) of people interviewed said that they were 'very concerned' with the amount of violence on television, compared to 42 per cent in 1990. While the 1992 survey was economical where questions on television violence were involved, concerns about television violence had remained constant – both as a spontaneous response and after further prompting. The latter pattern was also evident in a study the Authority commissioned in 1993.

1993 'Good Taste and Decency' survey

The 1993 survey *Perceptions of 'Good Taste and Decency' in Television and Radio Broadcasting* was conducted by AGB McNair Limited. Survey questions were incorporated in the AGB McNair MetroMonitor Omnibus – a survey instrument which involved a randomly selected sample of 990 people aged fifteen years and older living in the nine largest urban areas of New Zealand. The interviews were conducted face-to-face in the respondents' homes.

The prime objective of the research was to conduct a national opinion survey to assess attitudes and perceptions regarding good taste and decency on television and radio. In doing so, the survey sought to measure levels of perceived offensiveness of specific broadcast scenarios including screen violence, bad language, and the portrayal of sex and nudity on television. Finally, the research was also seeking to replicate aspects of the 1990 and 1992 surveys.

Considering the findings of the survey, the respondents were first asked whether they had any concerns about what was broadcast on television. Just under half of the respondents, or 43 per cent, spontaneously mentioned violence. The concern with screen violence was followed by 'too many advertisements' (20%), nudity and/or sex scenes (18%), and 'bad' language (11%). Allowing for the different sampling sizes employed in both the 1990 and 1992 studies, the above results were more or less consistent with the findings of that research.

Further probing on the screen violence topic revealed that the time of broadcast – in this case before or after 9:30pm – and whether or not the violence shown was gratuitous

were important criteria for people when they judged scenarios involving violence on television as being offensive. Respondents were presented with hypothetical scenarios which included brief descriptions of episodes involving violent content on television programmes. They were asked to rate the scenarios on a 0–5 offensiveness scale (where '0' stands for *is totally inoffensive to me* and '5' represents *is totally offensive to me*). The hypothetical scenario, screened before 9:30pm, depicting a close-up scene from an action movie in which a young man was severely beaten and where the episode was not important to the story was judged by 79 per cent of respondents as in some measure offensive – aggregating responses representing 'moderately offensive' through to 'totally offensive'. By contrast, a similar scenario where the scene was important to the story and screened after 9:30pm was judged offensive by 48 per cent of people interviewed. The portrayal of violence during news programmes was judged the least offensive of all hypothetical scenarios. The time of such broadcasts was a factor, however. Images of violence during the early evening news were seen as offensive by 47 per cent, whereas similar pictures broadcast in the late evening news were considered offensive by 33 per cent of respondents.

Half (49%) of the respondents believed that the showing of excessive violence on television desensitised society by making violence more acceptable. Over a quarter (27%) of respondents said that they would be offended in the knowledge that children could be watching it. Ten per cent said they would be offended because it would upset them personally and another 10 per cent of people interviewed suggested that they would not be offended at all by violence on television.

As the Authority has a statutory role to ensure that good taste and decency are being maintained in broadcasting, respondents were asked what they saw as going against good taste and decency. The findings were interesting as the respondents' understanding of good taste and decency was perhaps different from the Authority's normal application of the standard. In fact, 47 per cent of respondents believed that violence went against principles of good taste and decency. Thirty-three per cent of people interviewed associated it with nudity or sex scenes, and 24 per cent with bad language. A relatively high 19 per cent of respondents did not know what the standard of good taste and decency stood for. As was the case with the levels of offensiveness in relation to television violence, the perceived offensiveness of the portrayal of sex and nudity was mediated by first, the time of the broadcast and, second, whether or not the portrayal was gratuitous. Consequently, a hypothetical scenario screened before 9:30pm depicting a couple having sexual intercourse which was not important to the story was found offensive by 70 per cent of respondents. When a similar scenario was screened before 9:30pm without the sex being gratuitous, 64 per cent believed it still to be offensive. A music video which showed images of intimate sexual activity was judged offensive by 70 per cent of respondents.

In contrast to the violence scenarios which revealed that there was a relatively greater acceptance of violent content shown during news programmes, the portrayal of sex and nudity during the news generated greater levels of offensiveness. A hypothetical scenario screened on the early evening news which involved strippers performing was found

offensive by 64 per cent of people interviewed. The same item being screened on the late evening news was found to be offensive by 40 per cent.

A concern about children may explain the above findings. Fifty-two per cent of respondents said that they would be offended because children could be watching it. The fact that people were less likely to be offended by the portrayal of sex and nudity than screen violence was borne out by the finding that 26 per cent said that they were not usually offended by a scene of sexual intercourse on television. Thirteen per cent believed it to be offensive because they would be personally upset by it, and 9 per cent thought it offensive because other people watching might have found it unacceptable.

Levels of offensiveness towards 'bad' language were also surveyed. Respondents were asked to rate the offensiveness (again, as above, on a 0–5 offensiveness scale) of a list of 20 swear words, blasphemies and other expletives. In order for respondents to rate each individual word in context, the following scenario was offered:

> I would like you to imagine each word being used in a police drama, where police have chased and are just arresting a hardened criminal, and the programme is screened after 8:30pm. How offensive would you find [each] word, used in the police drama setting?

As this question was repeated in the 1999 *Monitoring Community Attitudes in Changing Mediascapes* research, the full table of 'offensive' words from the 1993 research is shown below. While not exactly the same word list was used in 1999 and the type of measurement was slightly adjusted, it allows for a comparison of findings as a basis for gauging whether changes in public opinion on language have taken place during the six-year period.

Three words clearly emerged as being judged offensive by a majority of the respondents (see Table 1.1). The use of 'cunt' and 'motherfucker' were found offensive by 80 per cent of people interviewed. Three-quarters (75%) of the sample believed 'fuck' to be offensive. 'Wanker' (52%), 'arsehole' (50%) and 'prick' (48%) saw about half of respondents raising objections. Below the seventh-ranked word 'piss', the majority of words caused considerably less offence to a majority of respondents. Expletives like 'bugger' (26%), 'bollocks' (26%), 'bloody' (22%), and 'hell' (22%) offended a relatively small minority. This analysis also revealed that there was a broad range of opinion on most words. While relatively large numbers of respondents were more than moderately offended about particular words, relatively large proportions of the sample were not offended at all. As the 1993 research report recorded: 'Thus opinion on the offensiveness of many commonly used swear words, blasphemies and expletives can be considered substantially polarised.'

As was found with the portrayal of sex and nudity, people took exception to bad language because of a concern that children might be watching or hearing it. Just under half of respondents (48%) gave this as their main reason. A quarter of respondents (24%) stated that they were offended because it upset them personally. Nine per cent were offended because they believed other people watching television might be offended. Approximately

Table 1.1: 1993 list of words in order of offensiveness

	Level of Offensiveness						% Who Scored 3+	Average Score
	0 %	1 %	2 %	3 %	4 %	5 %		
1. Cunt	7	4	8	12	1	55	80	**3.87**
2. Motherfucker	8	5	6	12	13	55	80	**3.82**
3. Fuck	11	5	8	13	12	50	75	**3.59**
4. Wanker	22	10	12	18	13	21	52	**2.56**
5. Arsehole	23	11	15	15	11	21	50	**2.51**
6. Prick	23	14	13	18	10	20	48	**2.40**
7. Piss	30	12	16	14	10	17	41	**2.13**
8. Jesus	37	13	9	11	8	20	40	**2.03**
9. Christ	37	13	10	11	8	20	39	**2.02**
10. Bastard	32	13	15	16	8	15	39	**2.00**
11. Shit	33	14	14	15	8	16	39	**1.99**
12. Balls	37	14	13	13	8	15	36	**1.87**
13. Bullshit	37	15	13	14	7	14	35	**1.82**
14. God	41	14	9	12	6	17	35	**1.78**
15. God Almighty	42	13	10	11	6	17	34	**1.78**
16. Crap	39	15	16	14	6	10	30	**1.63**
17. Bugger	44	15	15	11	6	9	26	**1.46**
18. Bollocks	46	12	12	11	5	10	26	**1.44**
19. Bloody	50	15	14	11	4	7	22	**1.25**
20. Hell	52	15	10	11	5	6	22	**1.19**

(Base: All respondents=990)

one in five people (18%) said that they were not normally offended when confronted with bad language in broadcasting.

Other items of potential perceived offensiveness were also put to the respondents. A television reporter attempting to interview shocked victims at the scene of a road accident was judged offensive by 90 per cent of people interviewed. A television news presenter making a throwaway racist remark was considered to be offensive by 84 per cent of respondents. These two scenarios attracted the highest levels of offensiveness scores across all scenarios employed in the survey.

Scenarios involving items of potential offensiveness on radio were also tested. Three-quarters (75%) of respondents believed it to be offensive if a DJ were to invite calls from listeners in a competition which involved the gratuitous use of offensive language. A talkback host insulting a caller was judged to be offensive by 71 per cent of people interviewed. The scenario depicting a radio talkback personality who, as a joke, made a comment about women drivers was found to be offensive by just under half (49%) of the respondents. Forty-three per cent of people interviewed thought it was offensive for a DJ on a breakfast radio show to tell a 'dirty' joke.

As had been the case in previous research, the 1993 survey *Perceptions of 'Good Taste and Decency' in Television and Radio Broadcasting* also included questions about the awareness and knowledge of television programme classifications. Even when unprompted by the interviewer, 54 per cent were able to recall 'AO' or 'Adults Only' and 53 per cent were able to name 'G' or 'General'. Only a third (32%) of respondents were able to recall 'PGR' or 'Parental Guidance Recommended'. Most respondents (85%) knew what 'AO' stood for and 'G' was correctly defined or understood by 87 per cent of people interviewed. The 'PGR' classification was more or less accurately identified by 72 per cent of the respondents, with 20 per cent saying that they did not know what the acronym meant.

Turning to a breakdown of the socio-demographic variables, it emerged that patterns established in the previous research commissioned by the Authority were confirmed. Age and sex were the most powerful socio-demographic discriminators of attitudes towards broadcasting standards issues. Women consistently reported higher levels of offensiveness, and women were also more likely to state that they were personally offended by broadcasting content involving violence, the portrayal of sex and nudity and offensive language. With respect to age, the average offensiveness rating increased as the age of the respondents increased, and older people were more inclined to be offended personally by items depicting screen violence, sex and nudity, and bad language.

On the whole, but with the exception of bad language, there was evidence that blue-collar workers were less concerned about broadcasting standards matters than were white-collar workers. The amount of time spent in front of the television also resulted in variation, with 'heavy viewers' being generally less offended by violence, and good taste and decency matters than 'light viewers'.

1997 adult programmes on pay television survey

In order to assist it with the review of the *Code of Broadcasting Practice for Pay Television*, the Authority commissioned AGB McNair to conduct a national survey of community attitudes to adult material on pay television.[2] The following research objectives were identified:

- To discover community views on perceived differences between pay television and free-to-air television, and how this impacts on the regulation of programme content;

- To ascertain community standards for the limits of acceptability of pay television programme content, with particular reference to the portrayal of sex and violence, and offensive language;

- To explore how and the extent to which parents and caregivers monitor and regulate their children's and young persons' (i.e. under 17-year-olds) access to and use of television, their concern about children's access to adult entertainment, and their views on acceptable time zones;

- To explore the need for child control devices such as pin numbers or smart cards to restrict access by children to adult entertainment, and how access restrictions influence people's attitudes to otherwise unacceptable material;

- To examine community attitudes to the portrayal of women in adult entertainment, especially in programmes with sexually explicit material and sexual violence, and to discover whether the community considers that such material discriminates against women;

- To examine community attitudes to the portrayal of violence, sex and nudity, and sexual violence, and how people perceive the effects of this material on themselves and others.

The research proceeded through two stages. The first qualitative phase involved focus group discussions in Auckland, Napier, Christchurch and Invercargill. The focus groups were stratified and recruited around age, sex, ethnicity, parental status, pay television subscriber and socio-economic status. The focus group research was designed to explore attitudes about adult material and pay television, and develop themes to be tested in the quantitative stage of the research. As is a standard feature of focus group research, the exercise also set out to determine the appropriate wording for the questionnaire to be used in the national survey.

The survey was administered through a self-completion questionnaire. Of the 1,700 people initially contacted, 1,000 people completed and returned the questionnaire – a response rate of 59 per cent, which is regarded as acceptable in mail surveys. The multiple-stage structure of the survey made it possible to check the characteristics of those who returned the self-completion questionnaire and those who did not. Importantly, when the two data sets were compared, it emerged that the two groups were similar in their demographic profiles. Hence, concerns about the effect of non-response bias could be allayed to some degree.

The awareness of the classification symbols currently shown on television and the use made of them was probed by the survey. While most people (89%) knew what the symbols meant, only a minority (20%) said they had regularly used them. These characteristics did not vary significantly between parents and non-parents, or between Sky subscribers and non-subscribers.

As adult programming available in the cinema and on videotape normally carries the Office of Film and Literature Classification's R18[3] classification, questions relating to the meaning of the R18 classification were tested. One-third, or 32 per cent, of respondents correctly identified that R18 meant that people under 18 were legally prohibited from watching, while 47 per cent thought that the classification R18 concerned a recommendation that the material was better suited to those over 18 years of age.

Another question asked respondents what they thought the R18 classification should be used for. Violence and excessive violence, sex, bad language and sexual violence, in that order, constituted the bulk of what people thought should be labelled R18. People with children were more likely than those without to identify violence and sex as needing the R18 classification. With respect to the availability of R18 material, a third (34%) of respondents felt that anyone wanting to view adult material should be obliged to get it from a video shop and not from television. A similar proportion (33%) thought that if R18 programming was to be shown on TV, it should be available on a separate adult channel.

Respondents were asked their opinions on the acceptability on pay television of scenes containing violence, sexual violence and sexual intercourse, and the kinds of restrictions they thought should be imposed. Just over a quarter of respondents (27%) wanted no violence at all on pay television. About the same proportion (30%) wanted no sexual intercourse, and 53 per cent wanted no sexual violence. Considerably more were prepared to allow violence (58%) and sexual intercourse (58%) to be shown if these aspects were important to the story, but the level dropped to 43 per cent for sexual violence.

About half of the respondents (49%) believed that violence and sexual intercourse (45%), if shown at all, should be screened late at night. Again, the figure dropped to 35 per cent for sexual violence. In addition to screening adult programmes late at night, a second way of restricting access to adult material was to have a separate R18 channel. This was favoured by 25 per cent of the respondents with respect to R18 material containing themes of violence and sexual intercourse. Twenty per cent believed it to be acceptable to show sexual violence on a separate adult channel. There was substantial support for allowing scenes of violence (62%), sexual violence (42%) and sexual intercourse (58%) on pay television when blocking technology could be used to restrict access by children. A substantial minority favoured no restrictions on adult material and believed that adult themes should be treated in the same way as any other programme on pay television – 29 per cent, 20 per cent and 30 per cent respectively for violence, sexual violence and sexual intercourse. Those who favoured screening adult material late at night had a distinct preference for 10pm as the watershed hour, as against the alternatives of 8pm and midnight.

Respondents were asked to record their level of concern about each of a list of types of scenes in movies which might result in R18 classifications. There were two aspects of interest. One was the ordering in importance of the types of hypothetical scenarios. Those

causing the most concern were sexual violence, serial killing and bondage, and at the other end of the scale were nudity, sex and offensive or bad language. The other feature of note was that pay television subscribers showed a consistently lower level of concern with each type of scenario.

Almost everyone (91%) thought that adult material had a bad effect on children, 73 per cent thought it caused violence in society, and 50 per cent thought it was harmful to society as a whole. By contrast, only 21 per cent felt it affected them directly in an adverse way. There was an appreciable gender split on the perceptions of the potential for causing violence, the general harm to society and the bad effect on the respondent, with women generally thinking the material was more harmful. There was a similar tendency for parents/caregivers.

The perceptions in the community about the acceptability of adult material on pay television were also explored in the survey, both by comparison with the attitudes to free-to-air television and in absolute terms. The principles that respondents thought underlay the use of rules for controlling the viewing of adult material were also probed. Two-thirds (67%) of respondents thought that a wide range of material, including R18 material, should be available on pay television. The respondents were asked if they thought that the rules on what could be broadcast on pay television should be exactly the same as those for free-to-air television. Of the total sample, just under half (46%) agreed with that proposition. When the total sample was asked what was an appropriate time after which adult programmes could be shown on Pay TV, 13 per cent said there should be no restrictions and the bulk of the remainder were fairly evenly split between 8pm (21%), 9pm (21%) and 10pm (29%).

The majority of the respondents (85%) said they had one or more viewing rules for children. The most common rules were: not allowing R18 material (73%); no viewing allowed after a certain time at night (70%); no sex material (62%); no violence (57%); no horror (54%); and, finally, no bad language (49%). Other rules such as programme selection and having an adult present were much less common. The reasons specified for having rules were such considerations as the perceived bad influence on children of some material (30%), the need to exercise control over viewing (27%) and a belief that the children had better and healthier things to do (15%). However, having rules for viewing by children is one thing, but putting them into effect appeared to be another. Parents/caregivers admitted that the rules they set were broken, with 27 per cent saying that they were broken sometimes or often.

Classification information about programme content was reported as being used frequently by about 50 per cent of the parent/caregiver respondents to guide them in deciding if their child could watch a particular programme. This information was most often used for five- to 12-year-old children. About 12 per cent of parents/caregivers admitted that their child sometimes, at least, watched R18 material. This was most prevalent (30%) for the 13–17-year-olds.

Parents/caregivers almost universally rejected the proposition that children aged up to four years old could recognise the difference between fact and fantasy, and could therefore be allowed to watch any movie on television. For children aged five to 12 years old, the number of parents/caregivers who agreed with this proposition rose to 24 per cent, and for the 13–17-year-olds, to 61 per cent. Only 16 per cent of parents/caregivers thought that it was hard to monitor children's viewing, although this figure rises for both the older parents and older children. Over 30 per cent of parents of older children thought it was hard to monitor children's viewing.

All respondents in the survey were asked their opinions on the utility of blocking devices. Seventy-three per cent thought that the R18 blocking card was an effective way of preventing children under 18 years old from watching R18 material in the home. Out of all respondents, 63 per cent said they would use an R18 card if they subscribed to Pay TV and if they had children living at home, while among those who were already Sky subscribers the proportion was smaller at 54 per cent. Seventy-nine per cent of the respondents said that they would use the keypad device in similar circumstances.

The proposition was put to respondents that there was a third option between those of total prohibition of R18 programmes on Pay TV and leaving control to parents, perhaps with the help of control devices. This option was to have an R18 channel which would have to be subscribed to separately. Of all respondents, 58 per cent thought that parental supervision was sufficient, 20 per cent favoured a separate R18 channel and 18 per cent wanted no R18 material on Pay TV.

1998 BSA public awareness survey

In 1998, ACNielsen conducted a telephone survey to measure the public's awareness of the Authority and the public's familiarity with the complaints process. The national survey was conducted using ACNielsen's Information Express Telephone Omnibus Service and involved a random sample of 1,000 people aged 15 years and over. The research also set out to measure the public awareness of the statutory obligation for broadcasters to broadcast daily messages to remind viewers and listeners of their right to complain. Finally, the survey included questions about the complaint behaviour of respondents.

With respect to the public awareness of the Authority, it was found that 81 per cent of people interviewed knew of the Authority. The 19 per cent of respondents who were not aware of its existence predominantly consisted of people from the younger age groups. Whereas 51 per cent of respondents identified the Authority as an agency which receives complaints about broadcasting, 24 per cent believed the Authority was a censoring body, or was involved in the control of the quality of broadcasting content. Seven per cent of people interviewed confused the Authority with New Zealand on Air, and 13 per cent did not know what its functions were. Sixteen per cent were not aware that people were able to make complaints about broadcasting. These tended to be women, people in the

age category 15–34 years old and people on low incomes.

Regarding people's awareness of broadcasters' messages, 38 per cent of respondents were not aware of broadcasters' messages on television compared to 56 per cent of people who were not aware of broadcasters' messages on radio. Women, 15–24-year-olds, people on low incomes and those with low education levels made up the socio-demographic composite.

Turning to complaint behaviour, five per cent of respondents in the sample indicated that they had actually complained about broadcasting in one form or another. Actual complainants were over-represented in the 55–64 age group (7%) and in the 65 and over age group (9%). Furthermore, people involved in 'home duties' (15%) were more likely to state that they had complained. Finally, residents in Auckland (7%) were also more likely to complain, which could be explained by the fact that since the larger broadcasting networks were based in Auckland no toll call was involved.

More complaints were made about television broadcasts (77%) than about radio (23%). These figures correspond with the distribution of formal complaints received by the Authority. The survey also revealed that women, 35–54-year-olds, and professionals were more likely to complain about television programming, whereas men, those 55 years and older, and Wellingtonians were more likely to complain about radio. Sixty per cent of these complainants had complained to the radio and/or television station concerned, while 40 per cent had complained elsewhere, including to the Authority (18%). A majority (54%) had complained by phone, compared to 41 per cent of respondents who had complained in writing.

Intended complaint behaviour was also a subject of the survey. Forty-four per cent of people interviewed had in the past considered complaining, compared to 56 per cent of respondents who had not. Nearly one quarter (23%) of respondents stated that they had felt the urge to complain on more than ten occasions during the preceding year. Those over 55 years old were over-represented in this category.

Of those 44 per cent who said that they had considered complaining but did not do so, 30 per cent mentioned laziness or lack of motivation. Women, the 25–34 and 65+ age groups, singles and professionals were most likely to state this. Another 23 per cent believed that laying a complaint would be ineffective. These predominantly comprised males, those in the 55+ age group, people living in households with children older than 16 years old, and people on low incomes.

Conclusion

During the period 1990–1998, the research has revealed a quite remarkable degree of stability in public opinion regarding broadcasting standards matters. It would seem that

the age and sex of respondents are important predictors of a host of attitudes towards broadcasting standards, in particular where such issues as screen violence, the portrayal of sex and nudity, and offensive language are concerned. Overall, women consistently display higher levels of concern about broadcasting content, and as the age of the respondents increases, so do levels of perceived offensiveness.

Notes

1 For a historical overview of the media and moral panics in New Zealand, see Roy Shuker and Roger Openshaw with Janet Soler, *Youth, Media and Moral Panics in New Zealand: From Hooligans to Video Nasties*, Palmerston North: Department of Education, Massey University, Delta Research Monograph, No.11, 1990. For a broad discussion on censorship in New Zealand, see Chris Watson and Roy Shuker, *In the Public Good? Censorship in New Zealand*, Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 1998.

2 See Phillipa Ballard, Linda Sheldon and Garry Dickinson, *Community Attitudes to Adult Material on Pay Television*, Wellington: Broadcasting Standards Authority, 1997.

3 R18 stands for 'approved for exhibition only to persons aged 18 years and over'. Films that carry the R18 classification are legally restricted to those who are 18 years and older.

2

Talking about Broadcasting Standards: Findings of the Qualitative Research

Introduction

The qualitative research comprised ten focus group discussions held in various North and South Island centres during September and October 1998. The purpose of engaging in focus group research was twofold. First, it served as an initial exploration of broadcasting standards issues as perceived by participants and, second, it provided the opportunity to access the language of participants when they talked about broadcasting standards. In this function, the focus group research had a fundamental input into the design and wording of the questionnaire to be administered in the national survey.

Apart from the fact that the focus group research contributed to questionnaire design, the findings of the qualitative phase are of intrinsic interest. After all, the qualitative data provide an in-depth account as to how people define, perceive and deliberate broadcasting standards matters. While the focus group research presented in this chapter does not claim representativeness, its findings do to some extent prefigure the findings obtained in the national survey. The participants were recruited according to a list of criteria. The composition of the ten focus groups covered the following variables: age, gender, ethnicity, parental status, Pay TV subscribers, and, finally, geographical area. For further elaboration on methodological issues, refer to Appendix I, and for the composition of the focus groups cited after quotations, see p. 109.

This chapter is divided into three broad sections. The first section discusses the patterns of media use in the households of the participants. The second section concentrates on broadcasting standards proper – focusing on the participants' language and perceptions when they reflect on such issues as violence, bad language, the portrayal of sex, privacy, balance, accuracy and fairness. The final section will deal with topics concerning the protection of children, parental responsibility and that of broadcasters.

Patterns of media use

Viewers' and listeners' perceptions of broadcasting standards matters are in part moulded by the programmes they tend to favour. Indeed, it could be argued that perceptions of current broadcasting standards are to some extent driven by what is on offer, by what is seen as favourite programming and, finally, by what is seen as programming that is to be avoided. Moreover, viewers' and listeners' programme preferences are not uniform, but tend to be divided on age and gender lines. This section of the chapter discusses the patterns of media use among the participants who took part in the focus group discussions, starting with television and radio use.

Radio was universally present in the households of participants, and all but one participant had television in their household, with about four in ten receiving subscription television through Sky Network Television. The trend was definitely towards multiple television sets – up to five were reported in one household alone. Younger family members, so it seemed, frequently had a television set in their bedrooms. Multiple television sets in households also meant that adults were more likely to watch separately. The use of radio has been highly individualised for some time now, and the focus group discussions revealed that television is following radio in its footsteps where such individual use patterns are concerned.

However, the older participants mentioned that they tended to watch television with their partners:

> My wife won't watch TV alone. She likes [me] to sit and watch a programme with her.
>
> I often try to [watch] with my wife, but she normally likes to watch programmes I don't like.
>
> **(Older males whose children have left home – Wellington)**

Women in the same age category mentioned that they tended to watch the news with their husbands or, in some instances, watch television with their grandchildren. On the whole women tended to watch television less than their partners, surrendering the living room to their partners.

In the case of parents with children still living at home, domestic viewing patterns were split between adults and children as they watched television in different rooms of the house:

> I watch alone; my two sons have a TV so I can watch what I want. They watch alone, I watch alone.
>
> **(Female parents of children aged 13–18 years – Napier)**
>
> I sit rarely down with the children. They've their own choice.
>
> **(Female parents of children aged 2–12 years – Auckland)**

> When I get home I sit down [and] watch the news with the wife. The kids go to their room and watch TV there.
>
> **(Male parents of children aged 2–18 years – Napier)**

In households with only one television set, a perhaps more 'traditional' picture emerges:

> The TV is in the lounge and that's where everybody congregates. At 6 o'clock, it's always on the news...everyone has to shut up.
>
> **(Pay TV subscribers – Christchurch)**

The younger participants tended to watch television with their peers, often friends or flatmates. As one pointed out, a consensus was not too hard to find:

> You can always find a movie that you both want to watch.
>
> **(Males, 18–30 with no children – Christchurch)**

While everybody reported that they were regularly listening to the radio, watching television seemed the more dominant activity in most households. Radio was reported to be predominantly listened to in the morning – *Morning Report* and commercial breakfast shows were mentioned – either at home as people got ready for the working day or in the car on the way to work. Those at home during the day mentioned that they had the radio on for most of the time.

The individualised use of television is a relatively recent experience and is perhaps an extension of the fact that social life has become increasingly confined to the private domestic sphere. The family use of television has given way to a more individual use of the medium, rather like radio had done earlier. The changed viewing context from the family to individual was acknowledged to have implications for the exercising of parental responsibility. This observation had not gone unnoticed by the parents themselves, who, like most participants, believed that the prime responsibility lay with parents to monitor television viewing.

As television sets have become cheaper and therefore easier to acquire, households with multiple television sets seemed to have bought them in order to accommodate the range of programme preferences that exists within households. The focus group research also suggested that the number of television sets in households had gone beyond the proverbial spare set in the parents' bedroom. It emerged that once the battle for the remote control had been lost, family members moved to other rooms of the house to watch their favourite programming. What, then, are people's favourite programmes? In addition, what constitutes programming they wish to avoid?

The viewing preferences of the people participating in the focus group research were fairly predictable, and follow the familiar demographic and psychographic profiles used in the media industry. Age and gender were the most important variables by far. Men overwhelmingly reported sport as their major preference: most of them had in fact

subscribed to Pay TV for that reason. While older men displayed a partiality to news, current affairs and documentaries, for younger men this was substituted by movies. Young men only casually referred to watching news and current affairs. With respect to their preferences towards radio programming, men were more divided. Both public radio and commercial radio featured prominently, with perhaps commercial radio drawing a greater following, particularly among younger males.

Older women, like their male counterparts, showed an appetite for news, current affairs, documentary, 'true stories' and, perhaps surprisingly, sport. This is not to say that fictional content did not feature among this group's preferences; for instance, *Coronation Street*, *Blue Heelers* and *Montana Masterpiece Theatre* were some of the mentioned favourites. By contrast, younger women tended to tune into TV2 and TV3 and cited sitcoms like *Friends* and *Ally McBeal*, (romance) movies and *Shortland Street* as their favourites. Young women did not mention watching the news regularly, but did refer to programmes such as *60 Minutes* and *20/20*. Female listening patterns for radio followed a pattern similar to that for men; as age increased public radio tended to take precedence over commercial radio, the latter being almost exclusively listened to by younger females. Generally speaking, the point about radio was that listening to public radio and to commercial radio tended to be mutually exclusive. There were few people who reported listening to both and where this was the case, it was often a combination of National Radio and NewsTalk.

Programming that the participants mentioned avoiding followed similar patterns. Even though personal taste is a fairly idiosyncratic measure, age and gender were again important predictors. Most men, young and old, displayed an intense dislike of soaps. Likewise, women found it hard to understand what drew the men in their households to (American) action movies. Both men and women used the labels 'pointless' and 'stupid' in describing soaps and action movies respectively. There was the issue of the perceived quality of programming so that, for instance, older participants of both genders challenged the quality of news and current affairs. 'Sensationalist', 'commercialist' and 'personality-driven' were some of the labels used. Other programming issues, such as the number of repeats and the amount of advertising and infomercials, were also criticised.

It is perhaps interesting to note that participants rarely used the term 'offensive' spontaneously, when referring to programming they did not like. When prompted, or when other participants in the focus group introduced the term, it would gain currency, but even then only to a limited extent. There appears to be a big gap between the programming that participants did not like (and, consequently, did not tend to watch) and programming that offended viewers and listeners, as explained by this participant:

> We see a lot of garbage on television. This doesn't mean we're offended by what's on TV, it just means we don't like it!
>
> **(Male parents of children aged 2–18 years – Napier)**

Alternatively, the fact that the term 'offensive' was relatively absent from the focus group discussions may hint at the supposition that the term does not feature strongly in a

participant's vocabulary when they talk about broadcasting standards. This is not to say, however, that people do not take offence, but that the most common action is to switch channels or to turn off the set altogether. Taking offence and laying a complaint are relatively distant cousins and seemed only to be linked by the degree of offensiveness which, in turn, seemed to involve a moral judgement. As one young man stated:

> It would have to be something that offends morally, rather than you getting bored [with the programme] or whether it is just sounds ridiculous or something.
>
> **(Males, 18–30, no children – Christchurch)**

Generally speaking, participants acknowledged the relative nature of offensive programming. This was expressed in the realisation that audiences are composed of people with different tastes and interests:

> What may be objectionable to me may not be objectionable to you.
>
> **(Older males, children left home – Wellington)**

> It's up to the individual and not everybody has the same moral standards. It would be a pretty sad world if we all thought the same.
>
> **(Pay TV subscribers – Christchurch)**

As a spontaneous reaction to the question as to what caused offence, swearing on radio and television were singled out for discussion. Its predominance on television, in American movies in particular, was considered to be gratuitous. While New Zealand may be conventionally considered a secular nation, the use of religious expletives was similarly ruled out of order. Although language on television was considered offensive, but more or less anticipated, expectations of radio were much higher and, therefore, enlisted strong sentiment when radio was considered to offend with bad language. To be confronted with 'offensive programming' was, for some participants, not something that was offset by a broadcaster's warning.

Being offended by language, then, appeared to be the most prominent category that participants listed spontaneously. In other words, language is perhaps one area in which the so-called slipping of standards was most acutely experienced. Nevertheless, objectionable language does also seem to strike people as a personal offence – blasphemy being a case in point. Furthermore, the latter was accompanied with, as we shall see later, a concern for children.

Viewers and listeners bring certain expectations to programmes which, based on previous experiences, are often the reason for their current choice of programming in the first place. As expectations guide what people watch and listen to, being inadvertently confronted with programming that one does not expect tends to cause offence. While the use of the remote control often provided practical assistance to avoid offensive programming, the question remains as to what are the other strategies employed when dealing with objectionable content.

'New Zealanders are a passive lot; we're lazy and let others to take action. We moan, but we do nothing.' Contained within this statement is a realistic outlook that was quite typical for most focus group discussions in that while people were talking about broadcasting standards in their immediate circle, they would not tend to put pen to paper. There were people who had complained about broadcasting matters not necessarily related to standards matters, such as programme scheduling. However, there was a reluctance to take complaints beyond one's immediate circle, and listed below are some of the comments which illustrate the complaint behaviour:

> I think we phoned up once, but the boards were jammed.
>
> I have moaned and groaned, but I've never written in.
>
> **(Maori females – Wellington)**

> I used to feel I want to write, but I don't carry it out. I used to think others [would].
>
> **(Pay TV subscribers – Christchurch)**

> I may have thought about it, but probably never got around to do it.
>
> **(Females, 18–30, no children – Auckland)**

> We say we're going to, but we don't.
>
> **(Female parents of children aged 13–18 years – Napier)**

> We tend to accept everything, even though we don't like it. We're basically apathetic about it and can you really change anything with just one letter?
>
> **(Older females, children left home – Ashburton)**

Others did not see the point of complaining, thinking it would not make a difference. This impression was partly created by the belief that a single person was relatively powerless to initiate an investigation or that nothing would happen in any case:

> I know you can complain, but I'm only one person – it's not going to make a difference.
>
> **(Female parents of children aged 2–12 years – Auckland)**

> We don't know whether how seriously they're gonna take you. You just gonna waste time doing it. You just get the feeling that they'll put the thing aside.
>
> **(Maori males – Auckland)**

> If one person complains, what are they going to do?
>
> **(Older males, children left home – Wellington)**

> I know people who have...but, at the end of the day, it doesn't matter – in the long run nothing will happen.
>
> **(Male parents of children aged 2–18 years – Napier)**

> Wouldn't the Broadcasting Standards Authority need several complaints before

> they would act? Would they act on one complaint out of 3,000,000?
> **(Older women, children left home – Ashburton)**

Finally, others believed that there were more important things in life than television:

> If I'm going to protest about something, it's not about TV. I do not want to wave a banner. TV's not that important.
> **(Male parents of children aged 2–18 years – Napier)**

And for others still, the very idea of complaining was rather foreign to them – turn off the set was their advice:

> I mean I just can't imagine somebody sitting at home writing a letter of complaint about... I don't know...what's happening on *Shortland Street* and then sign it 'Christian'. I mean if they feel so strongly about it, turn it off!
> **(Males, 18–30, no children – Christchurch)**

So far, this chapter has considered with the patterns of media use among the participants. The highly individualised use of radio and television was noted. Moreover, with several television sets in households, individuals were able to act out their viewing preferences in either the living rooms or the bedrooms of their homes. However, encounters with 'offensive programming' were less prevalent, simply for the reason that participants voted with the remote control or with their feet. This was also reflected in the complaint behaviour. It seems that the democracy afforded to viewers and listeners by the remote control, or the off switch, may perhaps explain why participants refrain from mobilising the complaint process. Some degree of scepticism about the efficacy of the complaints process was also present.

Talking about broadcasting standards

This section will address the participants' perceptions of the specific broadcasting standards categories. It will deal respectively with the participants' attitudes towards the portrayal of violence, use of (bad) language, the portrayal of sex, balance, fairness and accuracy, the privacy of the individual and, finally, discrimination. Generally speaking, violence, language and the portrayal of sex were seen as major concerns. The other standard categories of balance, fairness and accuracy, privacy, and discrimination, featured less in the focus group discussions. Some care will be given to the actual language used by the participants when they talked about broadcasting standards. In what follows below, a representative voice across the ten focus group discussions has been selected.

Violence

The portrayal of violence was a dominant feature of contemporary television for many of the participants. Whether or not such a perception could be considered as 'socially

desirable', violence was articulated as a genuine concern. Indeed, more often than not it was mentioned without prompting by participants. For the older participants, violent programming was a major concern: *'Violence is what we feel strongest about.'* For these participants, it generally signified a lowering of overall standards:

> It's becoming more violent and graphic, to raise ratings by lowering standards. In far too many programmes violence is central to the theme; it's brutal.
> **(Older males, children left home – Wellington)**

The deliberate and graphic nature of violence had most participants worried – females in particular – regardless of whether it concerned fictional or factual programming. In particular, fictional programming was seen as defying realism with the consequences of violence not being shown. Apart perhaps from younger men, there appeared to be a consensus:

> I'm against blood and guts violence, for instance, somebody being shot and seeing blood spurting out the body onto a wall, and keeping the camera trained on it. You don't want to see the blood spurting out.
> **(Older males, children left home – Wellington)**

> News shows dead bodies being shot up – it's the norm now.
> **(Male parents of children aged 2–18 years – Napier)**

> Deliberate violence is not acceptable; like kicking people in the head or situations of three people beating up one.
> **(Older females, children left home – Ashburton)**

> You don't want to see the end result; you don't want to see too many details.
> **(Female parents of children aged 2–12 years – Auckland)**

> There's too much violence and it's too graphic. They have their teeth broken and then get a good beating and get up and walk away.
> **(Female parents of children aged 13–18 years – Napier)**

> I think the consequences and harm need to shown; violence hurts and harms!
> **(Females, 18–30, no children – Auckland)**

The above comments do not extend to the participants' belief that there was no place for violence altogether. Context was judged the overriding factor in deciding whether or not violence was warranted:

> *Once Were Warriors*, it was central to the theme. The acts of violence are part of life [and] it's part and parcel of the drama in context.
> **(Older males, children left home – Wellington)**

> Slapstick violence like *Police Academy* is okay for kids. If it's highly dramatised even little kids can see that it's not real.

> Some acts are brutal and violent and that needs to be shown. I think it's bad if it's trivialised.
>
> **(Females, 18–30, no children – Auckland)**

> In a historical movie, you can't take the violence out of it, because you wouldn't have a story. Things that have war in it. It's acceptable because viewers expect it.
>
> **(Older females, children left home – Ashburton)**

> Schwarzenegger is make-believe! You know it's not real, so it's fine to watch.
>
> **(Male parents of children aged 2–18 years – Napier)**

> Seeing rape on *Crime Watch* is different from drama because they want to show what happened. This is different from watching a drama where someone is perpetrating a violent act against a woman.
>
> **(Maori females – Wellington)**

> It's important to know whether it's real or pretend violence. For instance, wartime movies are true to life and it happened. If the violence is relevant, it's OK.
>
> **(Female parents of children aged 2–12 years – Auckland)**

Whether violent content was screened on free-to-air television or on Pay TV did not seem to make a difference. Some in fact believed that Pay TV was too permissive, including not maintaining a watershed, thus showing violent content during the day:

> Violence is violence! It doesn't matter what channel it is on.
>
> **(Older females, children left home – Ashburton)**

> On Sky anything goes. They don't care about time either; they have a really violent movie at 2 o'clock in the afternoon.
>
> **(Maori females – Wellington)**

The portrayal of violence against women, children and the elderly was especially denounced:

> Children should not have to listen to children screaming.
>
> **(Female parents of children aged 2–12 – Auckland)**

> I don't think any violence against women or children is justified.
>
> **(Female parents of children aged 13–18 years – Napier)**

> I don't really like watching movies that involve parents beating up their own kids or kids getting molested. I don't even watch it actually.
>
> **(Maori males – Auckland)**

> What is not acceptable is sexual violence and the beating of elderly people.
>
> **(Pay TV subscribers – Christchurch)**

> Violence towards women by men, we should have not to see at all. Violence to

> children and the elderly is also out (but I can't say that I've ever seen that).
>
> **(Older females, children left home – Ashburton)**

> I can't imagine any context where a woman is being raped fits well into a part of a story.
>
> **(Maori females – Wellington)**

For parents with children living at home, violent programming offered different challenges. A concern for the young was an important theme for parents, particularly the effect violence was believed to have on children:

> I used to like Rambo movies, but all of a sudden I've got young kids who I've got to watch.
>
> **(Maori males – Auckland)**

> Violence is made acceptable for kids and there's so much of it. My boys enjoy violence and I find that awful.
>
> **(Female parents of children aged 13–18 years – Napier)**

> Sometimes the violence is so bad and they say kids pick up these things from TV.... It's scary stuff!
>
> **(Female parents of children aged 2–12 years – Auckland)**

> I find it hard to stop my eleven- and thirteen-year-olds watching an R16.
>
> **(Male parents of children aged 2–18 years – Napier)**

Violence in news and current affairs caused disquiet for some, whether it concerned themselves as adults or whether it was out of concern for children:

> The news headlines are sensationalised: blood, guts, murder and rape. We don't need to be subjected to it.
>
> **(Older females, children left home – Ashburton)**

> Children should not have to see violence in the news, because news is fact and the impact is harder and it disturbs them.
>
> **(Female parents of children aged 13–18 years – Napier)**

As hinted at above, of all groups the young males were generally most tolerant of screen violence. They, however, drew the line with real violence as screened in reality TV:

> Fantasy is OK – it's not real as opposed to real life. I don't like real violence...say some black guys are beating a white on the street and hitting with him with a bottle and kicking him in. I don't find that acceptable...it's not entertainment.

> Murder in movies is all right because you know it's not real. But on *Real TV* there is this sickening feeling.
>
> **(Males, 18–30, no children – Christchurch)**

Language

The second broadcasting standards issue to be addressed is language, or rather the use of bad language on the airwaves. Perhaps even more than the portrayal of violence, the preponderance of bad language on radio and television was a matter where the so-called lowering of standards was most acutely felt. For many of the older participants, for instance, it signified the end of the social etiquette they were brought up with. Yet, as with the discussions on the portrayal of violence, the participants called on contextual factors to nuance their opinions. Nevertheless, people were concerned with the prevalence of bad language:

> The swearing gets a bit too heavy.
>
> **(Male parents of children aged 2–18 years – Napier)**

> Television infiltrates our homes with bad language.
>
> **(Older females, children left home – Ashburton)**

> I object to...movies using the 'F-word'. I make a comment every time that word comes across. I let my son know that I don't approve of it.
>
> **(Female parents of children aged 13–18 years – Napier)**

> There are some words on television that should never be on.
>
> **(Older males, children left home – Wellington)**

Some pointed to the perception of the use of language changing over time. While for these participants this was somewhat of a redeeming feature, others remarked that the change of pace was rather too quick. Words themselves, it was also suggested, changed meaning over time:

> A lot of words we hear now, ten years ago it was unacceptable.
>
> **(Older males, children left home – Wellington)**

> Times are changing; a lot of these words would've been offensive a few years ago, but they're now part of language.
>
> **(Male parents of children aged 2–18 years – Napier)**

> 'Shit' is now a common English word and it doesn't mean as much as it used to.

> You could be watching TV and they'll be swearing on TV which is something that when I was growing up you never heard of...the swear words on TV.
>
> **(Maori males – Auckland)**

> There's a big difference between our generation and this generation. The biggest swear word we used was 'Oh shit!' That's everyday language now.
>
> **(Female parents of children aged 13–18 years – Napier)**

> Words become twisted; 'wicked' used to mean 'evil', now it's 'cool'.
>
> **(Maori females – Wellington)**

When participants were exemplifying their concerns with language, the awareness of context was widespread, combined with such considerations as the time of the broadcast and whether a warning had preceded the broadcast:

> Some words used in the right context could be acceptable and if it's after 9pm and we've been pre-warned, and if it's essential to the story and it is not overdone, then it may be OK.
>
> **(Older females, children left home – Ashburton)**

> It depends on whether people have been warned with 'This may contain...'
>
> **(Pay TV subscribers – Christchurch)**

> If it's used in a comedy the way it's said can be quite funny...It's all about context.
>
> **(Maori females – Wellington)**

> It's got to do with the whole genre, for instance, 'Motherfucker' is OK in *Pulp Fiction*, but not on *Shortland Street*. For ordinary everyday programmes, it's different.
>
> **(Females, 18–30, no children – Auckland)**

> If it's central to the plot and not gratuitous...for instance, *Silence of the Lambs* wasn't offensive.
>
> **(Older males, children left home – Wellington)**

> If you are watching a movie and someone is talking like 'Nigger' and that sort of stuff then I wouldn't find that offensive, because it's a movie.
>
> **(Males, 18–30, no children – Christchurch)**

The question of intent, such as hatred or aggression, was considered important:

> When it's derogatory...The ones with sexual connotations are the worst.
>
> **(Female parents of children aged 13–18 years – Napier)**

> So long as it is not being used as a personal threat, and meaning 'Bastard'.
>
> **(Maori males – Auckland)**

> I don't like the words used to demean certain groups of people of race and colour ...I wouldn't watch it.
>
> **(Pay TV subscribers – Christchurch)**

> I wouldn't want anybody to use part of my body as a derogatory term for somebody else.
>
> **(Maori females – Wellington)**

The amount of repetition of bad language – American movies were mentioned by name – was judged as unnecessary, if not senseless:

> I don't like swearing 'Fuck' and 'Motherfucker' in every possibly third word in every sentence. It's not necessary.
>
> **(Pay TV subscribers – Christchurch)**

> I avoid the American movies. They use the 'F-word' most of the time and it just gets boring. I'm not against a word used effectively, but endlessly and mindlessly...
>
> **(Older males, children left home – Wellington)**

> It's a poor movie if everything is 'Fuck'. In American movies every second word is 'Fuck'.
>
> **(Male parents of children aged 2–18 years – Napier)**

> It's really offensive when every second word is 'F-word'. It's as if they made a movie about the word.
>
> **(Female parents of children aged 2–12 years – Auckland)**

> If the first lines out of an actor are 'Bugger', 'Cunt', 'Fuck', I'd say: 'No way, cut it out!'
>
> **(Female parents of children aged 13–18 years – Napier)**

Radio and television supposedly imitating life was another factor:

> It depends on how real these words are in everyday conversation. It keeps changing – everyone says 'Fuck' now.
>
> **(Males, 18–30, no children – Christchurch)**

> We swear like troopers, but we don't use the 'C-word'.
>
> 'Motherfucker' is worse...really worse in real life than on TV.
>
> **(Females, 18–30, no children – Auckland)**

> Kids are exposed to the language and we have to accept that.
>
> **(Female parents of children aged 13–18 years – Napier)**

> Some people do talk that way. I do it at work, but not at home.
>
> **(Male parents of children aged 2–18 years – Napier)**

> All the time they're assuming that everyday people talk like that. In my circles this language is not really acceptable.
>
> **(Maori females – Wellington)**

> The majority of swear words are heard elsewhere, but coming from TV makes it somehow all right to say it...
>
> **(Older females, children left home – Ashburton)**

Blasphemy, or the use of religious expletives, was also judged unacceptable:

> Religious words like 'God', 'God Almighty', 'Jesus' and 'Christ' I don't think are acceptable.
>
> **(Males, 18–30, no children – Christchurch)**

> Christian words...the only time they should be used are in Christian programmes. I don't like them anywhere else.
>
> **(Female parents of children aged 13–18 years – Napier)**

> I hate 'Jesus Christ' being used as a swear word. There's a lot of that these days.
>
> **(Female parents of children aged 2–12 years – Auckland)**

The age of the intended audience was crucial as people believed that children should not be exposed to bad language. Some of the participants also volunteered notions of a watershed particularly with the child audience in mind:

> Time of the day is important as children may be watching. It should not be on before 8:30–9pm.
>
> **(Pay TV subscribers – Christchurch)**

> I wouldn't want to watch *Lassie* and hear any swearing. If it's a movie for the young there should be no swearing or even dubbing.
>
> **(Maori males – Auckland)**

> Like the American movies with the predictable 'Son-of-a Bitch' and then 'Son-of-a-God-damn-Bitch. It's not helping the kids any...they just lose their innocence faster.
>
> **(Female parents of children aged 13–18 years – Napier)**

> [Bad language] should be only after 9 o'clock, the time of the evening when children are in bed.
>
> **(Older males, children left home – Wellington)**

> It should be on late. If it's on 7:30pm I wouldn't like that. Week-to-week programmes, like sitcoms and dramas, should keep it out.
>
> **(Female parents of children aged 2–12 years – Auckland)**

Language on radio was perceived to be less offensive. It was commonly believed that radio, with talkback perhaps being an exception, was given much tighter rules to work with than television. Some, mostly the younger participants, believed that radio was unnecessarily tame. However, generally speaking participants did not expect offensive language on radio, because they saw it as strictly an aural medium with no visuals to provide a possible additional context:

> It is stricter on radio. Radio is a lot tamer though than television. It would be more of a shock to hear on the radio, anyway. You're not used to hearing it.
>
> **(Males, 18–30, no children – Christchurch)**

> There's no bad language on radio compared to TV.
>
> **(Older females, children left home – Ashburton)**

> It sounds terrible on the radio...When they do it you'd say: 'How did they get away with that?'
>
> **(Female parents of children aged 2–12 years – Auckland)**

> On TV, it is visual and spoken. On radio, it's spoken only and more shocking. If you're seeing someone do something you could understand it. It softens the impact.
>
> **(Older males, children left home – Wellington)**

> What they say on the radio is a lot more toned down than TV, the language especially. When you do hear it, you really prick your ears, because it's so unusual.
>
> **(Maori females – Wellington)**

For radio presenters, talkback hosts and DJs, there was no excuse to use bad language. Radio personalities were, in a way, seen as bearers of proper language standards:

> I'd be offended if a DJ started swearing. What does annoy me though is when in a song they beep out the swear word. But if a DJ said it, that's different.
>
> **(Females, 18–30, no children – Auckland)**

> Announcers swearing on radio are unacceptable. Not even talkback. To me, it's totally unacceptable. The host should have enough vocabulary so that they don't lower themselves to those swear words.
>
> **(Pay TV subscribers – Christchurch)**

> It's out of context...they're not here to tell rude jokes and you're not listening to the radio to hear rude jokes.
>
> **(Male parents of children aged 2–18 years – Napier)**

If radio was perceived to use bad language, it was usually in the context of the commercial stations targeting the youth audience. Depending on the age of participants, this was met with approval or disapproval. However, audience expectations appeared to be a contextual factor which was taken into consideration:

> Radio Extreme – the one that the kids like. Filthy music! It's trash and dirty jokes.
>
> **(Female parents of children aged 13–18 years – Napier)**

> On 94.2, they say 'Wanker', 'Bastard' and it's refreshing and it's really laid-back and it suits the programme. It's for a younger age group.
>
> **(Females, 18–30, no children – Auckland)**

> I listen to RDU [a student station], and they don't do any censoring. They swear their head off; the presenters and the songs say it!
>
> **(Males, 18–30, no children – Christchurch)**

> It depends on the station. You hear rap music where you hear those kind of lyrics...'Motherfucker this, Motherfucker that'.
>
> **(Maori females – Wellington)**

> The new [radio stations] are trying to get the sixteen year-olds. They are getting a bit rough. I was listening to a song...all the swearing in it!
>
> **(Male parents of children aged 2–18 years – Napier)**

> If you listen to Pirate FM, you know you going to get bad language. Not on National Radio though.

> On niche stations, you could get away with any of these words which are acceptable to that audience.
>
> **(Older males, children left home – Wellington)**

As with the participants' perceptions of the portrayal of violence, their evaluations of language on radio and television took account of contextual factors. The age of the participant, parental status and perhaps gender were the more important variables. However, while it transpired that 'bad language' meant different things to different people, a concern for children growing up with bad language on radio and television was voiced by almost everyone.

Portrayal of sex and nudity

Bad language and the portrayal of sex and nudity are subsumed under the Authority's good taste and decency category. The good taste and decency standard is not absolute, but is invariably informed by contextual matters. This was clearly recognised by the individuals taking part in the focus group discussions. Adopting again the broad brush-strokes of demographic variables, the age and gender of participants largely explained their outlook on the portrayal of sex in broadcasting.

Kissing and/or the portrayal of making love 'under the covers' were generally seen as constituting no problems. The suggestion of sexual activity having taken place also met no offence:

> If a couple is just lying there and kissing, I find it OK.
>
> **(Older males, children left home – Wellington)**

> Intimacy is OK, I don't mind movies which suggest sex has happened.
>
> **(Female parents of children aged 13–18 years – Napier)**

> They can show a couple not actually having sex, but you know they're going to have sex and that's quite tasteful.
>
> **(Maori females – Wellington)**

> It's OK, if it promotes a loving relationship.
>
> **(Pay TV subscribers – Christchurch)**

> It is acceptable if it is showing affection for family, hugging and kissing. Showing affection and positive body contact is acceptable. Affection is acceptable any time and anywhere. Affection is harmony.
>
> **(Older females, children left home – Ashburton)**

> People in bed under the sheets is OK. Kissing and normal sex!
>
> **(Female parents of children aged 2–12 years – Auckland)**

The perception of the portrayal of sexual activity – implied or otherwise – occurring in 'everyday programming' especially when children and teenagers were watching was a quite common one. In this light, *Shortland Street* was often mentioned. For many, it brought up the nature of interpersonal relationships being portrayed on such programmes:

> There are these programmes that glamorise...they hop into bed with who they want.
>
> **(Male parents of children aged 2–18 years – Napier)**

> What's happening on *Shortland Street* right now is really quite tame. Just a bit gross at teatime.
>
> **(Males, 18–30, no children – Christchurch)**

> *Shortland Street's* main selling point is sex; everybody's sleeping with everyone else. They don't talk about using condoms or safe sex or anything like that...it's like anything goes.
>
> **(Maori females – Wellington)**

> Some of the content on *Shortland Street* shouldn't be on. My daughter gets to see programmes at 7pm, and being six she's asking questions.
>
> **(Female parents of children aged 2–12 years – Auckland)**

> *Shortland Street* haven't got that sex right yet. I mean, I don't really know families which change partners as much as they do.
>
> **(Pay TV subscribers – Christchurch)**

However, when the portrayal became progressively sexual, reactions became more qualified. Once more, context was an important condition in the way sex was portrayed with the more gratuitous elements being questioned:

> There is a vast difference between kissing and cuddling, and going into bed.
>
> **(Older females, children left home – Ashburton)**

> Sex with romance that's what I'd rather see. Sex without romance isn't really the same thing.
>
> **(Maori females – Wellington)**

> It's not acceptable when it focuses on sex too much or is not necessary to the plot...sex for entertainment.
>
> **(Pay TV subscribers – Christchurch)**

> You don't need to see it; when they're in bed you get the idea. You don't have to have it in your face. You don't need to see the graphic.
>
> **(Female parents of children aged 2–12 years – Auckland)**

> But it's going on and on, and leaping around and you see her face and his face, and you see it all. It's not necessary.
>
> **(Female parents of children aged 13–18 years – Napier)**

> Sex with love and it needs to have a story with it.
>
> **(Maori males – Auckland)**

While a few questioned the intentions behind educational programmes such as *Sex/Life*, they were generally looked upon positively. However, some participants believed it had missed the mark at times, thinking it combined the informative aspects with unnecessary salacious elements:

> *Sex/Life*...is the good with the bad. The sex is bad, but at the same time the educational may do some good. They cover AIDS and the use of condoms, but then there's a female in bright red underwear, and an all-out orgy. Teenagers learn a lot at 9:30pm!
>
> **(Older females, children left home – Ashburton)**

> I like that programme...called *Sex/Life*. It's really informative and it's not tacky. It teaches people about sex and life, safe sex, condoms and contraception, and different ways of having sex without actually being tacky...And my daughter is learning all sorts of things and it's not just about sex, it's about life and relationships.
>
> **(Maori females – Wellington)**

> Sex as educational is fine, but it's not a TV thing, it's a parent thing.
>
> **(Maori males – Auckland)**

> Sex programmes if they're educational it's acceptable, but then timewise you need to adjust for that.
>
> **(Pay TV subscribers – Christchurch)**

> *Sex/Life*...that's pretty informative.
>
> **(Male parents of children aged 2–18 years – Napier)**

The showing of nudity on television elicited the following responses in which a range of opinion was evident:

Most children know what it is all about now anyway, that is if parents have explained what it's all about. If it's not violent, it's perfectly normal. Nudity [is] just nudity. I don't find that offensive.

(Older males, children left home – Wellington)

I'm in the middle...depends on context. I'd cope with a little nudity in movies for adults.

(Female parents of children aged 13–18 years – Napier)

Sex scenes with only showing top half nudity can be screened after a certain time. It's hard to say what is a good time because kids watch TV really late.

(Females, 18–30, no children – Auckland)

Nudity and portraying casual sex is not acceptable at all. No sex scenes whatsoever, no nudity!

(Older females, children left home – Ashburton)

Private parts is nudity...top-half is OK, there's no problem with. But it has to be part of the story.

(Female parents of children aged 2–12 years – Auckland)

Not full nudity...we should leave it a bit to the imagination.

(Males, 18–30, no children – Christchurch)

Ludicrous standards...you can see the full frontal of a woman, but not of a man!

(Male parents of children aged 2–18 years – Napier)

Homosexual sex was something most participants did not want to see, even when it was, in comparative heterosexual terms, fairly innocuous. Some of the opinions on the portrayal of homosexual sex were quite strident:

I have a thing regarding the homosexual thing. I can't get comfortable with two men kissing.

(Older males, children left home – Wellington)

Same gender sex...is totally unacceptable. I do not even want to see kissing and hugging of that sort, nowhere near that. I don't want to see that.

(Older females, children left home – Ashburton)

They also got the gay acts. I don't want to see that...but that's my preference.

(Maori females – Wellington)

It's OK to know it exists and I've got nothing against it, I just don't want to see it on TV.

(Female parents of children aged 13–18 years – Napier)

> Homosexuality gets [up] my nose. It crops up more often with the Hero parade which shouldn't be shown.
>
> **(Maori males – Auckland)**

For some of the younger participants, however, the portrayal of homosexuality was not dismissed outright:

> Gay sex and kissing is OK. It should have the same standards as heterosexual sex; if it's going to be explicit, you should be warned.
>
> **(Females, 18–30, no children – Auckland)**

> I don't mind seeing two women kissing, but when two guys go at it...
>
> **(Males, 18–30, no children – Christchurch)**

Explicit and/or graphic sex – as a potentially different category from pornography – was rejected, even though there were some problems with definition:

> It's a bloody difficult question, this one. What morals are we basing it upon? What one person calls 'hard porn', I might call 'soft porn'.
>
> **(Maori males – Auckland)**

> The Sky company with *Basic Instinct* at 6pm. Very graphic scenes at 6pm!
>
> **(Female parents of children aged 2–12 years – Auckland)**

> Explicit sex is totally unacceptable. If it's a love story and they just take their clothes off, it's OK but the actual act...with sex going all the way.
>
> **(Older females, children left home – Ashburton)**

> Frontal nudity we shouldn't be seeing; half nudity...I don't mind that sort of thing.

> The penis on a guy [should] not be shown on TV at all. It's not just because I'm a male, but because that's the most private thing on a male.
>
> **(Males, 18–30, no children – Christchurch)**

There was definitely no place for pornography on television screens, and for some this included Pay TV. Again pornography meant different things to different people:

> I would not want to see porno on normal TV channels.
>
> **(Male parents of children aged 2–18 years – Napier)**

> Not full-on porno movies. Anything with masks gives me the creeps. I don't think that is acceptable no matter what.
>
> **(Females, 18–30, no children – Auckland)**

> I have trouble with porno material being shown – showing genitalia, that would concern me.
>
> **(Older males, children left home – Wellington)**

I draw a difference between [pornographic] videos (which should never be on TV), and television where sex may be shown after 10:30pm.
(Older females, children left home – Ashburton)

It shouldn't be triple-rated sex pornos. No need for that.
(Maori males – Auckland)

If it's pornographic, get a video! Several couples trying to have sex should be on video only. I don't even want to know that it's on television.
(Female parents of children aged 2–12 years – Auckland)

They don't show the full act on Sky, it's a good thing it's not on TV!
(Maori females – Wellington)

Pay TV, or Pay Per View, was granted an exemption by some, particularly when adequate warnings preceded the broadcast:

Time of the day that's it. If people want to watch graphic sex, why shouldn't they?
(Male parents of children aged 2–18 years – Napier)

Pay TV is the same as video, you bring it in your house, and you don't have to watch it. You chose to have Sky, so you can't complain.
(Older females, children left home – Ashburton)

If you pay for it, it's OK, but with explicit sex, pornography and rape, you should be warned, but it's acceptable on Pay Per View. When they have warned you, they don't have to cut.

Full frontal nudity, explicit sex or kinkiness if it's essential to the plot is acceptable on Pay Per View.

Playboy should be available if people are willing to pay for it.
(Females, 18–30, no children – Auckland)

It's OK on Sky, because you can block out R18 movies, so that's fine if people want to watch that kind of thing.
(Males, 18–30, no children – Christchurch)

Others qualified pornographic sexual activity even further, and believed it would never be acceptable on television. This type of content, it was claimed, should only be available from the video store, if at all:

Bondage. No way! That's horrific! The sick people can get a video.
(Female parents of children aged 2–12 years – Auckland)

Not the more exotic varieties like oral sex and things like that.
(Older males, children left home – Wellington)

> I think definitely no oral sex on TV...that's going a little bit too far. You don't want to see it do you, it's a very personal thing.
>
> **(Females, 18–30, no children – Auckland)**

Non-consenting sex, exploitative sex (involving children) and so-called 'perversions' were very strongly disapproved of:

> Something that's aimed at satisfying other's perversions, voyeurism or the exploitation of women and children. Also – and I've never seen it – animals. I don't want to see that ever!
>
> **(Maori females – Wellington)**

> Pornographic video stuff, paedophiles, child sex that's sick, I don't want to know it's on TV.
>
> **(Female parents of children aged 2–12 years – Auckland)**

> Bestiality...we should never see that kind of thing. We should never see any kind of animals.
>
> **(Males, 18–30, no children – Christchurch)**

> Sex with children is unacceptable!
>
> **(Older males, children left home – Wellington)**

> No paedophiles, no bestiality, sadism or anything abnormal or weird to me.
>
> **(Female parents of children aged 13–18 years – Napier)**

> It's unacceptable if it's violent sex, degrading to women or on animals. Pornographic, rape on children is totally unacceptable. It's degrading abuse.
>
> **(Pay TV subscribers – Christchurch)**

There were people, however, who believed that current levels shown on television were nothing out of the ordinary. What was shown on television was readily available through other media.

> There's sex everywhere. There's sex on computer, you can access books, and it's there. You can go to the video shop and get a video. I've seen my kids giggling while reading a porno magazine.
>
> **(Male parents of children aged 2–18 years – Napier)**

> I think it's mild what's on TV today. They often go to bed in movies and wake up in the morning and you think: 'What?'
>
> **(Females, 18–30, no children – Auckland)**

Balance, fairness and accuracy

Generally speaking, issues of balance, fairness and accuracy were in the main identified with news and current affairs. While discussions about news and current affairs were

predominantly couched in terms of the perceived quality of programming currently on offer (i.e. *'You don't get the bigger picture'* or *'Everything has to be sensational'*), the standards category of balance, fairness and accuracy were addressed directly as well. Participants believed there was much overlap between the three standards.

First, the issue of balance:

> It's never acceptable to have just one side of the story only. People want journalists to exhaust all angles of a story. You want to know everything, so you can make your own decision about what went on, not just what they found out or what they want you to know.
>
> If someone's accused of something, the accused gets something to say back. I think a lot of news items don't do that, like *20/20* they investigate one side of the story only.
>
> **(Maori females – Wellington)**
>
> They don't show all avenues on *60 Minutes*; as public we get opinion shown. The news is biased by journalists.
>
> **(Female parents of children aged 2–12 years – Auckland)**
>
> *Fair Go* listens to the complaint and they find the other side of the story as well. News reporting can be quite unbalanced.
>
> **(Female parents of children aged 13–18 years – Napier)**
>
> *20/20* was criticised the next day for not getting both sides of the story.
>
> **(Older males, children left home – Wellington)**
>
> It's hard to draw a line between an opinionated view rather than trying to put a spin on something. If someone is doing a programme where they are voicing their own opinions, like Bill Ralston used to do, I don't mind, but if they are doing it like as if it were fact and put down their own slant in it or spin on it, whatever...
>
> **(Males, 18–30, no children – Christchurch)**
>
> The journalists come in with a point of view; there's no neutral person. I want factual stuff about the position of New Zealand without the opinions – a presentation of facts.
>
> **(Male parents of with children aged 2–18 years – Napier)**

Fairness was also elaborated upon, and radio talkback in particular was commented upon:

> I think two people arguing from different sides is acceptable because they both are bringing their view. It's pretty fair and acceptable anytime.
>
> **(Males, 18–30, no children – Christchurch)**

> It's fair as long as they're not personal...fair coverage of the good and the bad.
> **(Maori males – Auckland)**

> You got to see things to know what's going on, but it can hurt the people involved.
> **(Female parents of children aged 2–12 years – Auckland)**

> With Radio Pacific, there's still an inequality of power there because if they don't like what they hear people speaking about, they just cut them off and don't let them respond.

> I think the fairness thing comes in when people assume or think they're being interviewed about one thing and the interviewer is taking the mickey out of them and I find that incredibly unfair.
> **(Maori females – Wellington)**

Finally, the participants believed that accuracy was a necessary ingredient:

> General reporting is fair when facts are correct. It's not acceptable when the procedure is not completed [then] it's obviously a rush job.
> **(Males, 18–30, no children – Christchurch)**

> It's an insult to people's intelligence...if the programme is presented wrong, the accuracy of the presentation or it doesn't ring true.
> **(Older females, children left home – Ashburton)**

> There's the inaccurate portrayal of events in semi-serious films.
> **(Older males, children left home – Wellington)**

> Things have been blown out of proportion. Something that's obviously not much of an issue, but the media get a hold of it and try and make you believe it is an issue.

> The truth of what they are reporting is important. Accuracy in the news [is important], instead they use hearsay.
> **(Female parents of children aged 13–18 years – Napier)**

For the focus group participants, the issues of balance, fairness and accuracy in news and current affairs were interrelated. There was an acute awareness of the 'power of the news media' with its potential to be unfair to people. At the same time, there was a perception that the broadcast media were not always living up to their professional codes of being objective and accurate.

Privacy

The broadcasting standards category of the privacy of the individual was also predominantly seen by the participants in the context of news and current affairs. However,

as one participant said: *'What's news and what is private information are two different things.'* As a general finding, it appeared that older participants were more conversant with privacy matters than younger participants. People were more or less in agreement on what privacy stood for, and most defined privacy in terms of intrusion.

> Some of the news is very intrusive on the privacy of people. I think they go too far. We see little babies dying, a mother at a funeral...a very sad case. I don't think we need to pry into that. Funerals are an unacceptable intrusion into the privacy of people. Weddings too.
>
> It tends to be the journalistic trend to pry into everyone's life. Then the interviewer will say 'How do you feel about that?' you know how that person will be feeling. They don't need to ask those sorts of questions. It's an invasion of people's space.
>
> **(Older females, children left home – Ashburton)**
>
> You have...reporters running after people. The news reporting where they're intruding in one other's suffering. There's no excuse for that!
>
> The invasion of privacy, media pestering and harassment; they should leave people alone. Princess Diana's harassment killed her – that was totally unacceptable. Sordid journalism! She had rights too!
>
> **(Older males, children left home – Wellington)**
>
> Privacy is about intruding on personal tragedy. It involves insensitive interviewing. They should recognise people's feelings.
>
> **(Female parents of children aged 13–18 years – Napier)**
>
> Respect and privacy! It's offensive that the media can put so much pressure on somebody like Jonah Lomu.
>
> **(Maori males – Auckland)**

Few contrasted the right to privacy with the public interest defense, one of the important criteria when privacy complaints are determined:

> It's only acceptable if it's clearly in the public interest. If it's a swindler then we should hound these as it is in the public interest. Time or context doesn't matter, it is whether it's in the public interest or not.
>
> **(Older males, children left home – Wellington)**

The discussions surrounding the privacy of the individual elicited strong, if not emotional, responses. The image of journalists hounding people was particularly widespread, as was the notion of the media's intrusion into grieving families at funerals.

Discrimination

The 1989 Broadcasting Act requires broadcasters to safeguard against the portrayal of people in a manner which encourages discrimination or denigration on account of their

sex, race, age, disability, occupational status or religious, cultural and political beliefs. The focus group research asked the participants' views on their perceptions of discriminatory practices in broadcasting.

Sexism featured prominently particularly in the focus groups consisting of younger women. The following comments serve as illustrations of what they identified as sexism:

> In *TAB Sports Cafe* on Sky, you know, women are always made to look silly. I watched one episode where they had this fat woman cricketer on and I was just furious because they made fun of her all the time. It was really sexist...
>
> **(Maori females – Wellington)**

> There are these heavily gender-biased programmes like *Baywatch*, aimed towards men. You need to wait fifteen minutes to get past the boobs bit.

> I listen to Radio Hauraki hardly ever, because I find all the announcers really misogynist, really sexist. I don't know how they get away with it!
>
> **(Females, 18–30, no children – Auckland)**

Racism or 'negative stereotyping' was also identified as occurring. Most comments associated their perception with the current climate of race relations in New Zealand.

> There is discrimination. Say a murder and a Maori did it, they say a Maori did it. They don't say a man or a woman...
>
> **(Males, 18–30, no children – Christchurch)**

> We know that anything that will make a [ethnic] minority look stupid will probably sell.

> It's a cultural inequity, because there's too much of a negative stereotyping of the one culture. There's a lot more Maori bashing out there and it's coming through on the news as well. The same as with the expensive underpants and it's the media [who] just keep going and going and going. If it's a white MP, you wouldn't hear of it.
>
> **(Maori females – Wellington)**

> Insulting people culturally through ignorance like Maori burial sites, that's not acceptable.

> [Racist themes] should not be inserted for effect, or in connection with violence
>
> **(Older males, children left home – Wellington)**

Other forms of discrimination were also mentioned:

> The cultural issues seem to be fairly obvious and they tend to be fairly stringent on that. It's the gay bashing I can't tolerate and the religion bashing and the someone who is different from us...They always make a joke of the gay guys who are

always effeminate; the church guy is always the geek with the glasses and the square haircut and reads silly magazines.

(Maori females – Wellington)

The protection of minors

The parents of children and teenagers were not the only ones who voiced concerns on the influence of radio and television on the young, and it was generally accepted that the young needed protection from certain forms of media content. It was a concern shared by most participants, irrespective of age and gender, and it was on the whole conceptualised as being potentially harmful. The harmful effects were perceived to be the following: (1) children might act out, or imitate, that which is fed to them through the media, (2) children may become disturbed by media content and, last, (3) the media may provide the wrong role models to the young.

Parents of young children were particularly concerned:

I don't like my kids to see people bleeding or gore or anything like that...I don't like them seeing somebody's head blown off.

(Maori females – Wellington)

All the swearing on television...if children hear that they are very impressionable to that.

(Female parents of children aged 2–12 years – Auckland)

Our children are old enough now, but thank goodness we don't have a 12-year-old.

(Older women, children left home – Ashburton)

The influence of (violent) programming on children was noted, and imitation of violence together with identification with wrong role models were mentioned as specific concerns:

They copy the violence that they see in the TV programme. They identify with the character too much.

I feel uncomfortable about violence on TV; kids, young adults...it's still going to affect them. Particularly, with one-parent families and no male role models and violence is carried out by a man who is the kid's only role model.

(Older males, children left home – Wellington)

Like that movie *Mighty Ducks* or whatever, apparently after that there was a big rise in kids playing ice hockey. It does influence people's lives.

Kids are more easily influenced and are more open to suggestion.

(Females, 18–30, no children – Auckland)

> I see my kids watching violence. They stop there and stare and their eyes are focused on the TV...you can almost see their brains ticking over.
>
> The movies about American youth gangs, The Hoods and all those sorts, you see them around the streets [in Auckland] with their scarves on imitating. It just imitates that TV and it can be a dangerous thing.
>
> **(Maori males – Auckland)**
>
> Young people are very impressionable. Young people, who haven't had much experience in life, think that the portrayal of violence on TV is the norm. They tend to mix normality and reality with the violence.
>
> **(Older women, children left home – Ashburton)**
>
> The youth gangs here, the Maori and Pacific Island ones, are going to emulate the bad language they hear. It's the transference of an American role model into a New Zealand society where it undermines the role models we already have.
>
> **(Maori females – Wellington)**

However, some participants were more optimistic about the discerning qualities of the child audience:

> Kids know that it's not real. They do if you teach them. I'm always telling my young boy that about half what you see on TV is for real.
>
> **(Male parents of children aged 2–18 years – Napier)**
>
> My oldest is 15 and she's sensible.
>
> They have to learn anyway, don't they, to their own discretion. They will learn to say 'this is too much for me, I'm not going to watch this' and be their judge of it.
>
> **(Maori females – Wellington)**
>
> The cartoons are so far from real. I don't think kids will trap themselves under rocks and chase roadrunners.
>
> **(Males, 18–30, no children – Christchurch)**

People also pointed to the broader social effects of television on the lives of children. Television was thus seen to influence educational performance and changes in leisure patterns among children:

> It's breaking concentration...It's being seen in the school system. The kids can't concentrate!
>
> **(Female parents of children aged 13–18 years – Napier)**
>
> It's a battle to get them outside on a fine day. It annoys me that the 15-year-old watches so much TV. You don't win.
>
> **(Male parents of children aged 2–18 years – Napier)**

> TV interferes with family life. TV is unsociable – kids stay inside and they don't do their homework.
>
> **(Pay TV subscribers – Christchurch)**

> TV is addictive. You don't see kids going out playing on the streets. It's just an easy occupier.
>
> **(Maori males – Auckland)**

However, television could not be exclusively blamed for what children came in contact with:

> Kids can read newspapers and read the court pages; graphic descriptions of a rape case...skinhead attacks. It's been happening for years. I don't know how many generations have been nicking their dad's *Playboy* magazines. Nothing new.
>
> **(Males, 18–30, no children – Christchurch)**

> Kids are picking it up in school no matter whether they hear it at home, on the radio and they're going to pick it up when it's on the TV all the time.
>
> **(Male parents of children aged 2–18 years – Napier)**

The watershed of 8:30pm was seen as quite effective for the very young; however, for children in their early teens it was considered less effective particularly now that so many had a television set in their bedrooms:

> There is a time shift so you know that content is going to happen, but you have the *Ricki Lake Show* at 2pm or something, right when the kids are there.
>
> **(Maori females – Wellington)**

> 9:30pm is the best time for any sort of violence. Some can't sleep and stay up until 9pm; some have tellies in their bedrooms and watch quietly until 9 or 10pm.
>
> When kids get older, when 12 to 13 years old, in no way can they watch TV and be controlled between 8:30 and 9pm.
>
> **(Female parents of children aged 2–12 years – Auckland)**

Parental responsibility and the responsibility of broadcasters

Most participants felt that it was the parents' responsibility to monitor what their children were exposed to. The importance of parental supervision was stressed, and supervision strategies were reported. Furthermore, the enforcement of rules was seen as an important parental task:

> It's up to the parents to take responsibility and it comes down to parental guidance. The parent should know what is wrong or right for kids.
>
> **(Males, 18–30, no children – Christchurch)**

We've very selective in what my daughter watches.

My daughter watches with us, so it's very controlled. She doesn't watch after a certain time at night, so to a certain extent that cuts out programmes that might be dubious to watch.

(Maori females – Wellington)

Movies with violence are more acceptable later at night, like a late-night movie. This timing is important. You have to put a ceiling on time to protect children and for parents to enforce it.

It's all about parental control – parents need to police their homes.

You can put a R18 card to block it if you got youngsters...it comes down to parental responsibility.

(Older women, children left home – Ashburton)

We don't let our little one watch half of what's on.

Sky is only on in the living room; it stops our kids from watching uncut movies.

Between 7am and news time, the kid can watch...anything after I check.

We're trying to protect our children a certain amount, but life's different.

(Male parents of children aged 2–18 years – Napier)

It's our responsibility to switch it off, if we don't like it.

(Female parents of children aged 13–18 years – Napier)

However, there were people who believed that some parents were not exercising their duties responsibly. Lifestyle changes were seen as a factor, but some believed that there were parents who simply did not care:

These days you've got so many parents who are both out working and I think a lot of mothers these days tend to think that the TV is a good babysitter.

(Older women, children left home – Ashburton)

Some people use TV as a babysitting tool. It could be the majority of homes where something like that is happening. A lot of parents are fobbing their kids off in front of TV.

(Male parents of children aged 2–18 years – Napier)

Lots of people don't have control over their children. They go to the pubs and let their kids watch anything. Some kids are allowed to watch anything.

I know five to six-year-olds staying up after eleven o'clock.

(Female parents of children aged 13–18 years – Napier)

> Often parents do not care. I know of kids who were still watching TV at 11pm. The parents can't complain then that violence is suitable for children.
>
> **(Pay TV subscribers – Christchurch)**

On the other hand, some parents – of teenagers especially – acknowledged that parental control was difficult to enforce:

> Mid-teens...they're so mobile, you can't control them any more. You tell them that some things aren't suitable for them and they watch a video at somebody else's. It's hard to stop them.
>
> **(Female parents of children aged 13–18 years – Napier)**

> There's stuff that comes on TV that kids shouldn't be watching. Unfortunately, parents can't always keep control over their kids watching TV.
>
> **(Maori males – Auckland)**

While the prime responsibility for monitoring the use of television and radio by children was seen to rest with parents, it was felt that broadcasters also had a role to play. Broadcasters were generally perceived to be responsible for maintaining standards:

> The programme standards of New Zealand are pretty good.
>
> **(Pay TV subscribers – Christchurch)**

> Broadcasting maintains a certain standard of programming. There's nothing in there that my kids couldn't see.

> The system on the radio and TV seems to be where they do a lot for us anyway. Anything provocative is screened out. They are switching it off for us. I never had to censor the kids.
>
> **(Male parents of children aged 2–18 years – Napier)**

However, the scheduling of programmes was seen as problematic, as was the classification of programmes:

> Sometimes the times of children's programmes are wrong; it's either too early or it's too late.
>
> **(Female parents of children aged 2–12 years – Auckland)**

> I find it hard to stop my 11- and 13-year-olds watching an R16. The timing of when they're on Sky could be better. But [free-to-air] TV is doing a good job of these time slots.
>
> **(Male parents of children aged 2–18 years – Napier)**

> You kind of expect that anything before maybe 6pm, 7:30pm or 8pm to be kind of clean. Things that kids could watch, but now you never know what's going to turn up on the telly...the ads for a later movie showing rude bits, or swearing or violence. You can't really censor anything these days.
>
> **(Maori females – Wellington)**

> Half of the time you don't know what we're watching. These little captions don't say too much. To know a little more would be a help.
>
> **(Female parents of children aged 2–12 years – Auckland)**

Warnings preceding programmes were generally welcomed; even though some saw them as somewhat inadequate. Some participants made suggestions as to how current practices could be improved. The watershed icon of 'Goodnight Kiwi' was still remembered by some parents and it was believed worthwhile reinstating:

> They put on 'This may upset viewers' to let us know it's our choice. It's good that they do that, let us make our choice. So people don't have to write in, because they are already told.
>
> TV guides need to have censorship ratings.
>
> **(Older women, children left home – Ashburton)**
>
> Bring back 'Goodnight Kids', the Kiwi thing. It's a shame we don't have 'Goodnight Kids' in between shows.
>
> If we don't want our kids to see certain things on TV, a PG or R18 card would be good. It should be routined in on TV with the TVNZ channels.
>
> **(Female parents of children aged 2–12 years – Auckland)**
>
> There used to be a 'Goodnight Kiwi' on Channel 2 to say 'Goodnight kids! I even used to turn their TV off as soon as that'd come up.
>
> **(Maori males – Auckland)**

The role of the Broadcasting Standards Authority

Finally, the participants discussed the roles of regulation and of the Authority within the regulatory framework. People were aware of the Authority – mainly through the daily messages that broadcasters are required to put to air and through newspaper articles reporting the Authority's decisions. However, people were less sure about its exact role. There was a tendency to conflate the role of the Authority with that of the censor as currently exercised by the Office of Film and Literature Classification. Furthermore, participants were not particularly well informed about the specifics of the complaint procedure. In many ways, this confirmed the findings of research commissioned by the Authority earlier in 1998 (see pp. 30–31).

There was a general consensus about the need for regulation and for a broadcasting standards organisation which stands independent from broadcasters:

> If they didn't have [the Authority] then there would be just a big flood of all this shit coming through on TV. Violence, sex...people will try to get away with anything.

I think that there should still be an independent authority where they can be objective to TV3, TVNZ and TV4 rather than having them control what they control.

(Males, 18–30, no children – Christchurch)

The channels are competing over ratings, so they can't be trusted to control standards. You need an independent body to say that enough is enough. The public can make complaints and [the Authority] can do something about it.

(Older males, children left home – Wellington)

The BSA is neutral; they go over all stations.

The parents have to have trust and faith that the Broadcasting Standards Authority is doing their job and warn the audience.

(Older women, children left home – Ashburton)

You need something there. Everyone should have the choice and have their say whether they use it or not.

(Female parents of children aged 2–12 years – Auckland)

Broadcasters must know what the standards are and not to go over them. There must be something in writing...a standard.

(Pay TV subscribers – Christchurch)

The reason why the broadcasters are quite good is because there's someone checking up on them.

(Females, 18–30, no children – Auckland)

We need it. It keeps a level playing field, not for censorship though, but it keeps journalists honest.

(Male parents of children aged 2–18 years – Napier)

If we don't have the Broadcasting Standards Authority, we have no accountability so that's why we need to have them. My query is who are these people accountable to and for what.

(Maori females – Wellington)

But people were less sure as to whether the Authority was 'doing a good job'. Again there was confusion with censorship:

[The Authority] must be working because you hear apologies from the broadcaster.

I don't think they're powerful enough. Maybe they're desensitised too. Maybe we should let the censor take a tough line.

(Female parents of children aged 13–18 years – Napier)

I think it's the fact that I know there's a system in place, but I don't know how seriously they're gonna take you.

(Maori males – Auckland)

> They're probably doing a good job. It's not the kind of thing that will grab our attention. If they are doing a good job then we shouldn't hear too much about it. It can't be an easy job to please everyone.
>
> **(Males, 18–30, no children – Christchurch)**

Others were more forthright in their opinion that the Authority was failing them, even though for different reasons:

> Tell them to stick your head in a bucket of water. People make stupid complaints and they uphold them.
>
> **(Male parents of children aged 2–18 years – Napier)**

> With all the sex on, they're not doing their job.
>
> **(Female parents of children aged 2–12 years – Auckland)**

> I'm just wondering sometimes whether they are doing a good job. It could be a bit more aware of the programmes they're screening, and the effect they're having on young males. They should be a bit more selective about what they're airing on TV.
>
> **(Maori females – Wellington)**

Conclusion

Participants were particularly attentive, and seemingly knowledgeable, with respect to the standards issues of screen violence, bad language and the portrayal of sex. The contributions to the discussions with respect to balance, fairness and accuracy, privacy, and discrimination were somewhat more uneven. This suggests that the vocabularies in talking about these standards matters were not as developed compared to the more familiar subjects of violence and sex.

Participants gave the protection of minors a priority. Overwhelmingly, the participants believed that the monitoring of children and teenagers is a fundamental responsibility of parents. Broadcasters, however, could assist parents by providing appropriate classification systems and warnings. There was general agreement about the need for an independent broadcasting standards body. However, there was a considerable amount of confusion about the current role of the Authority. Participants tended to see its role as one of censorship and monitoring programme standards. This confusion resulted in some people believing that the Authority's performance was inadequate.

The next chapter will provide the findings of the national survey. As was mentioned before, the focus group research offered an initial but in-depth acquaintance with the broadcasting standards issues as perceived by a relatively small number of people. The survey findings to be presented in the next chapter evaluate the extent to which the views volunteered in the focus group discussions are shared by the wider population.

3

New Zealanders on Broadcasting Standards: Findings of the National Survey

Introduction

This chapter reports the findings of the national survey which was administered between 13 March and 11 April 1999. The chapter starts with a summary of the demographic composition of the sample consisting of 1,000 randomly selected individuals. Apart from the standard demographic variables of age, sex, household composition and parental status, this summary also includes information on the sample composition in terms of subscription to Pay TV, number of television sets in households and average hours spent watching television and listening to the radio respectively.

The chapter continues with the television programme preferences of respondents as well as their concerns about television. This is followed by the respondents' perceptions of broadcasting standards as these apply to language, the portrayal of sex and nudity, screen violence, discrimination, and privacy and fairness. These opinions were measured by reading out hypothetical scenarios to respondents which they were asked to rate on an acceptability–unacceptability scale. The scenarios were formulated to match actual examples that have come before the Authority in various contexts.

The next section of this chapter will deal with respondents' opinions on the respective responsibilities of parents/caregivers and broadcasters. This section will also provide the findings on the respondents' awareness, knowledge and use of television classification and broadcaster warnings.

The final section of this chapter discusses the results of a sophisticated cluster analysis of the survey findings. Here a typology of the respondents emerges expressed in terms of their perceptions of broadcasting standards. It has been possible to characterise this typology on the basis of the associated demographic variables.

Characteristics of the sample

The sample consisted of 1,000 people aged fifteen and over from randomly selected households. The raw data was weighted to ensure that the sample matched the New Zealand population – according to the 1996 Census – in terms of the proportions by age groups and gender. The results presented in this chapter are based on the weighted figures.

This section identifies what proved to be the most significant demographic characteristics of the sample. First, Table 3.1 below shows the age and gender breakdown of the sample.

Table 3.1 Age and gender breakdown in percentages

Age group	Male	Female	Total
15–24	9.6	9.6	19.2
25–34	9.9	10.5	20.3
35–44	9.5	9.9	19.4
45–54	7.7	7.7	15.4
55–64	5.2	5.3	10.5
65+	6.5	8.6	15.2
Total	**48.5**	**51.5**	**100.0**

Table 3.2 records the household composition of the people participating in the national survey. In addition to that information, 39 per cent of all people interviewed said that they were personally responsible for the care of children aged fourteen or younger.

Table 3.2 Household composition in percentages

Household composition	%
Living on my own	10.1
A group flatting together	7.8
Young couple with no children	5.9
Family with young children at home	36.7
Family with adult children at home	18.0
Older couple with no children at home	19.5
Other	2.0
Total	**100.0**

With respect to subscription television, 71 per cent of people interviewed reported that they only received free-to-air television, with 27 per cent stating that in addition they had Pay TV in their household. Two per cent stated that they did not have a television set in their household. Forty per cent of respondents mentioned that they had one television set, another 40 per cent said that they possessed two television sets, and approximately one in five respondents (18%) said that they had three or more television sets in their household.

Respondents were also asked the amount of time they spent, on average, watching television and/or listening to radio. Table 3.3 shows the daily – for weekdays and weekends – time expenditure on radio and television by age and gender.

Table 3.3 Number of hours spent per day on radio and television by age and gender

	Age						Gender		Total
	15–24	*25–34*	*35–44*	*45–54*	*55–64*	*65+*	*M*	*F*	
Average TV hours weekend	3.6	3.6	3.0	3.1	3.1	3.3	3.4	3.2	**3.3**
Average TV hours weekdays	3.1	2.9	2.5	2.4	2.5	3.0	2.6	2.9	**2.8**
Average radio hours weekend	2.5	2.2	2.3	2.5	2.6	2.8	2.4	2.4	**2.4**
Average radio hours weekdays	3.1	2.8	2.7	3.2	2.7	2.9	3.1	2.8	**2.9**

Television programme preferences and concerns about television

Respondents were asked which television programmes they watched most often. The most popular programme types proved to be documentaries (53%), current affairs (51%), comedy (50%), sport (49%), drama (43%) and news (41%). Somewhat less popular were lifestyle programmes (31%), reality television (28%) and soaps (20%). Least popular programming comprised situation comedy (13%), science fiction (13%), fantasy (6%) and infomercials (2%). Respondents were asked a similar question with respect to which movies they watch most often. Again, comedy (46%) and drama (45%) ranked high, closely followed by action movies (44%). Science fiction (22%), romance (21%) and fantasy (10%) were less popular.

Taking the age and gender variables into account, the same picture emerges that was evident in the focus group research. Both men and women – the latter slightly more so – tended to list documentary, news, and current affairs in similar proportions. While men mentioned sport, action and science fiction movies as programmes they would watch

most often, women were more likely to watch drama, lifestyle programmes, soaps and romance movies. The younger age groups listed (situation) comedy, action and science fiction movies as their favourite television programming compared to news, documentaries and lifestyle programmes which drew a greater preference among the older age groups. Sport, drama, news, and current affairs (except among 15–24-year-olds) have a broad following across all age groups.

As had been the case in previous surveys commissioned by the Authority, respondents were asked whether there were matters broadcast on television that were of concern in any way. Sixty-five per cent of respondents answered in the affirmative, while 35 per cent said that they did not have a concern about what was shown on television. The levels of concern increased with age, covering the range from 41 per cent for the 15–24-year-olds to 84 per cent for people aged between 55 and 64, and 81 per cent for people aged 65 and older. Furthermore, women (72%) displayed a greater concern about what is shown on television than did men (58%).

Subsequently, the survey sought to measure which specific concerns respondents had about matters shown on television. As in previous research conducted for the Authority, violence (31%) topped the list, followed respectively by nudity and sex scenes (20%), amount of advertising (19%), and bad language (15%). Concerns about screen violence, and the portrayal of sex and nudity increased with age – a relatively high degree of tolerance existed among the younger respondents compared with a high degree of concern among older respondents which peaked for the 55–64-year-olds. Levels of concern about bad language on television presented the same pattern. Women consistently voiced more concern about violence, the portrayal of sex and nudity, and bad language – sometimes recording twice the level of concern expressed by men.

The next section incorporates contextual elements when considering possible areas of concern. For this part of the survey, respondents were asked to rate hypothetical scenarios on a 1 to 5 acceptability–unacceptability scale (see Appendix II for survey questionnaire). As mentioned above, these hypothetical scenarios were formulated to resemble actual examples of broadcasts which have been before the Authority as either formal or informal complaints. The contextual elements that were added to the hypothetical examples included such considerations as the time of the broadcast, thus effectively operationalising the 8:30pm watershed currently in use in New Zealand. Accordingly, the contextual variable as to whether programme content was broadcast *before* or *after* 8:30pm was put to respondents as a factor to consider when they were asked to judge a hypothetical scenario. Another contextual variable contained in the scenario description was whether the content was gratuitous or not. This was operationalised by the qualifications of 'important to the story' and 'not important to the story' as another factor for respondents to consider. Finally, whether the scenario had screened on free-to-air or on Pay TV was also introduced as a contextual factor for respondents to take into account. What follows, then, are the respondents' perceptions on a range of hypothetical scenarios covering broadcast examples of bad or infelicitous language, the portrayal of sex and nudity,

screen violence, discrimination, and privacy and fairness. These content categories were chosen because they constitute the statutory broadcasting standards framework on which the Authority adjudicates complaints.

Language

Like the previous research conducted for the Authority, this research presented respondents with a list of swear words, blasphemies and other expletives. The focus group research revealed that certain words had gained currency which were added to the list of words employed in the 1993 research.

Interviewees were given the following scenario:

> I would like you to imagine each word used in a scene where police have chased and are arresting a criminal. The criminal is swearing at the police. The television movie is screened after 8:30pm.

Respondents were subsequently asked to rate 22 words on the following 5-point scale: (1) totally acceptable (2) fairly acceptable (3) neither (4) fairly unacceptable (5) totally unacceptable. Table 3.4 below presents the findings, with the words ranked in order of their respective levels of unacceptability which was achieved by combining 'fairly unacceptable' and 'totally unacceptable'.

From Table 3.4, we can observe that 'cunt' (79.3%) and 'motherfucker' (77.8%) were perceived as unacceptable by more than three-quarters of the New Zealand population. These two words were considered the most offensive in the Authority's 1993 study referred to above. 'Nigger' (71.5%) was the third most unacceptable word, followed by 'fuck' (69.9%). 'Fuck' was considered the third-most offensive word in the 1993 study in which 'nigger' did not feature. This word was added to the 1999 list as it featured quite prominently in the focus group research.

Down the order, but still regarded as unacceptable by more than half of the population, were 'cock' (58.3%), and 'whore' (55.3%). 'Arsehole' (49.2%), 'wanker' (48.4%), and 'prick' (42.8%) followed, but the verdict was less clear cut. 'Jesus Christ' (40.8%) completed the list of words perceived as the ten most unacceptable. These rankings had not changed markedly from the 1993 study.

While recently having been the focus of media exposure and, subsequently, of some public debate, the word 'bugger' appeared at the bottom of the list with only a small minority (15.8%) objecting to its use. Hence, it is perhaps more appropriate to look at the levels of acceptability as measured by the sum of scores of 'fairly acceptable' and 'totally acceptable'. 'Bugger' was found acceptable by almost three-quarters (73.1%) of people interviewed, as was 'bloody' (73.1%). 'Crap' (66%), 'bollocks' (64.6%), 'bullshit' (59.5%), 'shit' (56.1%), 'balls' (54.1%), 'God' (53.5%) and 'bastard' (53%) were believed

Table 3.4 Acceptability–unacceptability of bad language in broadcasting

	1 % Totally Accept.	2 % Fairly Accept.	3 % Neither	4 % Fairly Unaccept.	5 % Totally Unaccept.	Mean Score
Cunt	5.0	8.0	6.5	22.0	57.3	**4.20**
Motherfucker	6.6	9.0	4.9	19.5	58.2	**4.16**
Nigger	5.4	12.5	9.7	21.5	50.1	**3.99**
Fuck	10.2	12.0	6.9	20.1	49.8	**3.88**
Cock	11.7	16.4	12.7	23.7	34.6	**3.53**
Whore	12.8	20.9	9.9	25.5	29.8	**3.39**
Arsehole	17.0	23.0	10.0	21.3	27.9	**3.20**
Wanker	16.4	22.3	12.0	23.2	25.2	**3.19**
Prick	17.2	26.3	13.3	21.8	21.0	**3.03**
Jesus Christ	23.7	23.4	11.6	11.1	29.7	**3.00**
Bitch	18.5	29.0	10.3	22.2	19.3	**2.95**
Dick	19.9	26.7	12.7	19.7	20.4	**2.94**
Piss	20.5	27.9	13.2	20.9	17.4	**2.87**
Bastard	22.9	30.1	10.8	16.7	19.1	**2.79**
God	28.0	25.5	11.9	10.7	23.4	**2.76**
Balls	23.1	31.0	12.9	17.3	15.4	**2.71**
Shit	24.4	31.7	12.3	16.2	14.9	**2.65**
Bullshit	26.0	33.5	12.6	13.3	14.2	**2.56**
Crap	30.0	36.0	10.6	13.0	9.7	**2.36**
Bollocks	31.9	32.7	15.0	10.0	9.6	**2.32**
Bloody	35.7	37.4	9.4	9.5	7.7	**2.16**
Bugger	37.2	35.9	10.7	8.5	7.3	**2.12**

(Base: All respondents=1,000) – Percentages do not add up to 100.0 because of a small 'Don't know' response

to be acceptable by a majority of respondents. Figure 3.1 provides an overview of the ranking of bad language as measured by the individual mean scores of words: the higher the point on the scale, the less acceptable is the word.[1]

Looking at the demographic variables, the following patterns emerge. As can be observed from Figures 3.2 and 3.3, gender and age are significant since men tend to be more tolerant of 'bad language' than women, and the levels of unacceptability tend to increase with age. Similarly, people with responsibility for young children consistently score higher than those

without (see Figure 3.4). People subscribing to Pay TV (27% of the total sample) were on the whole more tolerant of offensive language. However, it needs to be pointed out that while the differences between the above demographic groups are quite striking, the ranking of the individual words generally followed the trends observed in the total population. In other words, there existed a broad consensus about the ranking of infelicitous language judged acceptable and unacceptable.

Figure 3.1

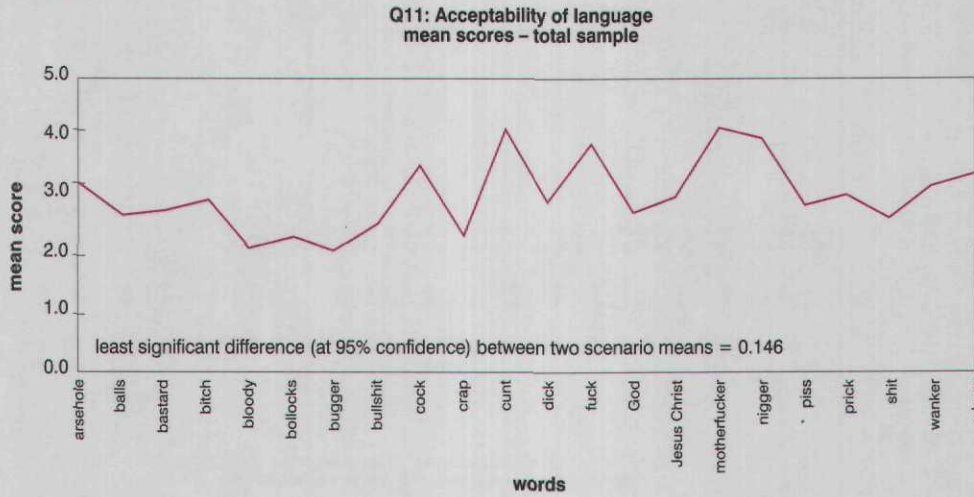


Figure 3.2

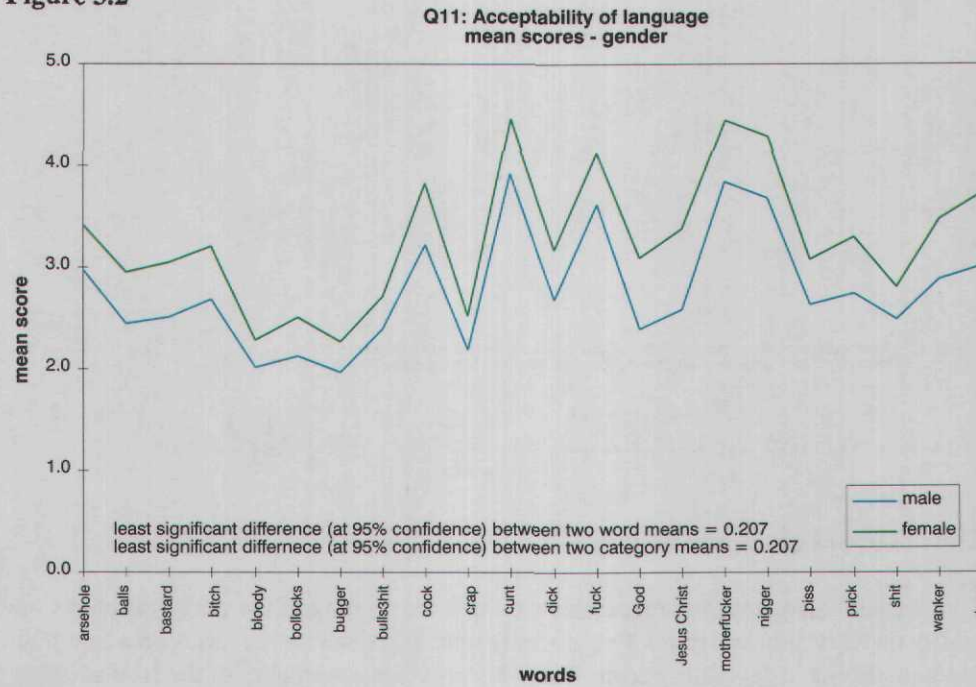


Figure 3.3

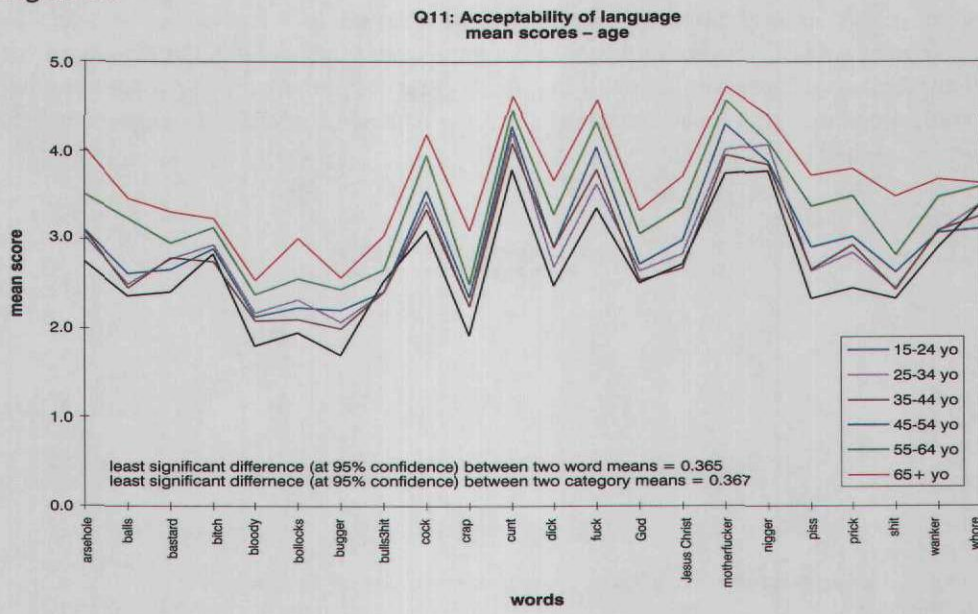
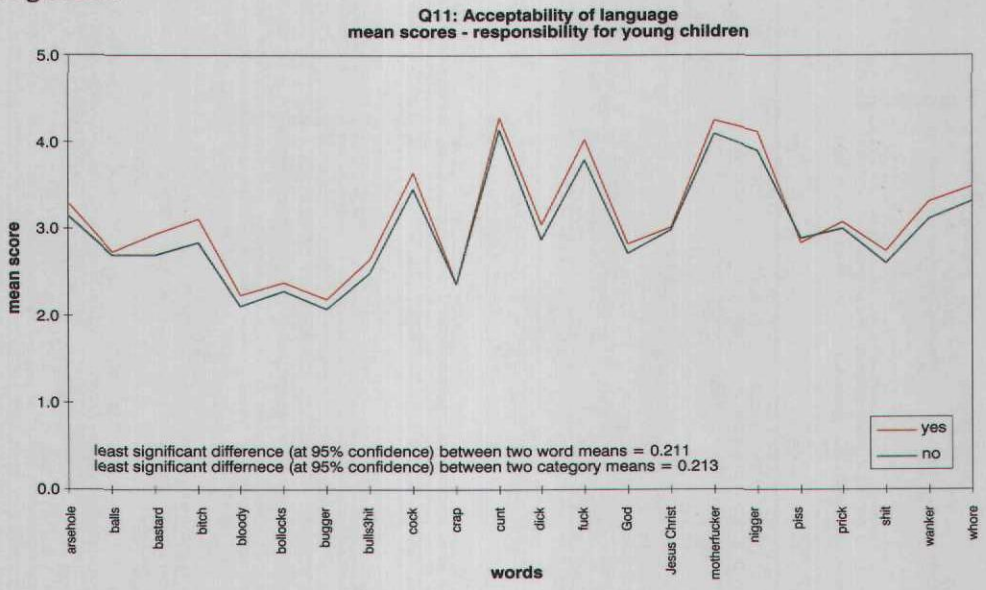


Figure 3.4



The portrayal of sex and nudity

The research also surveyed respondents on matters relating to the portrayal of sex and nudity on television and radio. Respondents were asked to rate scenarios on a five-point acceptability-unacceptability scale. Table 3.5 provides a summary of the results.

Table 3.5 Acceptability–unacceptability of the portrayal of sex and nudity in broadcasting

The portrayal of sex and nudity	Acceptable–Unacceptable 1 %	2 %	3 %	4 %	5 %	Total Accept.	Total % Unaccept.	Mean Score
Q10.1. A scene in a television movie showing a man and woman in bed having sexual intercourse. You can see the top halves of their naked bodies. You feel the scene is not really important to the story. The programme is shown before 8:30pm.	2.7	7.4	7.5	31.3	51.0	10.1	82.3	4.21
Q10.2. A scene in a television movie showing a man and woman in bed having sexual intercourse. You can see the top halves of their naked bodies. You feel the scene is not really important to the story. The programme is shown after 8:30pm.	8.7	30.1	14.4	23.8	22.9	38.8	46.7	3.22
Q10.3. A scene in a television movie showing a man and woman in bed having sexual intercourse. You can see the top halves of their naked bodies. You feel the scene is important to the story. The programme is shown after 8:30pm.	19.4	39.4	12.0	13.0	16.2	58.8	29.1	2.67
Q10.4. A scene in a television movie showing a man and woman in bed having sexual intercourse. You can see the top halves of their naked bodies. You feel the scene is important to the story. The programme is shown before 8:30pm.	4.7	14.4	13.5	31.1	36.1	19.2	67.2	3.79
Q10.5. A scene in a television movie a man and woman are having sexual intercourse. They are under the covers. You feel the scene is important to the story. The programme is shown before 8:30pm.	9.1	27.4	14.8	22.6	26.0	36.5	48.6	3.29

continued

Table 3.5 (continued)

Q10.6. A scene in a television movie showing a man and woman passionately kissing. You feel the scene is important to the story. The programme is shown after 8:30pm.	38.0	39.	57.4	9.3	5.7	77.5	15.0	2.05
Q10.7. A scene in a television movie showing two men passionately kissing. You feel the scene is important to the story. The programme is shown after 8:30pm.	20.9	28.9	10.3	13.9	26.0	49.7	39.8	2.95
Q10.8. A scene in a television movie showing two men in bed having sex. You can see the top halves of their naked bodies. You feel the scene is important to the story. The programme is shown after 8:30pm.	13.7	21.9	13.2	16.1	34.9	35.6	50.9	3.37
Q10.9. A scene in a television drama showing teenage boys taking off their clothes and swimming naked. The programme is shown before 8:30pm.	8.0	30.7	17.0	24.4	19.7	38.7	44.0	3.17
Q10.10. A medical programme about the human body showing both males and females naked.	40.9	37.6	8.9	7.1	5.4	78.5	12.5	1.98
Q10.11. An item in a television news programme about corruption in the sex industry includes nightclub scenes showing topless female strippers performing. The item is on the early evening news.	7.0	24.7	14.9	28.9	24.3	31.7	53.1	3.39
Q10.12. A DJ on a daytime radio show holds a phone-in competition asking callers to think of as many slang words as they can which describe the act of sexual intercourse.	3.8	9.7	10.8	28.1	47.2	13.5	75.3	4.06

Table 3.5 (continued)

Q10.13. A scene in a movie on Pay TV showing a man and a woman in bed having sexual intercourse. You can see everything. You feel the scene is important to the story. The programme is shown after 8:30pm.	14.0	27.8	11.6	16.4	27.8	41.8	44.8	3.17
Q10.14. A scene in a movie on Pay TV showing a man and a woman in bed having sexual intercourse. You can see the top halves of their naked bodies. You feel the scene is important to the story. The programme is shown before 8:30pm.	7.6	21.9	11.6	23.6	33.0	29.5	56.6	3.54

(Base: All respondents=1,000) – Percentages do not add up to 100.0 because of a small 'Don't know' response.

The following patterns can be observed. Generally speaking, it would appear that respondents judged content involving the portrayal of sex and nudity in terms of the time of the broadcast. In this light, the portrayal of sex and nudity was considered more acceptable after the 8:30pm watershed. Furthermore, the gratuitous portrayal of sex and nudity was more likely to be rejected than when it was considered as being important to the story-line. Gratuitous sex screening before 8:30pm was emphatically rejected: 82 per cent judged it as being unacceptable, with 51 per cent stating that is 'totally unacceptable'.

The invitation of a DJ on a daytime radio phone-in competition asking callers to think of as many slang words to describe the sexual act was considered to be unacceptable by three-quarters (75%) of the population, with just under half of the sample (47%) believing it to be 'totally unacceptable'.

At the other end of the spectrum, nudity in medical programmes was overwhelmingly accepted (79%) as was the portrayal of a man and woman 'passionately kissing' (78%). The portrayal of homosexuality encountered some reservations. Scenarios depicting homosexual sexual activity saw half of the respondents (51%) objecting where they had been rather more permissive of a similar scenario involving a heterosexual couple (78%).

People were more divided on the portrayal of 'innocent nudity' comprising the depiction of teenage boys taking off their clothes and swimming naked. Thirty-nine per cent found it acceptable, whereas 44 per cent believed it to be unacceptable. The portrayal of nudity in the form of topless strippers as part of a news item screened during the early evening television news was judged unacceptable by 53 per cent.

Finally, respondents were also asked about their opinions about portrayal of sex and nudity on Pay TV. Respondents were divided as to whether Pay TV could show sexual activity in which one could 'see everything' after the 8:30pm watershed. Forty-two per cent believed it to be acceptable, and 45 per cent thought it was unacceptable. However,

Figure 3.5

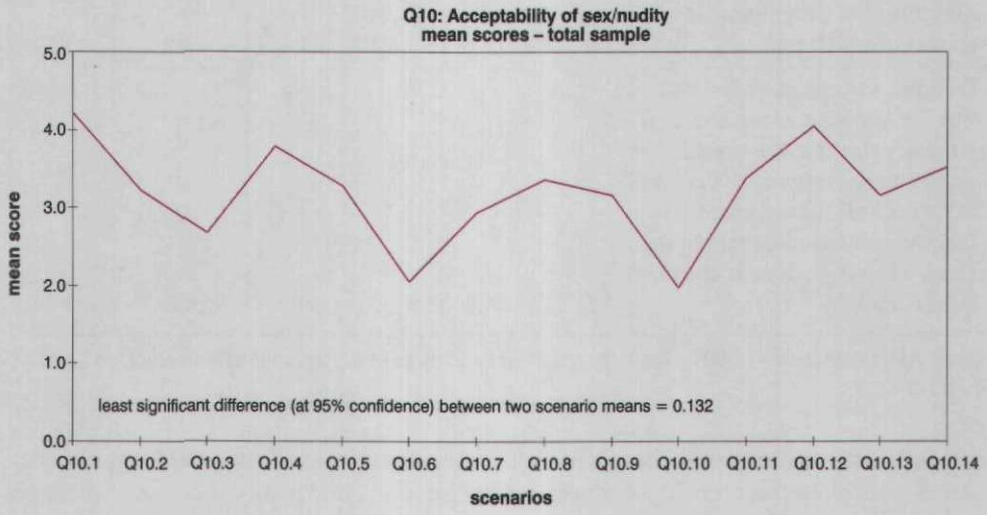
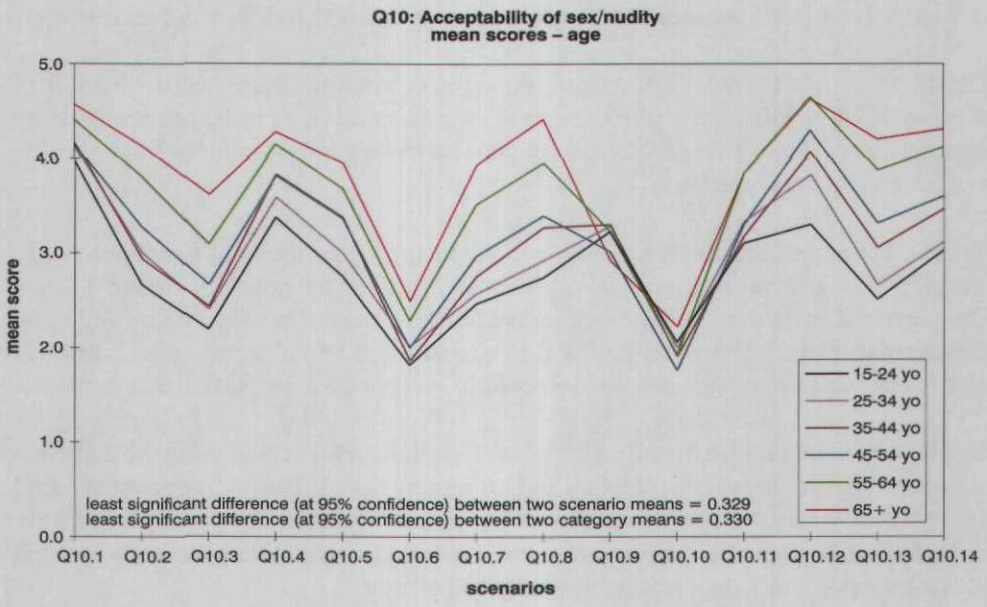


Figure 3.6



with respect to the portrayal of sexual activity of a less explicit nature shown *before* the 8:30pm watershed, a majority of 56 per cent felt that was unacceptable with 30 per cent stating that they found it acceptable. Figure 3.5 displays the mean scores for each of the

Figure 3.7

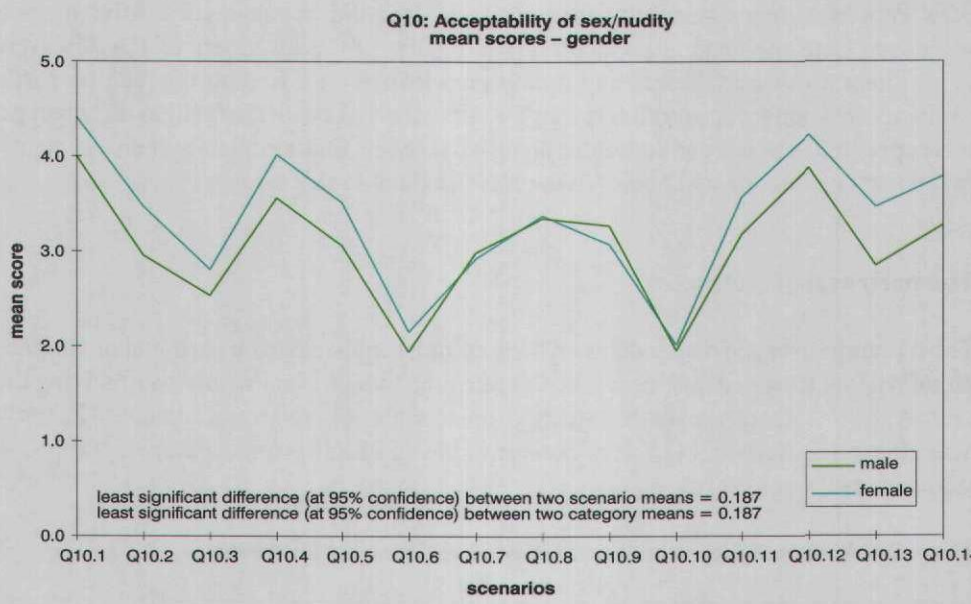
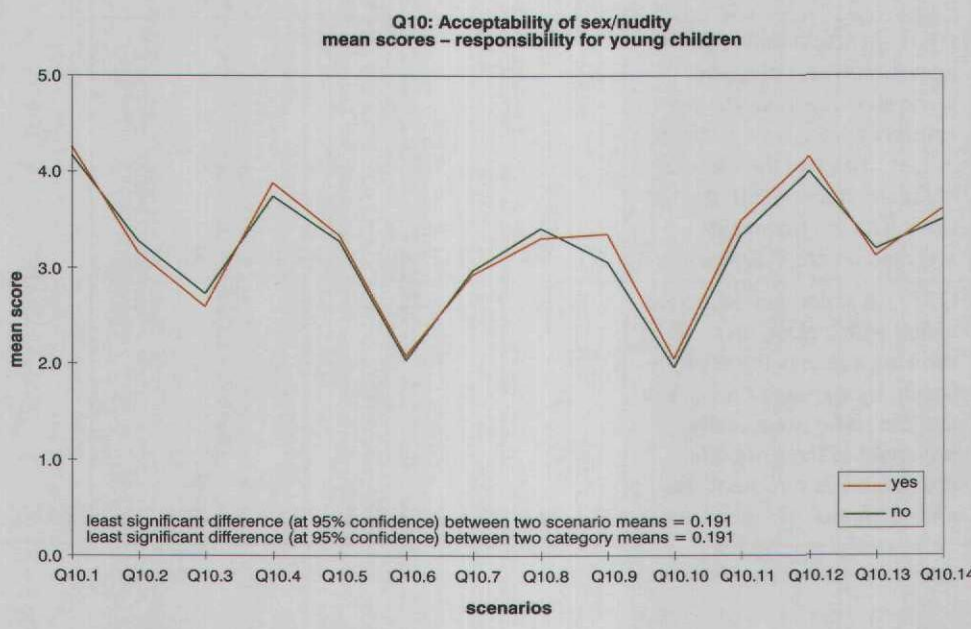


Figure 3.8



portrayal of sex and nudity scenarios.

As Figure 3.6 indicates, levels of unacceptability increase as people get older. Gender appeared to be another defining variable. Across the divide, women consistently had more difficulty with the portrayal of nudity and sexual activity than did men (see Figure 3.7). People with responsibility for young children did not markedly differ in their responses from the general population (see Figure 3.8). Subscribers of Pay TV were more tolerant towards the sex and nudity on television – a finding that can be partly explained by younger age profiles to Pay TV subscribers. As with the findings on language, there appeared to be a broad consensus about what people find acceptable, or unacceptable, in the portrayal of sex and nudity in the New Zealand broadcast media.

The portrayal of violence

The research surveyed respondents on their attitudes towards to the portrayal of violence on television. Respondents were asked to rate nine hypothetical scenarios involving the portrayal of violence on the following 5-point scale: (1) totally acceptable (2) fairly acceptable (3) neither (4) fairly unacceptable (5) totally unacceptable. Table 3.6 summarises the results.

Table 3.6 Acceptability–unacceptability of violence on television

The portrayal of violence	Acceptable–Unacceptable 1 %	2 %	3 %	4 %	5 %	Total % Accept.	Total % Unaccept.	Mean Score
Q7.1. An action movie on television with a close-up scene showing a man being severely beaten by a group of of men. You feel the scene is not really important to the story. The programme is screened before 8:30pm.	2.1	9.4	7.3	35.4	45.7	11.4	81.1	4.13
Q7.2. An action movie on television with a close-up scene showing a man being severely beaten by a group of men. You feel the scene is not really important to the story. The programme is screened after 8:30pm.	7.2	22.6	15.1	30.3	24.6	29.8	54.9	3.43

Q7.3. An action movie on television with a close-up scene showing a man being severely beaten by a group of men. You feel the scene is important to the story. The programme is screened after 8:30pm.	17.6	37.4	13.8	18.1	13.0	54.9	31.1	2.72
Q7.4. An action movie on television with a close-up scene showing a man being severely beaten by a group of men. You feel the scene is important to the story. The programme is screened before 8:30pm.	4.6	15.1	12.6	33.4	34.0	19.8	67.4	3.77
Q7.5. An action movie on television with close-up scene showing two men severely beating each other. You feel the scene is important to the story. The programme is screened before 8:30pm.	4.2	18.9	13.0	32.0	31.7	23.1	63.7	3.68
Q7.6. A comedy showing two men hitting each other in a fight. There is no blood and no one gets hurt. The programme is screened before 8:30pm.	17.6	37.5	14.8	19.0	10.8	55.1	29.8	2.68
Q7.7. A news item, reporting cruelty by soldiers during a civil war, includes close-ups of soldiers beating civilians. The news item appears on the early evening news.	16.8	36.2	10.1	19.3	17.1	53.0	36.4	2.84
Q7.8. A news item, reporting cruelty by soldiers during a civil war, includes close-ups of soldiers beating civilians. The news item appears on the late evening news after 8:30pm.	32.5	37.7	7.4	13.7	8.4	70.2	22.2	2.28
Q7.9. On Pay TV there is an action movie on television with a close up scene showing a man being severely beaten by a group of men. You feel the scene is not really important to the story. The programme is screened before 8:30pm.	6.9	12.1	13.3	29.6	34.4	19.0	64.0	3.75

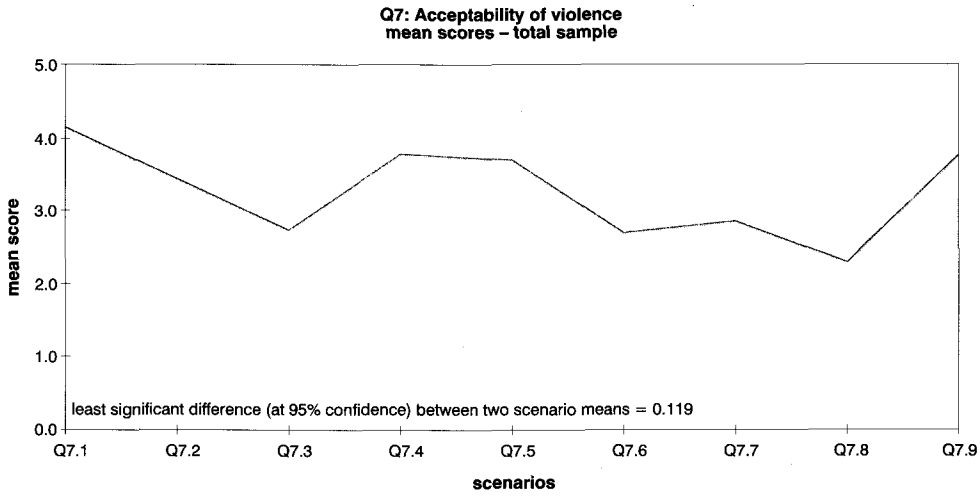
(Base: All respondents=1,000) – Percentages do not add up to 100.0% because of a small 'Don't know' response

The portrayal of violence in which the scene or action was not important to the overall story and shown on free-to-air television before the 8:30pm watershed was judged unacceptable by more than four-fifths (81%) of people interviewed. Similar scenarios with gratuitous violence screening before 8:30pm on Pay TV were believed to be unacceptable by just under two-thirds (64%) of the respondents.

The portrayal of violence in which the scene or action was not important to the overall story and shown after the 8:30pm watershed was found acceptable by 30 per cent with a slight majority (55%) objecting. The screening of violence involving content important to the story-line, but scheduled before 8:30pm on free-to-air television, was considered unacceptable by approximately two-thirds of the sample (64%). In contrast, the screening of violence involving content important to the story but scheduled after 8:30pm was found acceptable by 55 per cent.

A majority of respondents (55%) found violence in a comedy acceptable where there was 'no blood and nobody gets hurt'. A hypothetical news item reporting cruelty by soldiers during a civil war and shown on the late evening news was judged acceptable by 70 per cent of people. Yet, the timing of such a broadcast was apparently important for some respondents since the same hypothetical item screened during the early evening news was thought to be acceptable by 53 per cent. Figure 3.9 shows the distribution of the mean scores of the nine hypothetical scenarios.

Figure 3.9



Across all scenarios, the gender difference was uniform (see Figure 3.10). Women were significantly more disapproving of violent content than were men. As Figure 3.11 shows, age proved to be another important variable. As the age of respondents increased, they progressively found violence on television in general to be more unacceptable. Overall,

people with responsibility for young children were only slightly more disapproving of screen violence than people without such responsibilities (see Figure 3.12). However, there were significant differences between the above groups in the way they judged violent content screening before 8:30pm. Considerably more people with responsibility for young children found violence before the 8:30pm watershed unacceptable.

Figure 3.10

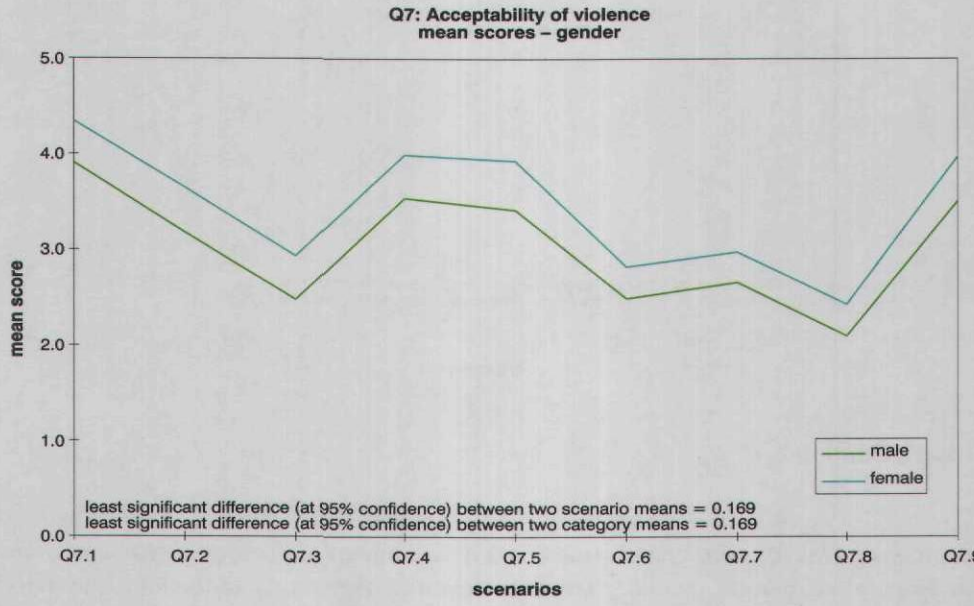


Figure 3.11

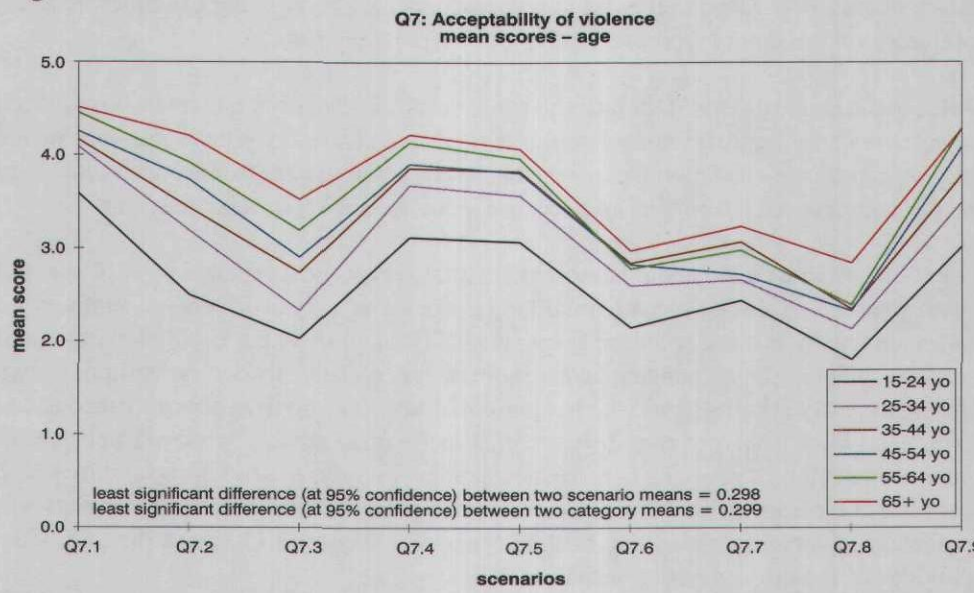
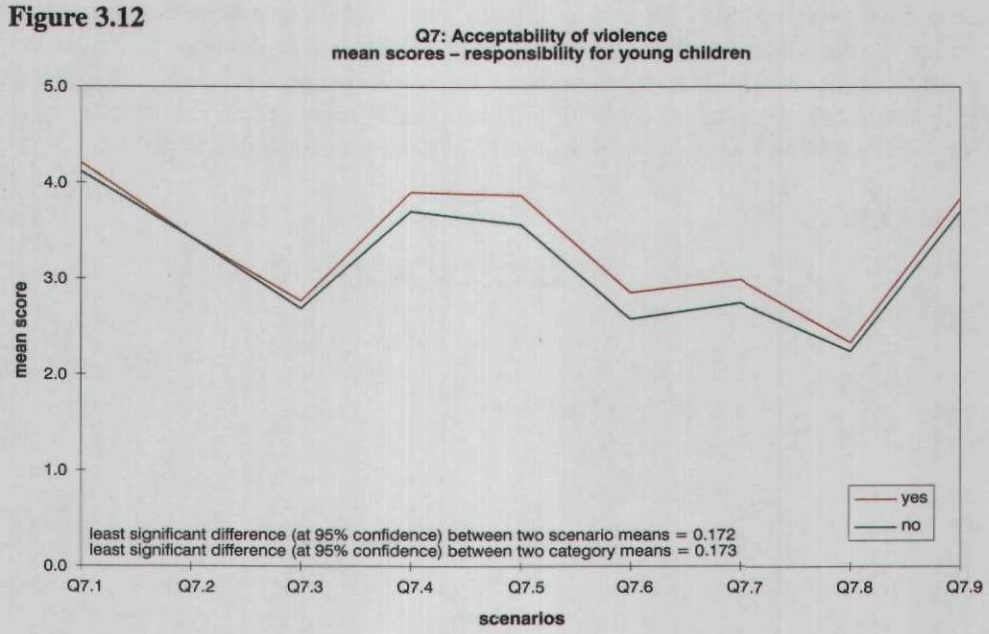


Figure 3.12



Discrimination

Section 21(1)(e)(iv) of the Broadcasting Act 1989 requires broadcasters to have safeguards in place against the portrayal of people in a discriminatory or denigratory manner. The survey polled people on their attitudes towards aspects of radio and television programming which could be considered as having elements of a discriminatory nature. Respondents were asked to rate six hypothetical scenarios involving examples of social prejudice on the same 5-point scale. Table 3.7 reports the results.

Jokes about ethnic groups made by radio announcers and television presenters were judged unacceptable by approximately two-thirds of respondents. Sixty-three per cent of the respondents thought it would be unacceptable for a radio announcer to make such a joke, and 68 per cent believed it would be unacceptable in the case of a television presenter.

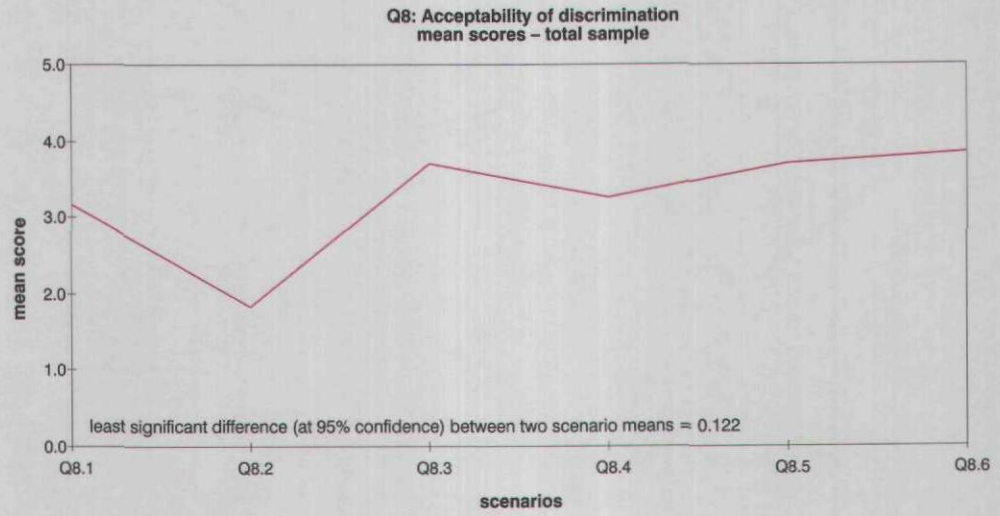
Jokes on breakfast radio about homosexuals were seen as unacceptable by 61.4 per cent of respondents. A similar scenario involving a joke about woman drivers was pronounced unacceptable by just under half of respondents (47%), with 34 per cent believing that it was acceptable. The respondents were more or less equally divided on an item shown during the early evening news which represented an ethnic group as poor and uneducated criminals. Forty-four per cent believed this to be unacceptable while 36 per cent of people interviewed thought it to be acceptable. Finally, a news programme which broadcasts the ethnicity of a man wanted by the police for identification purposes was judged acceptable by an unequivocal 83.6 per cent. Figure 3.13 shows the individual rankings of the discrimination scenarios.

Table 3.7 Acceptability–unacceptability of discrimination in radio and television

Discrimination scenarios	Acceptable–Unacceptable 1 %	2 %	3 %	4 %	5 %	Total % Accept.	Total % Unaccept.	Mean Score
Q8.1. An item on the early evening news shows an ethnic group as poor, uneducated criminals	10.8	25.2	18.7	23.6	20.2	36.0	43.9	3.17
Q8.2. A news programme broadcasts the ethnicity of a man wanted by the police to help to identify him	46.5	37.1	6.3	5.9	4.1	83.6	9.9	1.84
Q8.3. A joke about an ethnic group is made by a radio announcer on a breakfast show	5.6	17.3	13.5	26.2	36.3	22.9	62.5	3.71
Q8.4. A joke about a woman driver is made by a radio announcer on a breakfast show	8.6	25.7	18.2	23.8	23.3	34.2	47.1	3.28
Q8.5. A joke about homosexuals is made by a radio announcer on a breakfast show	5.6	17.2	15.3	24.6	36.8	22.8	61.4	3.70
Q8.6. A joke about an ethnic group is made by a TV presenter.	4.5	13.9	12.9	27.9	40.3	18.4	68.2	3.86

(Base: All respondents=1,000) – Percentages do not add up to 100.0% because of a small 'Don't know' response

Figure 3.13



As Figures 3.14 and 3.15 show, gender and age differences with respect to discrimination were less pronounced than they had been for the scenarios involving language, portrayal of sex and nudity and screen violence. Across the age groups in particular, there was a considerable degree of agreement over attitudes towards the acceptability or

Figure 3.14

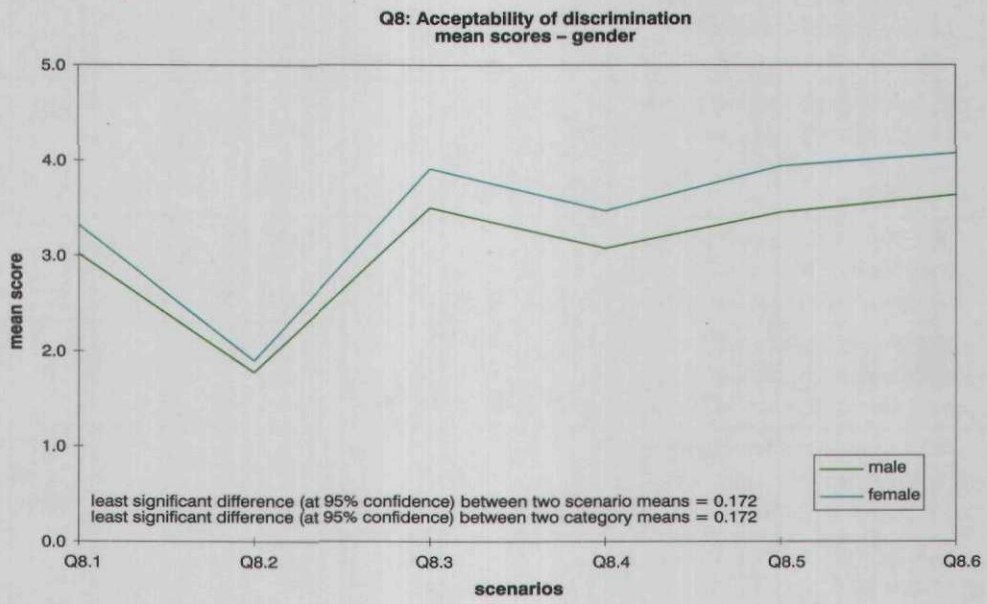
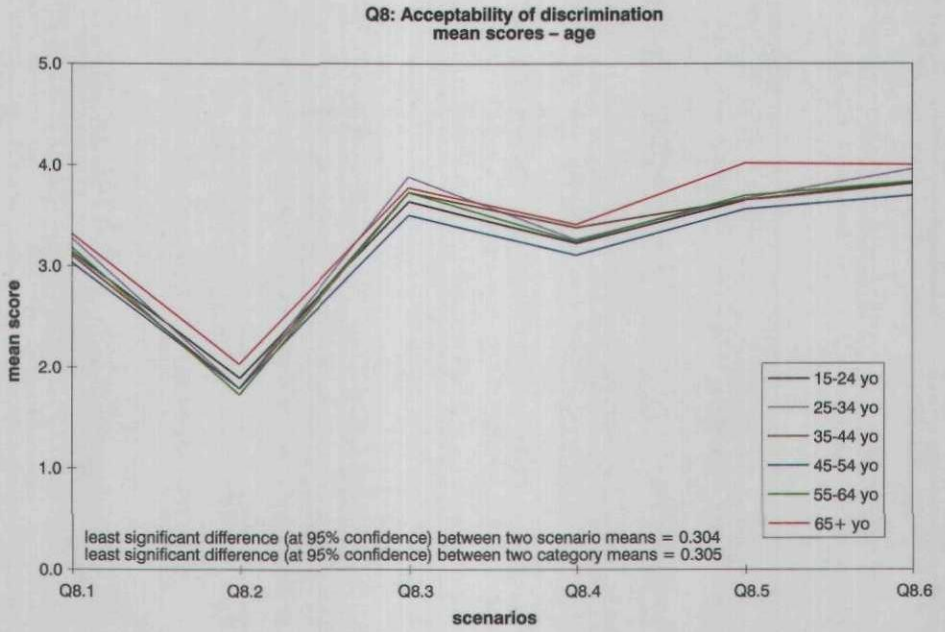
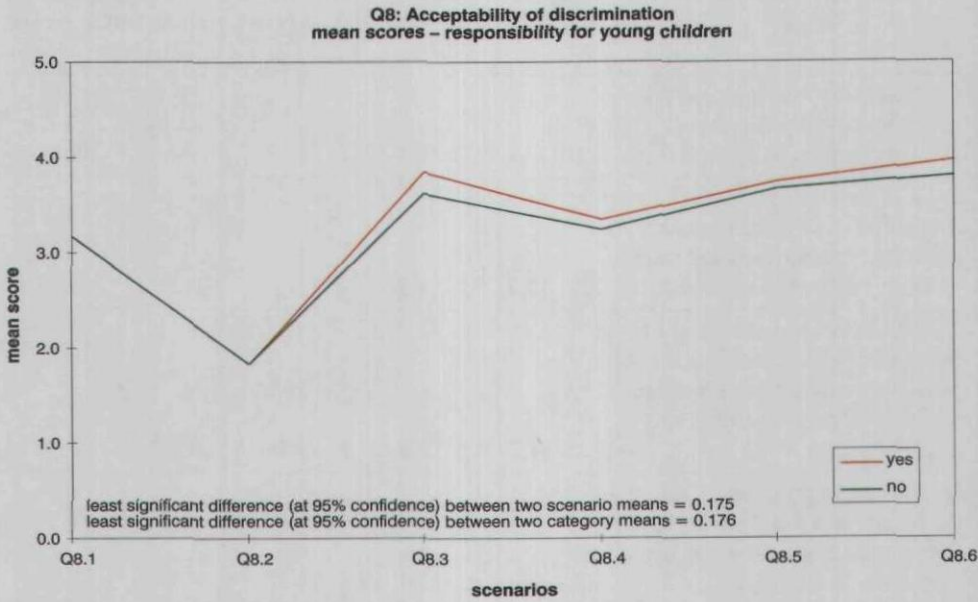


Figure 3.15



unacceptability of programming of discriminatory nature. Similarly, the parental status of respondents was not a strong intervening variable (see Figure 3.16).

Figure 3.16



Privacy and fairness

To conclude the presentation of the findings on the respondents' perceptions towards discrete broadcasting standards categories, the survey also polled people's opinion about issues concerning privacy and fairness in broadcasting. Again, respondents were asked to rate hypothetical scenarios on a 5-point scale. Table 3.8 provides an overview of the results.

A scenario in which a radio announcer phoned someone and mentioned their name before telling them that their partner was having an affair was considered unacceptable by 85 per cent of respondents. This was the highest disapproval rating of all scenarios put to the respondents.

A news programme which showed close-ups of family members at a funeral of a victim in a much-publicised murder was deemed unacceptable by three-quarters of people (75%). When the same scenario involved the funeral of a well known public figure, people were less concerned, but still more that half believed it would be unacceptable (57%). Even when close-ups of family members were not shown, 28 per cent believed funeral footage would still be unacceptable.

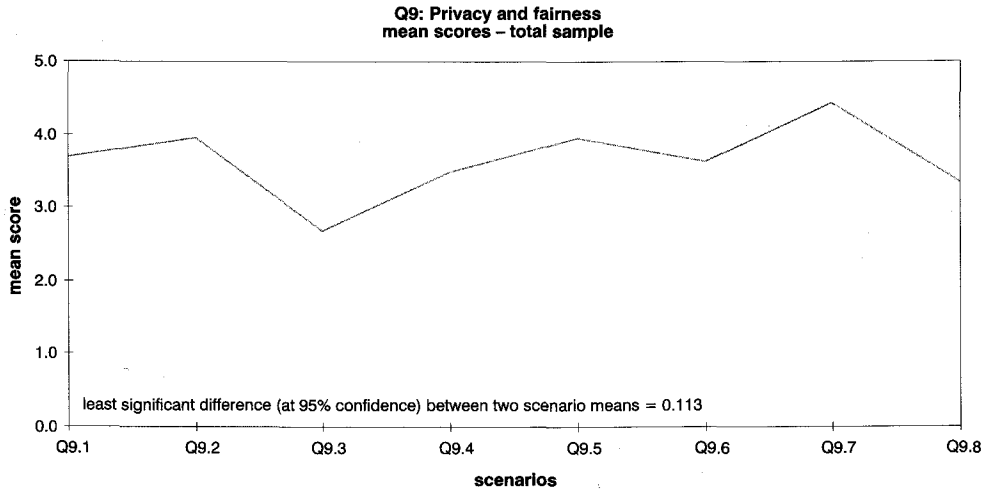
Table 3.8 Acceptability–unacceptability of privacy and fairness issues on radio and television

Privacy and fairness scenarios	Acceptable–Unacceptable 1 %	2 %	3 %	4 %	5 %	Total % Accept.	Total % Unaccept.	Mean Score
Q9.1. A radio talk-back host hangs up on callers without allowing them to finish their point.	7.0	14.8	13.2	32.4	32.2	21.8	64.6	3.68
Q9.2. A news programme shows the funeral of a victim in a much publicised murder case, and shows close-ups of family members.	2.9	12.7	9.7	35.5	39.0	15.6	74.5	3.95
Q9.3. A news programme show the funeral of a victim in a much publicised murder case, but does not include close-ups of family members.	13.5	41.7	16.5	19.0	8.8	55.2	27.9	2.68
Q9.4. A news programme shows the funeral of a well known public figure and shows close-ups of the family at the funeral.	5.4	23.0	14.5	32.4	24.6	28.4	56.9	3.48
Q9.5. A documentary about strip clubs is filmed using hidden cameras. A member of the public is filmed entering a strip club without knowing he is being filmed.	5.5	9.8	10.6	31.1	42.6	15.4	73.7	3.96
Q9.6. A documentary about strip clubs is filmed using hidden cameras. A politician is filmed without knowing he is being filmed.	10.4	15.8	9.8	27.9	35.8	26.2	63.7	3.63
Q9.7. As a practical joke, a radio announcer calls someone, mentions their name, and tells them their partner is having an affair.	2.8	4.4	7.5	18.0	67.2	7.2	85.3	4.43
Q9.8. A television reporter tries to interview a politician involved in a political controversy as he or she leaves home first thing in the morning.	9.2	22.1	15.0	31.1	53.3	31.3	53.3	3.35

(Base: All respondents=1,000) – Percentages do not add up to 100.0% because of a small 'Don't know' response

Another scenario, involving a member of the public being filmed by a hidden camera as he entered a strip club, was judged unacceptable by 74 per cent of respondents. It would seem that people believed that politicians have a right to privacy too. The secret filming of a politician in similar circumstances was considered to be unacceptable by 64 per cent. A scenario describing a politician involved in a political controversy who was filmed when sought for an interview as he left home first thing in the morning was considered unacceptable by just over half of the respondents (53%). Finally, 65 per cent of people interviewed did not believe it was acceptable when a radio talkback host hung up on callers without allowing them to finish their point. Figure 3.17 lists the mean scores of the responses to the privacy and fairness scenarios.

Figure 3.17



As Figures 3.18 and 3.19 attest, gender and age differences were relatively small. On the whole, women again displayed a higher degree of disapproval than men did. While the age groups tended to be in fairly close agreement, two scenarios stood out in terms of age difference. The younger respondents were rather less worried about a politician caught on camera as he entered a strip club. They were also less troubled about the practical joke scenario in which a radio announcer informed someone that their partner was having an affair. Parental status was not a major influence (see Figure 3.20).

From the above presentation of the findings, it can be understood that New Zealanders subscribed to a broad consensus concerning attitudes towards bad language, good taste and decency, screen violence, discrimination, privacy and fairness in broadcasting. Concerns with offensive language had not notably changed from 1993 when the Authority first polled New Zealanders on such matters. As regards the portrayal of sex and nudity, and screen violence, the research indicated that New Zealanders leave little room for

Figure 3.18

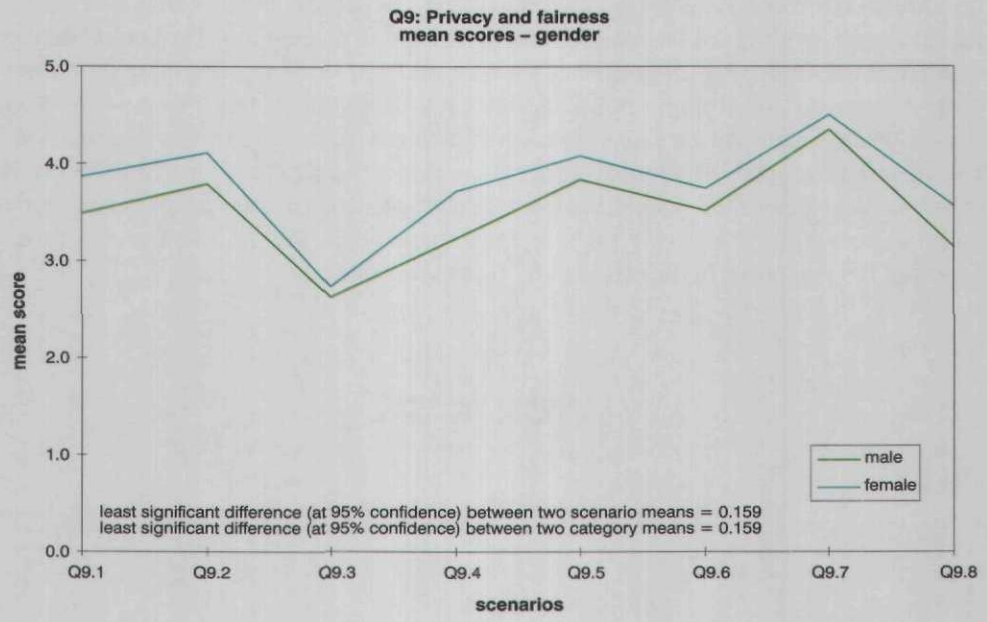
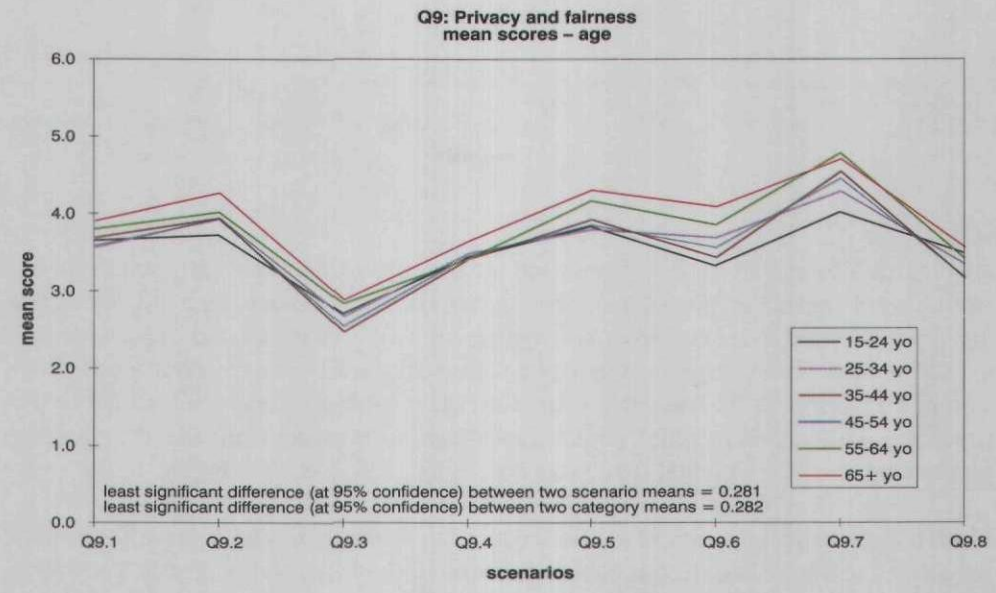


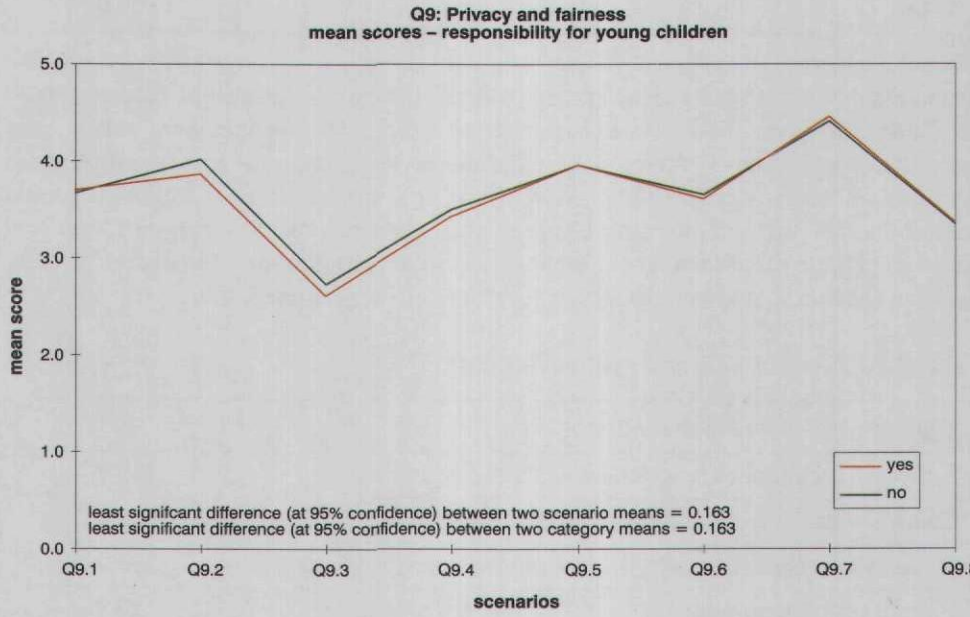
Figure 3.19



ambiguity where gratuitous violence, and sex and nudity were concerned. The broadcasting of such programming after the 8:30pm watershed defined for many what was acceptable. In contrast, the showing of violence, sexual activity and nudity before

8:30pm drew a clear response of rejection. Also judged by the above presentation of survey findings, it transpired that people felt most strongly about privacy issues. In fact, of all the broadcasting standards issues people were asked to give their opinion on, the perceived intrusion of privacy emerged as an issue which respondents considered as being most unacceptable. While on the whole a broad consensus could be discerned, gender and age emerged as the principal variables of difference. Women consistently recorded higher levels of unacceptability and, as the age of the respondents increased, so did their disapproval rates.

Figure 3.20



Parental and broadcaster responsibility

The final section of this chapter deals with issues surrounding parental and broadcaster responsibility and the respondents' knowledge, awareness and use of classification system and the 8:30pm watershed.

Parents or caregivers were overwhelmingly seen as having responsibility for what their children watch on television. Ninety-two per cent of respondents believe parents should ideally have that role. Only six per cent of respondents were of the view that television broadcasters should have responsibility for what children watch (see Table 3.9).

Table 3.9 Persons responsible for what children watch on TV

Persons Responsible	%
Parents/Caregivers	91.5
Television broadcaster	6.1
Children	0.4
Parents and broadcasters	0.7
Miscellaneous	0.1
Don't know	1.2
Total	**100.0**

Respondents were also asked what they believed the responsibilities of parents should be. Table 3.10 gives the most often mentioned replies since people were able to give more than one response. 'Know what children are watching' was mentioned by more than half of the respondents (56%). Twenty-two per cent declared that parents should control the time when children were permitted to watch television. A further 12 per cent held that parents should not let children watch violent programmes. Finally, 11 per cent said that parents should be responsible for checking programme ratings.

Table 3.10 Types of parental responsibilities*

Type of parental responsibility	%
Know what children are watching	55.7
Control what time children watch television	21.9
Shouldn't let children watch violent programmes	12.2
Check programme ratings	10.9
Shouldn't let children watch sexually explicit programmes	9.3
Take total responsibility	8.6
Switch off/change channels if unsuitable	7.3
Be with children while they watch	7.0
Don't let children watch programmes after 8:30pm	6.2
Shouldn't let children watch programmes with bad language	6.0
Educate children/give reasons why programmes not acceptable	5.7

* Most frequent responses

Broadcasters' responsibilities were seen to be as follows (again, people could give more than one response, which are summarised in Table 3.11 below). A quarter of respondents

(25%) stated that broadcasters should censor and/or rate programmes. Seventeen per cent believed that broadcasters should not show offending programmes at inappropriate times. Another 17 per cent said that broadcasters should show warnings before programmes with offensive content. Approximately 40 per cent – a cumulative percentage figure – mentioned that broadcasters should screen offending programmes after 8:30pm or at an 'appropriate time'.

Table 3.11 Types of broadcaster responsibilities*

Type of broadcaster responsibility	%
Censor/Rate programmes	25.4
Don't show offending programmes at inappropriate times	17.3
Show warnings before offending/inappropriate programmes	16.8
Don't show offending programmes before 8:30pm	15.1
Put offending programmes on after 8:30pm	13.2
Put offending programmes on at appropriate times	11.4
Check what is shown to children	6.9

* Most frequent responses

In helping parents to decide what is suitable for their children, over half of the respondents believed that broadcasters could assist by providing ratings and/or classification of television programmes (53%). Another 46 per cent of respondents said that providing warnings before programmes would greatly assist parents. Just under 12 per cent believed that the scheduling of programmes at appropriate times of the day was helpful. Seven per cent of believed that broadcasters should check what is shown to children (see Table 3.12).

Table 3.12 Types of television broadcasters assistance to parents*

Type of broadcaster assistance	%
Ratings/Classification of programmes	52.3
Warnings before programmes	45.6
Put certain programmes after 8:30pm	11.7
Scheduling/By the time of day the programme is on	11.7
Advertising in print media	4.1
Give explanation of ratings	4.1

* Most frequent responses

Awareness of watershed, classification and warnings

Table 3.13 shows that over three-quarters of respondents (76%) had an awareness of the 8:30pm watershed. All age groups showed more or less the same level of awareness of the 8:30pm watershed, except perhaps for the 65+ group, which showed a lower awareness level.

Table 3.13 Respondents' awareness of the 8:30pm watershed

Type of awareness	%
Aware (unprompted)	11.7
Aware (prompted)	64.7
Not aware	23.6
Total	**100.0**

As Table 3.14 indicates, a large majority of respondents (91%) had noticed classification symbols. Awareness of classification symbols was the highest among the younger age groups.

Table 3.14 Respondents noticing classification symbols

Have noticed	%
Yes	91.1
No	7.7
Don't know	1.2
Total	**100.0**

Two-thirds of respondents (67%) say that they frequently or sometimes used the classification symbols and warnings that precede programmes (see Table 3.15). The 35–44 year olds used them most frequently. Moreover, people with parental responsibilities showed a marked tendency to use classification symbols.

Table 3.15 Frequency using of classification and warnings for information

Frequency	%
Never	18.1
Rarely	13.6
Sometimes	28.7
Frequently	38.4
Don't know	1.2
Total	100.0

Further probing established that approximately half of the sample was able to recall the correct free-to-air television classification symbols. 'AO' ('Adults Only') was recalled by 49 per cent of respondents, 51 per cent remembered 'PGR' ('Parental Guidance Recommended') and, finally, 47 per cent were able to mention 'G' or 'General'. The other classification labels – 'R18', 'R16', 'R13' and 'M' ('Mature') were mentioned by 26 per cent of respondents, but these concern classifications not applying to free-to-air television (see Table 3.16).

Table 3.16 Respondents' recall of classification labels *

Classification label	%
'AO'	49.3
'PGR'	53.1
'G'	46.5
'R18', 'R16', 'R13' etc.	23.2
'M/Mature'	13.2
'Contains nudity, violence'	12.9
None/Nothing	14.7

* Most frequent responses

Multivariate analysis of the national survey data

So far this chapter has introduced the findings of the national survey organised around several topical areas, including television viewing preferences and concerns about television, the respondents' perceptions of and attitudes to a range of broadcasting standards issues, and the responsibilities of parents/caregivers and broadcasters. The findings conclusively demonstrated that there existed a broad consensus in attitudes towards broadcasting standards. In other words, the respondents ranked the hypothetical scenarios involving potentially offensive content in similar ways.

The chapter also examined the respondents' awareness and use of television classification and broadcaster warnings. The survey established that parents or caregivers were overwhelmingly judged as being responsible for what their children watch on television. Broadcaster responsibility was seen to reside in providing parents and caregivers with adequate programme information so as to make parents informed consumers.

It was further found that while there existed a broad consensus in terms of what respondents believed to be acceptable and unacceptable for broadcast, there were some marked differences in perceptions towards the hypothetical scenarios put to them. In particular, the scenarios involving bad language, the portrayal of sex and nudity, and screen violence brought out significant differences. Gender and age emerged as the important intervening variables: women tended to score consistently higher levels of

unacceptability, and as respondents got older the acceptability levels of the examples of broadcasting content presented to them decreased. Parental status appeared to be a factor predisposing respondents to rate unacceptability of content more highly especially with respect to those examples of bad language, sex and nudity and violence which screened before the 8:30pm watershed.

By means of a more advanced statistical analysis of the survey data, the next objective of this chapter is to see if the survey respondents, and by inference the total population they represent, can be grouped into clusters in a meaningful way. If this is the case, it might facilitate a deeper understanding of the structure of attitudes in society towards potentially controversial broadcast material. The methodological details of the cluster analysis can be found in the Appendix I.

Results of the respondent clustering

At the five-cluster level which was favoured as the most realistic, a summary of the clusters is contained in the Figure 3.21 below.

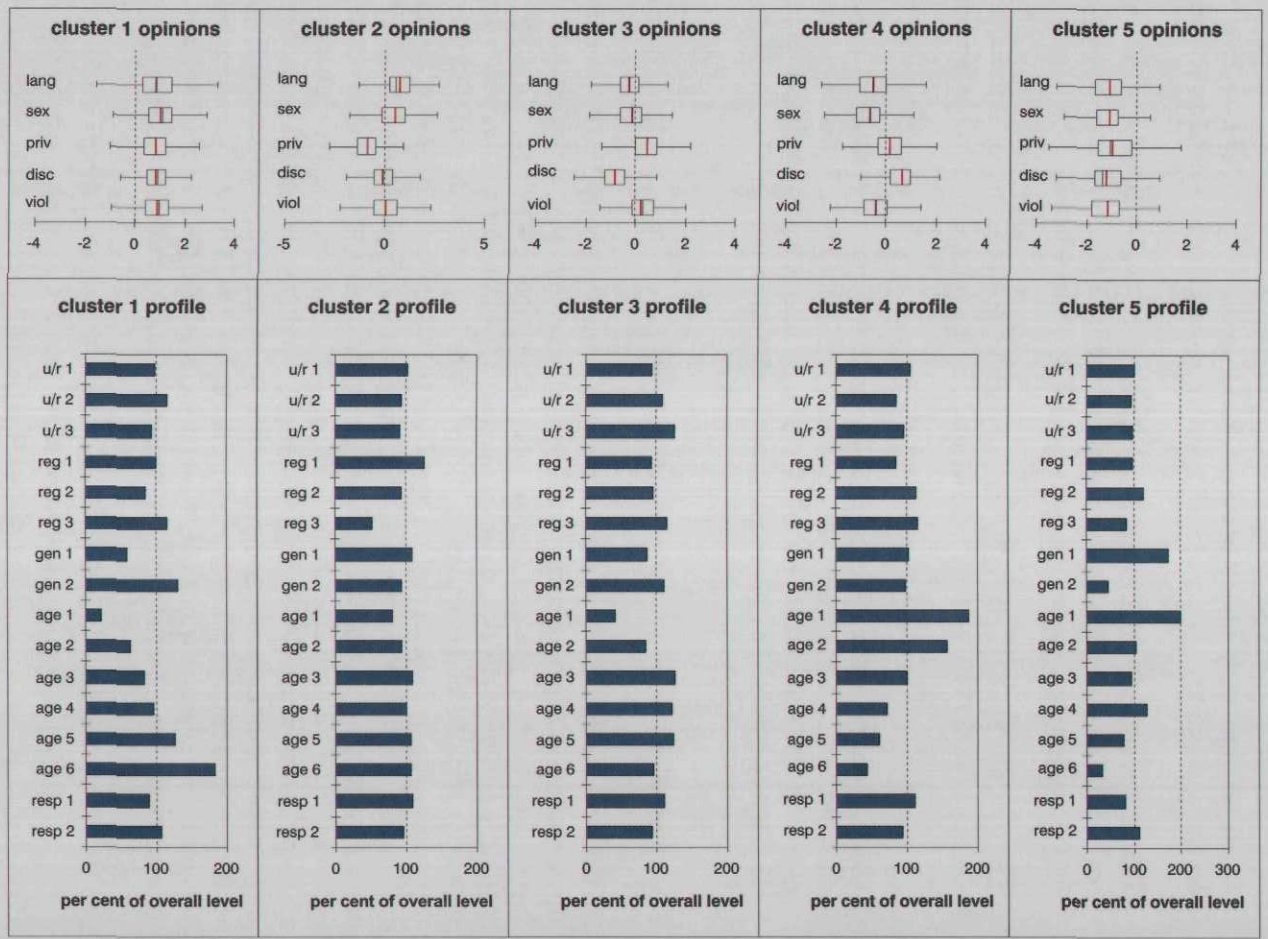
Each of the five figures displays the characteristics of a single cluster. The top panel of each figure shows the summarised opinion data on the five clustering variables. These are shown as box and whisker plots, details of the interpretation of which are explained in Appendix I. In each of these plots the positive end of the scale is less accepting of the particular type of broadcast material, the zero point is the mean opinion over the whole sample, and the negative end is more accepting.

The two bottom panels in each figure show the demographic characteristics of each cluster as bar charts. For each bar, the proportion in the cluster of the designated demographic type is shown as a percentage of the proportion in the sample as a whole. It is thus possible to see for which characteristics the cluster was over-represented or under-represented relative to the total sample. A key to the abbreviations used in the charts is as follows:

u/r 1	main metropolitan area	**age 1**	15–24-year-olds
u/r 2	secondary urban area	**age 2**	25–34-year-olds
u/r 3	rural	**age 3**	35–44-year-olds
reg 1	northern North Island	**age 4**	45–54-year-olds
reg 2	southern North Island	**age 5**	55–64-year-olds
reg 3	South Island	**age 6**	65+
gen 1	male	**resp 1**	responsible for young children
gen 2	female	**resp 2**	not responsible for young children

The cluster analysis of the survey data encompassing the respondents' scores on the 59 hypothetical scenarios identified the following cluster groupings:

Figure 3.21


cluster 1 opinions
cluster 2 opinions
cluster 3 opinions
cluster 4 opinions
cluster 5 opinions
lang
sex
priv
disc
viol
cluster 1 profile
cluster 2 profile
cluster 3 profile
cluster 4 profile
cluster 5 profile
u/r 1
u/r 2
u/r 3
reg 1
reg 2
reg 3
gen 1
gen 2
age 1
age 2
age 3
age 4
age 5
age 6
resp 1
resp 2
per cent of overall level

- Cluster 1 was less accepting than the sample as a whole on all five measures, and its opinions were relatively closely bunched. Cluster 1 (n=274) was under-weighted by males and those aged up to 34, and over-represented by those aged 65-plus.

- Cluster 2 tended to the middle of the road on all areas except one. Cluster 2 was more accepting on privacy. Cluster 2 (n=175) was under-weighted by South Island residents.

- Cluster 3 was more accepting on discrimination, while tending to be middle of the road with respect to the other four measures. Cluster 3 (n=170) was under-weighted by the younger age groups, and overweighted by South Islanders.

- Cluster 4 was more accepting on sex and possibly less accepting on discrimination. Cluster 4 (n=227) was heavily over-weighted by the younger age groups, and under-represented by the older ones.

- Cluster 5 was emphatically more accepting on all five measures, though it should be noted that it had a relatively wide spread of opinions. Cluster 5 (n=154) is heavily over-weighted by males and by 15–24-year-olds. Interestingly it is about average for 25–54-year-olds, and under-weighted by the 65-plus group.

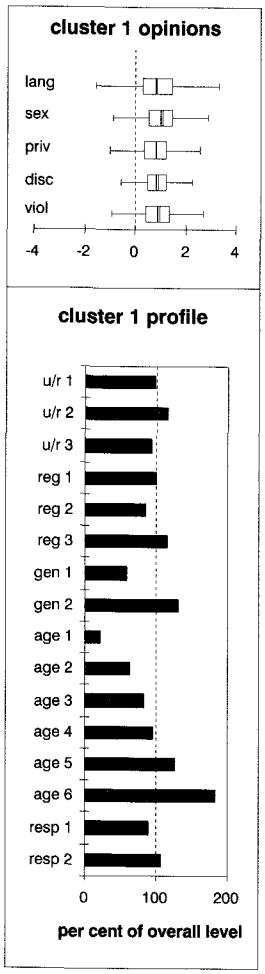
Cluster profiles

First, it is necessary to note that the clusters were more strongly typified by the opinions of respondents on the 59 scenarios and less by the demographic characteristics of the respondents. In other words, a crystallisation of opinion was evident. However, it is possible to be able to develop, on an interpretative level, cluster profiles which attempt to present respondent groupings in 'flesh and blood' rather than mere statistical composites. The five cluster profiles, presented below, are not to be seen as taxonomic units, neatly dividing the respondents into five classes of people. Instead, they ought to be understood rather like constellations in space which, particularly at their outer ends, appear as 'fuzzy' and to some extent overlapping. Furthermore, the five cluster profiles are empirical constructs which categorise people according the various ways they had judged broadcasting content as being acceptable or unacceptable, even though they might not define themselves as belonging to a particular set.[2] With these caveats in mind, the following constituencies within the data set were identified: the 'Moral Custodians', the 'Nosy Parkers', the 'Mainlanders', the 'Urbane Young' and the 'New Lads'.

The 'Moral Custodians'

Moral Custodians, or Cluster One, comprised 27 per cent of all respondents. Moral Custodians were on the whole less tolerant of all of the 59 scenarios put to them. In other words, they were less accepting – with similar degrees of objection – of bad language, the portrayal of sex and nudity, privacy and fairness, discrimination and violence. In

Figure 3.22



particular, transgressions of bad language, the portrayal of sex and nudity, and screen violence were perceived to be most unacceptable, with intrusions into privacy and fairness, and discrimination being judged in somewhat less disapproving terms.

Their demographic composite had the following social attributes. Moral Custodians were women aged 55 years and over. They tended to reside in the provincial centres of the South Island. Finally, Moral Custodians were of relatively modest means since most of them have retired, if one considers the high number people in this cluster aged 65 and older. This particular profile of Moral Custodians is, of course, not without precedents in New Zealand. At different points in this country's history, women have been accorded the role of moral guardians in the face of the perceived moral breakdown brought about by a predominantly male ethos of pioneer society. The corresponding age cohort of people born before the Second World War would indicate that these women are of a generation in which 'womanhood' was defined in terms of providing an example of moral nurture to society at large.

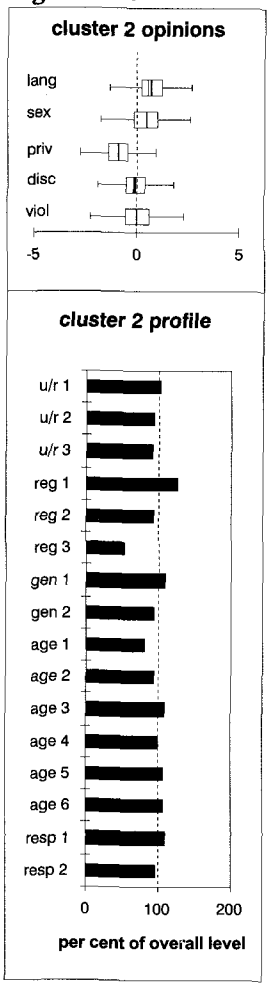
Moral Custodians, then, were most likely to be offended by broadcasting content. From anecdotal evidence obtained from an analysis of the Authority's incoming correspondence, it would be likely that Moral Custodians largely make up the pool of complainants with respect to broadcasting standards.

The 'Nosy Parkers'

As the label somewhat candidly suggests, the Nosy Parkers did not seem to be too concerned about privacy issues arising from broadcasting. They were otherwise relatively tolerant towards discrimination and screen violence, but less accepting of bad language, and the portrayal of sex and nudity. With respect to the latter four broadcasting standards categories, they were close to the mean. Nosy Parkers made up 18 per cent of the total sample.

Taking account of their demographic characteristics, Nosy Parkers tended to reside in the larger urban areas of the North Island. People from the South Island were distinctly

Figure 3.23



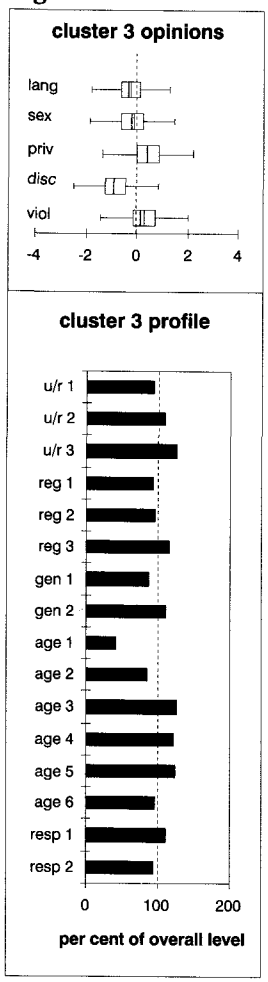
under-weighted in this cluster. Nosy Parkers have a tendency to be male. There was also a trend towards their being slightly over-weighted in the 35–44-year-old and 55 years and older age groups. To conclude the demographic composite, Nosy Parkers were over-weighted in the household income group earning under $10,000 a year.

The so-called 'tabloidisation' of broadcast media has been blamed for the increasing trend to pry into the private lives of citizens, be they prominent members of society or 'reluctant debutantes'.[3] The fact that such programmes rated well could be explained by the fact that there proportionately was – in audience terms – a sizeable constituency of Nosy Parkers who did not take much exception to privacy and fairness issues.

The 'Mainlanders'

Overall, Mainlanders were not too concerned about potentially discriminatory themes involving race and gender being broadcast. They also tended to be more accepting of bad language, and the portrayal of sex and nudity. Mainlanders were less accepting regarding transgressions of privacy and fairness, and screen violence. As attitudes towards privacy and fairness had characterised the Nosy Parkers, Mainlanders significantly differed from the total sample where their attitudes towards discrimination were concerned. Mainlanders constituted 17 per cent of the total sample.

Figure 3.24



As their cluster label already suggests, Mainlanders were over-weighted by the South Island's (semi-) rural population. They were also slightly over-weighted by women, as well as in the 35–64-year-old age groups. There was also a tendency for them to be parents of young children. Mainlanders were relatively affluent and were over-weighted in the $50,000–$70,000, $70,000–$80,000, and over $80,000 household income groups respectively.

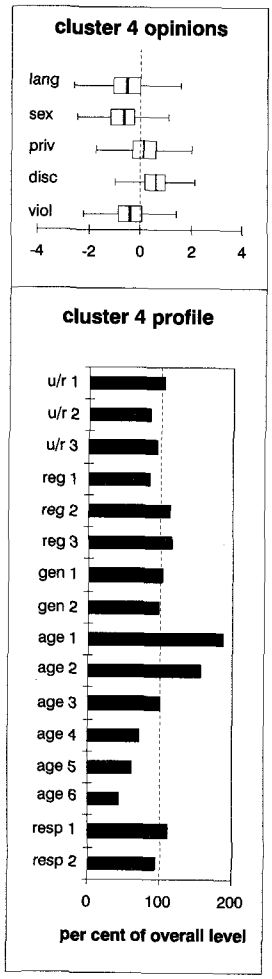
It could be said that rural South Island, which has been affectionately coined the 'Mainland' of New Zealand, was noted for a certain degree of pastoral nostalgia and a clear measure of conservatism on social issues. Aside from the fact of whether or not there was an ideological aspect to the attitudes displayed, such suppositions were evident in the cluster profile of Mainlanders which suggests that issues concerning feminism, gay emancipation and race relations had not quite taken a firm root 'down on the farm'. Or perhaps more accurately, these might not be issues for Mainlanders at all.

The 'Urbane Young'

After the Moral Custodians, the Urbane Young were the second largest cluster. They represented 23 per cent of the sample. On the topic of discrimination, the Urbane Young provided a mirror image of the Mainlanders. The Urbane Young found discrimination unacceptable. They were considerably more tolerant regarding the portrayal of sex and nudity, bad language, and screen violence. The Urbane Young were less unequivocal about privacy and fairness issues, verging towards the mean in this instance.

The Urbane Young were heavily over-weighted in the 15–24 years old and 25–34-year-old age groups. While urbane, these young might not necessarily all reside in the main

Figure 3.25



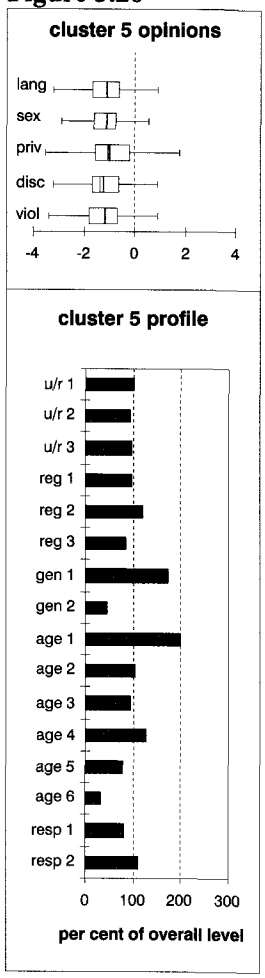
urban centres of New Zealand, although well represented in Wellington and Christchurch. Although they were slightly over-weighted as living in the metropolitan areas, the rural young were only slightly under-weighted. The Urbane Young were of both genders – males and females were evenly distributed in this group. There was a likelihood that the Urbane Young have parental responsibilities. Finally, they lived in relatively affluent circumstances – they were either the beneficiaries of their parents' (professional) middle-class background or belonged to the recently emerging class of Young Urban Professionals.

The Urbane Young were part of an educated middle class. They seem to subscribe to what had been labelled a 'politically correct' agenda. It appeared that they have taken on the new-found social awareness of their generation. The Urbane Young were markedly different from the New Lads, the final cluster profile under scrutiny.

The 'New Lads'

Whereas the Moral Custodians represented an extreme position in terms of unacceptability of broadcasting content, the New Lads were even more emphatic in giving virtually everything their thumbs up, since they could not find anything that would terribly upset them. The New Lads made up 15 per cent of the sample. Bad language, the portrayal of sex and nudity, discrimination and screen violence were collectively embraced as constituting no problem whatsoever. Transgressions of privacy and fairness saw a somewhat broader range with respect to the degree that they were judged acceptable, but they were nevertheless acceptable to the New Lads.

Figure 3.26



The label 'New Lads' seems appropriate as they were heavily over-weighted by males in the 15–24-year-old age group. Interestingly, males in the 35–44-year-old age group also seemed to qualify as New Lads. New Lads were fairly evenly spread geographically, with perhaps a tendency to reside in the lower part of North Island. New Lads were not very likely to have responsibility for young children. They tended to live in affluent households, which suggests that most still reside with their parents. This was perhaps corroborated by the fact that many were not able to cite the household income.

Although it is presently gaining currency in New Zealand, 'New Lads' is not an indigenous label. Having been flown in from the United Kingdom through such glossy magazines as *loaded*, *FHM*, and to a lesser extent the more up-market *GQ*, this novel concept of 'new manhood' is actively making its presence felt through equivalent New Zealand media outlets. The local magazine *Brass*, symbolises 'laddish' values, and local New Lads can tune into 'The Rock', a networked radio station which claims to be 'politically incorrect'. An apocryphal definition found on the Internet is perhaps worth quoting as it confirms the New Lad profile found in this study: '[T]he New Lad is a middle-class version of the traditional working-class male, copying observed values such as drinking, and being sexist, being 'blokes together' under the pretext of being ironic, knowing better but doing it anyway.'[4]

Conclusion

The cluster analysis seemed to give a workable dissection of the opinion data. The clusters could be interpreted with relative ease in terms of both opinions and demography. One should be careful, though, not to claim that the population was divided exclusively and exhaustively into the five clusters. Many people would lie somewhere away from the central core of the cluster they were most closely aligned to.

It was obvious that age, as recorded in the survey, had a major and self-consistent bearing on the cluster structure. This raises the interesting question whether the effect was purely an age one (as people get older they grew less accepting of the issues measured) or whether there was a cohort effect (people born during a specified decade tended to be

less accepting than those born in latter decades, and this effect persists over time). It could possibly be a mixture of both effects, and in any event it was not possible to answer the question without some form of repeated measurements taken at a later time. The way in which the clustering might change over time, in location and number of clusters and in their relative sizes, poses another general question, which is not considered here.

Notes

1 The least significant differences shown on the figures in this chapter are estimates of the sampling errors in the survey. The differences between two sample means have to be at least as great as the least significant difference for there to be good evidence of the underlying population means being significantly different at the given confidence level.
2 See Robert Bocock, *Consumption*, Routledge: London and New York, 1993, pp. 28–31.
3 See Michael Stace, *Privacy: Interpreting the Broadcasting Standards Authority's Decisions – January 1990 to June 1998*, Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 1998, pp. 15–18.
4 See http://www.geocities.com/~cosmikgirl/Text_Engl/Pages/NewLad.html

Conclusion

This monograph started with an overview of the research carried out for the Authority to date. The first chapter highlighted the relative stability of public opinion on broadcasting standards over the years with regard to such issues as screen violence, bad language, and the portrayal of sex and nudity. Screen violence, as evidenced by the first study conducted by the Authority, was consistently judged as being problematic by a majority of New Zealanders. Elderly women in particular stated that they found the various forms of violence portrayed on television unacceptable. Young men were on the whole far more permissive.

The portrayal of sex and nudity was similarly rejected. Again, women and the older age groups were more likely to be offended than men and younger viewers and listeners. Likewise, the broadcasting of bad language saw a not too different pattern. With respect to bad language, screen violence and the broadcast of sexual content, people had a concern for children and young people. Consequently, people tended to weigh up contextual matters such as the time of broadcast and whether the content was perceived to be gratuitous or not. In other words, there was an understanding that where violent or sexual content or bad language was not seen as integral part of the programme's narrative, it was likely to be rejected as offensive or unacceptable. The broadcast of programmes with such content before 8:30pm, if not 9:30pm, was also seen as unacceptable. Apart from exhibiting a concern for children, a not inconsiderable number of people stated that they were personally offended when confronted with programming of a provocative nature.

On the surface, the research findings of the *Monitoring Community Attitudes in Changing Mediascapes* project appeared to point to a similar direction as that of the previous research undertaken on behalf of the Authority. On the whole, there was a broad social consensus in the ways in which respondents had ranked the hypothetical scenarios in terms of their acceptability and/or unacceptability. The 'worms' in the twenty or so figures presented in Chapter Three attested to that. But as was also reported in Chapter Three (and to a lesser extent in Chapter Two), the same demographic variables were exerting a predominant influence.

Indeed, age and gender were the defining variables when people were asked to judge on broadcasting content. Women were significantly less tolerant of perceived transgressions of broadcasting standards as related to screen violence, bad language, and the portrayal of sex and nudity. On the other hand, men were rather more permissive in their attitudes. With respect to the same broadcasting content, age brought out stark differences between the young and the older age groups. The 15–24-year-olds were far more accepting of violence, bad language and sexual content compared to the 55-and-over age group. The gender and age differences were significantly less with respect to the scenarios which asked respondents to rank elements of discriminatory practices and intrusions into privacy and fairness.

What had not been captured in previous research, however, was the question as to what extent respondents could be seen to fall into identifiable groupings, thus combining their attitude scores with their demographic characteristics. The latter exercise was facilitated by a cluster analysis performed on the survey data.

Five reasonably clear social profiles emerged which were subsequently labelled to encapsulate their characteristics: 'Moral Custodians' comprising elderly women were the least accepting on all five measures (i.e. bad language, the portrayal of sex and nudity, violence, discrimination, and privacy and fairness); 'Nosy Parkers' who were not too concerned about intrusions of privacy and fairness, and were over-represented in the lower income groups; from the (semi-) rural South Island came the 'Mainlanders' who were less worried about discrimination. By contrast, the 'Urbane Young' judged discrimination unacceptable. They were predominantly made up of 15–34-year-olds. Finally, there were the 'New Lads' who are between 15 and 24 years old and were the most tolerant – one would almost suspect indifferent – on all measures.

The cluster analysis has opened up a novel understanding of attitudes towards broadcasting standards and their social constituencies. On the one hand, it demolishes the somewhat facile stereotypes which are all too readily cited, but which are not steeped in social reality. On the other hand, the findings presented in this book point to interesting avenues for research.

The Authority's research project *Monitoring Community Attitudes in Changing Mediascapes* was developed to initiate an ongoing trend monitor of public attitudes to broadcasting standards. The research that was reported in this publication has set the broad parameters for future public opinion measurement. To this effect, it seems that further in-depth research on the younger age groups is warranted. Since the Authority is mostly serviced by complaints originating from the middle-age to older age groups, the need to understand the younger age groups is important as they are otherwise absent from the complaints process. However, they are – as viewers and listeners – a growing audience whose views need to be accessed. If one can see research as a social barometer that records changes in public attitudes, the need to monitor the emerging generations as they become the prevailing audiences is a crucial task for the Authority in the future.

Appendix 1: Methodological Justification

Introduction

This Appendix outlines the research objectives and the methodological procedures that guided the fieldwork and subsequent analysis of the data. The fieldwork proceeded through two phases. First, a qualitative stage, involving ten focus group discussions in several locations in New Zealand, was conducted in September–October of 1998. This was then followed by a national survey of 1,000 randomly selected people, representing the quantitative stage of the research project.

Consultative Committee

In embarking on *Monitoring Community Attitudes in Changing Mediascapes*, the Authority was advised by a Consultative Committee established in May 1998. The Consultative Committee comprised:

- Garry Dickinson, formerly Chief Mathematical Advisor, Statistics New Zealand
- David Edmunds, Programme Standards Manager, Television New Zealand
- Michael Hill, Professor of Sociology, Victoria University
- Dr Jenny Neale, Associate Dean – Research, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Victoria University
- Reece Walters, Senior Lecturer, Institute of Criminology, Victoria University

Michael Stace, Executive Director, Wiebe Zwaga, Research and Communications Manager, and Phillipa Ballard, Complaints Manager, represented the Authority on the Consultative Committee.

Research objectives

Monitoring Community Attitudes in Changing Mediascapes was envisaged as a comprehensive study, the aim of which was to provide public opinion measurement of broadcasting standards issues. Furthermore, it is an important benchmark against which previously commissioned research could be compared. The research was also designed to examine how public opinion regarding broadcasting standards has evolved and changed. *Monitoring Community Attitudes in Changing Mediascapes* was developed so that it could be succeeded by yearly community attitudes monitors which would survey the New Zealand population on selected broadcasting standards matters.

On the advice of its Consultative Committee, the Authority identified the following research objectives:

- To ascertain community attitudes on current broadcasting standards issues as these pertain to (1) good taste and decency, e.g. the use of offensive language and the portrayal of sex and nudity; (2) balance, fairness, and accuracy; (3) privacy; (4) violence; (5) discrimination/denigration of people;

- To ascertain community expectations on the current regulatory regime of broadcasting in New Zealand;

- To ascertain community attitudes to broadcasting content and how respondents perceive the effects of broadcasting content on themselves and others – children and teenagers especially.

- To ascertain community attitudes on the issue of individual and/or parental responsibility *vis-à-vis* the responsibilities of broadcasters;

- The above research questions are to be analysed and interpreted in the context of lifecycle and/or lifestyle variance, and media use patterns.

These objectives were communicated in a 'Request for Proposal' document which was sent for competitive tender to the leading market research companies selected from the *Directory 98* of the Market Research Society of New Zealand. Five market research organisations responded by submitting their proposals. The Consultative Committee selected Colmar Brunton Research as the successful tenderer. Colmar Brunton Research started the focus group research in September 1998.

Focus groups: recruitment and composition

The focus group participants were recruited from a Colmar Brunton Research panel of 30,000 people. This panel is 'refreshed' on a regular basis and people are only used once

every six months to prevent the development of 'professional participants'.

The participants were recruited according to a list of criteria. The composition of the ten focus groups covered the following variables: age, gender, ethnicity, parental status, Pay TV subscribers and, finally, geographical area. The table below has the composition details of the ten focus groups.

Composition of the Focus Groups

Focus Group Composition	Location	No. of Participants
Females, 18–30, no children	Auckland	6
Males, 18–30, no children	Christchurch	6
Female parents of children aged 2–12 years	Auckland	4
Male parents of children aged 2–18 years	Napier	6
Female parents of children aged 13–18 years	Napier	8
Maori females	Wellington	8
Maori males	Auckland	6
Older females with children left home	Ashburton	8
Older males with children left home	Wellington	8
Pay TV subscribers	Christchurch	5

The number of participants in the focus groups discussions ranged from four to the stipulated maximum of eight, and the groups contained an even mix of socio-economic levels. The Maori focus groups contained an even mix of younger and older people, and varying parental status. Pay TV subscribers included a mix of males and females of different ages.

The same qualitative researcher from Colmar Brunton Research moderated the ten focus groups. The discussion guide, developed by Colmar Brunton Research in consultation with the Consultative Committee, covered topics pertinent to the objectives of the research and included a wide range of broadcasting standards issues. The focus group discussions took between 2.5 and 3 hours to complete. They were videotaped and subsequently transcribed by Colmar Brunton Research.

The findings of the focus groups were reported in a separate report written for the Authority by its Research and Communications Manager. This report, which is summarised in Chapter Two, formed the basis of several meetings between the Consultative Committee, the Authority, and representatives of Colmar Brunton Research, at which the questionnaire (see Appendix II) for the national survey was developed and fine-tuned.

National survey

The sampling process for the national survey utilised 1996 Census data down to the Area Unit level. It consisted of three sampling stages, each of which employed statistical methods to decrease possible sources of error and bias.

Each of these stages is described in detail below. The sampling scheme as a whole is summarised in a diagram at the end of this section.

Stage 1 of Sampling Scheme: Drawing the Primary Sampling Unit – Sampling of Census Area Units

The first stage consisted of selecting a sample of Statistics New Zealand Area Units, as defined for the 1996 Census. Area Units were chosen as the basis for the first sampling stage because other possible sampling units (such as meshblocks) are not as stable in their sizes from Census to Census. As different Area Units have different population densities they were randomly selected so their chance of inclusion is in proportion to their size – 'size' being defined as the number of residents of permanent private dwellings aged fifteen and over living in the Area Unit. This ensured that there was no bias through low-density areas being over-represented.

Stratification of area units

The above 'proportional' sampling should, in theory, ensure that each region of the country and each urban type is represented in its correct proportions. However, it is possible to encounter deviations due to factors such as differential non-response – for example, people in rural areas often have a higher rate of participation than people in urban areas. To counteract any influences which may have caused the sample to be biased with respect to regions or urban types, the following stratification method was employed during this first sampling stage.

Area Units were divided into nine strata defined by the intersection of the following three region types with the following three urban types:

Region types

- Northern North Island – Northland, Central Auckland, South Auckland/Bay of Plenty, East Coast
- Southern North Island – Hawkes Bay, Taranaki, Wellington
- South Island – all the South Island.

Urban types

- Main – urban zones of population centres with 30,000+ total population in 1996
- Secondary and Minor – urban centres with 1000 to 29,999 total population in 1996
- Rural – localities and Area Units with less than 1000 total population in 1996.

The Area Unit sampling ensured that percentages of respondents in each region/urban type combination matched Census data within the degree of congruence possible under the sampling scheme. The number of interviews made in each stratum was rounded to the nearest 10 because of the use of fixed size clusters of households (see Stage 2 below) and to allow nationally uniform fieldwork procedures.

Stage 2 of Sampling Scheme: Drawing the Secondary Sampling Unit – Selection of Households Within the Area Unit

Within each Area Unit a start point for a cluster of household interviews was selected along a controlled interviewer walk with call-backs. A 'start point' is a street intersection selected randomly from the street intersections within an Area Unit, using random numbers which refer to a grid overlay placed on a Statistics New Zealand Area Unit map. In rural Area Units street intersections were selected with additional reference to NZMS topographic maps which contain more road detail. Grid cells in the overlay were sampled until an intersection which met the turning criteria of an interviewer walk was found. There was an added precaution built into this process which made sure that the 'start point' had not been used for other Colmar Brunton random door-to-door research in the last six months. The latter was to prevent respondent 'wear-out' and associated negative effects on response rates.

Households were sequentially called upon along a controlled interviewer walk (or drive) out from the start point for the Area Unit. The interviewer went leftwards from the start point calling on every house encountered, and turned left at street corners to proceed down the same side of the road. If they came back to where they started, they crossed the road to the opposite side, and repeated the left turn. The walk was intended to produce eight interviews from households in the Area Unit after call-backs. It was confined so that at any stage during the initial walk and during the call-back walks no more than fourteen non-refusing houses, including those where interviews took place, were 'open' to contact by the interviewer.

Stage 3 of Sampling Scheme: Drawing the Tertiary Sampling Unit – Selection of Respondent Within the Household

Only one respondent per household was selected for the interview to avoid the problem

of cluster effects which can act to increase the sampling error in the survey. Cluster effects occur when the respondents have some type of association between them. This acts to decrease the amount of independent information the survey contains below that implied by the actual sample size. In addition, the sensitive and highly confidential nature of the survey provides additional reason for selecting only one respondent per household. The specific respondent was chosen randomly by selecting the person living in the household aged fifteen years and over who had the last birthday.

Weighting

Two separate sources of weighting were needed. One was to allow for the unequal probabilities of inclusion in the sample for people in different-sized households, and the other to ensure that the gender and age characteristics of the sample matched those in the 1996 Census. A final weight combining these requirements was calculated for each respondent.

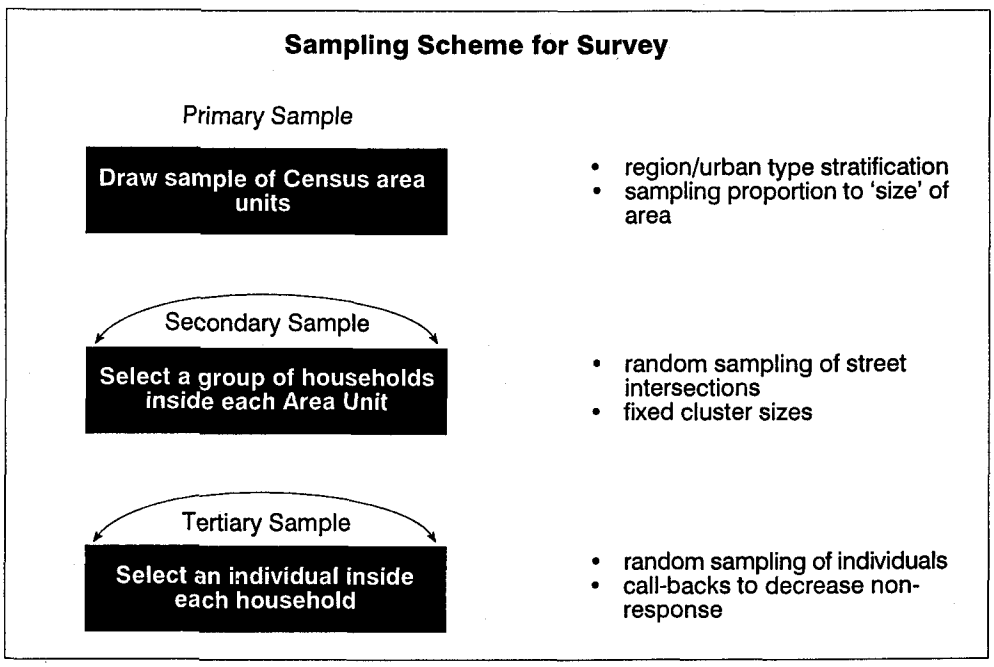
Coverage

Using this method, the coverage was almost 100 per cent complete. All permanent private households in New Zealand excluding those on off-shore islands had a known chance of being included in the sample. This did not include houses which required four-wheel drive access.

The diagram below illustrates the sampling scheme for this survey and outlines the techniques Colmar Brunton used at each stage to decrease the effects of bias.

After conducting a preliminary pilot to ensure the effectiveness of the questionnaire, Colmar Brunton Research interviewed a total of 1,000 people aged fifteen years and older. Following the sample selection process described above, interviewing was nationwide from randomly selected households. Interviews were conducted on a face-to-face basis between 13 March and 11 April 1999. The average interview duration was thirty minutes.

Data was weighted to ensure the sample matches the proportions of the New Zealand population in terms of age and gender. The maximum margin of error for a proportion from a simple random sample of size 1,000 would be +/-3.1 per cent at a 95 per cent confidence level. The effect of stratification and clustering in the survey increased this margin of error to an average level of about 3.54 per cent. The effects of the inflated sampling error are attached to the figures in Chapter Three.



Data analysis

Nature of data

The national survey was administered to 1,000 respondents, sampled from the New Zealand population aged 15 and over. The data collected from each respondent could be divided into three sections:

- demographic and related variables including gender, age, residential location and responsibility for young children, together with details of access to, and consumption of, broadcast content;

- five omnibus questions comprising a total of 59 hypothetical scenarios on the respondents' assessment of the acceptability or unacceptability in broadcasting of a variety of issues including language, the portrayal of sex and nudity, screen violence, discrimination, privacy and fairness;

- a number of questions on the perceived responsibilities of parents and broadcasters towards children.

The data was first analysed by cross-tabulating the information obtained against the relevant demographic variables.

Summary of the cluster analysis

The specific objective of the cluster analysis was to reduce the complexity of the opinion data to more manageable proportions. Second, the analytic exercise attempted to ascertain if any recognisable clustering of respondents could be found in the reduced data. Third, it was intended that, in the event that clusters were found, they might be characterised in terms of the demographic variables. It should also be noted that the analysis was almost entirely exploratory data analysis, as opposed to confirmatory statistical analysis.

Reducing the dimensionality of the opinion data

Almost all the respondents' perceptions and attitudes were contained in the 59 hypothetical scenario variables which could be divided into five main areas of concern. These five areas – bad language, the portrayal of sex and nudity, screen violence, discrimination, and privacy and fairness – were selected as they represent the statutory categories on the basis of which the Authority determines complaints. The responses to the scenarios were measured on a common five-point acceptability–unacceptability scale. As a preliminary step the small number of missing values in the scenario data were replaced by the corresponding (weighted) sample means.

An examination of the distributions of the 59 scenario variables showed that they were consistently 'well behaved', that is to say that the distribution of responses was largely symmetric. This meant that a correlation-based technique such as principal components analysis could be justified. Each of the five scenario categories was given this treatment separately.

In the five analyses, the first principal component accounted for, on average, approximately 50 per cent of the total variance in the data. By looking at the individual scenario loadings it could be seen that these five leading components were useful summaries of the data for the five questionnaire topics. The succeeding components in each area were also extracted and were almost always identifiable with only one or two of the individual scenarios.

An attempt was made to repeat the principal component analysis on all 59 scenarios lumped together. The results here showed that the leading component had a heavy dependence on the contents of Q10 and Q11, probably because these two questions on bad language and the portrayal of sex and nudity contain 36 (or 61%) of the 59 input variables. It could provide some information about the overall opinion of a respondent, but it was judged to be less useful than the five separate measures, particularly as it tended to blur the importance of the five opinion areas.

Clustering the respondents

The component scores for the five leading components were calculated for each respondent. Because the five principal component analyses had been done independently,

it was necessary to check the inter-correlations between these components. Most were low, with the highest being at 0.66 and the second highest at 0.47. It was judged that no excessive harm would be done to the data if we treated the five principal components as independent in the respondent clustering.

The five principal component score variables were used as inputs in the clustering process. This treated each respondent as a point in a five-dimensional space and attempted to identify a small number of clusters. Solutions with three, four, five and six clusters were tried in sequence. The clustering process looked for regions in the five-dimensional space where the respondents were relatively densely grouped. It needs to be emphasised that absolutely clear-cut clustering of opinion data with this process was not to be expected and respondents near the fringes of one cluster could very easily be reassigned to another. This reflected, it is suggested, the reality of analysing opinion data.

Determining the number of respondent clusters present in the data was a matter of judgement. More clusters would have given a better fit in a formal sense, but might have created artificial differences. Selecting fewer clusters might have caused what should be recognised as distinct groups to be lumped together. Looking at the clustering output in detail, we have arrived at the conclusion that five clusters were the optimum supported by the data.

Weighting

The survey design selected one respondent from those eligible in each selected household. A respondent weighting scheme was used earlier in the main survey estimation phase to allow both for this unequal probability of selection and for benchmarking the achieved sample against the Census proportions for gender, age and region. It was hoped to use these weights in the cluster analysis, but it was impossible to run weighted versions of principal component analysis, cluster analysis or box and whisker plots on the software that was available. However, it is not thought that the results of the present analysis would change a great deal if such weighting had been used.

Principal components analysis

In this instance, the input to principal component analysis was the correlation matrix between the 59 scenario variables. The sample had been selected using cluster sampling and it was necessary to allow for the covariances this induces. Eight random sub-samples each of 125 respondents were drawn, without replacement, from the sample, one respondent in each sub-sample coming from each of the 125 clusters. Correlations were computed for each sub-sample and then averaged before starting the component extraction. This should have reduced substantially the unwanted covariance effects. Two separate runs were carried out, one using simple arithmetic average to form the correlation coefficients, and the other taking a slightly more complicated path involving inverse hyperbolic tangent transforms. Both these runs were carried through to the clustering

stage and very little difference was found in the end results. It is the inverse hyperbolic averaged method, which forms the basis for the results quoted in the paper. The software used to estimate the principal components was XLSTAT®, a third-party extension to EXCEL®.

Clustering

The k-means clustering algorithm used was also from XLSTAT. One of the problems with any sort of heuristic clustering is that different random starting points may give quite different cluster structure solutions on the same data. As explained above, two separate runs were run using different starting points and the two solutions obtained are very similar. It should be noted that the clustering algorithm starts afresh with each successive number of clusters, and there is no necessity for the members of a cluster at the three-cluster level, say, to either remain together or to split up in any simple way when four clusters are allowed. A member on the fringe of a cluster can quite easily change membership to another cluster if offered the chance. This 'fuzziness' of clustering is particularly appropriate when dealing with opinion data, as we are here. A detailed examination of the cluster membership showed that the main clusters were relatively stable as the number of clusters increased. Both of these results support the belief that the clustering solution found is more than just a computing artifact.

Box and whisker plots

These plots are useful for comparing the distributions of several continuous variables. The box part of the plot lies between the upper and lower quartiles of the sample distribution. It thus contains the middle half of the ordered data set, and one-quarter of the data lies out beyond the box at one end and a quarter beyond the other end. Across the middle part of the box passes two lines. One is the sample mean and the other the median (in some cases the two lines are so close as to be unable to be separated on the plot). If these two lines are relatively far apart, or away from near the centre of the box, then the sample distribution has a corresponding degree of skewness. The data in this analysis can be seen to be all pretty symmetric. The whiskers attached to either end of the box mark the points beyond which only one-third of a per cent of the data lies. These two points are the usual indicators for the data points which might be outliers in the sample distribution. The distance between them is also a measure of the total spread of the sample data. A few potential outliers were marked on the original output (in line with the expectation for the sample sizes being plotted), but these were removed from the plots in the interest of legibility.

Appendix 2: Survey Questionnaire

MONITORING COMMUNITY ATTITUDES IN CHANGING MEDIASCAPES QUESTIONNAIRE

INTERVIEWER'S NAME: _____

DATE: _____ **EMPLOYEE No.** ☐☐☐☐☐

PHONE NUMBER: _____ **INTERVIEW DURATION** ☐☐

START TIME: _____ **FINISH TIME:** _____

AUDIT DETAILS _____

CODE CALL NUMBER

Call One	6
Call Two	7
Call Three	8

CODE GENDER

Male	6
Female	7

CODE AREA

Auckland	06
Wellington	07
Christchurch	08
Hamilton	09
Dunedin	10
Hawke's Bay	11
Palmerston North	12
Wanganui	13
Tauranga	14
Rotorua	15
Invercargill	16
Whangarei	17
Nelson	18
New Plymouth	19
Gisborne	20

VIEWERSHIP/LISTENERSHIP

SHOW CARD A

1. What kinds of programmes and movies do you watch most often?
CODE ALL MENTIONS

PROGRAMMES	
comedy	06
documentary	07
drama	08
fantasy	09
current affairs programmes (eg 20/20, 60 Minutes)	10
infomercials	11
lifestyle, eg gardening, do-it-yourself, cooking	12
news	13
real events TV (eg programmes of real life police chases, accidents, natural catastrophes etc)	14
science fiction	15
sit-coms	16
soaps	17
sports	18
MOVIES	
action	19
comedy	20
drama	21
fantasy	22
romance	23
science fiction	24

2. And how many televisions do you have in your household?
CODE NUMBER AS 1 DIGIT ____

IF NO TVS GO TO Q4

3. Do you have Pay TV, such as Sky or Saturn, in your household?
CODE ONE ONLY

Yes	6
No	7

4. About how many hours do you personally spend watching television, both daytime and evening, at home and away from home on...
READ. WRITE IN TIME AS A 4 DIGIT NUMBER (IF NONE WRITE IN "0000")
EG 2HRS 30 MIN = 0230

...An average Saturday	☐☐☐☐
...An average Sunday	☐☐☐☐
...an average **day** between Monday & Friday	☐☐☐☐

5. And about how many hours do you personally spend listening to the radio, both daytime and evening, at home and away from home on...
READ. WRITE IN TIME AS A 4 DIGIT NUMBER (IF NONE WRITE IN "0000")
EG 2HRS 30 MIN = 0230

...An average Saturday ..... ☐☐☐☐

...An average Sunday ..... ☐☐☐☐

...An average **day** between Monday & Friday ..... ☐☐☐☐

OVERALL CONCERNS

6a. Are there any things shown on television which concern you at all?
CODE ONE ONLY.

Yes 06
No ..... 07 ➔ Q7

6b. What sorts of things concern you? What else?
DO NOT READ. PROBE TO NO. CODE ALL MENTIONS.

Bad language 06
Nudity 07
Sex scenes 08
Unacceptable moral standards 09
Violence 10
Sexism 11
Stereotyping 12
Racism 13
Privacy 14
Lack of fairness/balance/accuracy 15
Lack of variety/choice 16
Not enough NZ content 17
Too much American content 18
Too much British content 19
Too much sport 20
Too many infomercials 21
Too many advertisements 22

Too many game shows	23
Alcohol advertising/sponsorship	24
Tabloid/sleazy journalism	25
Unprofessional journalism	26
Real TV/Reality TV	27
Other (specify) _____	
_____	
_____	

VIOLENCE

7. I am going to show you a series of cards with descriptions of items from television and radio programmes. Unless we say otherwise, when we talk about TV throughout this survey we mean channels 1, 2, 3, and 4, and Prime TV as well as local channels. We don't mean videos and unless we say we don't mean Pay TV.

   I would like you to indicate how acceptable or unacceptable each item is to you **personally**, using this card with the scale on it.
   SHOW RATING SCALE CARD

   SHOW SCENARIO CARD B
   This card is about certain scenes on television. Using the scale, how acceptable or unacceptable, would you **personally** find the first scenario?
   OBTAIN RATING FOR ALL SCENARIOS.

	Tot Acc	Fair Acc	Neither	Fair Unacc	Tot Unacc	DK
1. An action movie on television with a close up scene showing a young man being severely beaten by a group of men. You feel the scene is **not really important** to the story. The programme is screened **before 8:30pm.**	1	2	3	4	5	9
2. An action movie on television with a close up scene showing a young man being severely beaten by a group of men. You feel the scene is **not really important** to the story. The programme is screened **after 8:30pm.**	1	2	3	4	5	9
3. An action movie on television with a close up scene showing a young man being severely beaten by a group of men. You feel the scene is **important** to the story. The programme is screened **after 8:30pm.**	1	2	3	4	5	9
4. An action movie on television with a close up scene showing a young man being severely beaten by a group of men. You feel the scene is **important** to the story. The programme is screened **before 8:30pm.**	1	2	3	4	5	9

TABLE CONTINUES

	Tot Acc	Fair Acc	Neither	Fair Unacc	Tot Unacc	DK
5. An action movie on television with a close up scene showing two men severely beating each other. You feel the scene is **important** to the story. The programme is screened **before 8:30pm.**	1	2	3	4	5	9
6. A comedy showing two men hitting each other in a fight. There is no blood and no one gets seriously hurt. The programme is screened **before 8:30pm.**	1	2	3	4	5	9
7. A news item, reporting cruelty by soldiers during a civil war, includes close-ups of soldiers beating civilians. The news item appears on the early evening news.	1	2	3	4	5	9
8. A news item, reporting cruelty by soldiers during a civil war, includes close-ups of soldiers beating civilians. The news item appears on the late evening news after 8.30pm.	1	2	3	4	5	9
9. On **Pay TV** there is an action movie on television with a close up scene showing a young man being severely beaten by a group of men. You feel the scene is **not really important** to the story. The programme is screened **before 8:30pm.**	1	2	3	4	5	9

DISCRIMINATION

8. Now we are going to look at another aspect of what is shown on television or heard on radio. Again we would like you to score each of the scenarios using the same rating scale. How acceptable would you find this first scenario? And the next?
SHOW SCENARIO CARD C. OBTAIN RATING FOR ALL SCENARIOS.

	Tot Acc	Fair Acc	Neither	Fair Unacc	Tot Unacc	DK
1. An item on the early evening television news shows an ethnic group as poor, uneducated criminals.	1	2	3	4	5	9
2. A news programme broadcasts the ethnicity of a man wanted by police, to help identify him.	1	2	3	4	5	9
3. A joke about an ethnic group is made by a radio announcer on a breakfast show.	1	2	3	4	5	9
4. A joke about a woman driver is made by a radio announcer on a breakfast show.	1	2	3	4	5	9
5. A joke about homosexuals is made by a radio announcer on a breakfast show.	1	2	3	4	5	9
6. A joke about an ethnic group is made by a TV presenter.	1	2	3	4	5	9

PRIVACY AND FAIRNESS

9. Now we would like you to score each of the scenarios on this card using the rating scale.
SHOW SCENARIO CARD D. OBTAIN RATING FOR ALL SCENARIOS.

	Tot Acc	Fair Acc	Neither	Fair Unacc	Tot Unacc	DK
1. A radio talk-back host hangs up on a caller without allowing them to finish their point.	1	2	3	4	5	9
2. A news programme shows the funeral of a victim in a much publicised murder case, and shows close-ups of family members.	1	2	3	4	5	9
3. A news programme shows the funeral of a victim in a much publicised murder case, but does not include close-ups of family members.	1	2	3	4	5	9
4. A news programme shows the funeral of a well known public figure and show close-ups of the family at the funeral.	1	2	3	4	5	9
5. A documentary about strip clubs is filmed using hidden cameras. A member of the public is filmed entering a strip club without knowing he is being filmed.	1	2	3	4	5	9
6. A documentary about strip clubs is filmed using hidden cameras. A politician is filmed entering a strip club without knowing he is being filmed.	1	2	3	4	5	9
7. As a practical joke, a radio announcer calls someone, mentions their name, and tells them their partner is having an affair.	1	2	3	4	5	9
8. A television reporter tries to interview a politician involved in a political controversy as he or she leaves home first thing in the morning.	1	2	3	4	5	9

SEX/NUDITY

10. We now have a card about sex and nudity. How would you score each of these items using the rating scale.
SHOW SCENARIO CARD E. OBTAIN RATING FOR ALL SCENARIOS.

	Tot Acc	Fair Acc	Neither	Fair Unacc	Tot Unacc	DK
1. A scene in a television movie showing a man and woman in bed having sexual intercourse. You can see the top halves of their naked bodies. You feel the scene is **not really important to the story**. The programme is shown **before 8:30pm.**	1	2	3	4	5	9
2. A scene in a television movie showing a man and woman in bed having sexual intercourse. You can see the top halves of their naked bodies. You feel the scene is **not really important** to the story. The programme is shown **after 8:30pm.**	1	2	3	4	5	9
3. A scene in a television movie showing a man and woman in bed having sexual intercourse. You can see the top halves of their naked bodies. You feel the scene is **important to the story**. The programme is shown **after 8:30pm.**	1	2	3	4	5	9
4. A scene in a television movie showing a man and woman in bed having sexual intercourse. You can see the top halves of their naked bodies. You feel the scene is **important to the story**. The programme is shown **before 8:30pm.**	1	2	3	4	5	9
5. A scene in a television movie showing a man and woman in bed having sexual intercourse. **They are under the covers.** You feel the scene is **important to the story**. The programme is shown **before 8:30pm.**	1	2	3	4	5	9
6. A scene in a television movie showing a man and woman passionately kissing. You feel the scene is **important to the story.** The programme is shown **after 8:30pm.**	1	2	3	4	5	9
7. A scene in a television movie showing two men passionately kissing. You feel the scene is **important to the story.** The programme is shown **after 8:30pm.**	1	2	3	4	5	9
8. A scene in a television movie showing two men in bed having sex. You can see the top halves of their naked bodies. You feel the scene is **important to the story.** The programme is shown **after 8:30pm.**	1	2	3	4	5	9

TABLE CTD OVERLEAF...

	Tot Acc	Fair Acc	Neither	Fair Unacc	Tot Unacc	DK
9. A scene in a television drama showing teenage boys taking off their clothes and swimming naked. The programme is shown **before 8:30pm.**	1	2	3	4	5	9
10. A medical programme about the human body showing both males and females naked.	1	2	3	4	5	9
11. An item in a television news programme about corruption in the sex industry includes night-club scenes showing top-less female strippers performing. The item is on the early evening news.	1	2	3	4	5	9
12. A DJ on a daytime radio show holds a phone-in competition asking callers to think of as many slang words as they can which describe the act of sexual intercourse.	1	2	3	4	5	9
13. A scene in a movie on Pay TV showing a man and woman in bed having sexual intercourse. You can see everything. You feel the scene is **important to the story.** The programme is shown **after 8:30pm.**	1	2	3	4	5	9
14. A scene in a movie on Pay TV showing a man and woman in bed having sexual intercourse. You can see the top halves of their naked bodies. You feel the scene is **important to the story.** The programme is shown **before 8:30pm.**	1	2	3	4	5	9

LANGUAGE

SHOWCARD F

11. Now we are going to look at the type of language heard on television. On these cards are a number of words, which some people find acceptable and some don't.

I would like you to imagine each word being used in a television movie, in a scene where police have chased and are arresting a criminal. The criminal is swearing at the police. The television movie is screened after 8.30pm.

HAND RESPONDENT SORTING SHEET

I'd like you to sort these cards onto this sheet to show how acceptable or unacceptable you personally feel each word is in this situation.

SHUFFLE SMALL CARDS AND HAND RESPONDENT ALL CARDS. WHEN FINISHED GET RESPONDENT TO READ THE CODE FOR EACH OF THE WORDS IN EACH CATEGORY (EG TOTALLY ACCEPTABLE) SO THAT YOU CAN CODE EACH WORD IN COL B OF TABLE OVERLEAF.

		COL B					
		Tot Acc	Fair Acc	Neither	Fair Unacc	Tot Unacc	DK
06	arsehole	1	2	3	4	5	9
07	balls	1	2	3	4	5	9
08	bastard	1	2	3	4	5	9
09	bitch	1	2	3	4	5	9
10	bloody	1	2	3	4	5	9
11	bollocks	1	2	3	4	5	9
12	bugger	1	2	3	4	5	9
13	bullshit	1	2	3	4	5	9
14	cock	1	2	3	4	5	9
15	crap	1	2	3	4	5	9
16	cunt	1	2	3	4	5	9
17	dick	1	2	3	4	5	9
18	fuck	1	2	3	4	5	9
19	God	1	2	3	4	5	9
20	Jesus Christ	1	2	3	4	5	9
21	mother fucker	1	2	3	4	5	9
22	nigger	1	2	3	4	5	9
23	piss	1	2	3	4	5	9
24	prick	1	2	3	4	5	9
25	shit	1	2	3	4	5	9
26	wanker	1	2	3	4	5	9
27	whore	1	2	3	4	5	9

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES

12. Who do you feel should be **mostly** responsible for what children watch on TV?
CODE ONE ONLY

parents/caregivers	6
TV broadcasters	7
children	8
don't know	4

13. What responsibilities, if any, do you feel parents have towards what their children watch?
DO NOT READ. CODE ALL MENTIONS.

know what children are watching	06
check programme ratings	07
shouldn't let children watch violent programmes	08
shouldn't let children watch sexually explicit programmes	09
shouldn't let children watch programmes with bad language/swearing	10
control what time children watch TV	11
don't let children watch programmes on after 8.30pm	12
other (specify) _____	
none	03

14. What responsibilities, if any, do you feel TV broadcasters have towards children?
DO NOT READ. CODE ALL MENTIONS.

censor/rate programmes	06
show warnings before offending/inappropriate programmes	07
put offending programmes on at appropriate times	08
put offending programmes on after 8.30pm	09
don't show offending programmes at inappropriate times	10
don't show offending programmes before 8.30pm	11
other (specify) _____	
none	03

15. How do TV broadcasters help parents decide whether or not a programme is suitable for children? What else?
DO NOT READ. PROBE TO NO. CODE ALL MENTIONS

warnings before programmes	06
ratings/classifications of programmes	07
by the time of day the programme is on	08
put certain programmes on after 8:30pm	09→**Q17**
other (specify) _____	
none	03

16. Programmes which broadcasters believe are not suitable for children are shown after 8:30pm on TV. Before I mentioned it, had you seen or heard anything about broadcasters screening some programmes after a certain time for this reason?
CODE ONE ONLY

yes	6
no	7
don't know	4

17. Sometimes TV broadcasters use classification symbols and warnings on programme content. Have you noticed this information before?
CODE ONE ONLY

yes	6
no	7
don't know	4

SHOW CARD G

18. Some people pay attention to the classification symbols and warnings on programme content, and others don't. Using this card, how frequently, if at all, do you **personally** use this information to help decide whether you or children in your care, will watch a particular programme?
CODE ONE ONLY

never	6
rarely	7
sometimes	8
frequently	9
don't know	4

19. Can you name any of the classifications which are used to give advice on programme content?
CODE ALL MENTIONS ONLY IF EXACT CLASSIFICATION LETTERS ARE GIVEN. OTHERWISE CODE VERBATIM IN OTHER.

AO	06
G	07
PGR	08
Other (specify) _____	
_____	
none	03

DEMOGRAPHICS

To finish, I have a few questions about yourself to make sure we speak to a variety of people in New Zealand.

20a. What is your occupation?
GET FULL DETAILS. PROBE INDUSTRY/POSITION/JOB & WRITE IN

_____

20b. What is the occupation of the main income earner in this household?
GET FULL DETAILS. PROBE INDUSTRY/POSITION/JOB & WRITE IN. IF RETIRED, ASK WHAT WAS LAST JOB. IF SELF, TICK BOX

_____ ☐

SHOW CARD H

21. Which of the following on this card best describes this household?
CODE ONE ONLY

Living on my own	06*
A group flatting together	07
A young couple with no children	08
A family with mainly school aged or younger children at home	09
A family with mainly adult children at home	10
An older couple with no children at home	11
Other	12

22. Are you personally responsible for the care of any children aged 14 years or younger?

yes	06
no	07
don't know	04

SHOW CARD I

23. Which of the following age groups on this card do you come into?
CODE ONE ONLY

15 to 19 years	06
20 to 24 years	07
25 to 29 years	08
30 to 34 years	09
35 to 39 years	10
40 to 44 years	11
45 to 49 years	12
50 to 54 years	13
55 to 59 years	14
60 to 64 years	15
65 to 69 years	16
70 to 74 years	17
75 to 79 years	18
80 years and over	19

SHOW CARD J

24. Which of the following ethnic groups do you belong to?
CODE EACH MENTIONED.

New Zealand European	06
Maori	07
Samoan	08
Cook Island Maori	09
Tongan	10
Niuean	11
Tokelauan	12
Fijian	13
Other Pacific Island	14
Chinese	15
Indian	16
Other **(NOT SPECIFIED)**	02

SHOW CARD K

25. What is your highest level of education?
CODE ONE ONLY.

A. No school qualification	06
B. School certificate in one or more subjects	07
C. Sixth form certificate or university entrance in one or more subjects	08
D. Higher School Certificate or Higher Leaving Certificate	09
E. University Bursary or Scholarship	10
F. Technical or trade qualifications	11
G. University/tertiary qualifications	12
H. Other **(SPECIFY)**	...
...	...
...	...

SHOW CARD L

26a. Now a few questions about income. First, annual personal income before tax. Which of the groups on this card does your personal income from all sources fall into?
CODE ONE ONLY IN COL A

26b. **CHECK BACK TO Q21. IF LIVING ON THEIR OWN (CODE 6*) → CODE SAME AS FOR Q26A AND GO TO Q27. OTHERWISE ASK:**
And which of these groups does your combined household income fall into, including yours and your partner's or anyone else who lives with you?
CODE ONE ONLY IN COL B.

		COL A PERSONAL	COL B COMBINED
A.	Up to and including $10,000	06	06
B.	Over $10,000 to $20,000	07	07
C.	Over $20,000 to $30,000	08	08
D.	Over $30,000 to $40,000	09	09
E.	Over $40,000 to $50,000	10	10
F.	Over $50,000 to $70,000	11	11
G.	Over $70,000 to $80,000	12	12
H.	Over $80,000	13	13
	Don't know	04	04
	Refused	05	05

27. And how many people aged 15+ are living in this household?
CODE TWO DIGITS _____

28. Finally, do you have any additional comments you would like to make about television or radio broadcasting standards which have not already been covered?
WRITE IN BELOW.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

CLOSE:

That's the end of the survey. Thank you very much for your time. As I said before I'm from Consumer Link, a market research company. If you have any questions please feel free to call my supervisor. (GIVE RESPONDENT SUPERVISOR'S NAME AND PHONE NUMBER IF REQUESTED)

"I certify that I have conducted this interview in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Market Research Society Code of Practice and in accordance with the instructions from Consumer Link. I have thoroughly checked the questionnaire and it is complete in all respects."

INTERVIEWER'S SIGNATURE :_____

WRITE IN:
Respondent's Name: _____

DON'T ASK BUT WRITE IN:
Respondent's Address: _____

_____

_____

The Authors

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Broadcasting standards issues – such as the use of offensive language, the portrayal of sex and nudity, and screen violence – engender passionate debate. This monograph reports the findings of a 1999 national survey commissioned by the Broadcasting Standards Authority on public attitudes towards broadcasting standards.

The monograph first presents the findings of the focus group research, which explored the language of participants when they talked about broadcasting standards. The findings of the national survey are then analysed, including a statistical breakdown of the main variables of age, sex and parental status.

Five cluster profiles emerge – Moral Custodians, Nosy Parkers, Mainlanders, Urbane Young and New Lads – each showing distinct socio-demographic characteristics in the context of these New Zealanders' solicited attitudes towards broadcasting standards.

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