

Paul

**Balance and Fairness
In Broadcasting News
(1985-1994)**

by

Judy McGregor
Margie Comrie
Massey University

This research was funded by the Broadcasting Standards Authority
and New Zealand on Air (Irirangi Te Motu).

April 1995

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research would not have been possible without the support of the Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Business Studies at Massey University. Thanks are due to Nigel Lowe for tireless work in the communications laboratory, to Dr Ted Drawneek of Computing Services for statistical analysis and advice in questionnaire design, to Marianne Tremaine and John Harvey for proofreading and support, to Christine Smith for cheerful secretarial assistance, and Louise Allen for bargraphs and budgets. Professor Philip Dewe has enthusiastically supported the research project, advised in questionnaire design and read drafts of the research report. A special thank you to Joanne TeAwa. This research is as much hers as it is ours.

This research was funded by the Broadcasting Standards Authority and New Zealand on Air (Irirangi Te Motu).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page No.
Summary of Main Findings	1
Chapter One: The Fairness Factor	4
1. Scope of the research project	4
2. The Fairness Factor	5
2.1 Introduction	5
2.2 Political tradition: shooting the messenger	6
2.3 The New Zealand context	7
2.3.1 The television journalist's viewpoint	8
2.4 Recent political criticism	9
2.5 Parliamentary questions relating to broadcast news	13
2.6 Researcher's evaluation	13
3. The Regulatory Environment	14
Chapter Two: Research Methodology	17
2.1 Introduction	17
2.2 Research questions	17
2.3 Research approach	17
2.4 Methodology	18
2.4.1 Areas of news studied	18
2.4.2 Sample	18
2.4.3 The classification of Holmes	22
2.4.4 Unit of analysis	22
2.4.5 Formulation of categories	22
2.4.6 Selection and training of coders	25
2.4.7 Reliability and validity	26
Chapter Three: Results: General	28
3.1 Introduction	28
3.2 Researchers' evaluations	28
3.3 General	28
3.3.1 Crime	29
3.3.2 Politics	29
3.3.3 Health	29
3.3.4 Maori	30

3.4	Story length	30
3.4.1	Summary	30
3.5	Geographic origin	30
3.5.1	Summary and researchers' evaluation	31
3.6	Placement of stories	32
3.7	Chit chat	32
3.8	Events orientation	32
3.9	Captions	33
3.10	Wallpaper footage and file footage of television news	34
3.10.1	Summary and researcher's evaluation	34
3.11	Type of news	34
3.11.1	Crime	34
3.11.2	Summary and researchers' evaluation	35
3.11.3	Politics	36
3.11.4	Researchers' evaluation	37
3.11.5	Health	37
3.11.6	Researchers' evaluation	37
3.11.7	Maori	38
3.11.8	Researchers' evaluation	39

Chapter Four: The Sourcing of Broadcast News 41

4.1	Introduction	41
4.2	Number of sources	42
4.3	Source identification	42
4.3.1	Summary and researchers' evaluation	44
4.4	Source speaking time	44
4.4.1	Summary and researchers' evaluation	45
4.5	Government and Opposition voices - testing incumbency	45
4.5.1	Summary and researchers' evaluation	50
4.6	Number of repeat sources	50
4.7	Overall sound quality and camera treatment for the source	51
4.8	Interviews of sources in broadcast news	51
4.9	Ethnicity of sources	52
4.9.1	Summary and researchers' evaluation	53
4.10	Gender of sources	54
4.10.1	Number of sources by gender	54
4.10.2	Gender of source by subject matter	55
4.10.3	Speaking time by gender	55
4.10.4	Summary and researchers' evaluation	56

4.11	Nature of source	56
4.11.1	Crime	57
4.11.2	Health	57
4.11.3	Politics	57
4.11.4	Maori news	58
4.12	Unsupported assertions	58
4.12.1	Researchers' evaluation	59

Chapter Five: Controversy and Other Factors Impinging on Balance and Fairness

5.1	Introduction	61
5.2	Level of understanding and whether the main claim of the story has been supported	61
5.3	Controversy and its treatment	62
5.3.1	Introduction	62
5.3.2	Amount of controversy	62
5.3.3	Amount of controversy across time	62
5.3.4	Researchers' evaluation	64
5.3.5	Inclusion of sides in controversy	64
5.3.6	Fairness of inclusion across time	66
5.3.7	Weight given to different sides in the controversy	67
5.3.8	Treatment of each side by interviewer or host	67
5.3.9	Unavailability, previous or future availability of sides in the controversy	67
5.3.10	Other stories on the controversy and their effect on balance	68
5.3.11	Summary and researchers' evaluation	69
5.4	Use of emotional language and its effects on balance	70
5.4.1	Introduction	70
5.4.2	Use of emotional language over time	71
5.4.3	Researchers' evaluation	71
5.5	Special camera techniques	72
5.6	Special audio techniques	72
5.7	The creation of synthetic experience and its effects	72
5.7.1	Summary and researchers' evaluation	73
5.8	The "piece to camera"	73
5.8.1	Introduction	73
5.8.2	Some attributes of stories containing a piece to camera	74
5.8.3	Researchers' evaluation including qualitative analysis of three individual stories	74
5.8.4	Summary and researchers' evaluation	76

	Page No.
5.9 Dealing fairly with each person	76
5.9.1 Introduction	76
5.9.2 Results of whether subjects of stories are treated justly and fairly	77
5.9.3 Summary and researchers' evaluation	78
5.10 Distinction between factual reporting and comment, opinion and analysis	78
5.10.1 Introduction	78
5.10.2 Results of the distinction between fact and opinion	78
5.10.3 Reasons for the failure to distinguish between fact and opinion	79
5.10.4 Researchers' evaluation	79
Chapter Six: Issues raised for public debate	81
6.1 Introduction	81
6.2 Trends over time	82
6.3 Changes in the subject areas of news	82
6.4 Plurality and diversity in the news	83
6.5 The 'blending' of news on television	84
6.6. Significant points for individual broadcasters	84
6.6.1 Morning Report	84
6.6.2 Television New Zealand	84
6.6.3 TV3	85
6.6.4 Mana News	85
6.7 Implications for the codes of broadcasting	85
6.8 Limitations	86
6.9 Summary	87
6.10 Future research directions	87
References	88
Appendix: Coding Questionnaire Document	91

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

	Page No.
Table 1 Sample dates for television	20
Table 2 Sample dates for Morning Report	21
Table 3 Sample dates for Mana News	21
Table 4 Subject area of news by broadcaster	29
Table 5 Where stories originated	31
Table 6 What prompted the story?	33
Table 7 What is the story concerned with?	33
Table 8 Number of sources and average number per story	41
Table 9 Identification of sources both cited and speaking for themselves	43
Table 10 Identification of sources speaking only for themselves	43
Table 11 Identification of sources cited only	43
Table 12 Source speaking time for Government and Opposition	46
Graph 1 TV One news: Government and Opposition speaking time	48
Graph 2 Holmes: Government and Opposition speaking time	48
Graph 3 TV3 features: Government and Opposition speaking time	48
Graph 4 TV3 news: Government and Opposition speaking time	49
Graph 5 Morning Report news and features: Government and Opposition speaking time	49
Graph 6 Mana News: Government and Opposition speaking time	49
Table 13 Ethnicity of sources - excluding "unknown" category	53
Table 14 Gender of source	54
Table 15 The gender of identifiable sources	54
Table 16 Male sources for different subject areas	55
Table 17 Total speaking time and average speaking time for males and females	55

Table 18	Percentage of stories containing controversy	62
Table 19	TVNZ: Percentage of stories containing controversy	63
Table 20	Morning Report: Percentage of stories containing controversy	63
Table 21	TV3: Percentage of stories containing controversy	64
Table 22	Mana News: Percentage of stories containing controversy	64
Table 23	Fairness of inclusion of sides in controversy for all stories	65
Table 24	Fairness of inclusion of sides in the controversy for each programme	65
Table 25	Percentage of stories unfair in terms of inclusion across time	66
Table 26	Indications of unavailability, future and past availability in stories coded as unfair	68
Table 27	Other stories in the controversy and their effect on balance	68
Table 28	Percentage of stories containing emotional language	70
Table 29	Percentage of stories where emotional language causes imbalance	71
Table 30	Percentage of stories containing emotional language across time	71
Table 31	TVNZ: percentage of stories found to be unjust or unfair	77
Table 32	TVNZ: percentage unclear distinction between fact and opinion	79

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

- * Of the total of 915 stories sampled across four broadcasters (TVNZ, TV3, Morning Report and Mana News) 39% were political stories, 25.8% related to crime and 16% were health stories. Of the 176 Maori stories, 126 were broadcast by Mana News and coded as Maori stories. Only 50 Maori stories were broadcast by the other three broadcasters taken together. Maori stories formed 19.2% of the sample.
- * Increases and decreases in the subject areas sampled were recorded during the years 1985-1994. These changes are calculated by comparing the four subject areas with each other and do not reflect proportional increases within bulletins over time. The changes are:
 - * The amount of crime news in stories sampled increased for television news from 18% to 41% for TV One news (1985-1994) and from 40.9% to 53.6% for TV3 news (1990-1994).
 - * The number of political stories in the sample has decreased markedly across the years studied for Morning Report, TV One news and TV3 news.
 - * Health news has generally increased as a proportion of the stories sampled for Morning Report, TV One news and TV3 news.
 - * Low numbers of Maori-related news stories were reported for Morning Report, TVNZ and TV3 with no evidence of an increase over time.
- * Average story length in the stories sampled has been relatively stable for TV One. It has decreased for TV3 news and Mana News and increased for Morning Report.
- * Sixty per cent of crime stories sampled relate to a crime incident or to court reports and court reporting shows a general increase in television news.
- * A total of 2025 sources were used in the 915 stories coded ranging from no sources to nine sources in a story.
- * Across all programmes sampled, except for Mana News, the number of sources per story has tended to rise.
- * Forty five percent of stories used one source only, 25% used two sources, 15% used three sources and 15% used between four and nine sources.
- * Of the 2025 sources in the study 25.4% spoke for themselves, 34.1% were cited and 40.6% both spoke for themselves and were cited.
- * A total of 28.6% of cited sources were rated as being incompletely identified, compared with 18% for sources speaking for themselves, and 2.4% for sources who were both cited and spoke for themselves.

- * Over all the broadcasters, almost twice as many Government sources as Opposition sources spoke on air, confirming the influence of political incumbency in the news.
- * When Opposition sources spoke on air the average speaking time was shorter.
- * When sources were repeated in stories, either speaking for themselves or cited and speaking for themselves, in mainstream news programmes they were usually heard two or three times. By comparison the majority of repeated sources on Mana News were heard five to eight times.
- * Of the 2025 sources recorded 18.8% were interviewed so that questions and answers were broadcast. Of the questions put 2.5% were rated as aggressive, 45.8% were information gathering, 28.7% were fourth estate adversarial, 14.6% were neutral, 7.8% were supportive, and 0.6% were judged as weak.
- * A total of 88.5% of the questions were judged as very appropriate or appropriate in the context of the stories in which they were asked.
- * In the majority of cases (81.6%) the interviewer's tone of voice was rated neutral, 12.5% as positive and 5.6% negative.
- * In terms of ethnicity of sources, the study showed three of the four broadcasters relied overwhelmingly on Pakeha sources (Morning Report news 92% to Holmes 75.9%) and Maori sources varied from 5.3% (Morning Report) to 19.1% (Holmes). Pacific Island sources were seldom evident in the stories sampled.
- * The sources of news stories sampled revealed a strong gender bias with 80.6% of sources male and 19.4% female. The broadcaster displaying the greatest gender imbalance was Morning Report news at 89.4%. At the other end of the scale TV3 features carried 66.7% male sources.
- * The speaking time is shorter for female sources than for male sources over all the broadcasters except TV3 features.
- * A total of 93% of stories sampled were rated as either very clear (47.8%) or clear (45.2%) in terms of the level of understanding.
- * In the vast majority of stories (84.2%) the main claim was either fully or very fully supported.
- * Over all 21.8% of stories in the sample contained unsupported assertions and the percentage increased over the years of study for TVNZ and TV3.
- * Over a third of the news stories sampled contained controversy with Mana News least likely to broadcast stories containing controversy and TV3 features and Holmes most likely to contain controversy.
- * A general increase in stories containing controversy across time was recorded.

- * Of the stories containing controversy, 47.2% were rated as fair in terms of inclusion of relevant sides of the controversy in the story, 21.6% were judged to be neither fair nor unfair and 31.2% rated as unfair. TV3 features were judged to be most fair in terms of inclusion.
- * Almost half (47.5%) of stories containing controversy were rated as not giving equal weight to assertions in different sides of a controversy. In a total of 66.7% of Holmes' stories containing controversy, the interviewer was rated as treating sides in the controversy unequally.
- * Emotional language was coded as occurring in 33.9% of the stories overall and has generally increased over time. Emotional language occurred in 83.9% of Holmes' stories and was rated as causing an imbalance in 39.6% of the stories which used emotional language.
- * Over a third of television news stories sampled used special camera techniques and in the vast majority of cases there was no impact on balance noted by coders.
- * Very little use of special audio techniques was noted (in 53 stories only) with negligible impact on balance (rated as causing an imbalance in 8 stories).
- * Of the 553 television stories, 170 (30.7%) were coded as containing a piece to camera where reporters (generally on location) talk directly to the audience. Stories which contained a piece to camera were more likely to use emotional language, and less likely to deal fairly with everyone referred to or appearing in a story than those stories which did not contain a piece to camera.
- * Over all the stories sampled across the four broadcasters, 86.1% of stories were found to have dealt justly and fairly with every person taking part in or referred to in the story. In 13.9% of stories that was not the case.
- * A total of 47.6% of stories were coded as containing both fact and opinion, comment and analysis. In almost one third of these stories (32.7%) the coder was unable to distinguish clearly between factual reporting and the opinion.

CHAPTER ONE

THE FAIRNESS FACTOR

1. Scope of the Research Project

Funding for the research project was provided by the Broadcasting Standards Authority and New Zealand on Air. The Broadcasting Standards Authority is charged with encouraging the development and observance by broadcasters of codes of broadcasting practice and with conducting research and publishing findings on matters relating to standards in broadcasting (s21(e) and (h) of the Broadcasting Act 1989). New Zealand on Air is responsible for reflecting and developing New Zealand identity and culture by promoting programmes about New Zealand and Maori language and culture. Its interest in the research particularly related to the programmes, Morning Report and Mana News.

While the funding for the study was provided by the two bodies, no research direction was provided to the researchers. In other words, the project had no particular philosophy or policy frame of reference. The researchers began without ideological persuasion but simply with a commitment to quality broadcast journalism in whatever format the news is presented. It must be stressed that the conclusions reached from the data results presented in this report reflect the opinions of the researchers, rather than the opinions of the Broadcasting Standards Authority and New Zealand on Air.

The research project encompasses a content analysis of specific news categories of the main news bulletins of Television New Zealand's One Network News and Television Three, of Radio New Zealand's Morning Report and of Mana Maori Media's Mana News broadcast on National Radio.

The content analysis spans programmes from 1985-1994 and it measures variables in news stories such as time allocation, sources used in news stories and their affiliations, attribution of story material, geographic focus, emotive language and tone of news. This sampling frame enables discussion of frequencies, trends and any changes over time in relation to the issues of balance and fairness.

In addition to the analysis of manifest content of text in television news, an examination is made of visual cues by reference to available typologies relating to the visual elements of television. To supplement the quantitative emphasis of the research, several news stories are examined in an holistic and qualitative manner to provide contextual commentary.

As a framework for the content analysis, the research report includes an overview of media criticism which acknowledges the tradition of media criticism overseas and explores in more depth the nature and context of criticism of the news media in New Zealand since 1985. Such an overview complements, but does not duplicate, the literature review of balance, fairness and accuracy in news and current affairs previously undertaken by the Broadcasting Standards Authority. It acknowledges that much of the commentary and debate about balance and fairness in broadcasting news is expressed in negative terms, as bias. An overview of who is making the criticism, the nature of the criticism and its implications is addressed in the following section entitled *The Fairness Factor*.

The statutory, regulatory and operating environments which impact on the broadcasting organisations under study is also referred to and is reported in the section entitled *The Regulatory Environment*. Both these sections of the research report help set the scene for the content analysis. As Raboy (1992) states "the importance of the text-context relationship has become paradigmatic to media studies in the past decade."

2. The Fairness Factor

2.1 Introduction

The fairness factor in news has become an article of faith for the New Zealand public.¹ The presumption is that fairness and balance in news is a right rather than an expectation, even if definitions of fairness and balance are, at best, ill-defined and contested and, at worst, downright fuzzy. Even journalistic consensus for these standards remains elusive. Fairness and balance in the news are highly desirable, even if no-one can define them to the satisfaction of everyone.

This helps explain why politicians, public officials, commentators and members of the public take issue with the news media when they find themselves in disagreement with either some aspect of news content or of media performance. The fairness factor enjoys its own lexicon in the swirl of debate about the role of the mass media in a democratic society. Terms such as "unbiased", "objective", "impartial", "both sides of the story", "dispassionate", "lack of prejudice" are used synonymously with balance and fairness.

The concepts of balance and fairness in the news have always been caught in the tension between what Williams (1957) calls the two major themes in the development of journalism. These are the role of the news media as "a weapon of freedom, a sword in the hands of those fighting old or new tyrannies, the one indispensable piece of ordnance in the armoury of democracy (p.5)" and the news media as a "vehicle of entertainment, a medium for satisfying the common human appetite for gossip, an answer to the pleasure in news, not as an aid to forming opinion but for its own sake" (p.6). The dilemma posed by the "high" and "low" dual roles of the news media has, of course, always existed. What makes it more acute for modern broadcast journalism is the intersection of these dual roles with the broad sweep of technological innovation, complex media market competition, and a changed socio-political climate.

Lurking behind these factors is a potent challenge to the pre-eminence of what have been called "old" news formats by the "new" news--talkback and interactive media formats. Increasingly politicians and officials are choosing to make strategic use of electronic populism and going directly to the public as a means of side-stepping the traditional role of the news media in keeping politicians honest and officials accountable. This is subtly influencing the nature of news.

¹ The fairness factor was the title of the Fall 1992 issue of the *Media Studies Journal* published by the Freedom Forum Media Studies Center at Columbia University in the City of New York.

2.2 Political tradition: shooting the messenger

While the nature of news may be undergoing change, one theme endures in discussion of fairness in news. As Altschull (1992) states, "the messenger has always caught hell for bringing bad news." Criticism of the news media is as old as the news itself. And it is primarily politicians who keep the tradition alive. Altschull states, "political leaders from Genghis Khan to Napoleon to Gorbachev to Reagan to Clinton have always been accused of using their media lapdogs to sway the public and popular support. Metternich made the point for all time when he said that the press in Napoleon's pocket was worth 3,000 men (p.2)."

The tradition of political criticism of journalists has been chronicled by Goldstein (1989) in his book *Killing the Messenger*.

The view that journalists are biased and slant the news was articulated by US President Theodore Roosevelt in 1906 when he used the description "muckrakers". (Goldstein, *Killing the Messenger*, pp.53ff). At the core of the argument, Goldstein says, is the view that journalists are unhelpful, that their adversarial posture becomes destructive, perhaps unpatriotic, and that they are overly preoccupied with the negative aspects of life.

Roosevelt concedes that "the men with the muckrakes are often indispensable to the well-being of society" - but only if they know when to stop. He warns against "hysterical sensationalism", arguing it is likely to invite a reaction "which is sure to tell powerfully in favour of the unscrupulous scoundrel who really ought to be attacked, who ought to be exposed....." Goldstein sums it up thus: *the excesses of the contemporary press, with its preoccupation with the negative aspects of American life, is contrary to the public interest* (pp.55-56).

Or as Roosevelt put it: "There is filth on the floor, and it must be scraped up with the muckrake; and there are times and places where this service is the most needed of all the services that can be performed. But the man who never does anything else, who never thinks or speaks or writes save of his feats with the muckrake, speedily becomes, not a help to society, not an incitement to good, but one of the most potent forces of evil" (p.57).

Goldstein notes that Roosevelt, in his speech, failed to identify a single reporter or story in support of his point. He also notes that the term muckraker was to be embraced by journalists as a badge of distinction.

In 1969, US vice president Spiro Agnew also coined a memorable phrase when he called journalists "nattering nabobs of negativism" (p.53). In Goldstein's view, Agnew's fundamental mistake was to treat the media as a monolith when, in fact, in the US at least there is a wide range of points of view across the ideological spectrum. Agnew's Des Moines speech, and subsequent follow up speeches, "inalterably changed the way the media was viewed and the way the media viewed itself", says Goldstein (p.64). For he raised the core issues of credibility, fairness and bias - issues which, says Goldstein, are still in the forefront of the debate today. In his speech Agnew spoke of "querulous criticism" of a speech President Richard Nixon made about Vietnam by self-appointed analysts. He said there was a little group of men in the US TV networks who had a free hand in selecting, presenting and interpreting the issues (p.67), and that given the nature of the medium "a raised eyebrow, an inflection of the voice, a caustic remark" could raise doubts about the veracity of an official or the wisdom of government policy (p.68).

In Agnew's view the wall that should exist between news and comment had been demolished so far as the TV networks were concerned (p.73). He argued: "We would never trust such power over public opinion in the hands of an elected government - it is time we questioned it in the hands of a small and unelected elite. The great networks have dominated America's airwaves for decades; the people are entitled to a full accounting of their stewardship. This is unfortunate, in that tough, knowledgeable criticism is even more essential in a period when the media have come to so dominate our culture."

2.3 The New Zealand context

While shooting the messenger is an enduring political past-time critical introspection is not a routine ritual for journalists. Goldstein states, "contemporary journalists have not shown any great appetite for self-analysis..." (ibid, p.xi). In the New Zealand context commentators such as the principal researchers (Comrie & McGregor, 1992) and others such as Edwards (1992) have noted the irony that the news media which closely scrutinise the performance of officials and institutions are not themselves properly self-critical. Comrie and McGregor (1992) state:

A thin-skinned reaction to complaint and a general tendency to minimize responsibility for their own deficiencies is a media characteristic. Journalists have a reputation for dishing out bad news, but possess an inability to take it in return. In addition, the news media are in a unique position to massage their own image as the self appointed watchdogs of society (p.9-10).

What debate there is about the news media in New Zealand which impinges on the fairness factor, is left primarily to politicians and a handful of academic media critics and media columnists. The contribution from practitioners to the debate is largely reactive and often defensive. The discussion contained in the *Power and Responsibility* collection, published by the Broadcasting Standards Authority after a 1994 conference looking at the balance broadcasters must strike, for example, comes mainly from academics, with only a thin contribution from media practitioners.

In that collection Trevor Henry (1994), manager of current affairs for Radio New Zealand, is adamant that so far as his organisation is concerned, it has no editorial position on any issue (Power and Responsibility, p.93). But at the same time, he writes of the chilling effect of government complaints about election-year news coverage. A "welter" of such complaints, says Henry, "served to make us pause and examine what we were doing. We were able to satisfy ourselves that we were operating responsibly. Messages went out to staff to maintain the standards of their work" (p.93).

Television news, and the notion of perceived decline in standards, has been the main combat arena in debate about balance and fairness in the news. Edwards (1992), writing of TV news in *Whose News?*, argues TV is failing to present news in a neutral or disinterested way, but rather has given way to sympathy, prejudice and drama (p.17). He blames the deregulation and competition forced on the industry by the politicians and calls (p.20) for a return to BBC-style TV news, which he characterises as low key, authoritative and neutral.

Winter (1994), also lays the blame for the current state of affairs at the feet of the politicians, saying MPs should be called to account for deciding that TVNZ should function as a cash cow for the state, not as a public good (p.154). She argues that commercial imperatives have compromised and marginalised journalistic values in TVNZ's news culture (p.148). The

debate over standards was "little more than a battle of grand theologies between TVNZ news executives and their critics". (p.145) It had generated more heat than light and was currently stalemated. According to Winter, market pressures are mitigating against achievement of any equitable balance between TV as a public service and the industry's commercial objectives (p.146).

Atkinson (1994), calls for "active political intervention" to restore TV news to its previous more balanced state (p.67). A good place to start, he suggests, is with the Birt-Jay critique, which sees the journalist as a civic educator. A practical expression of this is the employment of what he calls more "context" for major stories. He cites Ruth Harley, executive director of NZ on Air, as suggesting the reason for the decline in the ratings of TV news is because people are tiring of a morselised diet of crime, disaster, war and macho sports coverage (p.65). If she's right, says Atkinson, now might be the time to revisit the existing news and current affairs model employed by TVNZ.

2.3.1 The television journalist's viewpoint

By and large contemporary television journalists working in the field in New Zealand have remained silent about the evolving nature of their craft. It has been left to a handful of news executives to conduct the dialogue over broadcast news. New Zealand television news clearly has not been immune from international trends in electronic news which has seen an increased focus on entertainment and populist criteria in news value judgements affecting not only the presentation but also the content of news. TVNZ acknowledges a debt from the United States, Canada and Australian relation to the 1989 changes in news presentation (Cutler, 1989). In terms of content there have been similar changes overseas. Surette (1992) notes the increase in television crime news in United States, for example, as a proportion of the news broadcast.

American academic and TVNZ consultant trainer, Shook (1989) stresses the craft of the picture story and the special values of photo-journalists. Shook says the camera and microphone can put viewers at the scene of news events helping them experience something of the events:

Visual storytelling is thus among the most experiential forms of news communication, and in experienced hands it can be one of the most compelling forms of the storytelling art (Shook, p.1).

Paul Cutler, quoted in 1989, when he was executive director of the evening news bulletins and the Paul Holmes show, states there will "always be a bias towards a good picture on television as opposed to what we might call a worthy story". Often, he says, television news will decide not to do a story because it's the kind of story that would sit better on page six of the *Herald*. "We say, "what pictures have we got for this story?" (Campbell, 1989, p.21).

A typical journalist will dismiss the "tabloid" label given to some television news, saying television covers the same subjects as the main metropolitan newspapers. Television journalists frequently believe criticism comes mainly from newspaper journalists and academics who know little about electronic media. They believe visual and audio tools to heighten the impact of stories should be exploited, or the potential of the medium would be wasted.

A senior producer for TV3 Current Affairs, Slater (1994), believes journalists are guided by their own ethics and sense of what is fair or balanced rather than the Broadcasting Act or the codes of practice. He adds that throughout the process of selection, recording, scripting and editing "there are so many eyes that seek bias, inaccuracy and bad taste".

Broadcasters are not some sort of evil machine dedicated to bringing down governments, running politicians out of office or intimidating unsuspecting members of the public through misuse of the medium. We just want to let as many punters out there know what is going on in their country and around the world. We also help our station sell advertising for cash.

Hypothetically imagine what would happen if there were no regulation. Are our news bulletins suddenly going to be full of breasts, buttocks, blood and gore? Of course not. Viewers would simply turn off or change channels (p. 127).

Television journalists believe, too, that they are closer to their audience by adopting a more visual, pacey style of presentation with a human interest focus, which mirrors overseas trends in television news. In part this belief stems from the journalists' perception of their audience as viewers in search of entertainment as much as information. As Norris (1992) states, "if you can entertain the viewer in the process of informing so much the better".

A senior television executive in an informal and unsourced interview indicated that it would be wrong to suggest TVNZ journalists prior to de-regulation ignored the audience. "But, for example, we didn't used to pay attention to researching the audience's views. Now we extensively seek out opinion through statistically valid samples about the news we offer and what the audience would like. That wasn't a preoccupation under the previous broadcasting system". This more populist view of the news is premised on the notion that what the audience wants from the news is important. What the audience wants and likes, of course, may contradict the Reithian notion of news as worthy and "good for us" as citizens exercising civic responsibilities.

The academic versus broadcasters debate about the nature of the news has been underpinned by the need for empirical data to serve as a common foundation for argument. One of the aims of this benchmark study is to contribute quantitative and qualitative research findings to move the debate forward. The extent and nature of political criticism of broadcast news in New Zealand needs to be examined. Who is making the criticism and what are they saying? Is the criticism substantive or mere politicking and how extensive is the complaint?

2.4 Recent political criticism

Some recent political criticisms of broadcasting in the New Zealand context include the following:

* Prime Minister David Lange (Auckland Sun, March 9, 1988) took legal action after talkback host Paul Holmes asked callers to speculate on whether Mr Lange had "lost his marbles". Mr Lange pulled the plug on his regular Monday morning interview with Holmes following the remark. The report went on to say the incident was "indicative of Mr Lange's ever-worsening relationship with the media". It added: "In the wake of Labour's pummelling in the opinion polls, Mr Lange has told Beehive press officers to concentrate on giving good news to journalists."

* State Owned Enterprises Minister Richard Prebble (NZ Herald June 13, 1990). In response to a Frontline programme on politics and big business, Mr Prebble accused TVNZ of suffering a "sudden and sharp deterioration in standards of fairness and objectivity". He said it was a shame that a parliamentary committee would not investigate state TV. Mr Prebble said the 6pm Network News should be renamed "the Auckland crime show", the Holmes show should be described as entertainment, and Frontline, docudrama.

* After the Tamaki by-election in 1992 Prime Minister Jim Bolger snapped at Kim Hill on air. "No one's worked harder to win the Tamaki electorate than me and the suggestion that it was despite me, I'd have to say, is a perversion of the facts of a magnitude that not even Morning Report has equalled before" (Evening Post, 4.3.99). Media adviser Michael Wall rang National Radio manager Errol Pike to point out that, if the Prime Minister was to continue to get up at 6.30am for Morning Report, some courtesy, at the very least, would be appreciated. Pike told the *Evening Post* that while the Prime Minister was dissatisfied with Morning Report in Government, "two years ago when he was in Opposition, he had some glowing things to say about Radio New Zealand. We're not here to patsy him, or anyone else. We're here to ask the hard questions." In his years in the job Pike was quoted as saying "every government has had a whack at us. The criticism is evenly balanced, so we must be doing a damned good job".

* Relations between TV3 and Prime Minister Jim Bolger were reported to have taken "a turn for the worse" (Christchurch Press, May 14, 1992) with TV3 at first being denied access to Mr Bolger's office to film his meeting with the Dalai Lama. The report quoted TV3 director of news and current affairs Rod Pederson as saying there were "outstanding conflicts over its treatment of some political coverage". It went on: "The Prime Minister's anger with TV3 has been simmering for some months. It has to do with the way serious political matters are treated on TV3's late news and entertainment programme Nightline." Then on July 28, 1992, the Press said relations between the two parties had again taken "a turn for the worse" when Mr Bolger accused TV3 political editor Bill Ralston of being irresponsible for allegedly suggesting in an interview with Radio New Zealand political editor Richard Griffin that unoccupied government buildings in Wellington could be targets for arsonists.

* Former Opposition spokesperson on broadcasting John Terris said in an interview (Dominion, June 23, 1992) that there should be a formal code of ethics covering broadcasters. "I see no evidence that Paul Holmes' opinions are any more worthy than those of the average dustman, or my maiden aunt," he said.

"The advent of tabloid television, with all its undeniable excesses such as the abuse of privacy and heavy-handed editorialising, is designed purely to keep people from watching the competing channels. It could be argued that governments of the past are to blame by decreeing that we should have three channels in the first place and by restricting revenue by holding the licence fee, but the broadcasters have always argued that they should be entitled to freedom and independence, so legislated codes of practice have always been a no-no.

"At their own insistence, the broadcasters have been left to devise their own. They have not done so. Broadcasting have standards set out in their act, and various management rules, but no code of ethics as such. This is a very odd situation for a professional body with important public responsibilities. Furthermore, the Broadcasting Standards Authority, which is supposed to be our watchdog in matters of this kind, is, from my experience, not interested in doing anything about it."

* Social Welfare Minister Jenny Shipley (Christchurch Press, July 14, 1992): TV is a "diet of garbage" which encourages violence in children. TV values, says Mrs Shipley, "saturate and distort our views of the world and human relationships". What's required, according to the minister, is social policy, for some response is needed due to how TV portrays the news. "It will require proactive strategies of choice and they are deserving of public debate in an intelligent way."

* Mr Prebble again (NZ Herald, October 28 1993): Mr Prebble was reported as saying TVNZ was trivialising the election campaign in its news coverage. He went on: "TVNZ claims most New Zealanders get their news from their News at Six. "If this is true, it's frightening. "I do not have much time for Winston Peters, but it is wrong that the biggest coverage of his campaign was when Luke Donnelly disrupted the NZ First meeting at Gisborne. "I feel likewise about our Prime Minister. "TVNZ has said to every nutter in New Zealand, if you want to be on the news at 6pm, go to one of Mr Bolger's walkabouts and abuse him. The ruder you are the better. Giving television coverage to a student who abuses the Prime Minister adds nothing to the campaign."

* The current Minister of Broadcasting Maurice Williamson has complained about bias by omission. In the *Power and Responsibility* collection he complained about a *Frontline* programme on the effects of the government's social and economic policies on the people of Mangere in which what he said about Government's policies was not reflected in the material broadcast. He states, "the broadcaster's decision to exclude this material left viewers with a misleading impression of the government's actual position on economic and social issues" (p.5). And he cites TVNZ's decision not to run a story on the government's decision to put Interferon, a drug required for the treatment of Hepatitis C, on the subsidised drugs list, as a "significant omission." He said, "the climax to the story they had chased for a week was not screened. They told me later that some more important items had squeezed the Interferon story out of the bulletin. That bulletin however, did find room for an item about camel racing in Kuwait" (p.5-6).

* His ministerial colleague, Bruce Cliffe, has spoken about his aim to improve the standard of news and current affairs. Mr Cliffe, the Minister responsible for TVNZ and RNZ (Evening Post, May 16, 1994) was asked whether the Government has compromised standards by ensuring television and radio become ratings-driven. In reply he said New Zealanders could not expect the standards of integrity and impartiality reached by, for example, the BBC. The price is too high - the broadcasting fee in Britain is four times that paid by New Zealanders. He said: "They're extraordinarily expensive and the public of New Zealand has got to remind itself that it's thanks unfortunately to the commercial nature of our programmes that we are able to provide a service". He admits it is a tall order for a radio station to get ratings and also provide a service. But he does not buy the argument that commercialism must equal low-quality programming in either radio or TV. "Just because you're commercial doesn't mean you've got to be vulgar, pornographic or violent. It's clearly an objective of mine to reduce levels of violence on television, to improve the news and current affairs standard, to ensure that it is at all times impartial and, of course, to deal with pornography." The aim of a news programme should be "to inform to confuse", he says. "If you come away saying that particular politician is an idiot, or that idea is wonderful, then you've been unconfused. You should be confused because life is like that." So how does he intend to achieve this, given that the law prevents ministerial interference in editorial decisions? Mr Cliffe: "Quietly. You will have already seen and you will see more steps that have been taken." Such as? "Well, they're so subtle...let's just say, however, long or short my term as minister is, at the end of the day we will see a difference, that's all. We must expect from our news services standards of reporting that we all believe in. I know many people in New Zealand have concerns about that at the moment, and so do I."

* More recent political criticism of broadcasting came from Labour leader Helen Clark. (reported in the NZ Herald, December 21, 1994). She complained to the Broadcasting Standards Authority that TVNZ's coverage of the Selwyn by-election lacked accuracy, objectivity and impartiality.

In particular she complained about TVNZ political correspondent Linda Clark and her indulgence in what Helen Clark called "editorial comment, unsourced gossip and mischievous remarks". She gave examples of five broadcast items, three of which the BSA agreed "breached a standard that news must be presented accurately, objectively and impartially". The items were broadcast on One Network News and Primetime. The BSA also said there should be "a clear distinction between what is news and what is the correspondent's interpretation of news". That could be achieved by "always sourcing factual matters and clearly attributing opinion". It found one item inaccurately stated Labour began its campaign on July 20, a second item that Ms Clark's leadership was "on notice" was not objective, and a third, that Labour candidate Marian Hobbs was "on the defensive", was neither impartial nor objective.

Shaun Brown, TVNZ's head of news and current affairs, responded in an article next to the report of Ms Clark's complaints, that journalists were often prevented for reasons of confidentiality from identifying sources. He said the BSA "may not fully understand the difficult yet vital role of a political correspondent". Brown went on: "It is clearly in the interests of politicians that much of the political process takes place behind closed doors and is then represented to the public with the best possible gloss on it. It is equally in the interests of the public that the correspondent probes behind the political facade to establish what is really happening and provide an analytical context. "It is in the public interest that informed analysis and interpretation be given, even when the source or attribution must remain confidential. "

Brown said he "noted" the BSA's desire to see facts and interpretation more clearly distinguished and would discuss this with TVNZ journalists. Other critical comment included a Christchurch Press editorial (November 12, 1992). Its theme was "Politicians, it seems, cannot resist the temptation to meddle with TV and radio", and was directed at Mike Moore. A report in the Christchurch Press, April 16, 1993, said the Minister in charge of Radio New Zealand, Warren Cooper, may have broken the law in allegedly trying to influence the content of RNZ news, according to Labour's Steve Maharey.

* A politician who has critiqued the news media in regular commentary is the Minister of Science and former Minister of Health, Simon Upton. In two columns published in 1993 in the *Dominion* (1.2.93; 2.8.93.) Upton complains of the irresistibility to journalists of "bad" news. And, "more worryingly, the replacement of carefully researched stories and discriminating analysis with unexpurgated opinions is corrosive of a democratic society. This may seem strong. After all, if we are only talking about opinions, who's worrying? The answer is that opinions quickly take on the patina of fact" (*Dominion*, February 1, 1993).

He says one of the effects of changes in the news media is that "even the journalists who supposedly ferret out the facts have to be transformed. They become in-house experts, people in the know who can hint at an intimacy with those they spy on that brings a *frisson* of dangerous living in high places right into every living room" (*Dominion*, August 2, 1993).

2.5 Parliamentary questions relating to broadcast news

A brief analysis of questions relating to broadcasting asked by politicians in the House indicates that MPs were more preoccupied with issues of local content on television - whether there was more or less of it nowadays - and the fate of the New Zealand music industry, than they were about matters of fairness or balance in the news. But there were several examples of concern about issues of news, as recorded below.

* Broadcasting Minister Jonathan Hunt (March 7, 1989), in response to a question, noted: Under Section 7 of the SOE Act, the Minister is "expressly prohibited" from giving directions to RNZ or TVNZ about their news.

* Richard Prebble (September 23, 1992): He asked Broadcasting Minister Maurice Williamson what steps he was taking to ensure TVNZ adopted a policy to cover the 1993 election "fully and fairly". Mr Williamson replied that there was no need for him to do any such thing. "Part VI of the Broadcasting Act ensures that this happens automatically."

* Jim Gerard (Nat, Rangiora-March 29, 1990), asked Broadcasting Minister Jonathan Hunt how many times government MPs had been interviewed on RNZ Morning Report and Good Morning NZ in the last six months compared with opposition MPs. Hunt replied: I am advised by RNZ that in view of the significant content of "package" items containing such interviews within overall items of which the programme diary notes do not identify the sub-content any meaningful reply...cannot be provided without research and auditioning beyond the resources of the company to undertake.

2.6 Researchers' evaluation

A review of political criticism of broadcast news indicates the criticism is not systematic, nor is it generalised. It is, however, inevitable because of the shifting and complex nature of contest between politicians and journalists. Complaint is likely to be triggered by a politician taking offence at specific coverage or non-coverage of an event or issue they are personally involved with, rather than at the fundamental nature of broadcast news. Political incumbency appears to be a factor in criticism of the fairness factor in radio and television news. While there is not a tide of complaint about broadcast news the effect of political criticism should not be under-estimated. Cocker (1992) states that "strong political leaders in New Zealand have more often than not succeeded in bringing broadcasting authorities to heel. Often they have appeared to do so with the support of the public who have been unsympathetic to the impolite questioning of leaders by upstart broadcasters" (N.Z. Herald, September 12, 1992). And the inevitability of political complaint is referred to by political scientist Bob Gregory writing in a historical context about politics and broadcasting in the years 1962-1975. He discusses the nature of independence in broadcasting and states:

Independence must be negotiated continuously, under changing circumstances, by differing and transient personalities. In the final analysis no amount of legislative or structural change, no so-called guarantees, and no amount of agreement among political parties can remove the tension that exists between public broadcasting and politicians. There is nothing sinister in this; it is simply in the nature of things that we might expect politicians-and others so motivated- to try to coerce, manipulate or influence the system to their own advantage (p.111).

3. The Regulatory Environment

Analysis of balance and fairness in news and the question of whether there has been change over time in the nature of news must acknowledge the statutory and regulatory environment in which broadcasters must operate.

In 1988 the Government announced a virtual deregulation of broadcasting. The Broadcasting Corporation of New Zealand was split into two SOEs (TVNZ and Radio New Zealand), and the Broadcasting Tribunal was abolished. Control of the licence fee money shifted from BCNZ to the Broadcasting Commission (now New Zealand on Air). Licence money was available for private television programming and a market based system for allocating radio and television frequencies was set up. The Broadcasting Standards Authority was established as a consumer grievance mechanism, although in the first instance broadcasters monitor their own standards in relation to news.

The State Enterprises Act 1986 and related legislation saw the BCNZ restructured along the following principles:

- a commercial, competitive orientation, with managers held accountable for performance;

- competitive neutrality with the private sector. That is, publicly owned broadcasters should not have any advantages or disadvantages vis-a-vis private broadcasters;

- separate contracting by the state for delivery of social objectives;

- the separation of policy advice and regulatory responsibilities from commercial activities (Steering Committee Report, 1988, p.25).

Commercial considerations are now paramount. Section 4(1) of the SOE Act says "The principal objective of every State enterprise shall be to operate as a successful business". To this end an enterprise is required to be: "profitable and efficient", "a good employer" and to exhibit "a sense of social responsibility".

- TVNZ interprets these requirements to mean the company must be market-led, competitive, profitable and foster New Zealand cultural identity although this is not explicit (TVNZ, 1991, p.23).

The comparative weight of the "social responsibility" requirement has been the subject of court action, with the latest decision arousing some concern. In September 1993 the Court of Appeal held that the stipulation that SOEs exhibit a sense of social responsibility was unenforceable by official review or civil action (Taggart, 1993). Taggart, who questions the decision, says it runs counter to several High Court decisions, ignores the distinctive "public" features of SOEs "making it more plausible to view them as no different from private companies" (p.355). Currently several Cabinet portfolios impact on broadcasting, the Minister of Broadcasting and the Minister in charge of TVNZ and Radio New Zealand. In addition, the Minister of Finance is a shareholding minister.

Self-regulation is the guiding philosophy of the standards regime for New Zealand broadcasting. In the case of both radio and television news, broadcasters enjoy a self-regulatory regime which is underpinned by statutory requirements and backed by the

statutory body, the Broadcasting Standards Authority. The Minister of Broadcasting Maurice Williamson (1994) states, "broadcasters are, in the first instance, responsible for maintaining standards. This gives them a vested interest because there is a risk that they will lose this responsibility if it is not wisely exercised" (p.7).

With respect to programme standards the Broadcasting Act 1989 states that under s4(1)(d)- Every broadcaster is responsible for maintaining in its programmes and their presentation, standards which are consistent with 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.

Broadcasters also need to maintain standards consistent with the approved codes of broadcasting practice. Separate codes exist for radio and television news. It is these codes which are used by public officials and members of the public to lodge formal complaints. Williamson (1994) states that generally broadcasters have sound procedures for dealing with complaints. "They have policies concerning the rapid correction of errors. And their complaints procedures tend to be handled by senior executives of the company"(p.7).

He indicates there are some "areas of concern" from the correspondence he receives as Minister. There are the perceptions in the minds of some that there is little point in complaining because "nothing will be done" and the time allowed for determining complaints.

The Minister of Broadcasting posed the question of whether sanctions that can be imposed by the Broadcasting Standards Authority should be increased. Finally Mr Williamson referred to the debate about whether a formal statutory regime was still necessary. Some broadcasters, or their representatives, like Brent Impey from the Independent Broadcasters' Association, believe that broadcasters have shown themselves to be responsible enough to set their own programme standards. They advocate a non-statutory complaints mechanism like the Advertising Standards Complaints Board. Slater (1994), a senior producer for TV3, goes further and states:

On balance, I think it better for true self-regulation to determine them. Every broadcaster would have to put in place whatever structure they felt best for them. A super editor, an internal ombudsman, whatever. Then, I think, leave it up to the viewer to determine whether to watch or not to watch the programme and/or the channel they most trust. At the end of the day it is all driven by ratings and revenue. That need not be a foul concept. It could be the purest form of regulation there is (p.129).

The alternative viewpoint is that the standards by which broadcasters must be judged are too important to be left solely to broadcasters and that there are risks in relying solely on the market to deliver standards. This appears to be the prevailing political sentiment. Williamson (1994) states, "I consider the existing statutory regulations are a good compromise-simple and flexible and able to be used with the minimum of formality" (p.8).

The other aspect of the Broadcasting Act 1989 which impinges on the study is the cultural safety net provisions of the legislation. In relation to the Broadcasting Commission (New Zealand on Air) s.36 (a) (ii) states the functions of the Commission are to reflect and develop

New Zealand identity and culture by--promoting Maori language and Maori culture. This statutory requirement led directly to the funding of the first national Maori news service, Mana News which is one of the broadcasters subject of the research.

Mana News, a private provider of Maori news, began broadcasting in 1990 and has had a number of prime time slots around 6pm and a number of different bulletin lengths since then. Mana News started with a ten minute bulletin, later expanded to twelve minutes in the prime slot of 6.15pm, on the National programme.

NZ On Air partly funded Mana News from the year ending June 1990 until January 1995. From January 1995 the funding of Mana News was turned over to Te Mangai Paaho, a crown agency established under the Broadcasting Amendment Act 1993. Walker (1994) states Te Mangai Paaho faces "some difficult decisions on the allocation of scarce resources" (p.5).

The statutory and regulatory environment in which news broadcasters operate is characterised by a fundamental ambiguity; most must make money in a highly charged market but can only do so while abiding by a number of public service norms including cultural safeguards. They can self regulate in relation to standards but only to the extent breaches of the act or the codes do not occur. The tension between the "high" and "low" roles of broadcast news has been heightened by deregulation and the legislative apparatus which gives effect to it.

CHAPTER TWO

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 Introduction

This section describes the methodology employed in the research. The research questions set the objectives of the project and the approach taken to the research has been specified to acknowledge the perspective of the principal researchers. The details of the content analysis methods used are described and the coders who helped in the project are recorded. Finally, reliability and validity measures are discussed.

2.2 Research questions

The research questions formulated for the study relating to balance and fairness were developed at two levels, at the level of the story broadcast, and at a more general level relating to change in broadcast news over time. The questions were:

1. Are news stories as broadcast fair and balanced according to a number of measures such as sources, attribution, gender, ethnicity, tone, visual cues, use of language, interviewer's tone and style etc?
2. What, if any, is the nature of change in content and presentation of news stories broadcast in specific categories of news (crime, politics, Maori issues and health) between 1985-1994?
3. How do such changes impact on the concepts of balance and fairness in the news?
4. What, if any, are the implications of the results of the content analysis for the Codes of Broadcasting Practice for Radio and Television?

2.3 Research approach

An enduring difficulty with news media scholarship which attempts to explore balance, objectivity, fairness and impartiality in news is that they are, to use Salter's (1992) expression, "essentially contested concepts". And, indeed, in the New Zealand context definitions of fairness, accuracy and balance are elusive. The Broadcasting Act 1989, establishing the Broadcasting Standards Authority, stated that among its functions it must: encourage the development and observance by broadcasters of codes of broadcasting practice [s21(1)] which must cover among other things: fairness and accuracy in programmes [s21], and balance when controversial issues of public importance are discussed [s.4]. The interpretation section of the Act, however, remains silent on the definition of balance, fairness and accuracy. Nor is a definition provided in the Codes of Practice for broadcasters. Complaints relating to balance, fairness and accuracy dealt with by the Broadcasting Standards Authority also do not yield insight into the definition of the terms, but rather deal with cases on a case by case basis.

Academic researchers, generally, have fallen into two camps. Some empirical scholars such as Miljan (1992) believe balance is something objective and measurable. Others, such as Hackett, Gilsdorf & Savage (1992) and Raboy (1992) say balance must be seen as a relational notion.

The approach of this research is to regard news as socially constructed and to acknowledge that balance is a contested concept whether it is regarded as a journalistic value or an issue of policy. The methodology will not begin with a single, unambiguous definition of balance against which news stories will be measured. Instead, the research will employ a methodology which examines criteria commonly accepted in journalistic practice, such as sources, timing and attribution, which impinge on balance and fairness and which will allow a transparent view of the news. The results of this methodology will allow for cross-media comparison and a discussion and analysis about balance and fairness in the news, including observations about any changes over time.

2.4 Methodology

2.4.1 Areas of news studied

Four specific areas of news were studied. Time and resource constraints and pragmatic considerations meant that not *all* stories in the period of study could be examined. Naismith (1993) states that a preliminary analysis of the first 55 "balance, fairness and accuracy" complaints determined by the Broadcasting Standards Authority indicated that 20 or 36% dealt with issues which were directly political (i.e. government related) 29 or 52% dealt with broader social issues and conflict arising from them. In light of these figures it was decided to study crime news, news about or concerning Maori, political news and health news. If a story about a Maori issue overlapped with one of the other categories it was coded as Maori news.

2.4.2 Sample

Defining the population and determining how many issues to sample are two major decisions for researchers utilising content analysis. Riffe, Aust and Lacy (1993) state:

The researcher's goal is to sample enough issues to achieve an "acceptable" estimate of unknown population parameters, while maximising efficiency of time and effort. Selecting too few issues may produce unreliable data and invalid results; selecting too many may be a wasteful misuse of coding resources (p.133).

Two approaches have been adopted traditionally in content analyses with respect to the sample. The first approach involves some form of sampling and random or stratified random sampling is used employing either a table of random numbers or a computer programme. A variation on random sampling is constructed week sampling in which the approach is, as Lichty and Bailey (1977) state, to "stratify the drawing to insure that the final sample will be evenly distributed across the days of the week, weeks, months or even years" (p.115). Riffe, Aust and Lacy (1993) state constructed week sampling "assumes cyclic variation of content for different days of the week." In constructed week sampling it is imperative to represent the days of the week researchers want to study equally.

Riffe, Aust and Lacy (1993) note that research on sampling is limited and their study tested the effectiveness of random, consecutive day and constructed week sampling techniques in relation to newspaper content analysis. Their study confirmed a constructed week procedure is more efficient than pure random or consecutive day sampling.

Published content analysis by New Zealand researchers examining the news has generally used small samples. In relation to broadcasting news, Atkinson (1994), in his analysis of the categories of news broadcasts by Television New Zealand, does not acknowledge the sample size but states, "admittedly the figures....are based on a relatively small sample of news content and more research needs to be done to assure their reliability" (p.56). Recent print media content analysis of crime news in New Zealand's metropolitan press by McGregor (1993) utilised a monthly print cycle as the sample, and research measuring gender representation in sports news coverage conducted in seven New Zealand newspapers used a weekly print cycle (McGregor & Melville, 1993/4).

The sample chosen for this research reflects the following considerations:

1. the desire to include a level of stories to provide reliable and valid data, particularly in light of the possibility that contemporary New Zealand news media research has erred on the size of small samples,
2. the fact the sample had to acknowledge the operating environment of the broadcasters under study noting that two of the broadcasters started transmission during the period of study,
3. the need to include similar periods of time across 1985-1994 to allow for valid comparable data,
4. the constraints of time and resources which dictate an efficient use of coding resources.

Week days were chosen to avoid weekend news bulletins which reflect reduced staffing and resource allocation and to avoid non-broadcasting days of programmes like Mana News and Morning Report.

For Television New Zealand the sample period consisted of two randomly selected constructed Monday to Friday weeks in each of the following years; 1985, 1987, 1989, 1990, 1992, 1994. The researchers examined sixty main daily news programmes with ten programmes per year sampled. In 1985 and 1987 this consisted of the 6.30 news (40 minutes) followed by the Top Half regional programme. The 1989 sample consists of a 30 minute news bulletin beginning at 6pm and followed by the Holmes programme. This format remained relatively unchanged through to the end of the study period. The TVNZ main news bulletins have been called by different terms during the study period. We have adopted the term "TV One news". At all times this is distinct from the Holmes and Top Half segments. When figures for the two elements are combined, the term "the TVNZ news hour" is used.

The sample period for TV3 began in 1990. (The sample dates fell before the 27 November 1989 start of the channel). It consisted of two randomly selected constructed Monday to Friday weeks in the years 1990, 1992 and 1994. A total of 30 main daily news programmes were analysed. The 1990 sample consisted of half hour news bulletins beginning at 6.30. When TV3 introduced a news magazine, initially the Westcott File, this was included as data.

The 1992 and 1994 sample consist of one hour bulletins (with news magazine) starting at 6pm. The TV3 news magazine segment, while embedded in the news, has been separated out for analysis. The term "TV3 features" has been used to describe this segment of the news and includes the Westcott File, Leighton Smith and Ralston.

Table 1 below shows the dates of the Television News sample.

Table 1: Sample dates for television

(TVNZ sample covers all dates, TV3 sample begins on 5 April 1990)

1985	1987	1989	1990	1992	1994
			(TV3 sample begins here)		
28 March (Thur)*	2 April (Thur)	6 April (Thur)	5 April (Thur)	2 April (Thur)	7 April (Thur)
26 April (Fri)	24 April (Fri)	28 April (Fri)	27 April (Fri)	24 April (Fri)	29 April (Fri)
7 May (Tues)	5 May (Tues)	9 May (Tues)	8 May (Tues)	5 May (Tues)	3 May (Tues)*
29 July (Mon)*	20 July (Mon)	17 July (Mon)*	23 July (Mon)	20 July (Mon)	18 July (Mon)*
26 Sept (Thur)	24 Sept (Thur)	28 Sept (Thur)	27 Sept (Thur)	24 Sept (Thur)	29 Sept (Thur)
2 Oct (Wed)	30 Sept (Wed)	4 Oct (Wed)	3 Oct (Wed)	30 Sept (Wed)	5 Oct (Wed)
23 Oct (Wed)*	14 Oct (Wed)	18 Oct (Wed)	17 Oct (Wed)	14 Oct (Wed)	19 Oct (Wed)
1 Nov (Fri)*	6 Nov (Fri)	10 Nov (Fri)	9 Nov (Fri)	6 Nov (Fri)	18 Nov (Fri)*
18 Nov (Mon)	16 Nov (Mon)	20 Nov (Mon)	19 Nov (Mon)	13 Nov (Mon)*	21 Nov (Mon)
19 Nov (Tues)	17 Nov (Tues)	21 Nov (Tues)	20 Nov (Tues)	17 Nov (Tues)	22 Nov (Tues)

* indicates a replacement date

The sample period for Morning Report was one randomly constructed week in each of the following years; 1985, 1987, 1989, 1990, 1992, 1994. The hour between 7-8am was chosen for analysis. This is the only time frame for the programme which has remained constant between 1985-1994 which allows for the collection of valid and comparable data. Data were collected from a total of thirty hours broadcasting. The news bulletins within Morning Report were deemed qualitatively different and have been separately analysed. The terms Morning Report News and Morning Report Features have been used to describe the two elements. Table 2 on the next page shows the dates selected for the Morning Report sample.

Table 2: Sample dates for Morning Report

1985	1987	1989	1990	1992	1994
28 March (Thur)*	2 April (Thur)	6 April (Thur)	5 April (Thur)	2 April (Thur)	7 April (Thur)
29 July (Mon)*	20 July (Mon)	17 July (Mon)*	23 July (Mon)	20 July (Mon)	18 July (Mon)*
2 Oct (Wed)	30 Sept (Wed)	4 Oct (Wed)	3 Oct (Wed)	30 Sept (Wed)	5 Oct (Wed)
1 Nov (Fri)*	6 Nov (Fri)	10 Nov (Fri)	9 Nov (Fri)	6 Nov (Fri)	18 Nov (Fri)*
19 Nov (Tues)	17 Nov (Tues)	21 Nov (Tues)	20 Nov (Tues)	17 Nov (Tues)	22 Nov (Tues)

* indicates a replacement date

The sample period for Mana Maori Media began when the broadcaster went to air in 1990 and consisted of dates from 23 July 1990 onwards comprising twenty seven programmes of varying length broadcast on Radio New Zealand's National Radio in the evening on week days. Table 3 shows the dates of the Mana News sample.

Table 3: Sample dates for Mana News

1990	1992	1994
	2 April (Thur)	7 April (Thur)
	24 April (Fri)	29 April (Fri)
	5 May (Tues)	10 May (Tues)
23 July (Mon)	20 July (Mon)	25 July (Mon)
27 Sept (Thur)	24 Sept (Thur)	29 Sept (Thur)
3 Oct (Wed)	30 Sept (Wed)	5 Oct (Wed)
17 Oct (Wed)	14 Oct (Wed)	19 Oct (Wed)
9 Nov (Fri)	6 Nov (Fri)	11 Nov (Fri)
19 Nov (Mon)	6 Nov (Mon)	21 Nov (Mon)
20 Nov (Tues)	17 Nov (Tues)	22 Nov (Tues)

The sample was chosen to acknowledge the operating environment of the last decade. The first year chosen, 1985, provides a valuable benchmark. 1987 represents a new management culture in TVNZ. 1989 represents the first year of operation of Television New Zealand and Radio New Zealand as State Owned Enterprises. 1990 marks the first year of television competition with Television Three going to air, and the first year of Mana News broadcasts.

1992 and 1994 offer a chance to study any progressive change. The period of study spans two opposing political parties in power, the Fourth Labour Government and the incumbent National Government, which has implications for the news coverage of incumbent versus non-incumbent politicians.

2.4.3 The classification of Holmes

Television New Zealand executives insisted that the Holmes programme was part of the "news hour" (Norris, 1992). For this reason this research applied the same categories and judgements to Holmes and to Ralston as to the network news. In our opinion Holmes, then, was done something of a disservice by Television New Zealand's classification and justification of the nature of the programme. For while Norris (1992) told journalism students that Holmes followed Reithian principles, the true character (and success) of the Holmes programme stems from it following an overseas-inspired recipe of entertainment, opinion-commentary and information, rather than following the stricter criteria of news and current affairs.

In our opinion Television New Zealand's attachment to the notion that Holmes follows Reithian principles somewhat distorts the balance between education, information and entertainment inherent in Lord Reith's philosophy. The public and this research have been obliged to judge Holmes by programme standards applicable to news and current affairs because TVNZ insisted Holmes was news. Clearly Holmes has elements of news, elements of opinion, elements of personalised commentary, all of which constitute electronic tabloid journalism (using the word tabloid in the best sense of the word). In our opinion such news magazine type programmes which are a global phenomenon and which are highly popular may need separate consideration in relation to codes of broadcasting practice when they are next reviewed. It is pleasing to see TVNZ using promotional material for its revamped news hour which separates "news" from Holmes.

2.4.4 Unit of analysis

The unit of analysis chosen for study depends on what is being researched and must relate to the purpose of the study. News media scholarship has encompassed units of analysis ranging from a single word as the smallest unit, through statements, sentences, paragraphs to stories and programmes. Lichty and Bailey (1978) suggest in relation to television news that "in most cases the 'story' as a unit is most logical and useful" (p.117).

For this research the story was the most logical and useful unit of analysis. Stories for the purpose of study were defined as all locally-produced news stories broadcast during the sample period by the broadcaster under study in the categories of political news, health news, crime news and news about Maori. Stories covering these areas of news which originated overseas were excluded from the sample although overseas stories clearly filmed and produced by New Zealand journalists or film crews overseas constituted local stories for the purpose of this study. Stories or opinion pieces from overseas radio correspondents which featured on Morning Report were excluded.

2.4.5 Formulation of categories

Category construction is one of the most time-consuming and exacting tasks in content analysis. Kaid and Wadsworth (1989) state "no step in content analysis is more crucial than the formulation of categories" (p.203). The concepts contained in the research questions of the study must be reflected in the categories formulated. Stempel (1989) states "categories must

be pertinent to the objectives of your study" and says the "simple test" of whether or not they are "is whether or not the information they yield will answer the research questions of the study or permit the testing of hypotheses of the study" (p.128).

The principal researchers spent two months of the research project formulating and revising categories. Stempel (1989) states "category systems already developed by other researchers may prove to be appropriate" (p.127). The difficulty for this research project was its benchmark nature. The absence of a rich tradition of scholarship about broadcast news in New Zealand meant categories had to be formulated *de novo*. While reference was made to available indigenous studies such as McGregor's (1993) crime news content analysis and categories formulated for Comrie's (forthcoming) doctoral research into broadcast news, and to categories formulated in overseas content analysis, the specific nature of the project and the areas of news chosen meant both descriptive and content categories needed to be devised, pre-tested and revised. The principal researchers used a number of journalists as reference points in the formulation of categories. The categories were then tested against sample stories.

The next stage in category formulation was to write a research document encompassing the categories in questions which could be answered by coders. This provided the research project with a content analysis questionnaire for coding purposes (Appendix 1).

Help in the design of this instrument came from Professor Philip Dewe of the Human Resource Management Department, Faculty of Business Studies, and Dr Ted Drawneek, Computing Services Consultant, both of Massey University. The statistical package SPSS-X was used to analyse data and the coding questionnaire was trialled and tested utilising SPSS-X.

The descriptive categories formulated included the date and day of the week the story was broadcast, the medium that broadcast the story, the duration of the story in seconds, whether it was positioned as a lead item in the broadcast, its proximity to advertising, whether the story was headlined and whether the story, if it was a Morning Report story, was a news or feature story. Where the story originated from and the predominant subject matter of the story were coded. Whether the story was preceded or followed by chitchat and whether stories were "packaged" so that crime stories or political stories followed each other was also explored.

A range of content categories was formulated. First, coders were asked to identify what type of crime story, health story, political story or Maori story they were analysing against a range of 63 identified categories. This provided basic data about whether certain types of political reportage, or aspects of crime, health or Maori news were dominant. Next coders were asked to identify whether the crime story featured a crime offence and if so, what type of offence ranging through violent offences to property offences. Coders analysing political news were asked whether the story was predominantly personality-based or issue-based, and in relation to health news a question asked whether the story featured patient health or health structures. In relation to Maori news a category was created, after reference to news media scholarship about reportage of minorities, asking whether the story was good news, bad news or neutral in its emphasis.

A major feature of the content categories related to sources and their attribution. This acknowledges the central importance of sources of news in maintaining balance and fairness in broadcast news. Sources impinge on the following general standards in the codes of broadcasting practice for radio: the need for broadcasters to make reasonable efforts to

present significant points of view, to acknowledge the right of individuals to express their own opinions, to deal justly and fairly with any person taking part or referred to in programmes, to respect principles of partnership between Maori and Pakeha and actively seek a balanced contribution and views on matters relating to partnership.

Sourcing and attribution relate specifically too, to codes of broadcasting practice for radio news and current affairs such as; the listeners' ability to distinguish clearly and easily between factual reporting and comment, opinion and analysis, the presentation of news accurately, objectively and impartially, the constant review of the reliability and integrity of news sourcing, the editing of programme material to prevent distortion and fairness in allocating time to interested parties in controversial public issues.

In relation to television, sources and their attribution in the news impinge on general codes such as that prescribing truth and accuracy on points of fact, to the right of individuals to express their own opinions, dealing justly and fairly with any person taking part or referred to in programmes, showing balance, impartiality and fairness in dealing with political matters, current affairs and all controversial questions.

Specific news and current affairs standards for television which emphasise the central importance of sources and their attribution to any study of balance and fairness in news are: that the news must be presented accurately, objectively and impartially, that the standards of integrity and reliability of news sources should be kept under constant review, that care must be taken in editing to prevent distortion of views, and that broadcasters should aim to present all significant sides in as fair a way as possible.

Content categories for sources and attribution asked coders to make up to twenty coding decisions relating to how full the identification of the source was, gender, ethnicity, type of source, the time in seconds the source spoke for, whether the source was repeated in the story, the camera treatment or sound quality where applicable. Where sources were interviewed, the content analysis looked at the nature of the questions: whether they were appropriate to the context of the story, what the interviewer's tone of voice was and who asked the questions in the interview. Each source in every story was treated separately by coders within the coding instrument.

A number of content categories were formulated in relation to assertions in stories not supported by sources or other physical evidence and how this affected the balance of the story. A series of categories were formulated in relation to captions, video footage, the match of pictures to narrative, the use and effect of wallpaper footage, and whether the story utilised film creating a synthetic or simulated experience and the effects of this in terms of balance.

A series of questions were asked relating to "piece to camera", audio material, and the match of audio to journalists'/newsreader's narrative. The use of special camera techniques and the effects in terms of balance and the use of audio techniques and the effects in terms of balance of the story were two other sets of categories.

Coders were asked to rate their level of understanding of the subject matter of the story using a five point scale ranging from very clear to very unclear, to write down up to three main reasons for the level of understanding of the story and to explain the main claim of the story. Coders also judged how fully the main claim was supported against a five point scale.

Each story was analysed in terms of whether it contained controversy, how fair the story was in terms of inclusion of relevant sides of the controversy and whether assertions of each side of the controversy were accorded equal weight in the story. If coders answered in the negative they were asked to explain why. They were asked to rate the weight given to controversial assertions in terms of balance against a five point scale. Coders were asked to note whether there was an indication in the story of non-availability of a side of the controversy or of previous or future availability. Interviewer treatment, where appropriate, in terms of balance, and whether or not other stories in the sample programme affected the balance of a controversial issue were also explored. The presence or absence of emotional, loaded language and its effect on the balance of a story was examined.

Whether every person taking part in or referred to in the story was justly and fairly dealt with was analysed and a series of questions was asked exploring the fact/opinion dichotomy. Coders were asked to identify whether the story contained factual reporting *and* comment, opinion and analysis. If so, was it possible to distinguish clearly and easily between fact and comment, opinion and analysis?

The seventy-five questions in the coding instrument provided a comprehensive sweep of categories impinging on balance and fairness.

2.4.6 Selection and training of coders

Stempel's (1989) advice to "try to find experienced coders" was employed in this research project (p.133). Seven coders were used in the research and all but one of the coders had two levels of expertise valuable for the research project; understanding of the news media and previous content analysis coding expertise. Six of the coders had post-graduate news media scholarship interests. The "desirability of having people with somewhat similar academic backgrounds" referred to by Stempel (p.134) was acknowledged. One of the coders was, additionally, a journalist with more than 20 year's experience.

Coders were allocated stories by broadcasting medium and by subject area. A post graduate media studies student who had previously examined crime news examined all crime news on television. Political stories on television were coded by the experienced journalist, a former Parliamentary Press Gallery journalist and political reporter, and by a post graduate media studies student. Health news was coded by a post graduate communications programme student who had been a former registered nurse. The two coders analysing Maori news on television and news broadcast by Mana News were Maori academic staff working in the communications programme of the Faculty of Business Studies.

The coders were:

Kimberley Allan, a post-graduate student at Massey University who has a Bachelor of Arts in Humanities and has recently completed a Diploma in Media with distinction. Kimberley coded crime news on TV1 and TV3 news programmes.

June Young, a registered nurse who returned to Massey University and completed a Bachelor of Arts in Information Systems, and then a DBA in Communication in Management. June coded the health news on TV1 and TV3 news programmes.

Phillip Melville, another post-graduate student from Humanities, who has a Bachelor of Arts, a Diploma in Media Studies and is completing his Masterate in Media Studies at Massey. Phillip along with another coder, coded politics on TV1 and TV3 news programmes.

Alister Browne was the other person who coded the political news on TV1 and TV3. Alister has a Bachelor of Arts in modern history and a Certificate of Proficiency in media sociology, plus he has over 25 years of journalism experience in both daily and weekly newspapers.

Alister has worked as a political reporter and spent some time working in the press gallery. At the moment Alister works as a free lance journalist.

Joanne TeAwa (Nga Puhī) is an assistant lecturer doing post-graduate work in the Human Resource Management department at Massey. Joanne has a Bachelor of Business Studies in Communication Management and is in her final year of her Masters of Business Studies, writing a thesis on the Maori perspective of news. Joanne coded the Maori news on TV1 and TV3 as well as coding some of Mana Maori Media news.

Geoff Forbes coded Morning Report, in all four subject areas. Geoff has a Bachelor of Science, a Diploma in Business Administration and a number of post-graduate diplomas in Business Studies (Information Systems), Social Science (psychology), and in Humanities (Philosophy).

The final coder for this research was *Rochelle Kupa* (Ngai Tuhoe). Rochelle is also an assistant lecturer in the Human Resource Management department of Massey University. She has a Bachelor of Arts in English and is completing a Master of Philosophy in business studies. Rochelle coded Mana Maori Media news, all of which fell into the Maori category of news.

Stempel (1989) states "training will continue throughout a study" and the training of coders involved initial training sessions and trial runs and then a series of twice daily spot checks with individual coders and twice weekly group meetings between the coders and the principal researchers. Opportunities were provided for coders to discuss problems and to work out precise definitions of categories. Decisions about category definitions were communicated to all coders.

It is commonly agreed by content analysts that the major challenge in the training of coders is the development of a frame of reference that is universal to the coders. To ensure this common frame of reference emerged, coders were encouraged to talk about their decisions and to mark any ambiguity for discussion with the principal researchers.

A total of 1120 hours were spent coding stories by the seven coders. In addition 640 hours were spent by the principal researchers formulating categories and another two weeks were spent checking and annotating questionnaires so they were ready for computer analysis.

2.4.7 Reliability and Validity

Coders in the study were each responsible for separate subject areas and broadcasting media, except in the area of television political stories where two coders worked. This meant a high degree of consistency within each subject area. However, intercoder reliability was also considered important. During the training sessions, coders exhibited a high degree of agreement on all decisions.

Intercoder reliability checks were conducted on 25 stories. The majority of these stories were coded three times by separate researchers who aggregated the results. Care was taken to compare only questions that called for a measure of judgement so that results would not be artificially boosted by gaining agreement on factual questions such as date or medium of broadcast.

Results were compared by using the simple percentage of agreement between coders which Stempel (1981) maintains is the appropriate reliability measure. The percentage of agreement for coders varied between 93 and 72 percent and was an average of 82.2 percent. Scott (1955) comments the percentage of agreement measurement is biased in favour of dimensions with a small number of categories and many content analyses use two-category scales. Because many of the questions tested in this study used a 5-point scale, the percentage of agreement found was deemed to show strong intercoder agreement.

At the end of the coding process intracoder reliability (consistent coding across time) was tested by coders re-coding three of their first 10 stories. Intracoder reliability figures ranged from 96.4 percent to 88.5 percent with a mean of 92.8 percent.

CHAPTER THREE

RESULTS: GENERAL

3.1 Introduction

The results are presented in the study in the following manner. A description of the question asked is provided (with cross reference to the question number in the survey instrument for easy reference) along with a rationale for why the particular line of inquiry was pursued.

Overall results are then presented and, where appropriate, results are presented by broadcast medium. If the results show difference across years or contrast between media then these are highlighted. The results are reported as frequencies with a reliance in the text and tables on percentages for easy comparison. In some of the calculations there are missing values and where numbers instead of percentages are reported the missing values are acknowledged.

It needs to be noted that all Mana News stories are coded as Maori and that Morning Report news and features have been separately analysed.

The three results chapters look at separate themes in the study. Chapter Three provides general results about the number of stories analysed, the nature of coverage of subject areas and detail such as geographic origin and placement etc.

Chapter Four provides results of detailed analysis of sourcing within broadcast news stories while Chapter Five examines stories containing controversy and factors impinging on balance and fairness.

3.2 Researchers' evaluations

The results are summarised and where researchers' opinion is absent, these are presented under the heading of *Summary*. Where the results are summarised and debated in terms of the researcher's opinions this is clearly shown in the research report by the heading *Summary and Researchers' Evaluation*. These sections follow the relevant results for ease of reading. Several stories are analysed qualitatively in some detail to illustrate points made in the research. These are included in the sections *Summary and Researchers' Evaluation* to differentiate the qualitative analysis from quantitative analysis.

The presentation was adopted to clearly differentiate results and their summary from the opinion of those conducting the research. The researchers' evaluations are included for the purpose of provoking debate about broadcast news and of bringing the debate out into the public sphere. In doing so, the research attempts to answer the call of Docherty and Tracey (1993) to avoid "scholarship as silence". The researchers feel that engagement in public debate about the nature and significance of broadcast news is part of the social responsibility of communication research to avoid the "irrelevant culture of the cloister" (Docherty & Tracey, 1993, p.231).

3.3 General

A total of 915 stories were coded in the research project. The totals for the four broadcasters analysed are: TVNZ 389 stories, TV3 164 stories, Morning Report 236 stories, Mana News 126 stories. Further breakdown follows in the table below which details programmes and subject area of news.

Table 4: Subject area of news by broadcaster

Subject Area of News	TV1 News	Top Half	Holmes	TV3 News	TV3 Features	Morning Report News	Morning Report Features	Mana News	TOTAL by Subject
Politics	138	1	27	47	8	56	80		357
Crime	92	23	13	68	-	20	20		236
Maori	18	3	4	8	1	5	11	126*	176
Health	41	16	13	24	8	21	23		146
TOTAL by Broadcaster	289	43	57	147	17	102	134	126	915

* All Mana news stories coded were categorised as Maori

Of the total sample of stories 39% were political stories, 25.8% related to crime, 19.2% were stories related to Maori issues and 16% were health stories. It must be noted that of the 176 Maori stories, 126 of these were broadcast by Mana News and only 50 of the stories were broadcast by the other three broadcasters taken together.

3.3.1 Crime

The amount of crime news on TV One news increased during the sample period. In 1985 crime made up 18% of the four subjects studied while in 1994 it was 41%. A total of 31.8% of the stories across subjects in the sample were coded as crime stories for TV One news. For Holmes, crime news stories comprised 22.8% of the stories sampled and showed a decrease from 30% in 1990 to 18% in 1994. For TV3 news, the number of crime stories in the sample across four subject areas comprised 46.2%, and crime stories increased proportionately over the years from 40.9% to 53.6%. Morning Report news over the years contained 19.6% crime news and Morning Report features comprised 14.9%.

3.3.2 Politics

The amount of politics on Morning Report news comprised 54.9% of the stories sampled across the subject areas. And on Morning Report features 59.7% of stories in the sample were political stories. There has been a drop in the number of political stories in Morning Report news when they made up 76.5% in the sample in 1985, to 31.5% in 1994. Both of those years follow an election year. A similar drop occurred for Morning Report features, from 72.5% in 1985 to 53.8% in 1994. This decline in the amount of political coverage is also apparent for TV One and TV3. In 1985 on TV One, politics comprised 64.5% and in 1994 it comprised 35.9%. Over all politics amounted to 47.7%. In 1990 TV3 went from 43.2% of political stories in the sample to 26.8% in 1994. Over all politics comprised 31.9% of all stories sampled on TV3. Holmes totalled 47.3% political stories and peaked in 1990, election year.

3.3.3 Health

Health news comprised 14.1% of the sample stories on TV One news with 11.3% in 1985 and a general increase to 20.5% in 1994. Health stories comprised 22.8% overall on Holmes, with 30.8% in 1985, dipping to 15.4% in 1992 and rising again in 1994 to 36.4%.

TV3 News has shown an increase in health news from 6.8% in 1990 to 19.5% in 1994, with an overall figure of 16.3%. Again an increase in health related news during the sample period was recorded for Morning Report news and features from 5.9% (news) and 7.5% (features) in 1985 to a peak of 42% (news) and 23.1% in 1994 for news and features respectively.

3.3.4 Maori

The paucity of Maori news stories in the sample was uniform across broadcasters with the exception of Mana News, whose stories were all coded as Maori. Of the stories sampled for TV One news 6.2% were Maori, Holmes 7%, TV3 news 5.4%, TV3 features 5.8%, Morning Report news 4.9% and Morning Report feature stories 8.2%. There is no evidence in the results of an increase over time.

3.4 Story length

Each story was timed in seconds by coders. The average story length for TV One news was 111.6 seconds and has remained relatively stable cross the years of the study, 1985-1994. Top Half stories averaged out at 124.5 seconds and decreased in time between the two years of broadcast 1985-1987. Holmes averaged 383.8 seconds per story and there has been little fluctuation in story length between 1989 to 1994. TV3 news averaged 87.1 seconds per story and the story length declined between 1992 and 1994 from 93.8 seconds to 74.8 seconds. TV3 features averaged at 269.5 seconds per story but has increased story length in 1994. Morning Report news averaged 41.4 seconds and recorded an increase from 37.6 seconds in 1985 to 48.5 seconds in 1994. Morning Report features averaged 268.8 seconds and have fluctuated during the sample period from 171.7 seconds in 1985 to peaks of 363.4 seconds in 1990 and 319 seconds in 1994. Mana News story length averaged 210.6 seconds with a reduction from 288 seconds in 1990 to 136.3 seconds in 1994.

3.4.1 Summary

Overall the results show that generalised criticism that broadcast news story length is reducing does not apply to political, crime, health and Maori stories in the study. In the case of Morning Report news and features story length is increasing. Mana News stories have decreased in length during a time span in which the programme length shortened and more stories were covered in each programme. However, during a time frame in which TV3 News increased its programme length from half an hour to one hour the story length decreased. Already the average story on TV3 News is 24.5 seconds shorter than the average story in the sample broadcast by its rival TV One.

3.5 Geographic origin

In total 70.7% of stories originated in either Auckland or Wellington with 28% from Auckland and 42.7% from Wellington, in part reflecting the number of political stories in the sample. Other North Island cities accounted for 10.5%. Counting coverage from small towns and rural areas of the North island as well, the total North Island coverage amounted to 86.8% of the stories coded. Just over 10% of stories originated from the South Island with 5% of stories from Christchurch and less than 2% from Dunedin. New Zealand staff based overseas accounted for about 2% of stories. The sample was slightly skewed because of the presence of stories from the regional programme Top Half. The figures presented in the following table are presented over all for all media and then presented as adjusted minus Top Half.

Table 5: Where stories originated - expressed as a percentage of total stories for each programme

Geography Where story originated	TV1 News	Top Half	Holmes	TV3 Features	TV3 News	MR News	MR Features	Mana	All Media Overall	Overall Minus Top Half
Auckland	26.7	83.7	37.4	47.0	36.1	10.8	17.3	22.2	28	25.2
Wellington	44.6	2.3	33.9	29.4	29.9	67.5	68.6	24.6	42.7	44.6
Christchurch	5.9	-	5.4	11.8	9.5	2.9	5.2	-	5.0	5.3
Dunedin	3.1	-	-	-	1.4	2	0.7	0.8	1.6	1.7
Other North Island City	7	-	3.6	11.8	8.2	4.9	3.0	40.5	10.5	11.0
Other South Island City	0.7	-	-	-	3.4	2	1.5	-	1.2	1.3
North Island Small Town	3.1	11.7	7.1	-	2.7	2.9	1.5	8.7	4.2	3.8
South Island Small Town	1	-	1.8	-	2.7	1	-	0.8	1.1	1.2
North Island Rural	1	2.3	3.6	-	2	2	-	1.6	1.4	1.4
South Island Rural	1.3	-	1.8	-	4.1	1	-	0.8	1.4	1.5
Offshore Island	-	-	-	-	-	1	1.5	-	0.5	0.5
Overseas NZ Crew	5.6	-	5.4	-	-	2	0.7	-	2.4	2.5

3.5.1 Summary and researchers' evaluation

The results will provide no comfort to provincial viewers and those living in the South Island. The Auckland-Wellington news syndrome is a combination of a number of external factors affecting the news such as the population concentration in Auckland and the location of Government and the public sector in Wellington. But internal policy decisions have also influenced the North Island big city bias of broadcast news. The centralisation of television news following deregulation was accompanied by the shedding of a large number of provincial journalists. This was compounded by the policy decision to abandon regional news magazine programmes, Top Half, the Mainland Touch, the South Tonight, and Today Tonight. While TVNZ has made policy decisions that centralised news is good for viewers, there remains a sense of disquiet among some viewers that the only news they will see and hear about their own local community is when the news event is horrific enough for a visit by a helicopter carrying television journalists. While the prospect of regional television is offered up to assuage provincial tension about the big city domination of news, serious questions can be asked about the "reality" of a socially constructed news which predominantly uses Auckland and Wellington as news catchment areas.

While the following observation is impressionistic only, and the research project ended in 1994, Television New Zealand's revamped news hour appears to be including greater numbers of stories from provincial areas and cities outside Auckland and Wellington. For example, Otago's change of scenery (5 May), a Rotorua man's longevity (15 May), the decline of sawmilling at Karamea (22 May,) and a Dunedin craftsman's nautical table (22 May). Dunedin, in particular, looks to be a beneficiary in the One More story feature. These are the types of stories which rarely made it on screen prior to the change.

3.6 Placement of stories

The results showed a tendency for certain types of news stories to be placed together in a bulletin. Over all 56.7% of political stories across all the media studied were placed proximate to other political stories. Of the crime stories in the sample, 47.9% were broadcast before or after another crime story, and 20.7% of health stories aired next to other health stories. Because all Mana News stories were coded in the Maori category analysis of proximate placement for Maori stories is not meaningful. The results showed that TV One news and Morning Report in particular grouped political items together.

3.7 Chit chat

Dr Brian Edwards coined the term "cootchie coo news" in 1992 when writing about what he considered to be the increasing tabloidization of television news. One of the elements of the cootchie coo news identified by Edwards was chit chat between newsreaders, or news readers and journalists as the news programme unfolded. The study asked coders (Question 13) to identify whether each news story in the sample was preceded or followed by chit- chat related to the story. A very small number only of the 915 stories coded (3.2%) contained chit chat and when it did occur it was more prevalent in the Holmes and Ralston programmes.

3.8 Events orientation

What has been termed the "event orientation" of news (Galtung and Ruge, 1965) was confirmed by the study. Stories were examined to see what prompted the story, an event or an issue (Question 44). The question was asked to shed light on the oft-expressed criticism of the news media that the news media concentrates on happenings and events without regard for their socio-political context and stories are stripped of any historical perspective. The complaint about the primary orientation of news as "happenings" is that the concentration on the concrete at the expense of the abstract does not allow listeners and viewers to develop a fuller picture and deeper level of understanding from the news. This needs to be countered by Tiffen's (1989) observation that "whatever their commitment to diversity, no news organisation functions by promoting debate in the abstract" (p.179). The imperatives of modern journalism means that "events" include pseudo events such as press conferences and arranged events as well as spontaneous, inherently newsworthy happenings.

The results show that 87.2% of the stories in the sample across all broadcasters were prompted by an event, 11.9% by an issue and in 0.9% of cases, coders could not tell.

Table 6: What prompted the story?

What prompted the story?	Number of stories*	Valid percentage
An event	797	87.2%
An issue	109	11.9%
Can't tell	8	0.9%
Total	914	100%

* One missing value

The study developed this subject and asked a followup question (Question 45) to see if stories as broadcast were concerned with an event only, an event with the underlying issue mentioned, an event with the issue covered in depth or the issue only. The results showed that about 20% of stories overall were concerned with an event only, 35% with an event with an underlying issue mentioned, 35% with an event with an issue covered in depth and 8 % were restricted to an issue only.

Table 7: What is the story concerned with?

Is story concerned with:	Number of stories*	Valid percentage
Event only	195	21.3%
Event with underlying issue	322	35.2%
Event with issue in depth	320	35%
Issue only	77	8.5%
Total	914	100%

* One missing value

3.9 Captions

The study asked a series of questions about captions (Questions 25-28) which related to television news stories. Captions, like visuals and graphics are one element in the visual mix of a television news story that impinge on the balance and fairness of the story. Essentially they are labels which can contain value judgements. Because captions are reductionist items, similar to a newspaper headline, they must be accurate, relevant, not overstate the case but be easily understood. They must be also be convenient, attractive and grab attention.

The study asked whether the story contained captions which related to the source or the story (not the reporter/newsreader), whether the captions were descriptive, evaluative or mixed, and to what extent evaluative or mixed captions were supported by other sources or physical evidence in the story. The accuracy of the captions in the context of the story was also examined.

Overall the results showed that captions in television news stories in the sample were non problematic in terms of balance and fairness. Over 90% of captions used were descriptive and the small number of captions which were evaluative or a mixture of descriptive and evaluative were generally supported by other sources or physical evidence in the story and were predominantly accurate.

3.10 Wallpaper footage and file footage of television news

The study asked a number of questions (Questions 29-35) about the use of video footage and file video footage on the basis that the visual element of news is a major influence on how the audience perceives the news in terms of balance and fairness. Over eighty per cent (81.1%) of the 553 television stories in the sample featured video footage, and in 80.6% of cases where video footage was featured the coders judged that the pictures matched the narrative.

The study also asked whether the story used wallpaper footage (Question 31), described for the purposes of the study as "generally appropriate visuals serving as a background to the journalistic narrative which are not part of the events covered in the story", and how important the wallpaper footage was in presenting a particular point of view in the story. A total of 47.7% of television stories used wallpaper footage and in 60% of those stories wallpaper footage was rated as either "very important" or "important" in presenting a particular point of view. In 67% of the stories containing wallpaper footage, file footage was used and in more than half these cases (58%) it was not identified as such.

3.10.1 Summary and researchers' evaluation

Clearly video footage is an integral part of the news. The question raised by the results, particularly in relation to file footage, is whether there is a need in terms of balance and fairness to remind viewers that the visual images they are seeing are recycled visual images. Clearly there are strong implications for balance and fairness when one particularly dramatic piece of file footage is repeatedly used in news to increase the pace and dramatic tension of otherwise boring news stories (see the Ross story, analysed later in this chapter). Putnis (1994) suggests reconstruction by the use of file footage means images are displaced, taken out of the context which gives them meanings and edited to suit new purposes and support new meanings. Putnis in his study of Brisbane television news found that taken as a whole over 50% of domestic news stories include file tape. The issue is, perhaps, not the use of file footage, but its disclosure as such to viewers.

3.11 Type of news

3.11.1 Crime

The study looked at what type of crime stories were reported by broadcasters against a typology of eight categories. Over a third (36.9%) of crime stories dealt with crime incidents followed by 24.6% dealing with court reporting. General crime issues were reported in 11% of stories, 8.9% of stories reported police activities, prison issues 5.5%, legislative activity about crime and policing 2.1%, prison escapes 0.4% and the "other" category 10.2%.

The results show over 60% of crime stories relate to a crime incident or to court reports. Court reporting showed a general increase in television news with a marked jump in the number of court report stories in 1994 by both TV One and TV3 News. Over a third (36.7%) of the court report stories in the sample for TV One News between 1985 and 1994 were

broadcast in 1994 and over 80% of court reporting for TV3 was broadcast in 1994. In 1990 and 1992 three court stories only were reported in our sample for TV3 News. In 1994 this had jumped to 13. The court reporting concentrated almost exclusively on the criminal court.

The survey also examined what type of crime offence was reported. In 13.2% of the stories the question was not applicable because the content did not feature a crime offence. Eight other categories were listed for coders from violent offences through to property offences. Violent offences accounted for 44.9% of the stories, sexual offences 8.1%, white collar dishonesty 6.8%, other offences of dishonesty 4.7%, drugs 3.8% and property 1.7%. The other and mixed offences category amounted to 16.6%. All broadcasters (with the exclusion of Mana News) carried similar proportions of stories about violent offences. TV3 carried a higher proportion of stories about sexual offences.

3.11.2 Summary and researchers' evaluation

The qualitative analysis of crime news showed that court or court-related news was the one facet of crime news which consistently raised issues in relation to balance and fairness. These were:

1. The essential presumption of innocent until proven guilty is under threat by television news. Some of the court stories coded make judgment calls, both subtle and overt, as to an alleged offender's guilt or innocence.
2. And television news is taking increased risks with its film of crime victims. TV3 News, (21 November 1994) features an alleged rape victim in the Dunedin doctor name suppression case. The woman is featured entering Medical Council hearings. While her face is not seen, her back view, hairstyle and the clothes she is wearing are clearly visible. Later on in the news story she is identified as a nurse who used to work for the doctor. The broadcast pushed the boundaries to the limit particularly if criminal proceedings in relation to the complaint follow. *not clear*
3. In several other stories coded reporters made damaging assumptions about defendants implying guilt with remarks that they had showed no emotion or remorse with respect to charges against them. These remarks are in fact a reporter's interpretation and opinion of a defendant's emotional state but they are reported as "fact" and can be highly prejudicial.

Crime news constitutes a constant and significant portion of television news in New Zealand. The study shows the crime news which is broadcast is characterised by:

1. increasing coverage by television of court news, almost exclusively the criminal court,
2. over-reporting of violent and/or sexual offences in that the broadcast crime news does not represent violent crimes in the proportion in which they are actually committed. (The same applies for newspapers, McGregor, 1993)

The increase in court reporting by television has interesting implications for newsroom resources. Court news is easy to capture in that there is a systematic and dependable supply usually in close vicinity to news rooms. Heavier use of court reportage in broadcast news also accentuates the concentration on crimes which are solved and perpetuates a particular picture of the criminal justice system. Surette (1992) states it is the courts that the news media most often show as the social institutions charged with processing offenders and dispensing justice.

The nature of court coverage has changed along with the amount. Television news reports of court stories are less sedate, more intrusive of privacy, and highly reliant on visuals which incorporate tension, emotion or pathos outside court rooms. The use by television news of film of defendants, families, lawyers and victims leaving and arriving at court has become a dramatic mainstay of the nightly news. Both TV One news and TV3 in the sample period "make news" from their own presence by featuring as dramatic visuals a defendant trying to shield themselves or their families from the intrusion of cameras.

For example, TV3 news (19 October 1994) ran a story on the jury's retirement in the Ross babysitter case in which the woman defendant was accused of murdering infants in her care. The story featured in the headlines to the news. The headline featured dramatic action footage of Ross rushing from a car and hitting cameras. This film, which was not shot on the day of the story unless Ross had several changes of clothes for the day, accompanied voiceover from John Hawkesby who told viewers the news programme would include the "latest on the Palmerston North baby murder trial." The visuals of Ross upset at the presence of cameras did not relate to the actual story which was about the judge's summing up. The visuals which featured in the headline simply acted as a dramatic audience drawcard and were unfair to the defendant and irrelevant to the story which was a straightforward piece about the summing up and the jury's retirement. There appears to be an increasing tendency for court news to rely on defendants' and families' concern at intrusive cameras to provide dramatic film footage rather than anything inherent in the story itself. While cameras are entitled to shoot in a public place it would be worrying indeed if the need for "high concept" (dramatic, pacey, action) film outweighs any rights defendants may possess.

The nature of television court coverage has clear implications in relation to s4(1)(b) and s4(1)(c) of the Broadcasting Act 1989, the responsibility of broadcasters for programme standards. Every broadcaster is responsible for maintaining in its programmes and their presentation, standards which are consistent with the maintenance of law and order; and the privacy of the individual. The general standards in the Codes of Broadcasting Practice for both radio and television list a code relating to respect for the principles of law which sustain our society. It is clear from the study that television news is pushing the boundaries of contempt of court and the fundamental principle of the presumption of innocence.

3.11.3 Politics

Coders were asked to identify what type of political story was broadcast ranging across 17 categories from leadership poll to parliamentary business. Policy matters constituted 31.8% of the sample with economic policy comprising 14.6%. Political controversy featured in 14.3% of stories, international diplomacy featured in 8.4% of stories, political party affairs in 7.6% of stories and party fortunes in 4.5%. Electoral issues comprised 3.1% of issues. Stories about political leadership and politician's fortunes amounted to 2.8% each. Two per cent and under of stories related to political visits, party polls, personality profiles, constitutional issues, parliamentary business and leadership polls. The "other" category constituted 7.3%.

The study also asked whether the political story as broadcast was predominantly personality-based, issue-based, mixed or other. Over two thirds of the stories (68%) were issue-based, 9.7% were personality-based and 20.3% were regarded as a mixture of issues and personality. Holmes and TV 3 features were more likely to feature personality-based political stories whereas Morning Report featured political stories which were issue-based almost exclusively.

3.11.4 Researchers' evaluation

A persistent criticism of broadcast news by politicians in opposition is that they fare poorly quantitatively and struggle to find a voice on either radio or television news. Political incumbency as a factor influencing news media coverage has been analysed by a number of commentators; Graber (1993) and Tiffen (1989). Tiffen comments on the publicity advantages of political incumbency and states that "Governments enact decisions and because action is more consequential than criticism they are inherently more newsworthy than Oppositions" (p.129). Tiffen states that Governments enjoy more initiative in their media relations and can help focus the news agenda into particular areas. They also have advantages as the custodians of the administrative and ceremonial roles of the State. And he points out that Governments also have an interest in reducing the Opposition's visibility where this is possible. In the next chapter the concept of political incumbency is examined by contrasting the nature of Government and Opposition sourcing in news stories.

3.11.5 Health

The type of health story was examined looking at 18 categories ranging from stories about health cures or epidemics through to health policy and waiting lists (see Question 17(b)). Stories broadcast in the sample showed a more even spread than was revealed in other subject areas. Proportionately more stories featured health policy 11.6%, health finance 9.6%, safety 9.6%, industrial relations 8.9%, ethical issues 8.2%.

The study looked to see if health stories featured patient health or health structures (see Question 18(c)). Over a third (35.2%) of stories were concerned predominantly with patient health, 17.9% with health structures, 12.4% of stories were a mixture of patient health and health structures and other health stories were 34.5%.

3.11.6 Researchers' evaluation

The question was asked partly to examine whether news media concerns about the flow of information as a consequence of health restructuring in 1991 were being realised. The restructuring had profound implications for the news media because it choked off a systematic supply of health news from the monthly public meetings held by area health boards. Elected area health boards were removed and replaced with Government-appointed commissioners. Public access to information under the area health board system had previously been safeguarded by the Local Government Meetings and Information Act 1987. The new health agencies were excluded from this act and the legislation provided no requirement for notification of meetings, or public attendance at meetings. As Tully and Fountain (1993) state the Government criticised the news media for its coverage of the health changes while restricting media access to information. While the new agencies come under the ambit of the Official Information Act 1982, this legislation has generally proved a cumbersome, reactive and slow way for journalists to access information. It relies largely on journalists knowing what information they are looking for when they make a request.

It is clear from the results reported earlier that the proportions of health news have generally increased rather than decreased which suggest that while one type of news (reportage of area health board meetings) has declined, other types of health news are being reported. The results show that there was a general decline in 1992, perhaps as a consequence of the health restructuring, but that health news increased as a proportion of the sample in 1994. This clearly indicates the news media have found different access paths to different types of health news and discovered new ways of covering the health round. For example, sourcing from

health administrators dropped off to a solitary source across the entire sample and rose again in 1992 and by 1994 there were 17 health administrators sourced. Tentative support for the suggestion that the news media have found their way around the restrictions is found from results of patients as sources. From 1990 onwards patients appear to have increasing voice and an increasing use of family and friends and health experts is evident.

3.11.7 Maori

Maori stories were examined to see what type of news was covered (see Question 17(d)). Treaty issues comprised 18.7% of stories broadcast, policy 11.4%, 10.8% culture. Stories featuring employment, health, education, welfare issues and housing amounted to 18.2% in total. It should be noted that 126 stories of the total sample of 176 Maori stories were broadcast by Mana News.

The bad news/good news debate is a perennial one for journalists and in 1994 Martyn Lewis, the BBC TV News presenter, entered the fray. He quoted a former chairman of the BBC as stating, "the measure of responsibility is this: that by its nature broadcasting must be in a constant and sensitive relationship with the moral condition of society. Broadcasters are, and must be, involved: this gives them a responsibility they cannot evade." Lewis provoked his colleagues by arguing that when broadcasters decided the editorial priorities for each day's news "we should be more prepared than we have been in the past to weight the positive stories--not artificially created, but as they *naturally* occur in the news agenda--on the same set of journalistic scales on which *we* weigh the negative stories." His remarks provoked considerable journalistic breast-beating but have relevance for this research.

The study asked coders to indicate whether news stories about Maori issues were predominantly good news, bad news or neutral in emphasis. This question was underpinned by news media scholarship both overseas and in New Zealand which points to an unremitting portrayal of Maori in a negative light by the news media, or invisibility of Maori stories in the news agenda. The results of the broadcast news study confirm these findings as far as television news is concerned. Bad news prevails over good news in television news coverage. While the sample was small for both TVNZ and TV3, over half the stories were coded as predominantly bad news, with only a third good news, and a smaller number predominantly neutral. For TV One 57% of the 21 stories coded as Maori were bad news stories, 30% were good news and the other 13% were classified as neutral. On TV3 which broadcast only 8 Maori stories in the sample period, bad news and good news stories were even. It must be noted that the category "bad news" includes both stories which are bad news *for* Maori, and bad news *about* Maori. But clearly one of the major reasons why particular Maori issues and events become news is when inherently they constitute bad news which is often expressed as conflict.

By contrast with television coverage of Maori stories, the radio picture is quite different. The results showed the Maori stories broadcast on Morning Report were predominantly neutral (93.3%). No good news stories were coded for Morning Report and only one bad news story. Mana News featured more equal proportions of good news (37.3%), bad news (26.9%) and neutral stories (35.7%).

The nature of bad news in Mana News was predominantly bad news "for" Maori, either bad news for an individual Maori, bad news for a Maori organisation, or for Maori as a people. For example, a story on the Huntly mine explosion (24/9/92) was treated by Mana News in the context of what it meant for the Maori community, particularly if the mine closed. Another example concerned an education story (3/10/90) which explored the dearth of trained Maori language teachers which was clearly bad news "for" Maori. Only one story

defined as bad news was bad news "about" Maori, while 33 were bad news for Maori. Unlike television news the focus for Mana News was not conflict, but rather the problems that face Maori and Mana News stories usually included reference to solutions to those problems. There was a fundamental difference in the way in which a bad news story was told on Mana News.

3.11.8 Researchers' evaluation

The paucity of Maori news stories run by traditional broadcasters is compounded by negativity, sensationalism and stereotypical depiction which accompanied some of the stories coded. It is worth examining one story in some detail to illustrate our criticism.

A TV3 story (30 Sept, 1992) on land claims in Maunganui which originated from the release of the Waitangi Tribunal Te Roroa report, in which the Tribunal for the first time made recommendations concerning freehold land, exemplified all three elements (negativity, sensationalism and stereotypical depiction) which made the story both unfair and biased. The story focused on the reaction of local farmers and was an inflammatory story about how local farmers were arming themselves. Nowhere in the story is a Maori voice heard. No Maori appears on camera and no Maori sources are used in the story. What was actually in the report, its historical significance to the local Maori and other New Zealanders as partners to the Treaty of Waitangi, was not covered, with the report being referred to once and in a fleeting way. The story began with John Hawkesby introducing the story and a visual which carried the word "Grim Warning" over the top of a photo of a M16 semi or fully automatic military weapon. The visual was meant to symbolise the type of firearms a farmer would have on the farm.

The reporter begins with the extravagant statement that "all hell could break loose in this paradise" and that "there is talk of farmers arming themselves, the land claims are dividing the north." Nowhere in the story do any of the farmers interviewed actually say they have armed themselves because of the release of the report. Bill Guest, a farmer from the region and a member of Federated Farmers, did say in response to a question put by the reporter which viewers did not hear, that "the majority of farmers in Northland would have firearms, but while those were probably purchased for sports there is a concern".

The emphasis of the TV3 story was that land was going to be forcefully taken from farmers expressed in reportorial comment such as "farmers taking up arms against the Maori challenge". The actual recommendation of the Tribunal was that the Government take all steps required to acquire the named lands and return them to the tangata whenua. The story was hyped unnecessarily through visuals, emotional narrative and one-sided sourcing. The use of inflammatory language is revealed in the reporter's closing remarks, "ancient tribes of Maunganui fighting over land resorted to cannibalism and these hills could once again be the scene of violent confrontation if the Government doesn't settle the latest land claim quickly." The story raised the question of the abilities and responsibilities of mainstream television news to accurately and sensitively represent the reality of Maori in New Zealand. The news media is an important ingredient in the public mood on race relations. Stories such as the one examined above confirm the "bad news about Maori" emphasis of the news and reinforce the suspicion and hostility of some Maori towards the conventional news media. And as Entman (1994) states in his study of the portrayal of blacks on American network television news, "more important, over time, the specific realities depicted in single stories may accumulate to form a summary message that distorts social reality".

Commentators such as Fox (1992) and Walker (1994) state that there is a Maori perspective of news distinct from the traditional reportage of Maori news. But to date this Maori perspective has remained undefined. The results of this study help define what the Maori perspective of news is. For Mana News the focus is not on dissension between people but rather on the dilemmas for Maori. The results confirm Walker's (1994) comment that Mana News provides "New Zealand with a window on Maori reality that is positive and optimistic. It is an antidote to the prevailing negative images of Maori hitherto promulgated ad nauseam by the Fourth Estate" (p.5).

CHAPTER FOUR

THE SOURCING OF BROADCAST NEWS

4.1 Introduction

The study comprehensively examined sources in news stories and coders analysed every source used in news stories against a set of questions and criteria. Sources of news, people cited, quoted or who speak in stories, impact decisively on the presentation and construction of news. The study examined the use, nature, depth and influence of sourcing in news stories in relation to balance and fairness. Sourcing intersects with the central tenet of journalism, that of telling all sides of a story. Ericson, Baranek and Chan (1989) state news constitutes an authoritative vision of social order through what sources are cited as saying. It is accepted that control over knowledge from news is worked out through the relationship between journalists and sources. This knowledge includes not only factual information but an image of society. Sources play a dominant role in the news process.

4.2 Number of sources

A total of 2025 sources were used in the 915 stories coded. The source content of stories ranged from no sources to nine sources in a story. Sixty-one stories carried no sources. Of the stories with sources, forty-five per cent of stories used one source only, 25% used two sources and 15% of stories used three sources. The remaining 15% of stories carried between four and nine sources. Only one story carried nine sources and nine stories featured eight sources.

The number of sources is only one measurement of the amount of sourcing - time spent speaking by each source in the story and the number of repeats (times the story returns to a source in citation or sound bite) have also been coded.

The table below shows the number of sources recorded from each of the programmes, and the average number per story. Holmes at 3.4 and TV3 features at 3.1 had the largest average number of sources per story. TV3 news and TV One news were similar with averages of 2.5 and 2.4 respectively. Morning Report news had an average 1.4 and the longer feature stories, 2.3. Mana News used 1.5 sources.

Table 8: Number of sources and average number per story

Sources	TV1 News	Top Half	Holmes	TV3 Features	TV3 News	MR News	MR Features	Mana	Overall Total
Number of Sources	695	80	189	55	388	141	285	192	2025
Average Number for Story	2.4	1.6	3.4	3.1	2.5	1.4	2.3	1.5	2.3

For all programmes except Mana, the number of sources has tended to rise a little across the years - though not in a simple pattern. For TV One news the average number of sources in 1985 was 2.2. This rose until in 1989 there were 2.7 sources per story. It dropped to 2.3 in 1990 and 1992 and was 2.4 in 1994. The source numbers in Holmes stories peaked at 3.8 in 1992, dropping back to 3.2 in 1994. Source numbers in TV3 features have risen overall - with a peak in 1992, while source numbers in TV3 news have risen steadily from 2.4 in 1990 to 3 in 1994. Morning Report also saw an increase. The average number of sources in Morning Report news increased from 1.3 in 1985 to 1.6 in 1994. Over the same time the sources in feature stories rose from an 1.8 to 2.7. In Mana News source numbers were 1.6 in 1990, 1.7 in 1992 and dropped to 1.3 in 1994.

4.3 Source identification

The study asked coders to identify whether sources spoke for themselves, were cited, or both spoke for themselves and were cited. The traditional notion of news journalism is that the source of story content should be fully identified so that viewers and listeners know where the story has come from. Traditionally sources in stories have been identified and presented by speaking for themselves, had their identity and status in connection with the story presented through citation, or the source is identified and presented in the story through a combination of a presenter or reporter citing a source and the source speaking for himself or herself.

Of the 2025 sources in the study 25.4% spoke for themselves, 34.1% were cited and 40.6% both spoke for themselves and were cited. Several individual broadcasters matched the overall split between the three categories fairly closely, including TV One news and Top Half. Holmes, TV3 features and TV3 news had a higher than average percentage of sources just speaking for themselves at 45%, 52% and 41.6% respectively. Morning Report and Mana News made little use of sources just speaking for themselves, with no cases in Morning Report news, 5% in Morning Report features and 9.6% in Mana News. Morning Report news had the largest percentage of sources just being cited (75.9%) while both Morning Report features (59.5%) and Mana News (76%) had a higher than average percentage of sources that were both speaking for themselves and being cited.

The study examined the identification of the source in the story. The degree of identification of sourcing in news stories can affect the credibility of the news and audience perceptions of the reliability of elements of the story. A story in which a source is cited as "police say", for example, may be less credible for news audiences than a story in which an individually named police representative is sourced and identified as the source. Coders were asked to rate the fullest identification of the source in the story against a five point scale ranging from "very complete" to "very incomplete" for each of the three categories--speaking for themselves, being cited, and both speaking for themselves and being cited. The results overall showed a clear difference in the completeness of identification of sources against the three categories. The identification of sources who were both cited and spoke for themselves were proportionately far more likely to be rated as "very complete" "complete" or "adequate" (97.6%) than the other two categories. The identification of sources who spoke for themselves rated as "very complete", "complete" or "adequate" amounted to 82% while the proportion of sources whose fullest identification was rated in these three categories for cited sources was 71.4%. The tables which follow collapse the "very complete" and "complete" categories and the "incomplete" and "very incomplete" categories.

Table 9: Identification of sources both cited and speaking for themselves, by percentage

Identification	TV1 News	Top Half	Holmes	TV3 Features	TV3 News	MR News	MR Features	Mana	Overall Total
Complete	82	79	82.4	64.3	96.3	96.7	99.4	83.9	89.0
Adequate	13.5	10.5	11.7	28.6	2.8	3.3	0.6	14.7	8.6
Incomplete	4.5	10.5	5.9	7.1	0.9	-	-	1.4	2.4

Table 10: Identification of sources speaking only for themselves, by percentage

Identification	TV1 News	Top Half	Holmes	TV3 Features	TV3 News	MR News	MR Features	Mana	Overall Total
Complete	65.6	77.8	56.6	92.9	67.1	N/A	100	69.6	67.7
Adequate	10.8	11.1	22.9	-	16.1	N/A	-	30.4	14.3
Incomplete	23.6	11.1	20.5	7.1	11.6	N/A	-	-	18

Table 11: Identification of sources cited only, by percentage

Identification	TV1 News	Top Half	Holmes	TV3 Features	TV3 News	MR News	MR Features	Mana	Overall Total
Complete	34.2	51.9	22.2	14.3	23.5	76.5	75.2	44.8	45.3
Adequate	30.8	18.5	33.3	57.1	24.5	18.6	18.9	24.1	26.1
Incomplete	35	29.6	44.5	28.6	52	4.9	5.9	31.1	28.6

It is clear from these results that overall a substantial 28.6% of cited sources are incompletely identified, according to coders, compared with 18% for sources speaking for themselves and a much lesser number, 2.4%, for sources who are both cited and speak for themselves. The figures show a problem with cited sources and in part this reflects the practice of broadcasters to use institutions as sources -- "police say" and "the Government says" -- and has been excused by broadcasters on the basis of shorter story length. But the results for Morning Report news reveal the frailty of the argument. Morning Report news (with the overall shortest story length) used complete sourcing for 76.5% of its cited sources and only 4.9% of cited sources were judged as incompletely identified. Morning Report features were similar with a low 5.9% of cited sources incompletely identified. Results for Mana News were similar to the average in terms of cited sources.

Over all television can be differentiated from radio. While TV3 features at 28.6% reflected the average in terms of incomplete cited sources, they also had the lowest percentage of cited sources judged as complete, with 57.1% judged merely as adequate. TV3 news had 52% of its cited sources coded as incompletely identified. The results for Holmes were 44.5% of cited sources judged as inadequate, while the figure for TV One news was 35%.

TV One news showed a decreasing rate of identifying cited sources from 1985 to 1990--in 1985 27.3% of cited sources were incomplete and in 1990 the figure was 55.8%. In 1994 the figure had come back to 35.5% coded as incomplete. Holmes shows no clear pattern across the years. TV3 news had the highest percentage of incompletely identified cited sources. Again, from a high of 60.9% of incompletely identified cited sources in 1990, the percentage has dropped in 1994 to 37.3%.

4.3.1 Summary and researchers' evaluation

The results showed that a mixed mode of source presentation, citation and sources speaking for themselves, provides the broadcast news audience with a proportionately higher level of source identification and knowledge about source in news. The credibility of broadcast news depends largely on the public's perception of the integrity of sources used to gather the story. This integrity can be measured by looking not only at what is said but also at who is saying it. If the public cannot tell who is saying it, then the incomplete identification or, in some cases anonymity of sources, raises questions about the believability of the news. O'Brien (1992) points to the potential vulnerability of journalists to sophisticated political and public relations operatives when sources are not fully and completely identified. The results show that in 1994 over a third of cited sources (as opposed to sources speaking for themselves or sources who are both cited and speak for themselves) in television news stories are incompletely identified.

The codes of broadcasting practice for both television and radio compel broadcasters to keep the standards of integrity and reliability of news sources under constant review. The results point to a difficulty with the code if it is to be used by members of the public to lodge a complaint in relation to sourcing. If, in a significant number of stories, sources are less transparent because they are being cited in a generalised way only, then a potential complainant must take it on trust that broadcasters have, firstly, used a news source at all for the basis of the story and, secondly, that the standards of integrity and reliability of news sources are kept under constant review. The results of this research indicate that the nature of news in relation to identification of sourcing and attribution is changing. Taylor (1993) states broadcasters have used the excuse of network time constraints for the slippage in identification of sources and in attribution. But in the New Zealand context, the idea that the shortened length of news stories means "something must go" and that something is source identification is undermined by the results for Morning Report. Morning Report stories are shorter but the integrity of source identification has been largely retained.

When source identification is obscure, the integrity of political reporting is one area of journalism at particular risk. Journalists can imply inside knowledge or some revelation or be fed an "exclusive" or unwittingly used to "float a balloon". The results point to a need to review the codes of practice so broadcast news audiences can be confident in the identification of sources within a story. As it stands, the current code appears unenforceable from the public's viewpoint where a cited source is incompletely identified.

4.4 Source speaking time

Much of the contest between broadcasters, their critics and academic researchers has centred on the duration of sound bites. The reducing sound bite argument, however, tends to obscure a more thorough analysis of what should be a central question about sourcing in new stories which is the total amount of time a source is given in a news story. This measurement takes account of repeated sound bites from the one source in a story.

The results show some clear trends across time for the individual broadcasters. The two major television news programmes TV One and TV3 have reduced the amount of time given to sources speaking on air. In 1985 TV One news averaged 21 seconds for each source speaking for himself or herself. This had dropped to 10.4 seconds in 1994. In 1990 TV3 gave an average of 13.4 seconds to each source who spoke which rose to 17.6 seconds in 1992 when the programme went to an hour, and has dropped to 10.5 seconds in 1994.

The television magazine segments of the news, Holmes and Ralston and his predecessors, show considerable increases in the amount of time given to sources speaking for themselves. In 1989 Holmes' average was 69.6 seconds and this had risen to 117.9 seconds per source in 1994. TV3 Features had risen from 27.8 seconds in 1990 to 92.5 seconds in 1994.

Time given to sources speaking for themselves also increased in Morning Report news and features. In 1985-1989 the Morning Report hour sampled contained no sources speaking for themselves in new stories. In 1990 sources speaking for themselves spoke for an average of 10 seconds which increased to 15.6 seconds in 1994. Morning Report feature stories in our sample fluctuated between 88.5 seconds to 161.6 seconds but had levelled out to 100.1 seconds in 1994.

The average time sources spoke for themselves in news stories on Mana News has dropped from an average of 129 seconds to an average of 58.2 seconds, reflecting programme format changes.

4.4.1 Summary and researchers' evaluation

The results confirm commentary and concerns about reducing sound bites. The reduction of time allocated to sources speaking for themselves is dramatic in the sense that sources now have half the time to tell their story on TV One news, a third less time on TV3 News and half the time on Mana News across the time studied. On TV One and TV3 news sources have approximately ten seconds in total to put their case, comment, describe, rebut, challenge and explain. The results have clear implications for the quality of news discourse and clearly influence the role of the news media in a democracy. The traditional information function of the news is influenced by the nature of sourcing. If sourcing in the news declines this will have a debilitating effect on the information quality of news.

4.5 Government and Opposition voices - testing incumbency

The analysis of source speaking time allowed for comparison of Government and Opposition voices and for testing the concept of political incumbency as a factor in the balance of broadcast news. When all Government and Opposition spoken sources are totalled across all the subjects, as in the table below, the influence of incumbency is marked.

The construction of categories in the study allowed some comparisons of Government versus Opposition voices over time. The sample period 1985-1994 provides examination of sources over both Labour and National Governments and periods when both Labour and National were in opposition. For the purpose of this comparison third party sources were excluded from the data.

Table 12: Source speaking time for Government and Opposition in seconds

Source Speaking Time	TV1 News	Top Half	Holmes	TV3 Features	TV3 News	MR News	MR Features	Mana	Overall Total
Average Time Government MP	15.9	22	183	125	22.5	11.8	131.1	273.2	98.1
Average Time Opposition MP	17.5	-	187.2	106.5	21.4	17.5	107.3	240	87.3
Total Time Government MP	1402	22	3177	721	1107	86	5561	574	12660
Total Time Opposition MP	797	-	142	213	232	35	3007	721	6417

Over all, almost twice as many Government sources as Opposition sources spoke on air (209 compared with 106). Government sources spent almost twice as much time talking on air as did Opposition sources, and the average speaking time for Government sources was longer at 98.1 seconds than for Opposition sources at 87.2 seconds. This pattern held true for almost all programmes.

Mana News was the only programme to have run more seconds of Opposition speaking than Government source speaking time. However, the Opposition total consists of three longer interviews in 1990. There were no Opposition voices heard on Mana in 1992 and 1994.

The ratio of Government to Opposition voices on TV One news showed a clear disparity. At 1402 seconds for Government sources and 797 seconds Opposition time - the Opposition had only 57% of the time that the Government had. When Opposition sources spoke on air, they had on average a longer time per story to speak on TV One news - 15.9 seconds for Government sources versus 17.5 seconds for the Opposition. But this did not hold true for each year and the overall figures mask the reality. In 1985, while Labour was in power, Opposition MPs had a longer total speaking time (391 seconds) compared with Government MPs (351 seconds). The average speaking time for the Opposition in 1985 was 39.2 seconds compared with 21.9 seconds for Government sources. In 1987 and 1989 Government MPs spoke for almost twice the length of time as Opposition MPs. In 1990, (election year when National gained power in October) Government voices were heard for 224 seconds, while Opposition voices were heard for 130 seconds. Average speaking times were almost identical. In 1992 and 1994 with National in power the comparative strength of the voice of incumbency grew. In 1992, Government sources spoke for a total of 153 seconds, while Opposition sources spoke for only 34 seconds (only 22% of the time that Government sources had). In 1994 things were even worse for the Opposition. Government sources had five times the amount of air time - 121 seconds compared with the Opposition's 25 seconds. When Opposition sources did get on air they spoke for an average of 5 seconds, less than half the time of the Government sources at 12.1 seconds.

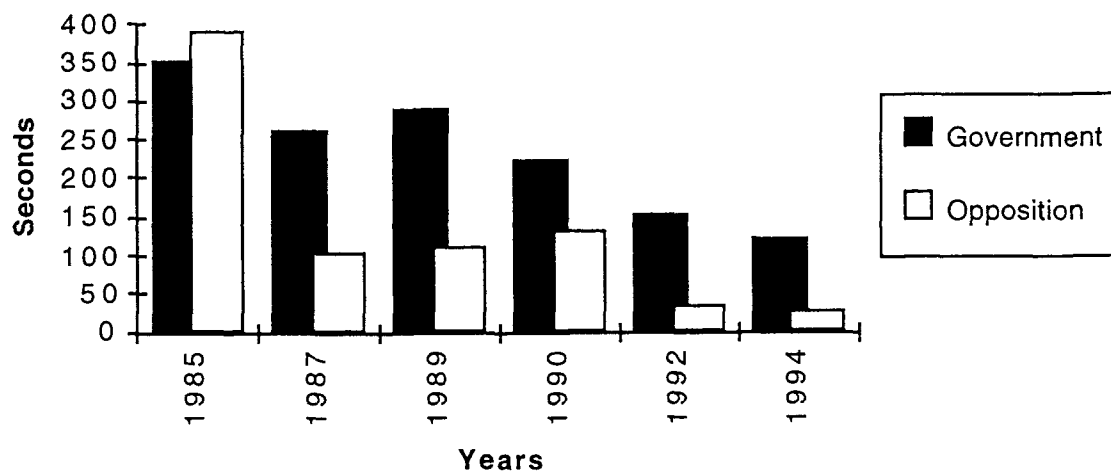
Holmes also broadcast during a change of Government from Labour to National, but its more generalised bias towards incumbency cannot be interpreted as favouring one party more than another. Overall, Government sources had more than twice the time on air than Opposition sources (3177 seconds compared with 1412 seconds). But Opposition sources had a slightly longer average speaking time - 183 seconds for Government sources and 187.2 seconds for Opposition sources. In 1989, while Labour was still in power, there were no Opposition sources speaking in the Holmes sample. Five Government sources spoke for a total of 590 seconds. In 1990, the changeover year, there were no Government sources in the sample. In 1992 however, the incumbency factor is working again: Government sources spoke for a total of 836 seconds while Opposition sources spoke for a total of 311 seconds (although their average speaking time was longer than Government sources). In 1994 things were worse for the Opposition. Government sources spoke for more than seven times the amount of time that Opposition sources did - 1751 seconds compared with 234 seconds. And Government sources on average spoke for far longer - an average of 291 seconds versus 117 seconds for Opposition sources. Altogether this represents a changeable performance by Holmes in terms of balancing by time the voices between Government and Opposition.

TV3 news and features show the strongest bias towards incumbency in terms of the amount of time sources spend speaking on air. In TV3 features, Government sources have more than 3 times the amount of airtime than Opposition sources. And for news the Government has nearly 5 times the amount of air time. Government speakers also have a longer average speaking time in each story than have Opposition sources on TV3. The small number of political sources coded in TV3 features make it difficult to draw conclusions. There were no political sources coded in the 1990 election year and the bias towards incumbency was consistent in 1992 and 1994. For TV3 news the picture is different for each year. In 1990, Government sources spoke for more than twice as long as Opposition sources. In 1992 there were more sources and the discrepancy in favour of the Government was an enormous 789 seconds to 64 seconds for Opposition sources. Average speaking time for Government sources was more than three times that of Opposition sources. However, in 1994 there was a large cutback in the amount of time spent on political sources and Government sources moved dramatically closer to Opposition sources. In 1994 Government sources in the sample spoke for a total of 78 seconds and Opposition sources spoke for 67 seconds. Average speaking times were 7.8 for Government sources and 8.4 seconds for the Opposition.

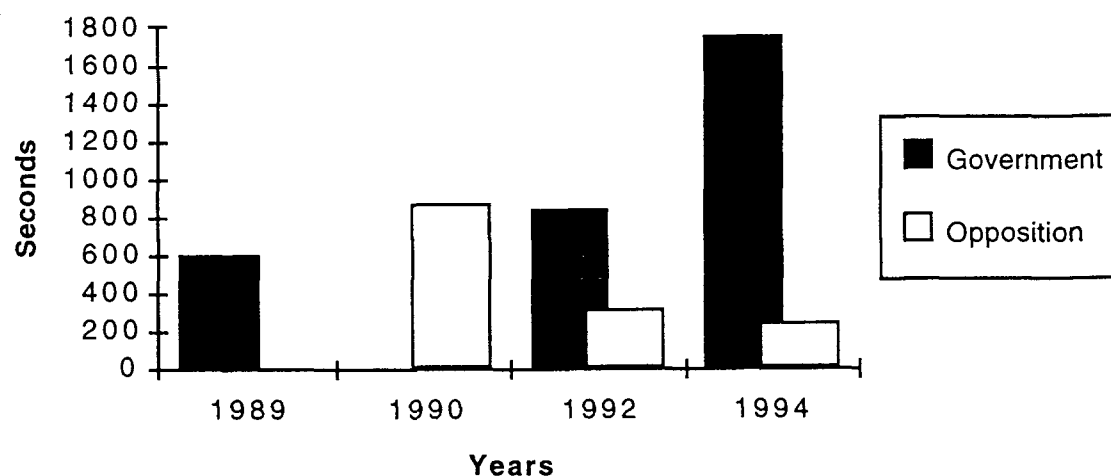
Morning Report also shows the incumbency factor at work. Morning Report news uses few recorded voices and audio clips were not recorded in the sample until 1990. Overall, there were 97 seconds of government voices compared to 35 seconds of Opposition voices. In the 1990 and 1992 samples only Government voices were heard. But in 1994 the Opposition had 35 seconds compared to the 8 seconds for the Government. Political voices form an important part of Morning Report features. Overall Government voices spoke for 5561 seconds compared with 3007 seconds for Opposition sources (54% of the time allotted to Government sources in the sample). Generally, Morning Report shows a far closer than average matching of Government and Opposition voices. In 1985 and 1987 Opposition people had 67% of the time of Government people. In 1990 that rose to 84% and in 1994 there was a closer balance at 91%. But there were two exceptions. In 1989 the Government (Labour) was given over six times the amount of Opposition speaking time and in 1992 the Government (National) had over twice as much. While the incumbency factor is demonstrated in Morning Report, it is more even-handed than television and has closed the gap between Government and Opposition voices over the study period.

All the programmes demonstrate that those in power have greater access to broadcast news. The imbalance between Government and Opposition voices is of particular concern with television where TV3 news and TVNZ news have in recent years given exceptionally large proportions of time to Government voices.

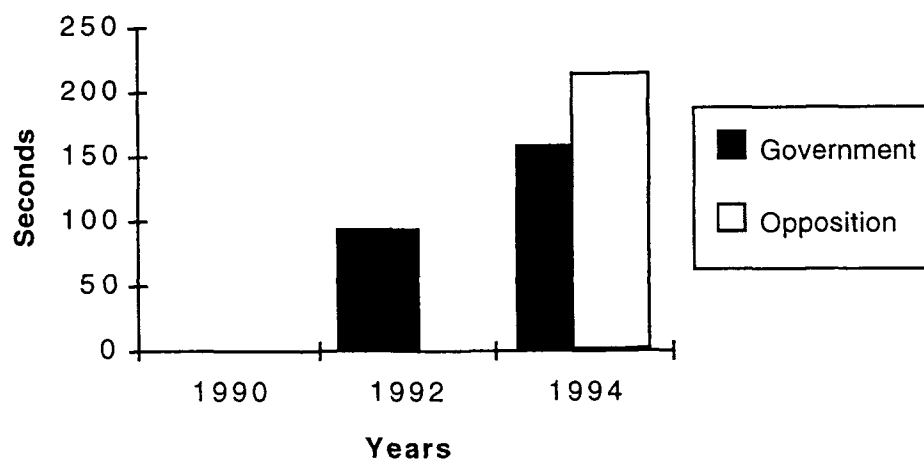
Graph 1: TV One news: Government and Opposition speaking time



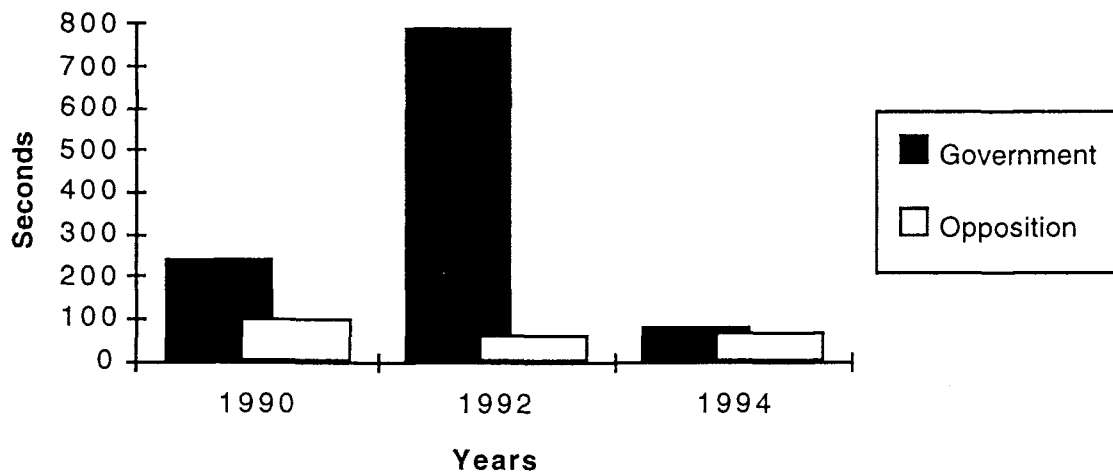
Graph 2: Holmes: Government and Opposition speaking time



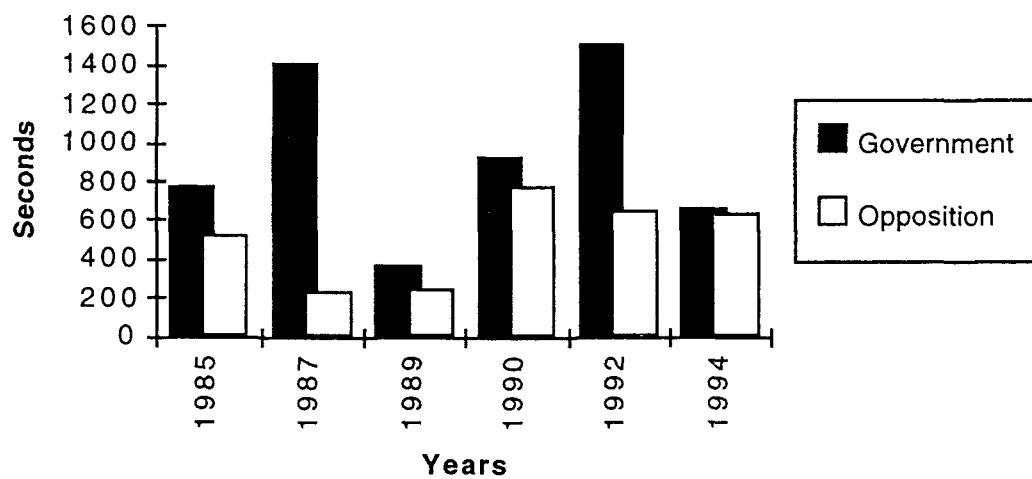
Graph 3: TV3 features: Government and Opposition speaking time



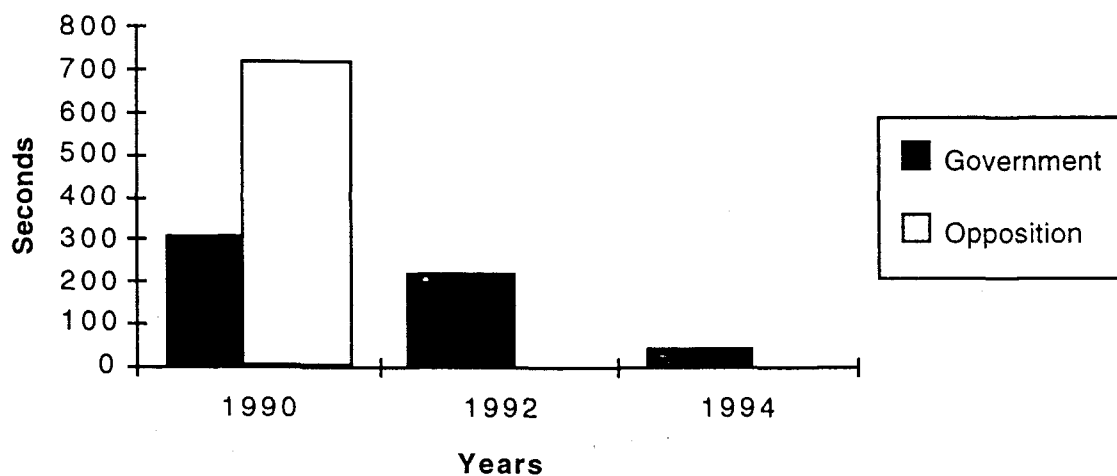
Graph 4: TV3 news: Government and Opposition speaking time



Graph 5: Morning Report news and features: Government and Opposition speaking time



Graph 6: Mana News: Government and Opposition speaking time



4.5.1 Summary and researchers' evaluation

The question of political bias in broadcast news is complex and multi-faceted and this aspect of the study has measured only the quantitative variable of source speaking time by Government and Opposition voices. The results show a clear bias towards the Government. This issue is whether the bias results primarily by virtue of incumbency and is therefore predictable and acceptable or whether there are other systematic news selection processes which disadvantage the Opposition. What is revealing is that for TV One News the disparity between Government voices and Opposition voices appears to be increasing.

imbalance
loaded term given what is actually being described, ie who is making news

It needs to be borne in mind that the news and quotas are incompatible notions. Some politicians are inherently more newsworthy than others by virtue of their temperament, their personality and their policies. Another influence on the voices which are heard is that the increasing level of sophistication by politicians about news media manipulation is by no means universal. Some politicians are adept at spin doctoring and headline attraction, others are not. Steve Maharey (1992) has written that it is essential for politicians to issue press releases if they are to be effective. "News must be anticipated, planned for and, where possible, made", he states (p.93). By contrast the news media views its fourth estate role as rowing against the prevailing current of media management strategies and tactics employed by politicians. As Keane (1991) so bluntly puts it, "the nasty business of lying in politics is a characteristic feature of democratic (and other) regimes" (p.101). Robust political journalism is a buffer against political mendacity. Broadcast news must guard against political propaganda no matter what its source.

4.6 Number of repeat sources

The study aimed to determine the depth of sourcing within broadcast news stories and coders were asked in relation to each story in the sample whether the source was repeated (Question 20 (l)). Of the 2025 sources across all broadcasters and in all the stories sampled, 48.5% of sources were repeated and 51.5% appeared in the news story only once.

The number of repeats was also examined (Question 20 (m)) and the study showed that the majority of sources were repeated once (44.3%) or twice (24.2%) and 77.9% of all repeated sources were either repeated once, twice or three times. At the other end of the scale one source was repeated 16 times.

If repeated sources are looked at by broadcast medium, a less uniform picture emerges because of the very different way in which Mana News used repeat sourcing in news stories. For example, of the repeated sources used by TV One news, 81% were repeated either once or twice, 80% repeated once or twice for TV3 news, 95% and 86% respectively for Morning Report news and features, 77% for Top Half, 63% for Holmes and 37.5% for TV3 features. The number of repeated sources for Mana News, on the other hand, showed only 18% of its repeated sources were repeated once or twice. The bulk of its repeated sources were clustered in the four repeats to seven repeats area (58%). Sources on Mana News clearly have more opportunities to speak in relation to a news story than any of the other broadcasters studied.

Looking at the means of repeated sources by broadcasters across time the results show Morning Report fluctuates from a low of 1.3 in 1985 to a high of 3.8 in 1990 and settles to 3 in 1994. Mana News remains relatively constant at about 5, and Holmes shows an increase from 1.9 in 1989 to 4.5 in 1994. The mean for TV3 Features is 3.8.

4.7 Overall sound quality and camera treatment for the source

Sound and video are essential elements in broadcast news stories and both elements, individually and collectively, can influence the balance of a story. For example, if one source suffers poor sound quality in a story, and a source expressing an opposing viewpoint does not, the audio quality has been a factor in the news presentation.

Each radio and television story was examined for the sound quality of the source as broadcast. Coders were asked to rate the sound quality of each source against a five point scale ranging from "very good" to "very poor" (Question 20(o)).

The results showed overwhelmingly that audio quality was not a problem for story sources in the sample period chosen. Ninety one per cent of sources in the study were rated as either "good" or "very good" in terms of overall sound quality, and a further 7% were rated as adequate.

A number of researchers have studied the inter-relationship between camera treatment and the sources of news. For example, Tiemens (1970) writes of the relationship between camera angle and communicator credibility and Mandell and Shaw (1973) examine the effect of camera angle and "bodily activity" in relation to how viewers pass judgements on people in the news. The effect of camera angle on source credibility and attraction has been researched by McCain, Chilberg and Wakshlag (1977).

The study asked coders to rate the overall camera treatment for its effect on the source and used a five point scale: strongly enhances, enhances, neither enhances nor diminishes, diminishes, strongly diminishes. The scale was devised to take account of camera angle, visual background, subject motion, all of which are ingredients in whether the subject of the news is perceived as credible and authoritative.

The results show the effect of camera treatment on the source (Question 20(n) was rated unproblematically by the coders. In 21% of cases, the overall camera treatment enhanced the source, and in 76% of cases the coders stated the overall camera treatment "neither enhances nor diminishes".

4.8 Interviews of sources in broadcast news

In the public mind, balance and fairness in broadcast news is determined not just by what is said but also how it is said. An interviewer's questioning style and tone can range from empathy to hostility and publicity about popular television hosts in contemporary debate about television news has suggested a "softening" of interviewing style in response to a perceived public disenchantment with "rude" and "aggressive" news media interviewers.

It is inherent in the varied nature of news that a variety of interview techniques needs to be employed depending on news content and the sources in the news story. In an interview in which the principal aim is to gather information, build up a cognitive picture for the news audience and increase knowledge, both supportive or fourth estate adversarial questions may be inappropriate, whereas straight forward information gathering questions are the most appropriate. But clearly where a politician or a public official is being either evasive or selective with the facts, supportive or neutral questions do not match the desired reportorial role which is to hold the public official or politician to account for his or her actions and performance. So a study of balance and fairness in broadcast news needs to investigate not only the interviewing style but the appropriateness of the questioning style to the context of the story.

A series of questions in the study (Questions 20 (p) to 20 (t)) looked at whether or not the source was interviewed so that questions and answers were broadcast. If so, coders then had to classify the questions against a six point typology ranging from "aggressive" to "weak", and they had to rate the appropriateness of the questions to the context of the story against a five point scale ranging from "very appropriate" to "very inappropriate". The tone of the interviewer's voice during questioning was noted against a three point scale from positive to negative. Coders listening to radio news stories and both watching and listening to television news stories identified who asked the questions against a list of fourteen categories of interviewer.

The study was constructed to provide a reliable picture of whether individual broadcasters employ particular interview styles. The results overall paint a positive picture of journalistic professionalism with respect to interview questions. Of the 2025 sources only 326 (18.8%) were interviewed so that questions and answers were broadcast. Of the questions put 45.8% were "information gathering", 28.7% were "fourth estate adversarial", 14.6% were "neutral" and 7.8% were "supportive". Only a tiny number featured at either end of the scale with 2.5% rated "aggressive" and 0.6% rated as "weak".

The appropriateness of the questions in the context of stories in the sample was rated positively by coders overall the broadcasters. Nearly ninety percent (88.5%) were rated as either "very appropriate" (15.6%) or "appropriate" (72.9%). Only 4% were rated as either "inappropriate" or "very inappropriate". Seven point five percent were rated as "neither appropriate nor inappropriate". Overall the interviewer's tone of voice during questioning was rated in 94.1% of instances as either positive (12.5%) or neutral (81.6%). Only 5.6% were rated as negative.

Looking at individual broadcasters 13.9% of the sources interviewed were questioned by Paul Holmes, 4.9% by Bill Ralston and 3.7% by Geoff Robinson. Other male reporters questioned sources in 43.5% of the interviews compared with 25% by other female reporters.

Over the years the two broadcast news interviewers who have attracted the most comment are Paul Holmes and Kim Hill while she was on Morning Report. The results for these two broadcasters relate to a small number of interviewed sources only recorded in the sample period. For Holmes the results showed that 11.8% of questions were coded as "aggressive", 47.1% were "fourth estate adversarial", 29.4% were "information gathering", 5.9% were "neutral" and 5.9% were "supportive". The appropriateness of questions asked of sources by Paul Holmes rated as 70.6% "appropriate", 17.6% "neither appropriate nor inappropriate" and 11.8% "inappropriate". His tone of voice in these interviews was coded as 5.9% "positive", 82.4% as "neutral" and 11.8% as "negative". For Kim Hill the number of interviews recorded was much lower but the results show no aggressive questions, and an even split between fourth estate, information gathering and neutral. All her questions were judged as appropriate but for tone of voice one third of her interviews were judged as negative.

4.9 Ethnicity of sources

The study asked coders to identify the ethnicity of sources in new stories (Question 20i). Overall the ethnicity of sources in the news stories sampled showed an overwhelming reliance on Pakeha newsmakers. A total of 61.7% of sources in the news stories sampled were identified as Pakeha, 12.8% Maori, 0.9% Pacific Island, 2.9% other and 21.1% unknown. The unknowns were often attached to stories in which sources were identified only as "police say" without any clues as to ethnicity or gender. When examining ethnicity by individual

broadcasters, all media except for Mana News rely on Pakeha sources. Mana News featured a similar proportion of Maori sources as the other media featured Pakeha sources. Only Top Half and Holmes (with the exception of Mana News) featured Maori or Pacific Island sources in proportion to their numbers in the population.

Taking the figures by the four broadcasters, for TVNZ 8.6% of news sources were Maori, 1.4% were Pacific Island and over 67% were Pakeha. TV3 had proportionately fewer Maori sources, 7.7%, and Pacific Island sources, 0.2%. Morning Report had the lowest percentage of Maori sourcing of news stories in the study at 5.3% Maori, and the same percentage of Pacific island sources as TV3 at 0.2%. Mana News sourcing was 65.6% Maori, 1.6% Pacific Island, and 18.5% Pakeha.

When the unknowns are taken out of the source equation (see table below) the figures by broadcaster show that TV One news had 85.6% of Pakeha sources, 8.1% of Maori sources and 1.9% Pacific Island sources. Holmes was higher than the overall TVNZ average. However, a quarter of the Maori sources appeared in one story - Maori 'street kids' interviewed in an item about youth crime. TV3 News has a higher percentage of Maori sourcing than TV3 Features, while Morning Report News' proportion of Maori sourcing is at 3.9% compared with 8.6% for Morning Report features. When the unknowns are eliminated, Mana News sourcing is 74.3% Maori, 21% Pakeha and at 1.7%, the highest proportion of all the broadcasters of Pacific Island sources in the stories sampled.

Table 13: Ethnicity of sources - excluding 'unknown' category, by percentage

Ethnicity (percentage)	TV1 News	Top Half	Holmes	TV3 Features	TV3 News	MR News	MR Features	Mana	Overall Total
Pakeha	85.6	84.3	75.9	84.1	86.6	92	90.0	21	79
Maori	8.1	13.7	19.1	4.5	10.6	3.9	8.6	74.3	16.4
Pacific Island	1.9	2	1.3	0	0.3	0	0.5	1.7	1.2
Other	4.4	0	3.7	11.4	2.4	3.9	0.9	3	3.4

4.9.1 Summary and researchers' evaluation

The notion of what constitutes an acceptable level of representation of ethnicity in news is a vexed question. Does the sourcing in news reflect some aspects of reality in that the considerable under-representation of Maori and Pacific Island sources in conventional broadcast news in New Zealand revealed in the study, may in part be due to the under-representation of Maori and Pacific Islanders in institutions which are relied on for sources and for news? Or is it a consequence of a Pakeha news agenda, too few Maori and Pacific island reporters and ignorance about the Maori perspective of news. The Maori perspective of news is defined by Fox (1992) and Walker (1994) as a window on Maori reality from a Maori perspective which incorporates the positive as well as the negative and displays an understanding of Maori issues and tikanga Maori.

The relative invisibility of both Maori and Pacific Islanders as sources in the news and newsmakers raises serious issues about diversity in television and radio news. Accuracy and social responsibility in news are not served by invisibility which promotes what Entman

(1994) has called "modern racism." The low numbers of Maori sources featured on Morning Report do not necessarily reflect the code of broadcasting practice for radio (general standards) which states (g) to respect the principles of partnership between Maori and Pakeha in New Zealand society in actively seeking a balanced contribution and views on matters relating to partnership.

The Broadcasting Act 1989 places a positive obligation on New Zealand on Air under section 36 to promote Maori language and Maori culture. This statutory compulsion, along with ministerial directives, led to the funding of Mana News as a separate Maori news programme. It is clear from the study that the relative insignificance of Maori as news sources in Morning Report is in part countered by Mana News whose stories primarily feature Maori as sources. However, the presence of Mana News does not excuse conventional broadcasters from making urgent efforts to improve the diversity and complexity of sourcing of stories about Maori.

4.10 Gender of sources

4.10.1 Number of sources by gender

The gender of sources used in news stories was overwhelmingly male at 67% male, 16.1% female and 16.9% unknown. The "unknowns" reflect stories in which a reporter or newscaster used descriptions such as "police say" with the gender of the source unknown. A common sense assumption is that the gender of unknown sources would not alter the gender imbalance and would reinforce the man-made nature of broadcast news stories. When the number of unknown sources by gender are taken out the results of sources by gender in news stories are even lower. Seventy nine per cent of sources in which the gender was known were male, and 21% female.

Table 14: Gender of source, by percentage

Gender	TV1 News	Top Half	Holmes	TV1 Total	TV3 Features	TV3 News	MR News	MR Features	Mana	Overall Total
Male	66.4	49.3	66.3	65	54.5	62.6	68.9	78.1	70.5	67
Female	14.7	20.5	24.1	17.1	27.3	17.3	8.1	10.2	20.5	16.1
Unknown	18.9	30.1	9.6	17.9	18.2	20.1	23	11.7	9	16.9

Table 15: The gender of identifiable sources, by percentage

Gender	TV1 News	Top Half	Holmes	TV1 Total	TV3 Features	TV3 News	MR News	MR Features	Mana	Overall Total
Male	81.9	70.6	73.4	79.2	66.7	78.4	89.4	88.4	77.5	80.6
Female	18.1	29.4	26.6	20.8	33.3	21.6	10.6	11.6	22.5	19.4

In our sample TV3 features like Wescott, Leighton Smith and Ralston, and TVNZ's magazine programmes Top Half and Holmes, had higher percentages of female sources. Morning Report, on the other hand had only 11.3% of female sources during the period studied. Mana News carried 22.5% of sources as women.

4.10.2 Gender of source by subject matter

While in all cases male sources outnumbered female sources, the percentage varied with subject matter. The table below shows that women were better represented in stories about health than any other subject matter. There was an overall average of 66% of male sources and 34% of female sources in health stories. Politics was the most male-dominated in terms of sourcing with 87% male sources and only 13% of sources in political stories being female. The figures for Maori stories are skewed because story numbers, and therefore source numbers, are so small.

Table 16: Male sources for different subjects areas, by percentage

Subject	TV1 News	Top Half	Holmes	TV3 Features	TV3 News	MR News	MR Features	Mana	Overall Total
Crime	80.7	78.9	73	-	72.8	87.5	87.8	-	78.3
Politics	87.4	100	84.5	73.7	87.1	92.1	86.8	-	87
Health	65.8	60	57.9	58.3	62	80	87.9	-	66
Maori	72.2	83.3	88.2	100	94.4	100	100	78.4	81.8

4.10.3 Speaking time by gender

When the total speaking time for each gender is analysed, males far outweigh females for every broadcaster (see table below). Furthermore the average speaking time for male sources is longer than for females for every news programme in the sample except TV3 News. There has been a general closing of the gap between average speaking time for females as opposed to males in 1994. In that year, for Morning Report Features the average time for male sources was 77.2 seconds while for females the average time was 152 seconds. For Holmes in 1994 the average speaking time for males was 110 seconds and for females, 140 seconds. However, in both these cases there were still far more male than female sources.

Table 17: Total speaking time and average speaking time for males and females, in seconds

Time in Seconds	TV1 News	Top Half	Holmes	TV3 Features	TV3 News	MR News	MR Features	Mana	Overall Total
Male total in sec	5629	1752	9585	2199	2903	421	18182	10309	50980
Female total in sec	1095	445	2737	766	833	37	2426	2741	11080
Average male speaking time	17.2	49.5	92.9	56	13.8	13.5	121.3	92.6	57.1
Average female speaking time	13.6	37.7	71	44.6	14.1	11	80.6	76.8	43.7

4.10.4 Summary and researchers' evaluation

This research confirms overseas study patterns into sources of news by gender. Two early studies of American network television news referred to by Brown, Bybee, Wearden and Straughan (1987) showed low percentages of women as sources: 15% of women in 1977, then a drop to 7% female news sources in 1979. What is disheartening is the lack of progress in the last decade when women's involvement in public life, in the work force, and in corporate institutions has increased dramatically. The continuing invisibility of women in news stories can no longer be attributed solely to the under-representation of women in institutional life relied on by journalists for stories. The consistently low percentage of female sources in news stories is further evidence of the lack of diversity in broadcast news.

When women are systematically invisible as newsmakers, that invisibility is a form of stereotyping because it implies women are less important than men, their participation in institutional and public life is less significant, their achievements less noteworthy, their challenges less dramatic and their disappointments less compelling. In *Images of Women*, a report of the Canadian Radio, Television and Telecommunications Commission in 1983, the definition of sex role stereotyping included the following points relevant to this study. These are:

- Failure to represent women in their full variety of ages, shapes, sizes and colour,
- Failure to reflect the increasing diversity of women's lives,
- Invisibility of women in discussion of many issues,
- Invisibility of female experts and decision-makers.

The results of the study relating to the gender of sources has implications for the codes of broadcasting practice. The general standards for radio state (h) To respect the principles of equity especially as they relate to the contribution and the views of all women in our society. The spirit of this general standard is not given expression in the percentage of sources by gender in the news stories broadcast by Morning Report.

A similar code does not exist for television. The Broadcasting Standards Authority has in the past rejected complaints relating to the invisibility of women in sports news which have attempted to utilise Code No 26 of the television codes suggesting that lack of coverage of women is likely to encourage denigration or discrimination against women. Currently non-coverage of women in the news appears to be largely a non-policy issue for television news unless a complainant can establish a breach of another specific code.

The Broadcasting Act 1989 outlining the functions of the Broadcasting Commission (New Zealand on Air) includes S 36(c)(i) to ensure that a range of broadcasts is available to provide for the interests of women.

4.11 Nature of source

The type of source in each of the four subject areas was examined by broadcaster in the study. Mana News stories were all coded as Maori so results for crime, health and politics relate to the three broadcasters TVNZ, TV3 and Morning Report.

4.11.1 Crime

The institutional nature of crime news is apparent with the police totalling 27% of sources in crime news stories. While there were fewer crime stories and sources on Morning Report, the police constituted 35.5% of sources in its crime news stories and a further 38.7% of sources were public servants. The bureaucratic and institutional nature of sourcing in Morning Report's crime news means stories take on an "official" perspective and that the human face of crime is secondary. Holmes, on the other hand, tends to feature victims and neighbours, exploiting the emotional impact of crime.

4.11.2 Health

In health stories nearly twenty per cent of sources in news across the three broadcasters TVNZ, TV3 and Morning Report were health professionals, 13% were professional interest groups, 15% were other interest groups and 10.6% were administrators. By comparison patients were 8% of all sources in news stories about health and families and friends were 4%. Again TV One and TV3 used patients and families and friends more often than Morning Report. The use of politicians as sources in health stories reveals a bias towards Government spokespeople, either the Minister of Health or another Government spokesperson. The Opposition spokesperson on health and other opposition spokespeople received negligible sourcing in stories. For example, in the health stories sampled on Morning Report, the Minister of Health and other Government politicians constituted 11% of sources used, compared with no sourcing from the Opposition spokesperson on health or from other Opposition politicians.

4.11.3 Politics

Political stories revealed the same pattern of source disparity in favour of Government. Overall the results showed that 8.9% of sourcing in political stories sampled featured the Prime Minister of the day, a further 16.3% of sources were other Crown ministers and 5% of sources were other Government MPs. By comparison the Opposition leader was sourced 5.7%, Opposition spokespeople constituted 4.8% of sourcing and other MPs were 6.9%. This remained fairly constant over time from 1985 to 1994 across both Labour and National Governments and reinforces the commonsense news assumption that incumbents make more news by virtue of their incumbency and reflects the pragmatics of news gathering from official sources.

Looking at individual broadcasters and sourcing of political news, Morning Report is the only broadcaster to achieve balance by number of sources between Government and Opposition voices. Twenty two per cent of sourcing overall in the programme's political stories sampled reflected Government voices through the Prime Minister, other Crown Ministers or Government MPs. Opposition voices through the Opposition leader, opposition spokespeople and other MPs constituted 23.4% of sourcing in the political news stories sampled. Both TV One and TV3 clearly favoured Government over Opposition spokespeople as sources for political stories. For TV One, Government representatives comprised 29.3% of sources compared with 15.2% of Opposition representatives. TV3's sourcing in political stories amounted to 28% for Government representatives and 12% for the Opposition.

The results have clear implications for the often expressed criticism of Morning Report as anti-Government or anti-Opposition depending on the nature and source of complaint and the perspective expressed.

4.11.4 Maori news

The sourcing of Maori news stories revealed a fundamental distinction between traditional broadcasters and Mana News. While the number of Maori stories broadcast by TV One, TV3 and Morning Report amounted to only 50 stories overall and the number of sources was therefore correspondingly low they tended to cluster around political and bureaucratic spokespeople, Maori interest groups and iwi or hapu spokespeople. The results showed Mana News on the other hand used a more even and diverse source base for stories about Maoridom. For example, Mana News tended to use fewer institutional sources such as the Minister of Justice, but more informal sources such as iwi spokespeople, researchers, Maori interest groups, education spokespeople, individual Maori, public servants and administrative officers. Mana News is the only broadcaster which is both systematically reporting Maori news and employing a diversity of Maori sources in their news.

4.12 Unsupported assertions

A basic premise of conventional journalism is that consumers of the news should be able to determine that assertions in the news (other than those which are easily verifiable by common knowledge, public records or historical fact etc) are backed up by sources, or some physical evidence such as film of an event or happening. The attribution argument has dominated much recent debate about the changing nature of television news in particular (Taylor, 1993). How much does the visual element of the film tell the story, how much do sources tell the story and how much of the story is down to the reporter telling the story without reliance, or with decreasing reliance, on the other usual ingredients of news which have traditionally provided television news with its authority and credibility in the information exchange with the audience? The central issue is how reliable are news stories which contain unsupported assertions, particularly if the story presents these assertions in the guise of fact?

The study asked coders (Question 21) whether the story contained any assertions by the reporter or the newsreader which were not supported by sources or other physical evidences. Coders were told to ignore assertions which were common knowledge or easily verifiable by public records or historical fact. If the story did contain unsupported assertions the study asked whether phrases such as "Television New Zealand understands" or "Radio New Zealand understands" prefaced the comments (Question 22). This question was asked to see if, when unsupported assertions were made, the broadcaster gave the public any indication of the status of the remark. To what extent the story was based on unsupported assertions (Question 23) and how the assertions affected the balance of the story (Question 24) were also examined.

The results showed that overall 199 stories (21.8%) stories contained unsupported assertions compared with 78.2 per cent of stories which did not. No unsupported assertions were found in TV3 features. However, 29.3% of TV3 news stories contained unsupported assertions, more than the average figure. Half of the stories coded for Holmes contained unsupported assertions. The highest percentage of unsupported assertions in Holmes was in 1990 where

unsupported assertions were in 12 of the 19 stories coded (63%). (For Top Half the figure was 20.9%.) TV One news also contained a higher than average percentage of unsupported assertions - these occurred in 26.5% of stories. There was an increase from 1989 onward and they reached about 44% in 1990 and 1992. There was a lessening to 36% in 1994. There were fewer unsupported assertions in Morning Report. They occurred in 10.9% of Morning Report news stories coded and in 16.4% of feature stories. The greatest number of unsupported assertions in Morning Report occurred in 1985 and 1987. At 7.9%, Mana had the lowest percentage of unsupported assertions of the programmes coded.

The majority of the stories which contained unsupported assertions did not preface the comments with "Television New Zealand understands" or "Radio New Zealand understands" so the viewer or listener was not warned that the assertions were of a different status from those attributed to sources or verified by physical evidence. But in all programmes (except TV3 features) reporters or news readers made some use of phrases such as "TV One understands", "Radio New Zealand understands", or "our reporter understands" as a support for otherwise unsupported assertions. TV One News employed this style of phrase most frequently (in 18 cases). All these cases occurred after 1989. While the phrase was used only 5 times on Morning Report it was used to accompany almost half of the unsupported assertions in news stories.

Stories which were predominantly or partly based on unsupported assertions comprised 58% (115) of stories containing unsupported assertions, compared with 42% of stories with unsupported assertions which had only minimal effect on the basis of the story. Few stories depended predominantly on unsupported assertions (a total of 14 in the whole sample). However, a considerable number were based at least partly on unsupported assertions. Holmes again shows up in this category. Half of Holmes stories contained unsupported assertions and nearly three quarters of those stories were based predominantly or partly on these assertions. For TV One news the figure was 64%, while for Top Half, half of the stories containing unsupported assertions were based in part on those assertions. In TV3 News, 57.1% of stories with unsupported assertions were based at least in part on them. (TV3 features contained no unsupported assertions). While Morning Report news contained only 11 stories with unsupported assertions, seven of these (63.6%) were based at least in part on the assertions. For Morning Report features the figure was 30.4%. Again, Mana News contained few stories (10) with unsupported assertions, with four stories partly based on the assertions.

In television, unsupported assertions were inclined to cause an imbalance in the story in which they occurred. They caused an imbalance in 44.5% of TV One cases, 33.3% of Top Half cases, 46.4% of Holmes cases and 45.2% of cases in TV3 News. In Morning Report features, unsupported assertions caused an imbalance in 21.7% of stories they occurred in. In Morning Report news and Mana news the unsupported assertions caused no imbalance.

4.12.1 Researchers' evaluation

The occurrence of unsupported assertions is of concern in television news on both channels and in Holmes. They are used with growing frequency (although there is some evidence of a drop off in 1994) and when they occur, unsupported assertions caused an imbalance about 45% of the time in the stories sampled. This means overall that nearly ten per cent (9.8%) of stories sampled contained unsupported assertions which affected the balance of the story.

When assertions are made in news stories that are not supported by anything in the story then attribution, a standard journalistic practice, is ignored. When attribution disappears, Taylor (1993) states, "all manner of stereotype, slant and speculation may be proffered." The worrying trend for television, which is apparent in the results, would be easy to dismiss under the general contention that the news is fundamentally changing and that the new style news is not lesser but just different and that critics do not understand the difference. Dennis and Pease (1992) state that, "today we're in a period when purely descriptive news coverage (Jack Webb's "just the facts, ma'am" school) has been blended with analytical reporting--background analysis, interpretation, multiple sources--and even the journalism of consequence, wherein probable outcomes of events are discussed and even predicted" (p. xvi).

The problem for the supporters of blended news, where unsupported assertions mix in with facts on the same basis in the story, is that there appears to be no public mandate for the change. Public confidence in the essential fairness of the news remains tied to the idea that facts and non facts are separate and that the integrity of facts is inviolable. Unless broadcast news is to deliver new clearly articulated standards of balance and fairness in the news to match blended news then the expectation of viewers and listeners is that they can tell the difference between facts and opinion and that assertions in stories are attributed. As O'Neill (1993) states "news may not be truth, but it is supposed to be linked to reality and to the facts which a nation needs for its own governance". If television news wishes itself to be taken seriously it must resist too casual a replacement of fact and attribution with unsupported assertion. While the code of broadcasting practice insists radio broadcasters distinguish between fact and opinion so the public can differentiate, the codes of broadcasting practice for television are silent on the separation of fact and opinion. Fact and opinion will be examined in more detail in the next chapter, Chapter Five.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONTROVERSY AND OTHER FACTORS IMPINGING ON BALANCE AND FAIRNESS

5.1 Introduction

This section of the research report differs in character from Chapters Three and Four in that it explores some of the more difficult "contested concepts" which are central to the balance and fairness debate. The study asked a series of questions designed to identify stories containing controversy and to examine how the sides of the controversy were treated. The study also attempted to identify a series of other factors which might influence the fairness and balance of a story. These included the use of emotional language, the use of film to create a simulated experience as opposed to coverage of a real occurrence, special camera and audio techniques, and the prevalence of "piece to camera". The study concluded with two questions developed from the Codes of Practice: whether every person taking part in or referred to in the story was dealt with fairly and justly, and whether the coders were able to distinguish clearly between factual reporting and comment, opinion and analysis. The findings from these questions are presented and discussed in this chapter.

In the absence of research exemplars, categories were formulated to incorporate accepted journalistic practice utilising both precise dictionary definitions and common sense assumptions about the meaning of words. Clearly there will not be universal agreement about whether a particular story is "controversial". For this reason the category was formulated more strictly in terms of whether a story *contained* controversy, defined as two or more sides in opposition. This was intended to provide a firmer platform for questions about balance and fairness. It is the balance and fairness of these stories which is the central issue. Controversy, after all, is integral to the news.

5.2 Level of understanding and whether the main claim of the story has been supported

The level of public understanding of news stories needs to be examined prior to analysis of fairness in news. If news consumers do not understand the story or the main thrust of a story is not supported, then judgements about whether the story is balanced are less meaningful. Coders were asked (Question 50) to rate their level of understanding of the subject matter of the story on a five point scale ranging from very clear to very unclear. The results were positive and showed that news stories studied were easily understood. Coders rated 47.8% of stories as very clear, and 45.2% as clear (a cumulative total of 93%), 6.6% of stories were coded as moderate, only 0.4% were judged as unclear and no stories were coded very unclear.

In Question 54, coders assessed how fully the main claim of the story was supported on a five point scale. The majority of main claims were fully supported - 27.5% very fully, and 56.7% fully. Coders rated 12.3% of main claims as moderately supported, 2.7% as partly supported and only 0.8% as hardly supported at all.

5.3 Controversy and its treatment

5.3.1 Introduction

The study asked whether each news story contained controversy, defined as two or more sides in opposition, and followed up with a series of questions about these stories in relation to fairness. Stories which contain opposing viewpoints or "sides" are at the heart of the balance and fairness debate. The integrity of broadcast news is bound up in public approval for both sides "getting a fair go". This fundamental tenet reinforces the broadcasters' claim for legitimacy as objective and balanced. In addition, issues such as the arbitrary nature of news deadlines, the availability of news contacts and sources, time allocation and the nature of the contest within the story impinge on the performance of broadcasters in delivering fair and balanced news.

Both television and radio codes of broadcasting practice refer to the need for fairness in allocation of time to interested parties in controversial public issues. In the case of radio the code states that in exercising the responsibility broadcasters will take into account the news value of the viewpoints offered and previous allotment of airtime. In the case of television, the code states no set formula can be advanced for the allocation of time, but all significant sides of controversial public issues should be treated as fairly as possible with each case judged on its merits.

5.3.2 Amount of controversy

Over a third of the stories coded (35.3%) contained controversy - defined as two or more sides in opposition. As the table below shows, this varied markedly across the programmes coded. Mana News was the least likely to contain stories containing controversy - only 12.8% of its items were judged to contain controversy. At the other end of the scale, TV3 features (at 58.9%) and Holmes (at 51.8%) were most likely to contain controversy. Top Half (which ran till 1989) contained less controversy (at 26.2%) than Holmes. TV One News had a higher percentage than TV3 news - 44.4% as opposed to 36.7%. But when the feature items were included and the whole hour counted, there was less difference between the two channels: TV One 43.4% and TV3 39%.

Morning Report items were less likely to contain controversy than television stories. The figure for Morning Report news stories was 22.6%, and for feature stories 38.3%, an over all figure for the programme of 31.5%.

Table 18: Percentage of stories containing controversy

TV1 News	Top Half	Holmes	TV3 Features	TV3 News	MR News	MR Features	Mana	Overall
44.4	26.2	51.8	58.9	36.7	22.6	38.3	12.8	35.3

5.3.3 Amount of controversy across time

There is a general increase in the percentage of stories containing controversy across time. As can be seen in the table below for TVNZ News there is a marked increase each year till 1992, when it drops but then in 1994 almost regains its 1990 levels. Top Half stories coded

contained less controversy in 1987 than in 1985. In 1989 Holmes begins with its higher level of controversy. Holmes stories fluctuate. In 1989 and 1992 over 60% of the stories contained controversy, but in 1990 and 1994 there was a lower percentage of Holmes items containing controversy than network news items. For audiences watching the TVNZ news hour, over the study period, there has been an increase in stories containing controversy between 1985 and 1994. This was particularly marked in 1989 when Holmes and the new format news began.

Table 19: TVNZ: Percentage of stories containing controversy

Date	TVNZ News	Top Half	Holmes	Overall
1985	37.7	33.3	-	35.9
1987	44.9	20.8	-	37
1989	47.7	-	61.5	51
1990	49	-	42.1	47.7
1992	41.7	-	61.5	45.9
1994	48.7	-	45.5	48

For Morning Report, the only other programme to cover the whole study period, there has also been an increase in the percentage of stories containing controversy over the study period, as the table below shows. This has taken a slightly different pattern for Morning Report news than features, but shows a particular increase in 1992 and 1994. The greatest percentage of Morning Report news stories containing controversy was in 1985, where they made up a third of the stories coded. This percentage dropped markedly in 1987 and 1989, and increased in 1990. There was another increase in 1994. Between 1985 and 1994 the percentage of Morning Report feature stories containing controversy increased from 24.3% to 61.5%. There was a marked increase in 1989. There were further increases occurring in 1992 and 1994. For the programme as a whole there was a generally steady growth in the percentage of stories containing controversy between 1985 and 1994 - from 26.9% to 43.8%

Table 20: Morning Report: Percentage of stories containing controversy

Date	M.R. News	M.R. Features	Overall
1985	33.3	24.3	26.9
1987	12.5	29	23.4
1989	13.3	45	31.4
1990	20	38.5	28.6
1992	22.7	57.9	40.5
1994	31.6	61.5	43.8

The TV3 news hour shows overall all a lower percentage of stories containing controversy than TVNZ except in 1994. While the news features have a higher percentage of stories containing controversy, they form a small percentage of the total news hour, except in 1994 where there were more stories coded in the feature segment and fewer in the rest of the news.

Table 21: TV3: Percentage of stories containing controversy

Date	TV3 News	TV3 News Features	Overall Total
1990	31.9	50	32.9
1992	32.2	50	33.8
1994	48.8	66.7	52

Mana News has a low percentage of stories containing controversy, although, because the whole of the programme is coded rather than particular categories of politics, crime and health, it may not be appropriate to make direct comparisons with other media. There is evidence of an increase in stories containing controversy, particularly in 1992, but overall Mana News' results are distinct enough from the other broadcasters to reveal that the traditional dialectical story model (A versus B), or the setting of two sides in opposition, is not the predominant style of Mana News stories. The figures for Mana News are:

Table 22: Mana News: Percentage of stories containing controversy

Date	Mana
1990	8.8
1992	15.4
1994	12

5.3.4 Researchers' evaluation

The results show that more than a third of all news stories in the sample contained controversy and that controversy as a slant on, and ingredient in, broadcast news is increasing. This raises several questions. Is the increasing number of stories containing controversy indicative of the broadcasting media putting before the public a wider range of issues that ought to be aired in a democracy? Or, is the combative nature of news being accentuated by changing news formats, increasingly adversarial reporting techniques and an altered perception of what it is journalists should do? Does the increase in controversy reflect a reality in which the querulous nature of society is on the rise in response to the pressures of modern life? And perhaps, most importantly of all, does the increase in controversy reflect an unstated and unacknowledged lowering of the evidentiary standards of traditional journalism? Has, for example, "checking the facts" to see if a story exists been supplanted by the theatre of pitting one side against another on camera or behind a microphone?

5.3.5 Inclusions of sides in controversy

For stories containing controversy the coders judged how fair the story was in terms of including relevant sides of the controversy. They used a 5-point scale ranging from very fair to very unfair which gives three broad categories of fair, neither fair nor unfair and unfair. Over all, the study found 47.2% of stories containing controversy were fair in terms of

including relevant sides of the controversy, 21.6% were judged to be neither fair nor unfair and 31.2% were rated as unfair. The results show that of all the stories sampled (915) 11% of stories (101) were rated as unfair in relation to including relevant sides of a controversy.

Table 23: Fairness of inclusion of sides in controversy for all stories

Fairness of Inclusion	Percentage	Number
Fair	47.2	153
Neither fair nor unfair	21.6	70
Unfair	31.2	101

Different programmes varied in terms of how inclusive they were, as the table below shows.

Table 24: Fairness of inclusion of sides in the controversy for each programme, by percentage

Percentage	TV1 News	Top Half	Holmes	TV3 Features	TV3 News	MR News	MR Features	Mana	Overall
Fair	43	27.3	30	100	77.3	37.5	38.5	37.5	47.2
Neither Fair Nor Unfair	25	-	30	-	7.6	29.2	25	31.3	21.6
Unfair	32	72.7	40	-	15.1	33.3	36.5	31.2	31.2

Of the programmes studied, TV3 features were judged to be most inclusive - all of the 10 stories in this category were judged as fair. (See table above) TV3 news had 77.3% of its stories containing controversy classed as fair in terms of inclusion (higher than the 47.2% overall figure for all media). It also had only half the average percentage of unfair judgements.

TVNZ features had the highest percentage of stories judged as unfair in terms of inclusion of sides in a controversy. In Top Half 72.7% of the 11 stories were judged as unfair. Holmes was also judged as less fair than the average in terms of inclusion. Only 30% of Holmes stories were judged fair (compared with an average 47.2%), while 40% were judged unfair (compared with an overall figure of 31.2%). However, TV One news, with the largest number of stories containing controversy coded, compared closely to average figures.

Morning Report features and news showed fewer items than average judged as fair in terms of inclusion and Morning Report features showed a greater than average tendency to be unfair in terms of inclusion (36.5% compared with an overall media average of 31.2%). In its presentation, the table features collapsed categories for fair and very unfair in terms of inclusion. While it is not apparent in the table, it may be worth noting that Morning Report features, like Holmes and TV3 news, had higher than average percentages of very unfair judgements.

Mana News compares closely to the average, especially with the percentage judged as unfair.

5.3.6 Fairness of inclusion across time

To examine whether there had been any changes across times in fairness through inclusion, TVNZ, TV3 and Morning Report were each treated as one element. Categories were collapsed to a 3-point scale - fair, neutral, and unfair.

For the TV3 News Hour, the highest percentage of stories judged as unfair in terms of inclusion occurred in 1992, when 5 of the 23 stories fell into the unfair category (three of those being judged as very unfair). Otherwise, TV3 had a lower than average percentage of stories judged as unfair in terms of including all sides in a controversy.

TVNZ, through till the end of 1990, had a higher than average percentage of stories coded as unfair in terms of inclusion. This was largely because of Top Half in particular and Holmes, although in 1990 the Network news was less likely than in other years to include all sides in a controversy. In 1992 and 1994 TVNZ stories containing controversy were judged fairer in terms of inclusion than stories in earlier years of the sample.

Morning Report also had a higher percentage of stories than the average classified as unfair in terms of inclusion. In 1985, over a third of stories containing controversy were judged unfair in terms of inclusion (3 of these, very unfair). In 1987 there was a marked decrease, but in 1989 almost 73% of stories containing controversy were judged unfair in terms of inclusion. In 1990 the figure dropped to 50%. There was a further decrease in 1992, and in 1994 Morning Report had the lowest percentage (6.3%) of stories classified as unfair in terms of inclusion out of all the media.

Mana News, despite the small number of stories containing controversy, does show a trend. In 1990 both stories were judged either fair or neutral in terms of inclusion. In 1992, one of the eight stories was judged unfair, but in 1994, four of the six stories (66.7%) were judged as unfair in terms of inclusion. Mana was the only one of four media with no "very unfair" classifications.

Table 25: Percentage of stories unfair in terms of inclusion across time

	TVNZ	TV3	Morning Report	Mana
1985	43.3		35.7	
1987	40.7		18.2	
1989	34.6		72.7	
1990	55.5	0	50	0
1992	25	26	43.8	12.5
1994	24	7.7	6.3	66.7
Number of stories	169	63	76	16

5.3.7 Weight given to different sides in the controversy

Figures here show that almost half (47.5%) of the time, stories do not give equal weight to assertions in different sides of a controversy. This is so widespread as to be a feature of the construction of broadcast stories. Examination of the performance of different programmes shows TV3 news as the most even-handed within stories. A total of 28% of stories did not give equal weight to each side. Top Half and Holmes were the least even-handed, both with around three-quarters of stories not giving equal weight. Other programmes were around the 50% mark although Morning Report news and features had a lower than average amount (40%) of stories coded as not giving equal weight.

There was no trend in the weight given to different sides in a controversy across time. In Holmes the weighting was consistent across time, but in other programmes it fluctuated, with no discernible pattern.

The uneven weight given to sides in a controversy causes an imbalance in the story in almost half (48.4%) of cases. For Top Half this weighting caused an imbalance in 8 of the 10 stories. For TV One News and Holmes the percentage was 48% and 46.4% respectively. On Morning Report where uneven weighting was given to sides in a controversy this caused an imbalance in 61.5% of news stories and 56.5% of feature stories. In Mana News, the figure was 44.4%, while uneven weighting in TV3 seemed to have the least effect, causing an imbalance in 20% of news features and 32.1% of news stories.

5.3.8 Treatment of each side by interviewer or host

The study asked whether each side of the controversy was accorded equal treatment by the interviewer/host or reporter (Question 62). TV3 news with 30.2% of stories giving unequal treatment and Mana News with 33.3% had the lowest percentages of stories with unequal treatment. Morning Report news (41.7%) and features (50%) was next. Half of TV One news stories were also coded as unequal. TV3 features had a higher percentage (60%) of stories coded as providing unequal treatment. The Holmes programme had the highest percentage (66.7%) of stories containing controversy being judged as according unequal treatment of sides in the controversy by interviewers. The three reasons identified by coders in relation to Holmes programme were that one side in a controversy was treated more sympathetically, or that one side was treated more aggressively, or one party in a controversy was attributed lower status.

Over all, eleven reasons were advanced by coders for stories which were rated as the interviewer, host or reporter not according equal treatment. The results of a content analysis showed that in a third of all problem stories only one side was heard, in 14% of problem stories more time was allocated to one side than the other and in 10% of problem stories the Government view was not represented.

5.3.9 Unavailability, previous or future availability of sides in the controversy

For each story where inclusion was a problem coders also noted whether any reason was given eg: one side was unavailable for comment; or had commented in the recent past; or would be available for comment in the near future. The table below shows that when stories were unfair in terms of inclusion there was rarely any indication given that one side was unavailable for comment. Of the 41 cases in TV One news, such an indication was given only three times. There was a higher incidence in Top Half and Holmes. Unavailability was not

mentioned in any Morning Report stories, but was mentioned in two of the five stories in Mana News judged as unfair in terms on inclusion. TV One news, Holmes and Morning Report each had three cases where the future or past availability of a side of the controversy was mentioned. The last line of the table sums up the percentage of cases affected by the mention of unavailability, and of future and past availability of a side in the controversy.

Table 26: Indications of unavailability, future and past availability in stories coded as unfair

	TV1 News	Top Half	Holmes	TV3 Features	TV3 News	MR News	MR Features	Mana	Overall
No. of stories unfair in terms of inclusion	41	7	12	0	9	9	18	5	101
No. of stories indicating future/past availability	3	0	3	N/A	0	0	3	0	9
No. of stories indicating one side unavailable	3	2	2	N/A	1	0	0	2	10
Total percentage stories affected	14.6	28.6	41.7	N/A	11.1	0	16.7	40	18.8

5.3.10 Other stories on the controversy and their effect on balance

Broadcasters frequently have several stories covering the same issue in the same programme. This is particularly true of the Morning Report feature section. Coders were asked to note when this occurred and to judge how these stories affect the balance.

Table 27: Other stories on the controversy and their effect on the balance

	TV1 News	Top Half	Holmes	TV3 Features	TV3 News	MR News	MR Features	Mana	Overall
No. of times other stories on controversy in programme	14	0	1	N/A	0	6	5	0	26
Other stories increase balance	2	-	0	N/A	-	2	1	-	5
Other stories decrease balance	3	-	0	N/A	-	0	0	-	3

The table above shows that having a number of stories covering one controversy does not necessarily improve the balance. In most cases additional stories made little difference and in 3 cases the other stories on TV One news decreased the balance already found in the story.

The results show an increasing amount of controversy and that overall stories containing controversy are frequently unfair in terms of fairness of inclusion of sides in controversies and in weight given to the views of different sides. This unfairness is most marked in the Holmes programme. Other factors which might have reduced figures for all broadcasters - the mention of unavailability, previous or future availability and the presence of other stories - did not really influence overall figures.

5.3.11 Summary and researchers' evaluation

The notion of contest is central to the news media for at least three reasons. First, scholarship on news values which underpin the reasons why some events are judged newsworthy or not (Galtung and Ruge, 1965; Chibnall, 1972; Hall, Critcher, Jefferson, Clarke and Roberts, 1978) indicates that the more negative an event, is the more likely it is to become news. This places conflict high on the totem pole of news values. Second, news formats, the way in which news becomes a story, are inextricably tied to the contest concept. News formats, while they are seldom transparent, help shape content and provide organisational consistency. The broadcast news format can involve, as Tiffen (1989) suggests, both the 'total mix' of a news programme and the structure of individual stories. News formats very often conform to what Epstein (1973) calls the dialectical story model, where A is presented in opposition to B. Third, the notion of objectivity in journalism, while lacking definition and under scholastic fire as an inappropriate model, has become a journalistic rite of passage. The most obvious expression of objectivity in the news is to present "the two sides of the story" in antithesis while the journalist remains aloof as a neutral bystander. And if the conflict is three sided, then, as Tiffen (1989) states, the almost automatic journalistic stance is to elevate the middle position as moderate and sensible.

In the New Zealand context a Television New Zealand executive Paul Cutler in a *Listener* interview in 1989 explained that television news is not the place for ideological issues discussed in the abstract. "For the six o'clock news, we try to bring it down to a more confrontational level. We know the viewer would be bored if we tried to explain the problems in the Labour Party on a pure ideological level" (Campbell, 1989, p.21).

Supplementing the notion of news as contest is the news media's perception of its role in a democratic society. Journalists see themselves as contributing to the quality of democratic processes by placing issues before the voters, distinguishing and differentiating between parties to contemporary debate, and holding to account those in power. All of these, too, place the news media on centre stage between opposing sides, as a promoter of the contest and as the means of its expression. Broadcast news, particularly television news with its visualness, in fact choreographs the contest.

Because contest is intrinsic to news, journalists and their custodians subscribe to a theology of prescribed and informal rules which set the parameters of how controversy is presented in the news. One of the rules is that of "balance and fairness" which is given formal expression in s.4(d) of the Broadcasting Act 1989, and again in the codes of broadcasting practice for both radio and television.

For broadcast news to retain public faith (as well as ratings) it must adhere to the highest standards in relation to difficult stories containing controversy. Public expectations are highest for the hard stories and the results reveal worrying signs about fairness of stories containing controversy. There

may be a tendency for broadcasters to dismiss these portents as the idiosyncratic judgements of academic researchers but, in all, nine researchers (seven coders and the two principal researchers) examined the stories. All these researchers are news consumers as viewers and listeners as well as having an academic interest in the news as a field of study. The viewpoint of audience members must be acknowledged in judgements of balance and fairness. News consumers do not watch or listen to every moment of the programme and certainly cannot be relied on to watch every programme referring to a certain controversy. From the audience viewpoint there is no substitute for dealing fairly with both sides of a controversy in the one news story.

5.4 Use of emotional language and its effects on balance

5.4.1 Introduction

Emotional language in the news has been identified as one element in what critics call the "tabloidization" of the news (Edwards, 1992). The choice of words can influence the drama, the tension and the sensation of news. Emotional language evokes different connotations for listeners. Van Dijk (1991) uses the choice of two words to describe an actor in the news which reflects the difference in lexical style. He states, "the use of "thug" rather than "demonstrator" signals different underlying opinions about the people referred to," (p.210). Emotional language can influence balance and fairness because it helps create and reinforce stereotypical representation, and because it reduces the complex to the simple. In examining balance and fairness in broadcast news it is crucial to look at the language of the news.

Coders (see Question 69) noted the presence of emotional, or "loaded" language used by the newsreader or journalist. The table below summarises results.

Table 28: Percentage of stories containing emotional language

TV1 News	Top Half	Holmes	TV3 Features	TV3 News	MR News	MR Features	Mana	Overall
42.5	32.6	83.9	29.4	34.9	14.7	29.9	13.6	34.1

Overall, emotional language is used in over a third (34.1%) of the stories. In 6.5% of these cases the language helps improve the balance of the story (Question 70). In 61.5% of cases it makes no difference. But in 31.7% of cases, 98 stories, emotional language helped cause imbalance in the story. Emotional language is therefore an important factor in causing a story to appear imbalanced.

Mana News journalists use the least amount of emotional language - it occurs in only 13.6% of Mana stories. Further, the emotional language was judged to have improved the balance of the story in 41.2% of cases and caused imbalance in only 5.9% of cases.

Holmes, by contrast, contains the most emotional language of any programme. It occurred in 83.9% of Holmes stories. In no case was the effect to improve the balance of the story. But in 39.6% of cases the effect was to cause imbalance and in three stories emotional language caused the story to become very imbalanced. Almost a third (32.6%) of Top Half stories, slightly less than the average, used emotional language, and this caused an imbalance in only one story (7.1% of cases). However, 42.5% of TV One news stories contained emotional language. In 10.8% of cases it helped improve the balance of stories, but in 36.6% it caused an imbalance. The overall percentage for TVNZ was 47.4% of stories containing emotional language used by the newsreader or journalist.

Table 29: Percentage of stories where emotional language causes imbalance

TV1 News	Top Half	Holmes	TV3 Features	TV3 News	MR News	MR Features	Mana	Overall
36.6	7.1	39.6	20	45.1	26.6	12.8	5.9	31.7

TV3 used less emotional language. It occurred in 29.4% of feature stories and 34.9% of news stories, an overall percentage of 34.4%. However, it created an imbalance in 45.1% of TV3 news stories which contained emotional language (two stories became very imbalanced).

Morning Report was relatively spare in its use of emotional language. This was contained in only 14.7% of news stories, but in 29.9% of its feature stories, an overall percentage of 23.3%. The emotional language caused imbalance in 12.8% of Morning Report feature stories and 26.6% of Morning Report news stories.

5.4.2 Use of emotional language over time

During the TVNZ news hour the use of emotional language has generally increased over time. Starting at 30.4%. It reached a peak in 1990 where 73.4% of all stories contained emotional language. Since then its use has dropped, although 46.9% of TVNZ stories contained emotional language in 1994.

On Morning Report there is generally less emotional language used although its use fluctuates. There is a peak in 1987 of 31.9% of stories using emotional language. The use is still relatively high in 1989 though it drops markedly in 1990. There is another increase (to 26.5%) in 1992 and a small decrease in 1994.

In the first two years of TV3 broadcasts, just over 37% of stories contained emotional language. This dropped to 26% in 1994. On Mana News the peak of emotional language use was at 21.2% of stories in 1992, in 1994 this dropped back to the low level of 4%.

Table 30: Percentage of stories containing emotional language across time

	TVNZ	TV3	Morning Report	Mana
1985	30.4		15.1	
1987	25.3		31.9	
1989	56		29.7	
1990	73.2	37.8	11.1	17.4
1992	60	37.3	26.5	21.2
1994	46.9	26	21.9	4

5.4.3 Researchers' evaluation

Emotional language has become one of the indices of difference between styles of reportage. Popular or tabloid journalism has specialised in the use of colloquial, simple, short words, "impact" words which fit news writing and evoke an emotional response from news consumers. It is clear

from the results that the nature of language in television is changing. Language, and its formal and informal uses, is not immutable. But the change in the language of broadcast news reflects changes both in the style of presentation and content as the news moves from an information emphasis to an entertainment emphasis, what Owen and Robinson (1993) call "entertainment", information presented in an entertainment format.

5.5 Special camera techniques

The study found that 39.8% of television stories used one or more of a variety of camera techniques. These included fast or slow motion, instant replay, juxtaposing events widely separated by time or space, shifting points of view, extreme close-up, techniques to disguise identity, and extreme camera angles. Special camera techniques increased in relative frequency after 1987. Such techniques had little effect on balance, causing an imbalance in only 21 stories. However, it is worth noting that 9 of those cases were stories from the Holmes programme.

5.6 Special audio techniques

Coders were asked to record any special audio techniques and their effects, if any, on balance. The study counted as special audio techniques any of the following: altered sound speed, sound effects, music, deliberate silence, archival tapes and merging, altering or distorting sound. Such techniques were employed in only 53 stories, 5.8% of the sample. Of these 53 the effect was to cause an imbalance in 8 cases (15.1%). Most of the audio effects were used by television, especially Holmes where 23% of stories used special audio techniques - mainly music from popular songs. Three of the cases of imbalance caused by audio techniques were in the Holmes programme and two were from TV3 news. Overall, however, the use of special audio techniques was not problematic.

5.7 The creation of synthetic experience and its effects

The nature of reality offered by the visual component of news needs to be examined in discussion of balance and fairness in the news. Even if it is accepted that news is a social construction there are degrees of construction and of reconstitution of reality. Funkhouser and Shaw (1990) coined the term "synthetic experience" and listed a number of techniques employed in news (and other mass media) which transform the nature of events so that they are "synthetic experiences". They state:

We contend that synthetic experience is qualitatively different from real experience. A "real experience", as we define it, physically originates within a person's natural sensory envelope--continuous sight, sound, smell, etc., arising from events occurring at their own paces in real time within the reach of the person's sensory capabilities. "Synthetic experience" results from perceptions that could not possibly originate within any person's natural sensory envelope (p.68).

Following Funkhouser and Shaw's typology, coders identified when television programmes told their stories with the assistance of film which creates a synthetic event and therefore a synthetic experience. Examples identified consisted of such things as a camera taking the visual perspective of a victim or criminal, re-enactments of crimes, staged shots of people injecting themselves with drugs, close-ups of people dialling phones, and flexing dollar bills.

It proved not to be a frequent feature in the stories coded, occurring in only 47 of 553 television stories (8.5%). Feature programmes tended to be more likely to use the device. The figures were: Holmes 14.3% of stories, Top Half 9.1%, TV One News 6.9%, TV3 Features 11.8% and TV3 News 8.8%. There was a general tendency to use synthetic experience less as the study period moved on. This is particularly marked in TV One news. However, TV3 news made particularly heavy use of the synthetic experience technique in 1992.

Coders were asked to what extent the story relied on film which created a synthetic experience (fully, partly, or not at all). No stories relied fully on this device. TVNZ stories using a film creating a synthetic experience were more inclined to rely in part on it. TV3 Features did not rely on the created synthetic experience, but slightly over half of the small number of TV3 news stories relied partly upon it.

Twenty of the 46 stories using synthetic events were crime stories. Camera techniques which employed a point-of-view perspective were frequent - retracing a route of a killer, going through a prison door, "walking" along a dark street and then falling to the ground as a victim. There were two re-enactments of crimes, some close-ups of "drug taking" and "heroin" injections. Other synthetic events implied processes of policing and justice - a judge's hammer dropping, a hand on a bible, a man being handcuffed and so on. Nearly all of these were described as providing a dramatic effect and in a number of cases these affected the balance of the story.

By contrast the 18 examples used to support health stories were generally different in kind. Frequently the effect was described as illustrative rather than emotional or dramatic. There were pictures of people drinking milk, cleaning their teeth, using inhalers, boiling water, puffing on a cigarette and so on. A small number were more dramatic: a simulated accident, a woman entering an abortion clinic being approached by a protestor. Overall these had little effect on the balance.

Only two cases of synthetic events were recorded for Maori stories, but one, a staged haka, emphasised the "defiance" of protestors that the story referred to. Seven synthetic events in political stories caused no imbalance and were used to provide a visual element.

Coders also assessed the impact the created synthetic experience had on balance (Question 40). The device caused an imbalance in 20% of cases for TV One News, 37.5% of cases for Holmes, 30.8% of cases when used on TV3 news and not at all when used in TV3 features.

5.7.1 Summary and researchers' evaluation

It should be stressed that the number of cases is very small. But figures show that when television broadcasters use the device of the synthetic experience to enhance the dramatic value of a story it is in crime news. Funkhouser and Shaw (1990) point to the blurring of real and unreal events possible with electronic media and the impact this may have on perceptions and attitudes. The crucial question is whether these media-depicted events "are mistakenly perceived *and stored* as real experience, rather than as authentic experiences of viewing unreal depictions that, in Plato's words, have as an antidote the knowledge of the situation's true nature" (p.69).

5.8 The "piece to camera"

5.8.1 Introduction

Television stories frequently use the device of a "piece to camera" where reporters (generally on location) talk directly to the audience. During this time the reporter frequently sums up a case or attempts to put it in perspective. The coders therefore noted the use of a "piece to camera" in a story.

Of the 553 television stories, 170 (30.7%) were coded as containing a piece to camera. Pieces to camera occurred more often in the news programmes: in 33.2% of TV One news stories and 31.3% of TV3 news stories. They were also used in 26.8% of Holmes stories (where reporters frequently prepared a "package" to precede a studio discussion). A piece to camera occurred in only 17.6% of TV3 feature stories and 13.6% of Top Half stories.

Across time the percentage of stories containing pieces to camera on TV One news fluctuated. However there has been a general increase, with three peaks of popularity. In 1985, 30.6% of stories contained a piece to camera, in 1989 it was 44.7% and in 1994, 53.8% of the stories featured a piece to camera. TV3 news does not show this increase. It has 34.9% in 1990, dropping to 27.4% in 1992 and returning again to 34.2% in 1994.

5.8.2 Some attributes of stories containing a piece to camera

Stories which contained a piece to camera were less likely to distinguish clearly between fact and opinion (see section 5.10) than stories which did not contain a piece to camera. In stories which did not contain a piece to camera there was a clear distinction between fact and opinion in 67.5% of cases. This dropped to 53.3% of cases when there was a piece to camera in the story.

Stories which contained a piece to camera were more likely to use emotional language than stories which did not contain a piece to camera. Fifty-three percent of stories which contained a piece to camera used emotional language, compared with 43.1% of stories which did not contain a piece to camera.

Similarly, stories containing a piece to camera were less likely to deal fairly with everyone referred to or appearing in the story (see section 5.9) than were stories without a piece to camera. Stories which contained a piece to camera dealt fairly with everyone in 71.7% of cases. This rose to 80.8% of cases for stories which did not contain a piece to camera.

Of the stories sampled 44.7% of those containing a piece to camera were political news and 31.8% were crime stories. For health stories the proportion was 15.9% and for Maori, 5.6%.

5.8.3 Researchers' evaluation including qualitative analysis of three individual stories

Three examples of political stories from the sample exemplify some of these attributes. A TV One news story on 3 May 1994 refers to New Zealand sending troops to Bosnia and New Zealand's role on the United Nations Security Council. There are a number of unsupported assertions and a mixing of fact with opinion in the story without clear differentiation between the two. The story relies heavily on two pieces to camera by political correspondent Linda Clark. The story headline is that the Prime Minister still denies that New Zealand has made a decision on whether it will send troops to Bosnia but that a rifle company is the most likely option. Linda Clark repeats the denial angle, "Jim Bolger said no commitment had been made to send more troops to Bosnia."

In the direct quote from the Prime Minister, however, he states the Government is "entertaining the idea" and discussing it. Linda Clark then claims the Government has made the decision to go but is "agonizing over what to do next."

The first piece to camera makes a number of assumptions and unsupported assertions with the reporter's opinion paramount. Clark states, "the Government is a reluctant participant, biding its time while officials work through the details and strategists work out the best way to sell all this to the public. But in the end Jim Bolger has no one to blame but himself."

The story follows with reportage on the security council in which Linda Clark states that Jim Bolger and the Deputy Prime Minister Don McKinnon were the two who lobbied hardest to get New Zealand on to the council and it was while New Zealand presided over the council that the latest call was made for more troops to be deployed. Linda Clark's closing piece to camera contains unsupported assertions and is more opinion than fact. She states.... "the Government may not like it, and it's understood defence advisers are equally cautious, but having encouraged the rest of the world to act, New Zealand will not be able to stand aside."

Another TV One example, by political correspondent Linda Clark, was broadcast on 18 November 1994, and the piece to camera was used as the reportorial device to provide a strange linkage in a story which also contained unsupported assertions. The story centres on the Prime Minister's visit to Thailand, the last leg of his 1994 Asian tour, and features the Prime Minister receiving an honorary doctorate from a Thai university. New Zealand foreign aid money had supported the university in question. The story also reports on the significance of the tour for New Zealand in building trade ties with Thailand. The story begins as a factual news item visually covering the pomp and ceremony of the doctorate award and with Jim Bolger quoted about the significance of the degree. The story then switches to Linda Clark's piece to camera filmed at night in the middle of downtown Bangkok.

Linda Clark leads in by stating, "but the side of Thailand that most New Zealanders have heard about is here in Patpong, Bangkok's seamier side, and the sex capital of the world". Visuals of young female prostitutes and a young Thai dancing around in a bright green dress. In the voice over for these visuals the story refers to child prostitution in Thailand and the Thai Government's attempts to clamp down on vice. Linda Clark then briefly mentions the New Zealand Government's proposed new legislation whereby New Zealanders who have sex with children in Thailand can be charged. The story then jumps back to video of Jim Bolger dancing at an official function tour with the words, "Jim Bolger was expected to brief the Thai Prime Minister, on the new law when he meets him this evening, but this visit hasn't been all business. Jim Bolger is always saying we are now part of Asia but clearly though stepping out Asian style is not quite as simple as it looks".

The juxtaposition of the ceremonial aspect of the Prime Minister's tour with a piece to camera about Thai sex saw the reporter having to stretch story content to make linkages. The story was a contrived pot pourri with the downtown scenes providing visual titillation. The juxtaposition of the ceremonial and business functions of the Prime Minister's Thai visit with video of Patpong Road gave a gloss of innuendo to the comment that "this visit hasn't been all business". This meant the story was unfair to the Prime Minister, and provided little understanding about New Zealand's relationship with Thailand.

TV3 news on 29 April 1994 also uses piece to camera techniques in a similar manner. The story begins with the suggestion that the Prime Minister Jim Bolger and his deputy Don McKinnon might not stand for electorate seats but instead head the party list under MMP. The story begins with wallpaper footage of Jim Bolger visiting the set of the television programme, Shortland Street in, what Jane Clifton, the political correspondent, describes as "affluent" Brown's Bay, Auckland's North Shore suburb. It canvasses the party list suggestion even though Jim Bolger's direct quote indicates he wants to stand in an electorate, and that it would be sensible for National's leader to also head the party list. The story sources Geoff Thompson, involved in candidate selection, who confirms that the National Party accepts the idea that the leader and the deputy leader should be placed at the top of the list. The story then talks of a "seat squeeze" under MMP involving the nine current seats north of Auckland's Harbour Bridge which will become five.

Jane Clifton's first piece to camera in the story labels certain National Members of Parliament as "bad boys" and evokes the image of ructions within National's ranks. Unsupported assertions and emotional language is used in the story, and the sourcing is not transparent. Instead Jane Clifton's opinion becomes the story. She states..."and there are more ructions in the party. Just a fortnight ago Jim Bolger said he'd be relaxed if MPs discussed their futures in other parties, well we've learned that he has upbraided three of them for doing just that." The story then shows a graphic reading, "Bolger's bad boys" accompanying three mug shots of Max Bradford, John Banks and Graeme Lee. Max Bradford had called for strong leadership and Lee and Banks had criticised the neglect of moral values. In Jane Clifton's final piece to camera she states, "Bolger has chided them all and he has urged Banks to tone down his speech he is making to the conference tomorrow. It's understood Banks won't."

In all these stories the audience is being asked to suspend judgement about the credibility of the news. Invisible sourcing and patchy attribution means news viewers must take on trust the political correspondent's opinion, opinion which is dressed as fact.

5.8.4 Summary and researchers' evaluation

The piece to camera gives expression to the personalisation of the news. Journalists are reasserting the significance of their own contribution by vigorous self promotion of the journalist as personality. Rival broadcasters use pieces to camera to establish they have an active presence at the scene and to differentiate news channels. The piece to camera turns the reporter from an anonymous voice into a personality and central actor in the play of the news. Taylor (1993) in his piece on the "standup syndrome" and its effect on journalistic attribution and objectivity says, "the idea behind them (pieces to camera) is that the journalist on camera serves as a guide for viewers leading them through the television screen, deeper into the story, showing through words, reactions and body language what it's like...". The piece to camera is clearly a valuable communication technique. The question which arises from the study is whether the technique is being overworked and misused, not whether the technique itself is valid.

The results of the research show the piece to camera occurs frequently and in a growing number of TV One news stories it is associated with stories which are less fair, contain more emotional language and in which the distinction between fact and opinion is blurred. Taylor (1993) says reporters often seem to forget standard journalistic practices during those seconds when their faces as well as their voices are on air. The standup, as he calls it, is used to provide visual strength and immediacy. The temptation he says is to simply voice an opinion or, worse, drop in a line merely because it is punchy. The problem with pieces to camera is that journalists discard attribution because either it is their own opinion which is being voiced, or a shorthand version of all the sources talked to, or because time constraints mean attribution is the easiest part of the story to drop. An increased reliance on pieces to camera in television news emphasise to viewers that this is the reporter's story, rather than this is a story the reporter tells.

5.9 Dealing fairly with each person

5.9.1 Introduction

Both journalists and the public are deeply concerned about the fairness of news. As Dennis and Pease (1992) state, "both the public and the press itself expect fairness in the reportage of news, both as a matter of journalists' personal honor and because of the centrality of accurate information in a participatory democracy." In New Zealand the "fair play" ethos is deep rooted, linked to our cultural identity and sense of self esteem. Most New Zealanders exhibit a "common sense" approval of the notions of fairness and justice in the news. They desire of the news that it exhibits balance by giving those who are subjects of the news a "fair go." Hackett, Gilsdorf and Savage (1992) point out that this may represent a somewhat limited and limiting definition of "balance". They state there is a potential contradiction between balance and fidelity. "The symmetrical presentation of viewpoints on public issues would often not be a faithful representation of public discourse" (p.27). While balance may not represent fidelity and while the term is ill-defined, it is possible to apply a commonsense yardstick, informed by knowledge of current journalistic practice, traditional standards and public expectations, about whether a subject of the news has been treated justly and fairly. This rather pragmatic approach is, after all, what the codes of practice ask of broadcasters and what is provided in the codes for the public to measure broadcasters' performance by.

It should be noted that there is a difference in the codes of broadcasting practice between radio and television in relation to time frame. The general programme standards for radio state that broadcasters are required to "deal justly and fairly with any person taking part or referred to in any programme" and "to show balance, impartiality and fairness in dealing with political matters, current affairs and all questions of a controversial nature, making reasonable efforts to present significant points of view either in the same programme or in other programmes within the period of current interest". The "period of current interest", however, is not present in the general programme standards for television which state broadcasters are required, "to deal justly and fairly with any person taking part or referred to in any programme" and "to show balance, impartiality and fairness in dealing with political matters, current affairs and all questions of a controversial nature".

5.9.2 Results of whether subjects of stories are treated justly and fairly

A question was included in the study (Question 71) based on the codes of practice asking the coders to decide if the story dealt fairly and justly with every person taking part in or referred to in the story. In a large majority of stories in the sample overall, 86.1%, it was found that every person taking part in, or referred to in, the story was dealt with justly and fairly. In 13.9% of stories that was not the case.

Morning Report proved to be the most fair and just of the programmes. Only 3% of both news and feature stories were judged not to have been fair and just to each person. Mana News was very similar with only 3.2% of stories judged as unfair or unjust. For TV3, all of the feature stories were described as just and fair, while 16.9% of the news stories were judged as unfair. The cumulative percentage for the TV3 news hour was 16.5%. It was TVNZ which had the highest percentage of stories judged not to have been fair and just to each person. This was especially the case for the Holmes programme where 37.5% of stories were judged to be unfair or unjust to at least one of the people taking part. The Top Half figure was 18.6% and the TV One news figure was 20.8% of stories judged unfair or unjust. Overall this made the TVNZ figure 23% of stories coded as unfair or unjust. Looking at TVNZ across the study period (see table below) shows the effect of Holmes. In 1990 there was a peak of 45.1% of TVNZ stories judged unfair or unjust, but there was a marked drop by 1994 when the proportion came down to 16%.

Table 31: TVNZ: Percentage of stories found to be unjust or unfair

1985	19.2
1987	8.1
1989	25.5
1990	45.1
1992	25.9
1994	16
Overall	23

Coders were asked to give reasons why the stories were not fair and just to all participants and the results were content analysed. Fourteen reasons were identified with the major reasons being no opportunity to reply (15%), one party's view not given or represented (13%) or one party made to look guilty or negative (12%). The fourth reason was that neither side was heard but the reporter's view was heard instead.

Stories identified as not fair or just to all participants were generally political or crime stories. The Holmes programme tended to undermine an interviewee's status or credibility. No opportunity to reply, and one party's view not given or represented were other reasons attributed to the Holmes programme's problem stories. Reasons why TV One News stories rated as dealing with individuals unjustly and unfairly were the reporter's view dominating over sources, reporters creating the stories themselves or undercutting the person they were interviewing.

5.9.3 Summary and researchers' evaluation

The positive results overall show that broadcast news between 1985-1994 does not systematically treat subjects of the news unjustly or unfairly. But in 128 stories of the 915 sample coders judged that at least one person in the story was not dealt with justly and fairly, and that the Holmes programme, in particular, was problematic. TVNZ insisted until early 1995 that Holmes was part of the news, and in doing so, found themselves in an ambivalent position, because if Holmes were part of the news then the programme should be judged by news standards. In reality though, the Holmes programme is really a news magazine programme strongly influenced by tabloid (in the pure sense of the word) journalism traditions, and as such often defies the stricter criteria which should attach to the news proper. Perhaps TVNZ's new promotion of its hour of news followed by Holmes which separates the two categories of news, pure news from news magazine, is an acknowledgement of the dilemma the network found itself in by insisting Holmes was news. The improvement in 1994 perhaps reflects the "softening" of Holmes which is reputed to have resulted from perceived audience turn-off from a harder-edged Holmes (Campbell, 1992).

5.10 Distinction between factual reporting and comment, opinion and analysis

5.10.1 Introduction

Delineation between fact and opinion has become enshrined in news journalism as the basis of the news media's claim for legitimacy as unbiased and objective. The separation is based on the assumption that news consumers should be able to tell the difference between the factual component of the story content and any opinionated material provided along with it. The assumption is that while the lines are drawn in this way news audiences can believe in the veracity of the facts, while they may or may not doubt the accuracy and adequacy of the opinion. The tradition of separating fact from opinion and commentary is reflected in the codes of broadcasting practice for radio and radio news and current affairs. Broadcasters are told that listeners should always be able to distinguish clearly and easily between factual reporting on the one hand, and comment, opinion and analysis on the other. The television code of practice does not contain a comparable written standard. In its decision on Helen Clark's complaint against TV One the Broadcasting Standards Authority expressed concern about the fuzzing up of the boundaries. It stated that there should be a "clear distinction between what is news and what is the correspondent's interpretation of news." That could be achieved by "always sourcing factual matters and clearly attributing opinion". In response Shaun Brown, TVNZ's head of news and current affairs, "noted" the Broadcasting Standards Authority's desire to see facts and interpretation more clearly distinguished and said he would discuss this with channel journalists.

5.10.2 Results of the distinction between fact and opinion

The coders were asked which stories contained both fact and comment, opinion and analysis (attributable to broadcasting employees rather than people quoted or interviewed) (Question 73). A total of 47.6% of stories were coded as containing both fact and comment, opinion and analysis. In almost one third of these stories (32.7%) the coder was unable to distinguish clearly between factual reporting and the comment, opinion and analysis of reporters or newsreaders (Question 74).

This inability to distinguish between fact and opinion is particularly marked in the case of TVNZ. For TV One news the coders could not make a distinction in 51% of the cases where the story contains factual reporting and opinion and analysis. The distinction was clear for Top Half with only 6.5% of cases where it could not be made. But in Holmes the coders could not separate factual reporting from opinion in 47.9% of cases. The table below traces trends in this blurring of distinction across time. It is not a real factor till 1989 when in 40.9% of stories factual reporting and opinion could not be distinguished. In 1990 and 1992 there was another leap to over 70%. The figure dropped in 1994, but in over half of stories which contain both fact and reporter opinion and analysis coders could not distinguish between the two.

Table 32: TVNZ: Percentage unclear distinction between fact and opinion

Date	TV One News	Holmes
1985	18.2	-
1987	19	-
1989	40.9	18.2
1990	75.9	61.1
1992	72.4	45.5
1994	54.5	45.5

In the first year Holmes was broadcast clear distinctions were generally made, but in 1990 over 60% of stories failed to make a clear distinction between fact and opinion. This level was still high in 1992 and 1994 (at 45.5%).

All other programmes make clearer distinctions. For TV3 news features, coders were able to make the distinction in all cases. For TV3 news, however, in a quarter (25.6%) of stories containing fact and opinion, coders could not clearly distinguish between the two. In Morning Report, relatively few news stories contained opinion or analysis, and of these a clear distinction could be made in all but 16.1% of cases. The distinction in Morning Report features was blurred in 20.3% of cases. In 1987, 7 of the 16 Morning Report stories (43.8%) failed to distinguish clearly between fact and opinion. In other years a clearer distinction was maintained. In Mana News, only 18 stories contained both fact and opinion and the distinction was blurred in only 11.1% of cases.

5.10.3 Reasons for the failure to distinguish between fact and opinion

A content analysis was conducted on the reasons coders gave for stories in which they could not distinguish between fact and opinion. The major reasons for the inability to distinguish was the manner of integration of fact and opinion. The other major reason was journalists adding postscripts or introductions to stories in the guise of factual material when it was opinion. The third reason was the presentation of opinion, analysis or commentary as fact. Crime and political stories featured most.

5.10.4 Researchers' evaluation

For those who believe the credibility of journalism is based on bedrock principles such as the division between fact and opinion, the results for television news are disturbing because they indicate a generalised blurring of the boundaries which have traditionally separated the objective from the subjective. If these boundaries are continually crossed in practice then a consequence of

the trend is a general undermining of the status of the news as elite from other programming, a status accorded the news because it is "factual", and because it is the "news of the day."

The old journalistic norms, such as the division of fact and opinion, is, as many commentators have pointed out, under siege in television news rooms. Purely descriptive news coverage is considered old-fashioned and slightly fusty (Cutler in Campbell, 1989; Taylor, 1993). Instead broadcast journalists appear to blend the facts with opinion, analysis and the journalism of consequence because it fits with newer presentational formats and perceptions of the audience's capacity and desire for content. The flaw of the argument in favour of blended news is precisely this aspect of perceived audience need. In fact, if asked, the news audience would probably say "we want to be able to trust the news". What the news has over any other aspect of electronic message is the elevation of facts in news story to the highest rank in the information hierarchy. If broadcast news is allowed to derogate from its own highest standards and traditions then this cuts away its own *raison d'être*. And as Dennis and Pease (1992) state the news media can "no longer assume that the public understand fully the differences between general news reports and commentary, between what is largely informational, presented without prejudice, and what is strictly opinion", precisely because facts and opinions are being "vitamized". Nobody is telling the audience in any clear way in this blended presentation just where the facts end and opinion begins so the public can make the conceptual distinction necessary.

CHAPTER SIX

ISSUES RAISED FOR PUBLIC DEBATE

6.1 Introduction

The intention of the research was to provide empirical data based on over 900 news stories broadcast on radio and television between 1985-1994 in relation to balance and fairness and look to see what implications the results have for the codes of broadcasting practice. A secondary, but no less important aim of the research, was to move the debate about the nature of news into the public sphere out of the closed circle of a handful of television executives, academic critics and press commentators. Television executive Paul Norris in 1992 complained that:

Much of the recent criticism (of television news and current affairs), expressed strongly by a self-serving press, is simply ill-informed and ill-judged and does nothing to contribute to a meaningful debate. Some even seek to turn our ratings against us, as if the achievements of high ratings were in itself a measure of failure in some more elevated arena (p.13).

The researchers believe it *is* time for more meaningful debate. Television executives cannot always retreat to a special pleading based on the elite mysteries of their craft and the unique requirements of the visual medium which place it beyond the time-honoured standards and norms of journalism. At the same time academics and critics need to acknowledge the international, technological and competitive forces shaping the contemporary broadcasting environment and the communicative power of quality television news.

It would be unwise for any of the parties to ignore public interest. As the Minister of Science, Simon Upton, told the National Press Club in a 1993 address about the changing nature of news coverage, the powers of judgement and discernment of the public should not be underestimated:

I believe its [New Zealand's] people have a good deal more in the way of moral backbone and powers of discrimination than populists - be they radio talkback hosts or politicians - give them credit. There is much the public is entitled to be critical of. What they need is a genuinely critical appraisal of the issues to bring that criticism to bear (p.16).

This study is a step towards a genuinely critical appraisal based on empirical data and starting without strong ideological persuasion other than a commitment to quality broadcast news in whatever format it is presented.

Several broad themes emerge from the results of this benchmark study of four broadcasters through 1985-1994. These themes include trends over time, changes in the subject areas of news, plurality and diversity in sourcing of news stories and the "blended" news in television. This chapter also summarises the researchers' evaluation of some areas of concern for the individual broadcasters subject of study. These areas of concern lead into a discussion of the implications they have for the codes of broadcasting practice. Finally the chapter addresses limitations of the study and points the way to future research directions.

6.2 Trends over time

The sweep of years examined, almost a decade of electronic news, reveals a consistent picture for television news, from the research results, of changing standards which impinge on balance and fairness. For TVNZ in a number of categories the watershed year over the stories sampled was 1990 and for TV3 was 1992. In 1994 both channels appear to have retreated, but not returned to, standards apparent in 1985. For example, the use of unsupported assertions by TVNZ was at its peak in 1990, dropped a little in 1992 and further in 1994, but was still well above the levels at the beginning of the study period. For TV3 the number of unsupported assertions peaked in 1992 and dropped back a little in 1994. Crime coverage peaked in TVNZ in 1990 and in TV3 in 1992. The use of emotional language and the problems of imbalance caused by its use was at its height in TVNZ stories in 1990 and peaked for TV3 in 1992. The imbalance caused by unequal interviewer treatment is highest for TVNZ in 1990 and TV One news in particular shows an improvement in 1994, whereas results for TV3 show an increase in this imbalance in 1992 and 1994. The problem year for TVNZ in terms of dealing fairly with everyone in the story was 1990, and for TV3, 1992. However, in terms of the ability to distinguish between fact and opinion 1994 was a problem year for TV One news and while this is less of a problem for TV3, the clarity of distinction has been decreasing.

The results for radio broadcasters across the years reveal less problematic trends than for television. If anything, Morning Report was marked by some areas of continuing improvement against the measures used in this research. For instance the distinction between fact and opinion has become clearer across the years, and in the later part of the study period there were hardly any cases of dealing unfairly with anyone in a story. Unsupported assertions have decreased markedly from a peak in 1987.

The results for Mana News revealed that in many categories it was least likely to be a problem broadcaster. For example, it had the lowest level of unsupported assertions, and was least likely to have stories that dealt with controversy, so had a low incidence of problems related to fairness in this area. Mana also had the lowest incidence of emotional language and performed well in dealing fairly with everyone in the story. But the uniqueness of Mana News, the fact that it relied heavily on the Maori perspective of news and allowed Maori people time to tell their stories in their own way, which defies modern broadcast presentation, rendered comparison between the two radio broadcasters difficult and somewhat artificial.

6.3 Changes in the subject areas of news

The research yielded some distinct signs of change in the proportion of news by subject matter. Crime stories sampled from 1985-1994 increased proportionately to other subject areas on both television channels. In addition to the large percentage of total news that is crime-related, there is evidence of skewed content of crime news in relation to its actual incidence in New Zealand society with a reliance on serious, violent crime. Also of concern is the changing nature of presentation of crime news by television news which is pushing to the limit traditional journalistic conventions in relation to contempt of court and privacy. While the news media are exempt from the provisions of the Privacy Act in relation to news gathering activities, Longworth and McBride (1994) indicate it remains to be seen whether the exemption will remain indefinitely. They state that in essence the news media have been placed on "good behaviour" (p.270).

The amount of political news across both television channels and for Morning Report appears to be on the wane. For Morning Report the drop is more marked in news than in feature stories. Television, similarly appears to be running proportionally less political news. Health news, on the other hand, is climbing despite news media concerns that restructuring would penalise news media access.

An area of considerable concern from the research is the persistently low proportion of Maori news stories in the story mix of the three traditional broadcasters at a time of considerable social and political flux for Maori and Pakeha in New Zealand society. It is puzzling that at a time when Maori issues are at the forefront of public attention and when Treaty issues dominate that Maori issues are not higher on the news agenda. Morning Report news and TV3 News fare particularly poorly in the overall proportions of news. This is somewhat surprising for TV3 News. When the channel began, news executives at TV3 publicly announced their commitment to hiring Maori television reporters to cover the Maori round (McGregor, 1992).

6.4 Plurality and diversity in the news

There is a strong presumption in both the Broadcasting Act 1989 and the codes of broadcasting practice in favour of plurality and diversity in the news. In this research this is measured in the sources of news by gender and ethnicity. The results in both categories show little improvement over a decade. In November 1994 the State Enterprises Committee (Dominion, 25/11/94, p.7). recommended that TVNZ considered recording the gender balance of its sports coverage "as a useful self-test or measure." Perhaps the recommendation needs a wider scope if the spirit and the intent of the broadcasting statute is to be given effect.

Minorities have traditionally fared badly from the news media but the results revealed a low incidence of stories about Maori issues in the traditional programmes and individual cases of sensational and stereotypical reportage. The prevalence of bad news stories when Maori news is covered compounds the problem. The influence of bad news about Maori or no news about Maori on the public mood in terms of race relations should be of concern to broadcast news management. Wilson and Gutierrez (1985) observed that the coverage of minority races by the news media has a number of stages.

News about ethnic minorities in white news media has been characterized by developmental phases. Five phases can be identified historically: (1) exclusionary, (2) threatening issue, (3) confrontation, (4) stereotypical selection, and (5) integrated coverage phases (p.135).

The research results show the first four phases of coverage in conventional broadcast journalism in New Zealand. Integrated news remains an ideal which is seldom realised in practice. The search for a voice by Maori in mainstream radio and television news remains a question of honour which is unfulfilled.

6.5 The 'blending' of news on television

The research showed that story length in the sampled stories remained much the same over the years but that source speaking time has fallen quite dramatically (in TV One news it has halved). The voice that has taken up some of the slack in television news stories is that of the journalist. Several categories in the study reaffirmed the new status of the television reporter as part of the story as well as the story-teller. These were categories such as "piece to camera", the increase in unsupported assertions and the integration of fact and opinion. The results of these factors is a blended or "vitamized" news which, while it is vigorously defended by its promoters and broadcasters themselves, intersects in a number of ways with classic and foundation principles of journalism. This clash of principles comes down to what should be the nature of broadcast news reporting. Clearly quality broadcast news should not be stenography. But should it be vitamized news, a thick shake of reportorial opinion, invisible sources, unattributed opinion, with a dash of fact? Is this the best way journalists can gather and present the best obtainable version of the truth? These questions should be at the heart of debate about balance and fairness in broadcast news.

6.6 Significant points for individual broadcasters

6.6.1 Morning Report

Morning Report news and feature stories performed well, comparatively, in many of the measures used in this study. It has remained consistent in its approach across the study years. Stories in the programme now have more sources speaking per story and these sources now have a longer time to express their view. In one area Morning Report falls short and this is the narrow range of voices heard on the programme. While it is acknowledged that the programme concentrates on political issues, urgent efforts should be made to improve the plurality of its source base. Morning Report is dominated by Pakeha sources to a greater extent than any other programme, with levels remaining relatively constant since 1989. Similarly, Morning Report is dominated by male sources to a greater extent than other programmes. This held true across all subjects. Earlier discussion has drawn attention to the codes of broadcasting practice for radio which call for respect for the principles of partnership between Maori and Pakeha and for the principles of equity relating to women. While National Radio broadcasts other programmes which cater to a variety of groups including minorities, the results of the study suggest that Morning Report, with its high listenership and potential influence could do more to support New Zealand on Air's mission to reflect and develop New Zealand identity and culture.

6.6.2 Television New Zealand

Television New Zealand has revamped its main nightly news programme in 1995, running an hour of news and conceding that Holmes is an additional extra and not an intrinsic portion of the news hour. Already informal commentary (Dr Brian Edwards, Public Radio) suggests that there have been improvements in such things as the length of sound bites. Clearly comparative research is needed to compare the results of this research against TV One's new format which lies outside the research parameters.

The results of the research project show TVNZ's identification of cited sources could be improved with 35% for TV One news incompletely identified and 44.5% of Holmes' cited sources incompletely identified. For TV One news over the stories sampled from 1985 to 1994 the average speaking time of sources has halved while it has increased on Holmes. There are, too, some problematic signs from the sample in relation to the split between Government and Opposition sources in the news with an increasing reliance on the incumbent.

Of particular note in TV One news is the blurring of distinction between fact and opinion. There is a growing use of the piece to camera coupled with an increasing use of emotional language and unsupported assertions.

The Holmes programme comes out poorly in many of the key areas related to balance and fairness. A large majority of its stories contained emotional language which in turn caused an imbalance. The programme performed worst in including of sides in controversy and in even-handed treatment both in terms of time and interviewer treatment. Holmes' stories were most likely to contain unsupported assertions and to use camera treatments which caused an imbalance and they were the least likely to deal with every person fairly. However, the researchers' earlier comments about the classification of Holmes as "news" need to be noted. An issue for debate is whether there should be separate or additional codes of practice relating to the Holmes-type programmes which clearly include characteristics in addition to those of the "news".

6.6.3 TV3

TV3 news has a reputation among some critics and news watchers as being the preferred alternative of the two channels in the main evening news bulletin clash (Edwards, 1992) although this is not confirmed by ratings. The results of the research show that in a number of the categories examined there is not marked differentiation between TV One news and TV3 news. While fairer in terms of inclusion of sides in a controversy than other broadcasters, TV3 had a high and growing proportion of crime news where film techniques resulted in unfair treatment. Also noticeable were a reduction in story length in the main news (only partly offset by longer feature items) very poor identification of cited sources, reduced total speaking time for sources and a strong incumbency bias for 1992. On the increase was the number of unsupported assertions, and until 1994 emotional language was a feature. The near invisibility of Maori news and the sensational nature of the Te Roroa story previously mentioned are cause for worry.

6.6.4 Mana News

Mana News' style and success is inextricably tied to the amount of time allocated to the news programme. In general the results indicate that perhaps Mana worked better when the programme was longer allowing justice to be done to sources with traditionally limited access and not usually heard on the airwaves.

6.7 Implications for the codes of broadcasting

Two areas of the study directly raise issues about the codes of broadcasting practice. The first concerns sources and the adequacy of the current codes in light of results which show a disappointingly high number of cited sources who are incompletely identified, particularly on television news. As it stands, the code urges both radio and television broadcasters to keep the standards of integrity and reliability of news sources under constant review. The

codes of practice have a dual purpose. First, they act as guidance and a yardstick for the broadcasters. Second, they act as a point of reference for news consumers who want to complain about a perceived shortfall in standards. While the code may operate well to remind broadcasters of their responsibilities about sources, it is apparent from this research that the code warrants revision if it is to serve an appropriate purpose for consumers when cited sources are incompletely identified. Should news viewers and listeners take on trust the integrity and reliability of invisible sources?

The increasing proportion of "vitamized" news which blends facts and opinion, very often in a piece to camera report containing unsupported assertions, also raises implications for the current codes of broadcasting practice. While the codes of practice for radio contain specific reference to the separation of fact and opinion no such delineation is mentioned in the television codes even though the Broadcasting Standards Authority has drawn TVNZ's attention to the problem in a decision on a recent complaint. Has the time come for some formal recognition in the television code for news urging television broadcasters not to fuzz the boundaries of fact, interpretation, opinion and analysis without disclosing to the public that part of the story is reportorial opinion?

6.8 Limitations

This research was a benchmark study with no antecedents in scope and spread of years. Inevitably some areas required greater analysis than the time frame and resources of the project allowed. One aspect in particular which warrants further scrutiny is the visual element of the news. A typology of categories to examine visualness needs to be established for comparative analysis. The development of such categories would require specialist knowledge and experienced coders.

The absence of previous examinations of balance and fairness in broadcast news meant the design of the study was exploratory and its application analogous to a radar scan looking for blips on the mediascape. The questionnaire developed for coding purposes attempted to be exhaustive and without preconception rather than focusing on specific predetermined concerns which may have provided greater in-depth information. Like all researchers employing content analysis methodology we would have preferred a bigger sample size, but pragmatic considerations such as time, resources and the wide scope of the project place inevitable limitations on how many stories and programmes could be looked at.

We have acknowledged that balance and fairness are contested concepts and that the reality of listening and watching the news is essentially a subjective process. As Ericson, Baranek and Chan (1991) state, "people in various settings at different times give it significance according to their circumstances and their selves" (p.53). But there is an important distinction between informal viewing of, and listening to, the news and a scientific study of news content employing content analysis methodology.

Lichty and Bailey (1978) state that a viewer or listener's selective exposure, perception and recall make it impossible for the news consumer to have a broad and accurate overview of all that is on the news. "People tend to over-generalize from what they do see and remember" (p.112). They state that "we analyse the content of news because a valid and reliable study is sharply different from casual watching" (p.112).

6.9 Summary

Overall it can be asked if broadcast news is in good shape. Positive points emerge from the study as well as a number of worrying signals. For example, story lengths have not altered much and the number of sources in each story has tended to rise. Coders overwhelmingly felt their level of understanding taken from the stories they viewed and listened to was high. And while stories are prompted by events there was a strong emphasis on dealing with issues which supports the information role of broadcast news. Generally there is a responsible use of audio and visual techniques. The majority of the programmes overall, too, treated every person taking part justly and fairly. Morning Report has improved in a number of categories used in the research, and in general, Mana News serves its Maori and Pakeha listeners well.

The categories set against traditional journalistic norms which indicate problems for television relate to the sourcing, attribution and the blending of news merging fact and opinion. In recent years New Zealand television broadcasting executives have displayed a tendency to dismiss criticism as unfounded because it rests on flimsy empirical evidence or because its critics are not deeply steeped in the mores of news. In response to the Broadcasting Standards Authority decision on Helen Clark's recent complaint, for example, a senior news executive complained that the authority "may not fully understand the difficult yet vital role of a political correspondent." The level of understanding aside, the role of political reporting has always been difficult. The question is whether journalistic standards are fixed so that performance and content can be measured against them and reporters and the public know what is expected of the news, or whether they are variable, in which case there is little certainty to be gained from them.

6.10 Future research directions

In general there is a weak tradition of news media scholarship in New Zealand although a small band of academic researchers have engaged Television New Zealand in vigorous debate since the de-regulation of broadcasting. The pervasiveness and power of the news media and its central place in the information exchange means it warrants systematic and continuous scrutiny. A decade of electronic news without the tracking role that research can provide is too long when there are clear signals that the fundamental nature of news is changing. News needs to be taken seriously and the intensity of debate raised. The fact that the concepts of balance and fairness in the news elude exact definition and are exacting in practice to apply does not mean we should abandon the pursuit.

REFERENCES

- Altschull, J.H. (1992). Fairness, truth and the makers of image. *Media Studies Journal*, Fall, 1992, 1-15.
- Atkinson, J. (1994). Structures of television news. In P. Ballard (ed.) *Power and responsibility: broadcasters striking a balance*, (pp.43-74). Wellington: Broadcasting Standards Authority.
- Avieson, J. (1991). The concept of objectivity in journalism: A restatement. *Australian Journalism Review*, 13 (No's 1 & 2), 15-22.
- Brown, J.D., Bybee, C.R., Wearden, S.T., and Straughan, D.M. (1987). Invisible power: newspaper news sources and the limits of diversity. *Journalism Quarterly*, 64, 45-54.
- Campbell, G. (6 May, 1989). Top of the evening. *N.Z. Listener*, 18-21, 34.
- Campbell, G. (11 July, 1992). Holmes sweet Holmes. *Listener and TV Times*, 12-17.
- Chibnall, S. (1977). *Law-and-order news*. London: Tavistock.
- Cocker, A. (12 September, 1992). Broadcasters ever at war with politicians. *New Zealand Herald*, Section 1, p.8.
- Comrie, M. and McGregor, J. (1992). *Whose news?* Palmerston North: Dunmore Press.
- Dennis, E.E. and Pease, E.C. (1992). Preface. The fairness factor. *Media Studies Journal*. Fall, 1992, pp.xi-xxi.
- Docherty, D. and Tracey, M. (1993). Scholarship as silence. *Journal of Communication*, 43 (3), 230-237.
- Edwards, B. (1992). The cootchie coo news. In M. Comrie and J. McGregor (eds.) *Whose news?* (pp.15-25). Palmerston North: Dunmore Press.
- Ericson, R.V., Baranek, P.M., and Chan, J.B.L. (1989). *Negotiating control: A study of news sources*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Ericson, R.V., Baranek, P.M., and Chan, J.B.L. (1991). *Representing order: crime, law and justice in the news media*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Entman, R.M. (1994). Representation and reality in the portrayal of blacks on network television news. *Journalism Quarterly*, 71(3), Autumn, 509-520.
- Epstein, E.J. (1973). *News from nowhere*. New York: Random House.
- Fox, D. (1992). The Maori perspective of the news. In M. Comrie and J. McGregor (eds.) *Whose news?* (pp.170-180). Palmerston North: Dunmore Press.

- Funkhouser, G.R. and Shaw, E.F. (1990). How synthetic experience shapes social reality. *Journal of Communication*, 40(2), pp.75-87.
- Galtung, J. and Ruge, M. (1965). The structure of foreign news: The presentation of the Congo, Cuba and Cyprus crises in four foreign newspapers. *Journal of International Peace Research*, 1, 64-90.
- Goldstein, T. (ed.) (1989). *Killing the messenger*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Gregory, R.J. (1985). *Politics and broadcasting: before and beyond the NZBC*. Palmerston North: Dunmore Press.
- Hackett, R.A., Gilsdorf, W.O. and Savage, P. (1992). News balance rhetoric: The Fraser Institute's political appropriation of content analysis. *Canadian Journal of Communication* 17(1), Winter, pp.15-37.
- Hall, S., Critcher, C. Jefferson, T., Clarke, J. and Roberts, B. (1978). *Policing the crisis: mugging, the state, and law and order*. London: MacMillan Education.
- Henry, T. (1994). Providing balanced news and current affairs. In P. Ballard (ed.) *Power and responsibility: broadcasters striking a balance*, (pp.92-98). Wellington: Broadcasting Standards Authority.
- Keane, J. (1991). *Media and democracy*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Lichty, L.W. and Bailey, G.A. (1978). Reading the wind: reflections on content analysis of broadcast news. In W.C. Adams and F. Schreibman (Eds.), *Television network news: issues in content research*, (pp.111-137). Washington, DC: Washington School of Public and International Affairs, George Washington University.
- Longworth, E. and McBride, T. (1994). *The Privacy. A Guide*. Wellington: Government Print.
- Maharey, S. (1992). Politicians, the news media and democracy. In M. Comrie and J. McGregor (eds.), (pp.90-100). *Whose news?* Palmerston North: Dunmore Press.
- Mandell, L.M. and Shaw, D.L. (1973). Judging people in the news - unconsciously: effect of camera angle and bodily activity. *Journal of Broadcasting*, 17(3), 353-362.
- McCain, T.A., Chilberg, J. and Wakshlag, J. (1977). The effect of camera angle on source credibility and attraction. *Journal of Broadcasting*, 21, 35-46.
- McGregor, J. (1992). *Te Orenge Waha Ki: a survey of Maori journalists*. Auckland: Race Relations Office.
- McGregor, J. (1993). *Crime news as prime news*. Auckland: Legal Research Foundation.
- Morrison, A. and Tremewan, P. (1992). The myth of objectivity. In M. Comrie and J. McGregor (eds.), (pp.114-132). *Whose News?* Palmerston North: Dunmore Press.

- Naismith, J. (1993). *Balance, fairness and accuracy in news and current affairs: Literature review*. Broadcasting Standards Authority.
- Norris, P. (1 October, 1992). Speech to the University of Canterbury School of Journalism.
- O'Neill, M.J. (1994). Who cares about the truth? *Nieman Reports*. Spring 1994, pp.11-14.
- Owen, D. and Robinson, M. (1993). 1992 heralds "electronic populism". *World & I*, February, pp.114-119.
- Raboy, M. (1992). Balance is in the eye of the beholder. *Canadian Journal of Communication* 17(1), Winter, pp.117-123.
- Shook, F. (1989). *Television field production and reporting*. New York: Longman.
- Slater, K. (1994). Regulations, complaints and corrections policies. In P. Ballard (ed.) *Power and responsibility: broadcasters striking a balance*, (pp.126-129). Wellington: Broadcasting Standards Authority.
- Taggart, M. (1993). State-owned enterprises and social responsibility: A contradiction in terms? *New Zealand Recent Law Review*, III, 343-364.
- Taylor, S. (1993). The standup syndrome. *American Journalism Review*. July / August, pp.35-38.
- Tiemens, R.K. (1970). Some relationships of camera angle to communicator credibility. *Journal of Broadcasting*, 14(4), 485-490.
- Tiffen, R. (1989). *News and power*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin.
- Tully, J. and Fountain, B. (1993). *The news tourniquet*. Journalism Department, University of Canterbury, Christchurch.
- Upton, S. (28 July, 1993). Speech to the National Press Club, Wellington.
- Walker, R. (1994). Maori TV and radio - where is it at? Paper delivered to the New Zealand Broadcasting Summit, Auckland 5-6, May 1994, p.5.
- Williams, F. (1957). *Dangerous estate*. London: Longmans, Green.
- Williamson, M. (1994). Opening Address. In P. Ballard (ed.) *Power and responsibility: broadcasters striking a balance*, (pp.1-9). Wellington: Broadcasting Standards Authority.
- Wilson, C. and Gutierrez, F. (1985). *Minorities and the media: Diversity and the end of mass communication*. California: Sage Publications.
- Winter, P. (1994). TVNZ news: populist news - values and popular representation. In P. Ballard (ed.) *Power and responsibility: broadcasters striking a balance*, (pp.145-155). Wellington: Broadcasting Standards Authority.
- van Dijk, T.A. (1991). *Racism and the press*. London: Routledge.

BALANCE AND FAIRNESS IN BROADCASTING NEWS (1985-1994)

GENERAL

1. What is the number of the story ? _____

--	--	--	--	--

(1-5)

2. What day of the week is it broadcast?

Monday	1
Tuesday	2
Wednesday	3
Thursday	4
Friday	5

(6)

3. What date and month is it broadcast? _____

--	--	--	--

(7-10)

4. What year is it broadcast? _____

1985 1 1987 2 1989 3 1990 4 1992 5 1994 6

(11)

5. Which medium broadcast the story ?

Tv One News	1
Top Half	2
Holmes	3
Ralston/Smith/Westcott	4
Tv Three news	5
Morning Report news	6
Morning Report feature	7
Mana News	8

(12)

6. What is the duration of the story in seconds? _____

--	--	--

(13-15)

7. Is the story the lead item?

Yes	1
No	2

(16)

For all stories other than Morning Report answer Q8 then go to Q11 and then continue. Morning Report coders do not answer Q8, go to Q9 and continue.

8. Is the story placed:

Before an advertisement 1
After an advertisement 2
Not proximate to an advertisement? 3

☐
(17)

9. Is the Morning Report story a:

News story 1
Feature story 2

☐
(18)

10. Is the feature story on Morning Report:

Just before the 8am news 1
Just after the 7am news 2
Not proximate to the news? 3

☐
(19)

11. Is the story headlined?

Yes 1
No 2

☐
(20)

12. If the story is headlined, is it the lead headline? (top of bulletin)

Yes 1
No 2

☐
(21)

13. Is the story preceded or followed by chit-chat related to the story?

Yes 1
No 2

☐
(22)

14. What is the predominant subject matter of the story?

Crime 1
Politics 2
Health 3
Maori 4

☐
(23)

Coders need to answer only one of Q15 according to the type of news being coded.

15(a). Is the crime story preceded or followed by another crime story?

Yes 1
No 2

☐
(24)

15(b). Is the health story preceded or followed by another health story?

Yes 1
No 2

☐
(25)

15(c). Is the political story preceded or followed by another political story?

Yes 1
No 2

☐
(26)

15(d). Is the Maori story preceded or followed by another Maori story?

Yes 1
No 2

☐
(27)

16. Where does the story predominantly originate?

Auckland	1
Wellington	2
Christchurch	3
Dunedin	4
Other North Island city	5
Other South Island city	6
North Island small town	7
South Island small town	8
North Island rural	9
South Island rural	10
Offshore islands	11
Overseas story done by NZ crew	12

--	--

(28-29)

Coders need to answer one of Q17 according to the type of news being coded.

17(a). What type of crime story is it?

Crime incident	1
Police activities	2
Legislative activity about crime/policing	3
Crime issues	4
Court reporting	5
Prison escapes	6
Prison issues	7
Other	8

17(b). What type of health story is it?

Cures	9
Epidemics	10
Scare stories	11
Safety	12
Prevention	13
Medical professional's concerns	14
Individual patient story	15
Structural health reforms	16
Consumers' views (patients, family and friends)	17
Ethical issues	18
New health breakthroughs	19
Waiting lists	20
Health policy	21
Industrial relations	22
Health finance	23
Misconduct	24
Misadventure	25
Other	26

--	--

(30-31)

17(c). What type of political story is it?

Leadership poll	27
Party fortune poll	28
Constitutional poll	29
Parliamentary business	30
Economic policy	31
Other political policy	32
Political visits	33
Political leadership	34
Party fortunes	35
Politician's fortunes	36
Electoral issues	37
Constitutional issues	38
Political party affairs	39
Personality profiles	40
Political controversy	41
International diplomacy	42
Other	43

17(d). What type of Maori story is it?

Treaty issues (policy)	44
Treaty issues (claims/negotiation)	45
Treaty issues (protest)	46
Maori politics	47
Policy	48
Personalities	49
Crime	50
Employment	51
Health	52
Education	53
Welfare issues	54
Housing	55
Achievement	56
Race relations	57
Racial discrimination	58
Religion	59
Culture	60
Cultural difference	61
Land claims	62
Other	63

Coders need to answer one of Q18 according to the type of news being coded.

18(a). What type of crime offence is it?

Violence	1
Sexual offences	2
Drugs	3
Dishonesty/white collar crime	4
Dishonesty/other	5
Property	6
Mixed	7
Other	8
Not applicable	9

18(b). Is the political story predominantly:

Personality based	10
Issue based	11
Mixed	12
Other	13

--	--

(32-33)

18(c). Is the health story predominantly about:

Patient health	14
Health structures	15
Mixed	16
Other	17

18(d). Is the Maori story predominantly:

Good news	18
Bad news	19
Neutral	20

19. How many sources are there in the story?

--	--

(34-35)

SOURCES

Line 1

Coders should note that the following section needs to be coded for each source that features in a story.

For each source (quoted by journalist or newsreader or speaking for themselves) in the story answer the following;

20(a). Is the source:

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Speaking for him/herself | 1 |
| Being cited | 2 |
| Both | 3 |

☐
(36)

For each source, coders must answer either Q20 (b-c) if the source was cited only, or Q20 (d-e) if the source spoke only for him/herself. If the source was both cited and spoke for him/herself coders must answer Q20 (f-g).

20(b). If the source is cited only, what is the fullest identification of the source in the story?
(Write in)

20(c). Is the fullest identification of this cited source:

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| Very complete | 1 |
| Complete | 2 |
| Adequate | 3 |
| Incomplete | 4 |
| Very incomplete | 5 |

☐
(37)

20(d). If the source spoke only for him/herself, what is the fullest identification of the source in the story?
(Write in)

20(e). Is the fullest identification of this source who spoke for him/herself:

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| Very complete | 1 |
| Complete | 2 |
| Adequate | 3 |
| Incomplete | 4 |
| Very incomplete | 5 |

☐

(38)

20(f). If the source is both cited and spoke for him/herself, what is the fullest identification of this source in the story.
(Write in)

20(g). Is the fullest identification of this cited/spoken source:

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| Very complete | 1 |
| Complete | 2 |
| Adequate | 3 |
| Incomplete | 4 |
| Very incomplete | 5 |

☐

(39)

20(h). What is the gender of the source?

- | | |
|---------|---|
| Male | 1 |
| Female | 2 |
| Unknown | 3 |

☐

(40)

20(i). What is the ethnicity of the source?

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| Maori | 1 |
| Pacific Island | 2 |
| Pakeha | 3 |
| Other | 4 |
| Unknown | 5 |

☐

(41)

20(j). What is the type of source?

Crime

Police	1	Prime Minister	10
Victim	2	Oppn leader	11
Alleged offender	3	Government politician	12
Eye witness	4	Oppn politician	13
Neighbour/residents	5	Legal expert	14
Family	6	Justice interest group	15
Lawyer for the accused	7	Journalist as eye-witness	16
Other lawyer	8	Other	17
Public servant	9		

Health

Health professional	18	Other Oppn politician	28
Patient	19	Ministry spokesperson/ public servant	29
Family/friend	20	Professional interest group	30
Administrator	21	Other interest group	31
Prime Minister	22	Health expert	32
Oppn. leader	23	Journalist as eye-witness	33
Minister of health	24	Other	34
Oppn spokesperson on health	25		
Third party spokesperson on health	26		
Other Govt politician	27		

Politics

Member of public	35	Public servant	44
Prime Minister	36	Quango spokesperson	45
Other Crown minister	37	Political party official	46
Government MP	38	Political commentator	47
Opposition leader	39	Lobby group spokesperson	48
Opposition spokesperson	40	Political correspondent	49
Other MP	41	Journalist as eye-witness	50
Third party leader	42	Other	51
Third party spokesperson	43		

Maori

Individual Maori	52	Maori political leader	64
Other member of the public	53	Waitangi Tribunal spokesperson	65
Prime Minister	54	Iwi/hapu spokesperson	66
Oppn. Leader	55	Public servant	67
Minister of Maori Affairs	56	Researcher/expert	68
Minister of Justice	57	Administrative officer	69
Other Government minister	58	Elder	70
Oppn spokesperson on Maori Affairs	59	Religious leader	71
Oppn spokesperson on Justice	60	Celebrity	72
Other Maori MP	61	Journalist as eye-witness	73
Third party spokesperson	62	Police	74
Other MP	63	Health professionals	75
		Other Maori interest group	76
		Education spokesperson	77
		Other	78



(42-43)

20(k). If the source speaks, how many seconds during the whole story does the source speak for?
(Cumulative) _____

--	--	--

(44-46)

20(l). Is the source repeated in the story, either cited or speaking for him/herself?

Yes 1
No 2

--

(47)

If no, coders go to Q20(n).

20(m). If so how many times is the source repeated in the story?
(Write number in boxes)

--	--

(48-49)

20(n). Rate the overall camera treatment for its effect on the source:

Strongly enhances 1
Enhances 2
Neither enhances nor diminishes 3
Diminishes 4
Strongly diminishes 5

--

(50)

20(o). Is the overall sound quality for the source:

Very good 1
Good 2
Adequate 3
Poor 4
Very poor 5

--

(51)

20(p). Is the source interviewed so that questions and answers are broadcast?

Yes 1
No 2

--

(52)

If yes, go to Q20 (q). If no, and you have coded all sources go to Q21, and continue coding for the story. If you have other sources to code continue through the coloured pages and begin to code the next source.

20(q). Overall were the questions:

Aggressive	1
Fourth estate adversarial	2
Information gathering	3
Neutral	4
Supportive	5
Weak	6

☐

(53)

20(r). Overall rate the appropriateness of the questions to the context of the story:

Very appropriate	1
Appropriate	2
Neither appropriate nor inappropriate	3
Unappropriate	4
Very unappropriate	5

☐

(54)

20(s). Is the interviewer's tone of voice during questioning

Positive	1
Neutral	2
Negative	3

☐

(55)

20(t). Who asks the questions during the interview?

Sue Wood	1
Paul Holmes	2
Bill Ralston	3
Geoff Robinson	4
Kim Hill	5
Linda Rose	6
John Hawkesby	7
Judy Bailey	8
Other male presenter	9
Other female presenter	10
Male reporter	11
Female reporter	12
Genevieve Westcott	13
Leighton Smith	14

☐

(56-57)

Coders need to repeat Q20 for every source in the story. If this is the last source please go to Q21.

GENERAL

21. Does the story contain any assertions by the reporter or newsreader which are not supported by sources or other physical evidence? Ignore assertions which are easily verifiable by common knowledge, public records, historical fact etc.

Yes 1
No 2

☐

(58)

If the answer is yes, coders need to answer Q22-24. If the answer is no, coders go to Q25.

22. If yes, does the story contain assertions supported only by "Television New Zealand understands" or "Radio New Zealand understands" or similar phrases?

Yes 1
No 2

☐

(59)

23. To what extent is the story based on assertions which are not supported by sources or other physical evidence?

Predominantly 1
Partly 2
Hardly at all 3

☐

(60)

24. How do these assertions which are not supported by sources or other physical evidence affect the balance of the story?

Very balanced 1
Balanced 2
Neither balanced nor unbalanced 3
Unbalanced 4
Very unbalanced 5

☐

(61)

25. Does the story contain captions which relate to the source or the story (not reporter/newsreader)?

Yes 1
No 2

☐

(62)

If yes, coders need to answer Q26-28. If no, coders need to go to Q29.

26. Are the captions:

Descriptive	1
Evaluative	2
Mixed?	3

☐

(63)

27. To what extent are evaluative/mixed captions supported by other sources or physical evidence in the story?

Fully	1
Partly	2
Not at all	3

☐

(64)

28. Are the captions in the context of the story:

Accurate	1
Inaccurate	2
Can't tell?	3

☐

(65)

29. Does the story screen video footage?

Yes	1
No	2

☐

(66)

If coders answer no, then go to Q42.

30. Do the pictures match the narrative:

Very good match	1
Good match	2
Neither a good nor poor match	3
Poor match	4
Very poor match	5

☐

(67)

31. Does the story use wallpaper footage (generally appropriate visuals serving as a background to the journalistic narrative which are not part of the events covered in the story)?

Yes	1
No	2

☐

(68)

32. If yes, how important is wallpaper footage in presenting a particular point of view?

Very important	1
Important	2
Not important	3

☐

(69)

33. What is the effect of the wallpaper footage in the story?
Please describe:

34. Does the wallpaper footage used contain file footage?

Yes	1
No	2
Can't tell	3

☐

(70)

If coders answer no, then go to Q36.

35. Is the file footage identified as file footage?

Yes	1
No	2

☐

(71)

36. Does the story contain film which creates a synthetic or simulated experience (as opposed to coverage of a live/real occurrence)?

Yes	1
No	2
Can't tell	3

☐

(72)

37. If yes, please describe?

38. To what extent does the story rely on film which creates a synthetic experience?

Fully	1
Partly	2
Not at all	3

☐
(73)

39. Overall what effect does film which creates a synthetic experience have on the story?
Please describe:

40. Rate the effect of the film which creates synthetic experience on the balance of the story:

Very balanced	1
Balanced	2
Neither balanced nor imbalanced	3
Imbalanced	4
Very imbalanced	5

☐
(74)

41. Does the story contain a piece to camera?

Yes	1
No	2

☐
(75)

42. Does the story contain audio from sources other than newsreader and reporter?

Yes	1
No	2

☐
(76)

If coders answer no, then go to Q.44.

43. Does the audio match the journalist's/newreader's narrative:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Very good match | 1 |
| Good match | 2 |
| Neither a good nor poor match | 3 |
| Poor match | 4 |
| Very poor match | 5 |

☐
(77)

44. What prompted the story?

- | | |
|------------|---|
| An event | 1 |
| An issue | 2 |
| Can't tell | 3 |

☐
(78)

45. Is the story concerned with an:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Event only | 1 |
| Event with underlying issue mentioned | 2 |
| Event with issue covered in depth | 3 |
| Issue only | 4 |

☐
(79)

46. Are special camera techniques employed in the story?

(Examples of special camera techniques are fast or slow motion, instant replay, juxtaposing events widely separated by time or space, shifting points of view (via moving cameras, zoom lenses or multiple cameras) extreme close-up, fish-eye lens, techniques to disguise identity, extreme camera angles, graphics, others)

- | | |
|------------|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |
| Can't tell | 3 |

☐
(80)

If coders answer no, then go to Q48.

47. If yes, rate the effects of the special camera techniques on the balance of the story:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Very balanced | 1 |
| Balanced | 2 |
| Neither balanced nor imbalanced | 3 |
| Imbalanced | 4 |
| Very imbalanced | 5 |

☐
(81)

48. Are special audio techniques employed in the story?

(Examples of special audio techniques are altered sound speed, sound effects, music, deliberate silence, archival tapes, merging, altering or distorting sound, etc)

Yes	1
No	2
Can't tell	3

☐

(82)

If coders answer no or can't tell, go to Q50.

49. If yes, rate the effects of the special audio techniques on the balance of the story:

Very balanced	1
Balanced	2
Neither balanced nor imbalanced	3
Imbalanced	4
Very imbalanced	5

☐

(83)

50. What is your level of understanding of the subject matter of the story?

Very clear	1
Clear	2
Moderate	3
Unclear	4
Very unclear	5

☐

(84)

51. Write down the main reasons (up to 3) for your level of understanding.

52. Please write the main claim of the story.
(Basic construct)

53. How is the main claim supported?

54. In your opinion how fully is the main claim supported?

Very fully	1
Fully	2
Moderately	3
Partly	4
Hardly at all	5

☐

(85)

55. Does the story contain controversy (two or more sides in opposition)?

Yes	1
No	2

☐

(86)

If no go to Q69.

56. How fair is the story in terms of inclusion of relevant sides of the controversy?

Very fair	1
Fair	2
Neither fair nor unfair	3
Unfair	4
Very unfair	5

☐

(87)

57. Are the assertions of each side of the controversy accorded equal weight in the story?

Yes	1
No	2

☐

(88)

If yes, go to Q60.

58. If not, why not? Write in below.

59. How does the weight given to assertions in the controversy affect the story in terms of balance?

Very balanced	1
Balanced	2
Neither balanced nor imbalanced	3
Imbalanced	4
Very imbalanced	5

☐

(89)

60. Is there an indication in the story of non-availability of a side of the controversy?

Yes	1
No	2

☐

(90)

61. Is there an indication in the story of previous or future availability of a side of the controversy?

Yes	1
No	2

☐

(91)

62. Is each side of the controversy accorded equal treatment by the interviewer/host/reporter?

Yes	1
No	2

☐

(92)

If yes go to Q65.

63. If not, why not?

64. How does this interviewer treatment affect the overall story in terms of balance?

Very balanced	1
Balanced	2
Neither balanced nor imbalanced	3
Imbalanced	4
Very imbalanced?	5

☐

(93)

65. Are there other story/stories in the sample programme which refer to the same controversy?

Yes	1
No	2

☐

(94)

If coders answer no, go to Q69.

66. How many other stories in the sample programme refer to the same controversy?

☐

(95)

67. Do the other story/stories affect the balance of coverage of the controversy:

Yes	1
No	2

☐

(96)

68. How does the other story/stories affect the balance of coverage of the controversy:

Greatly increases the balance	1
Increases the balance	2
Neither increases nor decreases the balance	3
Decreases the balance	4
Greatly decreases the balance	5

☐

(97)

69. Is emotional, loaded language used by the newsreader/journalist in the story?

Yes	1
No	2
Can't tell	3

☐

(98)

(Examples of emotional, loaded language are strongly emotional adjectives and verbs, exaggeration and overstatement, gross generalisation, cliché, metaphor, simile, alliteration, repetition etc)

70. If yes, rate the effect of the emotional language on the balance of the story:

Very balanced	1
Balanced	2
Neither balanced nor imbalanced	3
Imbalanced	4
Very imbalanced?	5

☐
(99)

71. Is every person taking part or referred to in the story dealt with justly and fairly?

Yes	1
No	2

☐
(100)

If yes, go to Q73.

72. If not, why not?

73. Does the story contain factual reporting and comment, opinion and analysis?

Yes	1
No	2

☐
(101)

If yes, then answer Q74-75.

74. Are you able to distinguish clearly and easily between factual reporting on the one hand, and comment, opinion and analysis on the other?

Yes	1
No	2

☐
(102)

75. What are the reasons why or why not?
