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***JURORS' PERCEPTIONS OF
THE INFLUENCE OF
EXTRA-EVIDENTIAL FACTORS
ON THEIR DECISION MAKING.***

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Psychology
at Massey University.

Catherine Helen Priest

1997

ABSTRACT

One of the major assumptions underlying the jury system is that juries' verdicts are based exclusively on the evidence presented in court. However, many have challenged this assumption and claim that a number of extra-evidential factors influence jurors' decision making. The present research was designed to investigate jurors' perceptions of the influence of various extra-evidential factors related to the defendant, the lawyers and the judge on their decision making, and to examine possible relationships between jurors' perceptions of the trial participants and their evaluations of the defendant, and the lawyers and their cases. Structured interviews were conducted with sixty-nine respondents who had served on a jury within the last three years, and the data collected was statistically analysed using a .05 level of statistical significance. The results indicated that respondents perceived that some of the extra-evidential factors investigated had influenced their decision making, and relationships were also found between some of these factors and respondents' evaluations. The implications of the results are limited by various methodological considerations, particularly relating to the sample and the nature of the data, but the results do suggest that extra-evidential factors may influence jurors' decision making, and that this is an area worthy of further investigation.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank those people who gave their time to participate in this study, without whom this research would not have been possible.

Thank you very much to Joan Barnes for her supervision and her persistence when difficulties were encountered during the development of this research.

I would also like to thank Professor Stuart McCutcheon for his assistance in the initial stages of this research, and the Honourable Justice Hugh Williams for his support and advice.

Special thanks to my friends for being there, especially Alex who kept me motivated during the latter stages of this project.

Finally, I would like to extend my deepest appreciation to my family and to Ben for their unwavering love, support and encouragement.

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