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**The Commercial Imperative in Broadcasting News:
TVNZ from 1985 to 1990**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of PhD in Human Resource Management
at Massey University

Margaret Ann Comrie

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ABSTRACT

Between 1985 and 1990, broadcasting services in New Zealand underwent significant restructuring and deregulation. This was part of a global surge of broadcasting deregulation caused by a mix of technological, political and economic factors threatening Western public service broadcasting systems (Willard & Tracey, 1990).

The switch in New Zealand television from public service broadcasting to a commercial approach was both swift and profound, affecting TVNZ and its output at all levels. This study seeks to trace the effects of that transition on a key product, the news.

The research epitomizes the growing tensions between two major models of broadcasting as marketplace ideology gains ascendancy over public service approaches. This tension has its counterpart in journalism, with its on-going conflict between a commercial rationale and an informative purpose based on notions of empowering citizens.

The major study objective was to identify the influence of deregulation and competitive pressure on the nature of TVNZ news from 1985 to 1990. Three methodologies were employed: a historical review, a content analysis and a qualitative news analysis.

The research takes the perspective of a growing number of scholars arguing for the importance of public service broadcasting (Price, 1995; Scannel, 1990; Tracey, 1992) and an informative news industry (Bennett, 1993; Bernstein, 1992) as a basis for a healthy democracy in a world of technological change.

Historical methodologies, especially interviews, were used to identify the roots of the change, key personalities and decision points which resulted in TVNZ's legislative and internal orientation to profit making. Newswriters described conflicts over techniques and news values, and losses and gains represented in the new style.

A content analysis of early evening news bulletins between 1985 and 1990 quantified changes in subject matter and the sourcing and attribution of news. Results confirmed a shift towards a more commercial approach. They showed a reduction in time given to the national news, reduced story length and shorter sound bites (on-camera statements by news sources). There was a swing away from serious news subjects (such as politics, economics, diplomacy and foreign affairs) in favour of more entertainment-oriented subjects (crime, accidents and disasters, human interest, and public moral problem stories). TVNZ news continued to rely on official sources, but increased its use of victims and ordinary citizens as news sources. There was a reduction in cited sources.

The qualitative news analysis backed up these findings. It demonstrated how greater pace was introduced into the bulletins and showed growth in emotional, tabloid language in stories and headlines. Analysis of individual news stories used Wyatt & Badger's (1993) typology to demonstrate a shift of function in news items, from information to vicarious experience. The analysis identified verbal and visual techniques used to heighten emotion and increase audience involvement.

The study shows how commercial pressures and the drive to increase ratings results in a news mix which short-changes citizens. This threatens democratic participation in a world where most people seek their information from television news and where changing technologies threaten to create a new class of the information impoverished (Kellner, 1990). Because the commercial imperatives shaping news are underpinned by legislation, there can be little long-term change without law changes to reinstate the primacy of PSB values into at least one of New Zealand's publicly-owned television channels, and to target funding for public service news programmes.

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CHAPTER ONE: SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH

1.1 Introduction

From the early 1980s, broadcasting systems have undergone dramatic change as a wave of deregulation induced by new technologies, political ideologies and economic pressures swept around the world (Garnham, 1994). At the same time, and partly as a result, public service broadcasting is being increasingly threatened (Willard & Tracey, 1990). Between 1985 and 1990, New Zealand broadcasting moved from moderate restriction to almost complete deregulation (Cocker, 1992). On the eve of competition, TVNZ, the publicly-owned broadcaster, was restructured and by legislation directed to focus primarily on profit-making activities. Responsibility for public service broadcasting was given to a government commission, New Zealand on Air.

The shrinking time given to serious informational programming in response to deregulation and competition has been noted in Britain (Sparks, 1995), Europe (Browne, 1989; Sassoon, 1985) and New Zealand (Cocker, 1994a). The concern is that publicly-owned broadcasters under competitive pressure are reneging on responsibilities to inform people. A growing number of writers (Aufderheide, 1991; Croteau, Hoynes & Carragee, 1996; Price, 1995; Scannell, 1989, 1990; Tracey, 1992) are linking public service broadcasting with the concept of the public sphere, within which the fabric of society is generated and maintained through public communication. As a result of social and economic trends, the public sphere is shrinking and, these writers believe, the key mandate of public media is now to "foster a viable, vital public sphere" (Aufderheide, 1991, p.169). The informational role of public service broadcasting is in this way linked crucially to the functioning of a healthy democracy.

1.2 The Primacy of Broadcasting News

Because of its importance, the study of news has formed a vital part of mass media research, informing developing theory. McQuail (1987) describes news as central to the mass media: "Media institutions could barely exist without news and news could not

exist without media institutions" (p.204). Researchers see the media in general as shaping the framework through which we perceive the world (Blumler & Gurevitch, 1982; Real, 1989) and the news media are essential to this process. By selecting and emphasising events and issues, journalists construct social reality and set the agenda of social debate (Chibnall, 1977; Hall, 1982; Leitch, 1990; Schlesinger, 1987; and others).

News is indispensable to the political process in democracies, both defining politics and being defined by it (McGregor, 1996). Television is the medium from which most people receive news in America and Europe (Levy, 1992) and this also holds true in New Zealand ("Research puts TV on top," 1993). So broadcasting news and current affairs is, as Kuhn says, the primary source of political information in Western democracies (Kuhn, 1985b). This focuses the attention of politicians not only on broadcasting structures (Cocker, 1994b; Gregory, 1985) but also on news outputs, where individual items are scrutinized in a highly public, sometimes powerful, but generally ad hoc, manner (McGregor & Comrie, 1995).

Moreover, the news is also important, both economically and philosophically, to broadcasters. The main evening news programme was described by one former commercial television manager from Australia as the "heart and soul" of a station (Dick, 1993). News provides essential high audience figures, and the American television ratings wars of the 1980s centred around news programmes. In America at local level, news is profitable (Lichty & Gomery, 1992) and provides identity (Shook, 1989). For the networks, news programmes are loss leaders, pulling in the audience in the early evening and so, as broadcasters believe, ensuring audiences stay with the channel throughout prime time. In New Zealand, television news rates more highly than anywhere else in the world (Atkinson, 1994b) and AGB McNair ratings show TVNZ's One Network news is nearly always the most popular programme, only displaced by top sports events.

News is central too, for broadcasting institutions whose survival does not depend on profit. Gregory (1985) argues that a news service which provides the values of objectivity and comprehensiveness lies at the heart of the public service ideal of broadcasting. In this way, as the major source of information for most people in Western democracies, television news is a vital component of the public sphere.

1.3 Research Strategy and Choice of Methods

This research aims to study the influence of deregulation and competitive pressures between 1985 and 1990 on TVNZ's main evening news bulletins by a combination of three methodologies.

The study period was selected to span the whole deregulatory process. It starts in 1985, when influences for change were being felt, BCNZ management was being restructured on a more commercial model, regulated competition for television was being planned and the Government was setting out on its path of economic deregulation. It ends in December 1990, after a full year of competition had created the pattern for channel ratings, when the results of TVNZ's long term strategic decisions were just being felt, and the Government had introduced a bill to lift restrictions on foreign ownership of broadcasting.

The three methodologies used in the study are historical research, quantitative content analysis and qualitative analysis. Historical methods (examining news reports and documents, and interviewing key actors) give a clear picture of the main legislative and management decisions, the reasons behind them and the effects felt by TVNZ newswriters. Content analysis produces a quantitative description of the changes occurring in the news during the study period. This is backed up by an in-depth qualitative study of selected bulletins, of news language, and treatment of selected subjects indicative of the change in news style.

This corroboratory combination of methodologies provides a unique perspective. Deregulation and commercialism have been frequently written about, from competing perspectives, at the broader policy level with comment on, but little systematic study of, the effect on programme content. (See for instance, Aufderheide, 1990; Blumler & Hoffmann-Riem, 1992; Brittan, 1989; Burgelman, 1986; Cave & Melody, 1989; Ferall, 1989.) This study not only provides the detailed examination of the strategies of policy formation which Kim (1992) calls for, but also complements this with an investigation of a crucial programme output, the news.

Content analysis is one of the most widely used research techniques for understanding and evaluating broadcast messages (Wurtzel, 1985). A number of writers testify to its continuing utility (Kaid & Wadsworth, 1989; Stempel, 1989; Wimmer & Dominick, 1991). Longitudinal content analysis studies such as this one are infrequent, but important (Patterson, 1978) and provide this research with a broad view not generally revealed in news media scholarship. In addition, its findings are confirmed and strengthened by the qualitative analysis examining areas not open to content analysis, such as the study of visual images, the interaction between audio and visual messages, and themes and symbols in the news (Carroll, 1985). These two methods of studying news are seldom employed in conjunction with one another but allow for a more meaningful analysis of the end product, the news stories as broadcast. Furthermore, the historical perspective provides the all-important context (Tuchman, 1991) for the news study.

The three methods together reinforce one another, providing corroborative evidence. In combination they provide a novel case study focusing on one of the key areas of broadcasting research, the effects of deregulation and competition on the news.

1.4 Research Questions

The underlying question in the study is: what is the influence of deregulation and competitive pressures on the nature of news? The research methodologies focus on five related research questions which set the direction of the project:

1. Did the TVNZ early evening news bulletins change significantly during the period 1985-1990?
2. If change has occurred, what is the extent and nature of that change?
3. What is the extent of the changing nature of newsroom practices and philosophies towards news from 1985-1990?
4. How, if at all, do deregulatory changes and major management decisions from 1985 to 1990 contribute to changes in the news bulletins?
5. How do the philosophies of broadcasting contribute to the changing form of news?

The list below shows how research questions are related to the methodologies.

Research Questions	Methodologies
1. Has news change occurred?	Content analysis Qualitative news analysis Historical perspective: Interviews Press reports
2. What is the nature and extent of change in news?	Content analysis Qualitative news analysis
3. What is the nature of change in newsroom practices and philosophies of news?	Historical perspective: Interviews Press reports
4. How have deregulatory change and management decisions contributed to news change?	Historical perspective: Interviews Document analysis Press reports
5. How do philosophies of broadcasting contribute to the changing form of news?	Literature review All methodologies

The content analysis, qualitative analysis methodologies and, to a lesser extent, interview material answer the questions on news content. The historical methodology of interviews and assessment of press reports and documents is used to answer questions on the changing nature of work practices and news values, on regulatory change and on management decision making. The first four research questions focus on the central concern of the project: the influence of deregulation and competitive pressures on the nature of news. All three methodologies, plus the theoretical perspective, are brought to bear on the final question about the links between philosophies of broadcasting and the changing nature of news. In exploring this question we touch on fundamental considerations of the function both of news and of broadcasting institutions in society.

1.5 Research Project Plan

The project plan below illustrates the scope of the research.

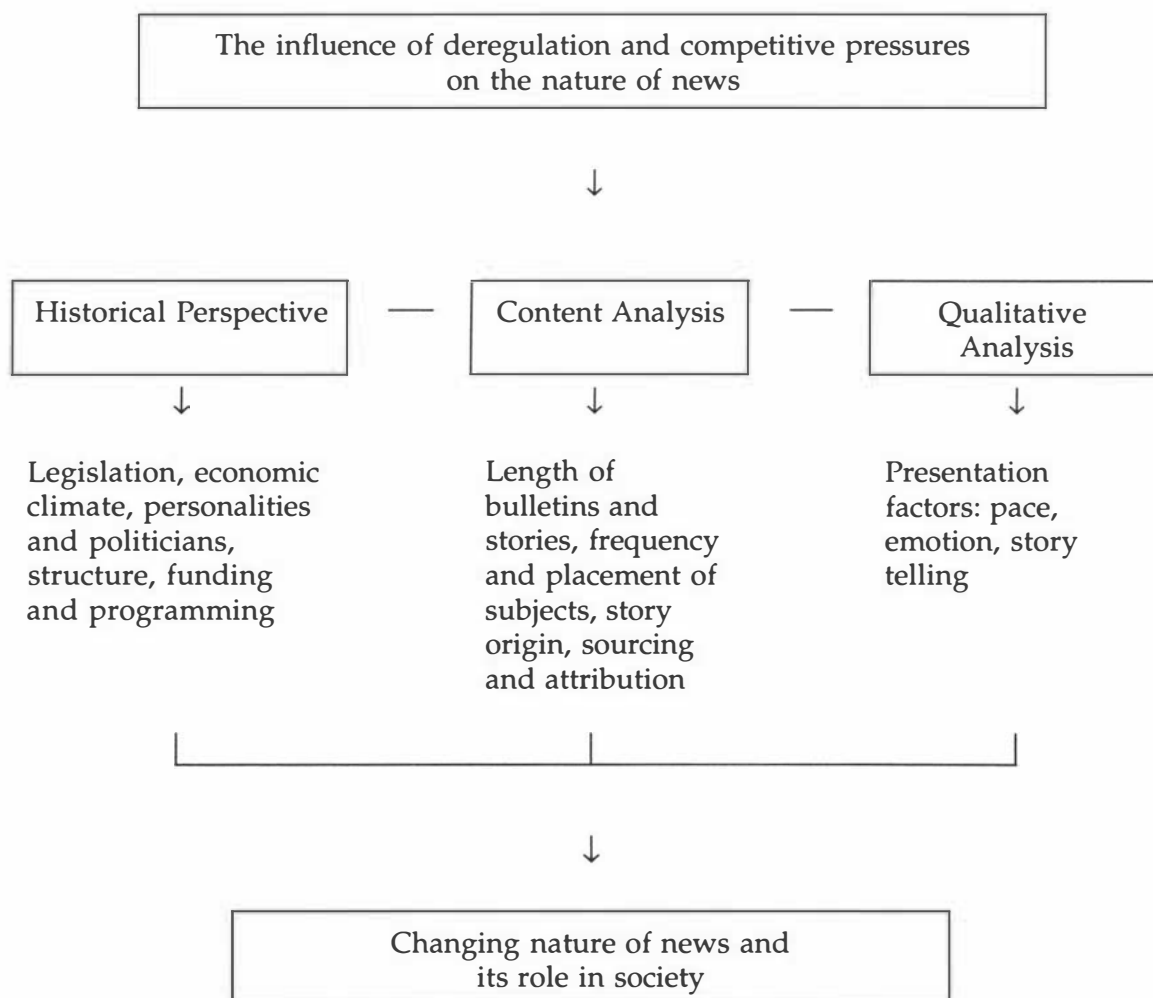


Figure 1: Research Project Plan

1.6 Theoretical Frameworks

A wide variety of contesting and even confusing theories have been developed to explain the mass media and one of its key products, the news (McQuail, 1987). This study draws on two broad theoretical approaches to broadcasting and their related

theories of news. The public service broadcasting approach, with its central notions of regulation to provide independence from political and commercial influences (Keane, 1991; Price, 1995) and a free access for audiences to a diversity of programme matter (Scannell, 1990), is explored first. This is set against the marketplace model, where open commercial competition between media institutions is deemed to best serve a marketplace of ideas, by providing a variety of programme matter that is validated by audience numbers (Brittan, 1989; Compaigne, 1985). The central focus of the research is the collision between these two approaches which became strongly apparent during the moves to deregulate the broadcasting industry in the 1980s and early 1990s. Both public service broadcasting (PSB) and the marketplace models have associated news theories. These reflect concepts of the role that news does or should play in society. From the liberal-pluralist tradition, associated with PSB, news is there to inform and empower. From the publicity model perspective, linked loosely with the marketplace model, news is part of the entertainment function of media and exists as a commercial commodity (McQuail, 1994).

1.7 Structure of the Thesis

The next two chapters constitute the literature review. Chapter Two examines the public service model; problems of definition, historical development, and manifestations in Britain, Europe and former British Dominions, especially New Zealand. It concludes with an examination of relevant news theory. Chapter Three opens with a review of writing on the marketplace model; its historical development, nature in practice, critiques of the model and associated news theory. It then moves on to discuss the recent deregulation of broadcasting which has been inspired by marketplace philosophies. It deals with the causes of deregulation, concentrating on its effects on PSB in the United States and Europe, before examining the New Zealand literature on deregulation. The chapter concludes with a look at current theories on the future role of public service broadcasting in a commercial environment.

The following chapter, Chapter Four, briefly explains the methodology used in the three elements of the research study: the historical perspective, the content analysis of news bulletins and the qualitative analysis. A detailed methodology precedes each separate results section in the thesis. Chapter Five covers the historical perspective and precedes quantitative and qualitative analysis, to provide a context for understanding news content (Ericson, Baranek & Chan, 1991; Tuchman, 1978). Chapters Six to Eight cover the content analysis methodology, results and discussion; Chapter Nine the qualitative analysis of news, methodology and results. The content analysis, with its quantitative measures is, as Winston (1990) says, at the logical centre of broadcasting research and precedes the qualitative analysis, with its insights into depiction, or how news was covered (Adams, 1978).

Finally, Chapter Ten summarises findings from all three methodologies and examines them in the light of different theories about the news media's functions in pluralistic societies.

CHAPTER TWO: PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTING

2.1 Introduction

In 1985, TVNZ was, by statute, a public service broadcaster acting as "a trustee of the national interest" (Broadcasting Act, 1976, S3(i)). However, the concept of a public service broadcaster is by no means simple or uncontested, and it was as much the debates and doubts surrounding PSB and its utility as political, financial and technological influences that set the direction of change in New Zealand broadcasting.

This chapter examines the literature on public service broadcasting (PSB) and the news theory which goes with this approach. Interpretations of this model and those of the marketplace model dealt with in the following chapter are at the core of the controversy surrounding deregulatory moves in broadcasting.

The development of PSB was contingent upon the high degree of regulation at the time considered appropriate for the new medium of broadcasting, so the chapter opens with a look at why broadcasting has been subject to greater regulation than other media. It then moves on to describe the historical roots of PSB in Britain, before looking briefly at PSB in Western Europe, the United States and some former British Dominions. Next, developments in New Zealand are examined in greater detail. The review then turns to questions of definition and current threats to PSB, covering as it does major critiques of the model. Finally, the chapter looks at news theory associated with PSB.

This study takes the perspective of authors such as Aufderheide (1991), Campbell (1994), Scannell (1989), and Tracey (1992), who argue for the importance of public service broadcasting in creating a viable public sphere, as posited by Habermas, and in strengthening the dialogue essential to an informed democracy. It is this perspective that informs the review.

2.2 Regulated Media

From its inception, broadcasting has been hedged by regulation and restriction. Western-style democracies, while favouring free speech, place far more controls on broadcasting than on the press. Even in the United States, generally regarded as the bastion of free broadcasting, the Federal Communications Act and successive judicial decisions have excluded broadcasting from the constitutional right to freedom of speech under the First Amendment.

There are three major reasons why broadcasting has received different treatment than the press: the perceived powerful effects of electronic mass communications, their primacy as suppliers of political information, and their scarcity.

Broadcasting is regarded as a uniquely powerful communications tool. Radio and television are intimate, intrusive media, very much part of our private lives (Real, 1989). Because audiences do not need to be literate, they can be exposed unwittingly to its effects, and television in particular has been regarded as having an intense emotional impact. Campbell (1994) contends that, given the revolutionary impact of previous communications developments such as the printing press and the pervasive influence of Marxist and Communist ideology from 1917 to 1945, it can be argued that the state, "in consideration of its own interests, could ill afford to take the chance of allowing the broadcasting realm to develop without guidance" (p.190).

Early bids to regulate broadcasting were supported by the "hypodermic needle" model of media influences which was current at the time and given strength in the United States by the mass panic which followed the 1938 broadcast of Orson Welles's "War of the Worlds" (Glover, 1984). In Britain, the BBC was a major creation of the corporate, social engineering philosophy of the state in the period between the wars (Burns, 1977; Sparks, 1995).

Attitudes did not relax in the 1950s and 1960s as television took off, even though new models from social science showed the media was much less influential than believed. Davis (1990) says a counter influence at this time was fear in the United States of communist subversion which in turn strengthened the view of the media as the

democratic bulwark against communism. Minimal media effects models gave way in their turn to limited effects and agenda setting models which supported the commonsense view of media influence. More recently, broadcasting has become intimately bound up with the massive telecommunications advances which are seen as central to society and, therefore, global development (Dennis, 1992). Already in the Western world "supermedia" are endowed with the power to shape our consciousness and penetrate every cranny of our lives (Real, 1989). Such perceptions mean that while most Western states are loosening economic restraints on broadcasting, many are at the same time fighting to retain and even tighten controls on programme content (Brittan, 1989).

The second reason for broadcasting regulation is encapsulated by Kuhn (1985b):

radio and television constitute the primary sources of political information for the electorates of Western democracies, most evidently, but by no means exclusively through their news and current affairs output; it follows that the organisation of broadcasting and control of its output are subjects which often feature prominently on the political agenda (p.2).

Third, until recently, broadcasting was an inherently scarce commodity. Radio and television are transmitted on a narrow section of the light spectrum. Only a small number of broadcasters can operate within a geographic area before their signals overlap and distort. During the 1920s, as radio stations proliferated in the United States, owners strengthened their signals to drown out competitors, or even destroyed others' transmitters. These "radio wars" set the scene for regulation within the United States and provided a rationale for restrictive regimes in Britain and other countries.

Television has even fewer terrestrial channels than radio. Until the last few years, this was judged to be four or five in New Zealand, and in Britain, five or six. This perceived scarcity prompted the British Government to classify channel allocations as an official secret. Even the government-appointed Peacock Committee was unable to discover the number of potential channels (Veljanovski, 1989a). Consequently, potential broadcasters have until recently had to satisfy certain criteria, frequently including a requirement to provide "public service". As Fountain (1989) puts it, while it is

recognised that the spectrum is a commercially valuable resource, the state has managed it more as a trustee than an owner. Garnham (1994) says all countries regulated broadcasters more or less rigorously in the public interest:

This system was not just the provider of entertainment, information and education to individual listeners and viewers. Its development coincided and was an integral part of both consumer capitalism and the modern nation state. In each country it provided, and still provides, a unique social space and social glue (p.5).

There is no dispute, as Garnham says, that this broadcasting system is in the process of breaking up across the world, and there is a general agreement among analysts about the technological, economic, socio-cultural and political reasons for this dissolution.

Recent technical advances, such as satellite and cable television, mean many more channels are now available. Furthermore, it has been shown that, with careful management and new techniques, a larger number of terrestrial channels (as opposed to satellite) can be supported than it first appeared.

This shift from scarcity to potential abundance has fuelled demands to lift broadcasting controls. There have been several angles of attack. First the Left and now business interests aligned with neo-liberal theorists (Atkins, 1995) are questioning the state's paternalistic role in allocating and controlling frequencies. Strong arguments have been mounted that spectrum frequencies should be treated as commercial property like any other. In New Zealand the 1989 Broadcasting Act, with its provision to sell off frequencies, was inspired by such reasoning.

Broadcasting, then, has been subject to tighter state control than the press. But in the last decade, changing technology, combined with the politico-economic embrace of laissez faire economic doctrine, has swept away the basis for much regulation. The resulting changes have affected the structure of broadcasting organisations, their work practices and their products. With the lifting of entry restrictions, the commercial rationale and its marketplace model for broadcasting have gained ascendancy over the public service model.

There are three major approaches to broadcasting: marketplace, public service and community. Marketplace broadcasting draws on notions of individualism and free enterprise. Public service broadcasting envisages a scarce resource entrusted to professionals who diagnose and interpret the needs of the people in order to provide a public space for the dialogue of democracy. Community broadcasting harks back to a protective "community" of mutual help and solidarity, attempting to reinstate the listener as "subject-participant in a sharing of artistic and political power" (Lewis & Booth, 1989, p.115). The various forms of community radio are beyond the scope of this study, and indeed are probably only seen in New Zealand in the few Access Radio stations, in Iwi Radio and talkback programmes.

Interpretations of the marketplace and public service models are at the core of controversy surrounding broadcasting deregulation. The two models developed from different historical and economic circumstances in the United States and Britain, leading to distinct structures and control mechanisms. The models remain ideals, but, as the commentary below and in the following chapter reveals, are the source of justification for a variety of broadcasting practices in their countries of origin and around the world.

2.3 The Public Service Model

Public broadcasting's very nature then is to nurture the public sphere as a means of serving the public good. It is a fundamental principle then that *public* broadcasting must motivate the viewers as citizens possessing duties as well as rights, rather than as individual consumers possessing wallets and credit cards (Tracey, 1992, p.19).

Public service broadcasting, also called public broadcasting or the public trustee model, has its home in Britain. But right across the West there was a consistent view of the vital importance of broadcasting in helping maintain the public discourse needful to a democratic society. Different states made arrangements in accordance with their legal and constitutional contexts and to meet needs created by different social and historical factors. So the PSB label covers a variety of practices and is difficult to define. In fact, Seymour-Ure (1991) suggests the term public service broadcasting was probably not in common use until it came under challenge in the 1980s. But different arrangements for

distribution, content and structure are all focused on the primacy of the political and of public values. In this chapter, some exploration of how and why various PSB systems were set up aids understanding of its role, while in the next chapter, a review of the major effects of deregulation on PSB leads to some ideas about what aspects of PSB can and should be retained.

2.3.1 Britain and the BBC

He who prides himself on giving what he thinks the public wants is often creating a fictitious demand for lower standards which he himself will then satisfy (Reith, 1925, in Scannell, 1990, p.13).

The BBC exemplifies the widely imitated public service broadcasting model. Sparks (1995) terms it the "characteristic product of the state capitalistic epoch" (p.141). According to Seymour-Ure (1991), broadcasting from its early days was "seen to be a legitimate field of public policy, and its development was shaped by periodic government inquiries" (p.60). These inquiries formulated explicit principles which covered both the goals of broadcasting and the form of organisation through which they could be achieved. Like many such organisational structures, the BBC sprang from a mix of historical circumstance, expedience and design, as the brief history below shows.

The First World War emphasised the strategic importance of "wireless telephony" as it was then called. During the war, control was in the hands of the Navy. Afterwards, keen to retain power, the Navy backed the Post Office in its restrictive licensing practices. The Post Office and the Government, following the Marconi scandal, wanted to end the Marconi monopoly and set up the British Broadcasting Company in 1922. This was a consortium of wireless set manufacturers, who financed and organised radio broadcasts in order to provide regular transmissions and so boost sales (Burns, 1977). According to Madge (1989), the company provided a solution to the technical problem of shortage of broadcasting frequencies and was therefore concerned largely with good sound quality.

Clearly, then, the initial aims of the company were not those of a "public service broadcaster". But it had one distinctive feature which influenced its later development; it was financed by licence fees paid by those who owned radios. This set it apart from companies in the United States, where most funds were to come from advertising or programme sponsorship. Licence fees gave the company a guaranteed yearly income which, according to Negrine (1985), meant it "could pursue a programme policy that was developed with little regard to the audience" (pp.16-17). The Company's managing director was John Reith, who personified the paternalistic aspect of public service broadcasting.

At the end of 1926, the British Broadcasting Corporation was founded, inheriting the Company's broadcasting monopoly, plant, staff, and managing director (Burns, 1977). The Crawford Committee's report preceded the founding of the Corporation and, as Negrine says: "It is here that one can trace the foundations of public service broadcasting with its emphasis on public duty, on providing for all, and on informing, educating and, not simply, entertaining" (p.17).

The Corporation was controlled by the Board of Governors, not by industry or government, and was governed by a Charter. This instrument was chosen to distance the broadcasters from Parliament and could not be easily imitated by corporations being set up in the Dominions such as Australia or New Zealand (Harding, 1985). While the charter aims to provide independence, the political pressures become apparent with the debates, concerns and compromises that accompany each charter renewal (Garnham, 1993).

The BBC structure was designed so that power was delegated to an Authority to run the service, along lines set by Parliament. Those appointed to the authority were to act as "trustees for the public interest" (Negrine, 1985, p.17). The authority assured accountability to Parliament, while freeing broadcasting from direct Government intervention in its day to day affairs. Theoretically, the authority did not have executive control over broadcasting. This arrangement continues in Britain today and provided the model for the NZBC.

Seymour-Ure (1991) says the quintessentially British public corporation concept centres on its "midway status between the politicians and their civil servants on the one hand and the people running the broadcast services day to day on the other" (p.62). The Governors faced both ways, shielding the broadcasters from outside pressure and reviewing the broadcasters' work. In practice, according to Seymour-Ure, this meant protecting broadcasters from politicians and pressure groups, more than the other way around.

With the launching of the Corporation, the BBC's "golden years" of public service radio were underway. However, the myth disguises the fact that not all was well. The Reithian ethic governed programming. Reith's famous epigram from 1922, "few listeners know what they want, and very few want what they need" (quoted in Cave & Melody, 1989), allowed the BBC to sail on regardless of indications that many listeners were rejecting its offerings. The BBC's monopoly was threatened in the 1930s by commercial radio. Continental transmitters beamed in Radio Normandie and later Radio Luxembourg, stealing away great numbers of listeners, especially on Sundays when, in the words of Madge (1989), "Reith's monstrous and cold Presbyterian personality settled like a pall of winter on the schedules" (p.25).

Cave and Melody (1989) say the BBC fought to maintain its monopoly against encroachment by continental broadcasters and radio cable systems. They cite Lord Reith's argument to the Beveridge Committee (1951) that "it was the brute force of a monopoly that enabled the BBC to become what it did; that made it possible for a policy of moral responsibility to be followed" (pp.227-228).

However, by the 1950s radio had already changed, responding to listeners' requirements, although it was not competition from commercial radio, but World War II that forced the BBC to review programme policies. A report on listening in the ranks made it clear the troops would not listen to serious programming, and the Forces Programme was born (Lewis & Booth, 1989). This targeted programming broke the tradition of universal service with mixed programming so central to the public service ideal. After the war, three different national radio services were developed: the Third Programme, the Home Service and the Light Programme (corresponding broadly to

New Zealand's Concert programme, National programme and local commercial radio without the advertisements). Further changes followed in the 1960s, when the BBC was forced to respond to the pop music pirate radio stations, finally launching Radio 1 in 1967. At the same time the BBC was allowed to develop local radio, a service handicapped by shortage of frequencies, shortage of funds and London's dominance (Lewis & Booth).

The development of television reflects the very different commercial opportunities it offers. The terms under which the British Government established commercial television made it part of the public service system from the beginning (Scannell, 1990). In 1936, despite a proposal to set up a consortium of private companies, the new television service was assigned to the BBC. By the mid 1940s, however, its monopoly power was being questioned, especially by advertising and media interests. The Beveridge report in 1951 recommended maintaining the BBC monopoly, but the post-war Labour Government was defeated before the Charter came up for renewal, and the incoming Conservative Government had misgivings about the BBC monopoly and was subject to pressure to allow commercial television (Cave & Melody, 1989). The consequent Television Act of 1954 attempted to marry the principles of public service broadcasting with free enterprise. It set up the Independent Television Authority to own and operate transmitting stations and supervise programmes. Independent companies would provide the programmes, and the Authority was required to ensure competition in the supply of programmes and "a proper balance in their subject matter" (Cave and Melody, 1989, p.228).

In the early unprofitable days of commercial television, however, companies exchanged programmes and, while there was competition about what member companies would accept from one another, the result was a carve-up whereby the major companies divided the production of network programmes among themselves. ITV contractors are franchised every seven to ten years and have a monopoly of advertising time in their respective regions. They became hugely profitable, making the fairly extensive public service programming obligations placed upon the ITA (later the IBA) acceptable. Under

legislation ITV was obliged to inform, educate and entertain according to the same standards as the BBC: "Along with them went the baggage of impartiality, high quality, good taste and decency" (Seymour-Ure, 1991, p.67).

Among the lobbying and bitter debate preceding the introduction of the 1954 Television Act, Madge (1989) points out the audience was never consulted in any meaningful way. However, as Seymour-Ure says, after the advent of ITV the popularity of programmes became a factor in BBC calculations in a qualitatively different way. When commercial television began it was highly popular, reducing the BBC audience to 27 percent at one period during the 1950s. The Corporation responded by competing for programmes and, since the early 1960s, has aimed for a 50 percent share of the audience to justify its licence fee. This market-oriented approach, Madge claims, is costly for the BBC and lays it open to the charge of neglecting its public service responsibilities in competing for audiences.

The licence system combined with the charter had given insulation but not guaranteed independence from commercial and political pressures. Cento Veljanovski (1989b) sums up the then current British television system as regulated competition or rationed television, although deregulation has since made its mark. At the end of the eighties there were four terrestrial channels. BBC1 and BBC2, financed by the licence fee, competed for audiences with ITV made up of 15 regional contractors. Channel 4, designed to complement ITV, was owned by the IBA but financed by a subscription imposed upon ITV contractors who had the right to sell its advertising time. However, the 1990 Broadcasting Act changed the rules for independent broadcasters, who were previously an integral part of the public service system, and introduced elements of genuine economic competition. Under the Act, a fifth channel (due on air in a couple of years) would compete with ITV for advertising, sparking fears that the new system would put ratings above quality and range (Seymour-Ure, 1991). Also in the last five years, the increasingly successful Murdoch BSkyB has begun transmission.

2.3.2 Western Europe

For more than half a century, Blumler and Hoffmann-Riem (1992) say, the appropriateness of public service principles as a legitimising creed and policy guide for Western European Broadcasting was largely unquestioned. New developments were introduced gradually, avoiding radical breaks with the past. The next few paragraphs briefly review pre-deregulation PSB in France, Western Germany and Italy. These countries are of interest because they demonstrate some of the strengths and weaknesses of the public trustee model, especially in the relationship of the state to PSB. They have also received the attention of writers because of lessons contained in their responses to deregulation.

From World War II until the early 1980s, broadcasting in France was a Government controlled state monopoly (Kuhn, 1985a). Control of news and current affairs at the public broadcaster ORTF was open. In the 1960s, Kuhn says, French television disseminated highbrow French culture and there was little entertainment. In 1974, the ORTF was dismantled into a production organisation and three competing state owned television channels. Two of the channels relied on half their income for advertising, and this intensified pursuit of the mass audience. "The result was an effusion of American or American-style trivia and low budget French productions punctuated with the occasional 'big' production or cultural programme" (Kuhn, 1985a, p.58). However, Kuhn believes the 1974 restructuring was not wholly to blame as there was a general trend toward entertainment television at the time. Despite various attempts at reform, the French government retained control over the appointments in key news and current affairs positions. So, according to Kuhn, French broadcasting until 1981 had two salient features: its legal status as a state monopoly and its use for partisan political purposes. The next chapter examines some developments in France since the Mitterand Government came to power; it should be noted here, though, that French broadcasting remained in a dependent relationship with the state well after 1981 (Burgelman, 1986).

Italian broadcasting is of interest to the study, as it provides Europe's earliest and most extreme experiment with deregulation and a more recent attempt to re-introduce regulation. For years Italian television was, as in many Western European states, a state controlled monopoly. The ruling Christian Democratic Party controlled the output of

Radiotelevisione Italiana (RAI) using it as an instrument of politics (Head, 1985). Popular pressure forced the reform of RAI in the mid 1970s; but instead of divorcing the organisation from politics, Head notes, it merely "divided the spoils a little more evenly among the main parties" (p.116).

Politics delayed RAI's conversion to colour and people began to tune into programmes from abroad. Then came the private television gold rush, beginning in 1971 with Tella Biella, a small cable system. Two years later the RAI lost a legal battle to maintain its monopoly when the Constitutional Court gave private cable systems and, implicitly, private broadcast stations the right to exist as long as they remained legal in scope (Head, 1985).

The West German broadcasting system as we know it today was established by the Western allies. To avoid a re-emergence of the Nazi propaganda machine, they aimed to make it as independent as possible, following a BBC model, and to link it to states (regions), rather than the central government (Etzioni-Halevy, 1987). Attempts by Adenauer in the 1950s to bring broadcasting under direct Government control were unsuccessful because of "the opposition of broadcasting personnel and state politicians and because of the steadfast position of the constitutional court" (p.23). Ten broadcasting organisations largely coincide with the federal states. The broadcasting "houses" are public corporations run by boards representing the public and financed by licence fees. Constitutionally, broadcasting's task is to maintain as wide a spectrum of information and opinion in programming as possible. Until 1985, private companies were not able to convince constitutional courts that they could guarantee sufficient public representation and pluralism to be allowed to broadcast (Williams, 1985).

In France, Italy and Germany, as in much of continental Europe, broadcasting is closely aligned with political and cultural aspirations. Broadcasting arrangements varied according to perceived need, so, for instance, the Netherlands provided for religious differences and Belgium for language differences. The health of public broadcasting, even in countries where it has been closely controlled by the state, has been seen as

related to the democratic health of the state. These traditions and values, Blumler and Hoffmann-Riem (1992) believe, are responsible for the relative tenacity of European PSB in the face of competition and new technology.

2.3.3 The United States

The importance of broadcasting as a component of political discourse has long been acknowledged in regulatory arrangements in the United States. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) was set up in 1934 to allocate frequencies. Its purpose is to ensure a variety of broadcasters have access to the airwaves, and licence applicants need to pass a series of ownership hurdles and meet requirements for various public service functions. The FCC's equivocal interpretation of its role and the lifting of entry restrictions in the 1980s is discussed in Chapter Three. However, it continues to represent a major part of the state's commitment to the public sphere.

Public service broadcasting is also established in the United States. There were plenty of non-commercial broadcasters in the early days of radio. Six hundred stations reached 40 percent of the population by 1930 (Katz, 1989). But the depression hit them particularly hard, and they survived the 1940s and 1950s only with corporate benevolence from institutions like the Ford Foundation. Such corporate funding received oblique Government backing in the form of tax exemptions. This concern with educative public forums was part of the American response to the Cold War, which also spawned the Hutchins Commission on Press Freedom (Davis, 1990).

In 1967 the Public Broadcasting Act set up the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) to oversee the public broadcasting service as a "free-standing institution, like other nonprofit corporations created to serve the public interest" (cited in Katz, 1989, p.197). Katz outlines some of the ensuing problems of public broadcasting. The corporation, she says, consisted of political appointees from high levels in industry, the military and government. Wrangles developed between the corporation and the Public Broadcasting Service and the system was constantly underfunded. Most serious of all, though, was the lack of a clear role or identity, making it extremely vulnerable in the

face of politicians, regulating bodies and pressure groups. Until public broadcasting in the United States can develop a clearer role and identity with insulated financial support, Katz concludes, its future will continue to be unpredictable and endangered.

2.3.4 The Dominions

Former British colonies also strove for public service broadcasting and attempts to emulate the BBC resulted in inevitable adaptations. Small, isolated pockets of settlement, rugged terrain and, in the case of Canada and Australia, huge distances to cover with relatively small capital bases provided both the central challenge and the reason for PSB.

Cocker (1994b), examining developments in Canada, Australia and New Zealand, argues the Dominions copied public service broadcasting for utilitarian reasons. Rural politicians in all three countries recognised the benefits of wireless in linking scattered populations. "That the government should assist in bringing the benefits of broadcasting to all communities, no matter how remote, has been an important motif justifying public funding involvement in all three nations" (p.237).

The public service concept and the organisational model that went with it were, however, established in the days of radio. The expectations, especially for universality in coverage and programming, were hard to transfer to television, with its vastly higher costs of production and distribution. There has been an increasingly uneasy fit between the values driving the state's approach on radio and the logistics and finances of television.

In all three countries, Cocker (1994b) says, the state was seen as vital in development and spreading prosperity. With this background of sanctioned state involvement, the structures established for broadcasting lacked impediments to political interference set up in Britain. Broadcasting started in the twenties with (carefully regulated) private commercial operators, and state-controlled public service broadcasting began a parallel service in the 1930s.

Canada's case is illuminating because of the overwhelming competition public service broadcasting has faced from its American neighbour. Collins (1985) says Canada has always used broadcasting as a means to unite and build the nation. Cocker (1994b) maintains Canada's Broadcasting Act of 1932 was motivated by issues of quality of service, national coverage and defensive nationalism, rather than a desire to promote broadcasting's educative role or independence of voice. The result was "a curious hybrid, neither a public service system on the British model, a commercial system on the American, nor a dual system on the Australian example" (p.242). Public and private sectors co-operated with the CBC as a central institution. However, according to Collins (1985), Canada's history of public service broadcasting is one of unrealised ideals, because too few resources are supplied.

The Australian Broadcasting Commission was established in 1932 as a national, publicly-funded, non-profit organisation "aspiring to the mantle of the BBC" (Harding, 1985, p.237). Its major task was to spread radio coverage throughout Australia. From 1923 onward, two types of radio stations had been operating: A class stations financed by the licence fee, and B class stations financed by advertising. So when the ABC was formed, it had to set up its national service in the face of competition from already viable commercial stations.

Not only did the Commission lack the BBC's monopoly power, it had less independence. The Postmaster-General had power to prohibit broadcasting of any particular matter; there were tight controls on spending and close links between commissioners and the Government (Cocker, 1994b). The ABC's "founding father", William James Cleary, was a persistent advocate of its educative and cultural responsibilities: "However, to achieve some measure of political independence he instituted a 'play safe' philosophy with regard to political controversy" (p.245).

Australia's commercial stations continued to thrive. From 1948 onwards, the ABC was funded by an annual appropriation, as the licence fee was inadequate to cope with the burden of servicing vast areas and setting up "mini-ABCs" in each state. Harding (1985) contrasts this with Britain, where appropriation was rejected as a funding method, because it could leave broadcasters open to political pressure.

When television arrived in Australia, the Liberals were in power and therefore, according to Harding (1985), the commercial sector won the battle for power. The ABC had responsibility for covering unprofitable areas and was restricted to only one station in each capital city. By the 1970s, he says, the ABC was "doomed" to the role of tastemaker. Harding also chronicles the growth of the ABC under Whitlam and describes Fraser's vendetta which followed. Between 1975 and 1983, by favouring commercial broadcasting, selecting Commission members and restricting funds, the Prime Minister "turned the vibrant organisation which he had inherited into a hesitant and dis-spirited shadow of its former self" (Harding, 1985, p.255). His conclusion is that broadcasting in Australia is very much part of the political battle, one to be continued over the "new" media.

2.3.5 New Zealand Broadcasting

Gregory (1985) chronicles a less blatant, but still hard-fought, battle in his history of the NZBC. His evidence shows "restructurings of public broadcasting in New Zealand have been shaped far more by political circumstance and opportunity than by principled belief and commitment" (p.10). He sees the history of New Zealand broadcasting as one of gradually increasing independence. It was the first country to introduce a Wireless Telegraphy Act, in 1903. There was tight control on possession of receivers, and the first transmission permit was not introduced until 1921 (Day, 1994). The broadcasting regulations of 1923 prohibited the broadcasting of "propaganda of a controversial nature" and of anything "not conducive to the public interest" (Day, p.51). In 1925 the regulations were extended, requiring broadcasters to transmit government communications when requested. As Cocker (1994b) puts it, "Broadcasting was firmly regarded as existing to support the purposes of the state" (p.240).

During the 1920s the Radio Broadcasting Company ran "A" stations throughout the country financed by licence fees. There was also a growing number of "B" stations financed by supporters' clubs and, from 1930, by sponsored broadcasts which gradually developed into advertising. In 1932, the RBC was replaced by a Broadcasting Board, set up to develop 'A' class stations around the country. The Board was timorous about controversy and slow in developing a national service, duplicating service in the four

main centres rather than improving reception in the regions (Cocker, 1994b). Meanwhile, Gregory (1985) says the depression had put a strain on the prohibition against "propaganda of a controversial nature", and Colin Scrimgeour's thinly disguised political commentaries aroused such official ire that his programme on election eve 1935 was jammed on the instructions of the Postmaster General.

In 1935 the incoming Labour Government abolished the Broadcasting Board, whose poor performance had discredited a corporation approach and opted for full control with a government department for the "A" stations. The Labour Government, worried that newspapers might buy up the private stations, decided to take control of these too. Owners could sell to the Government, or remain outside the service but without advertising. Most accepted the Government's offer (Cocker, 1994b).

There followed the period of what Cocker terms "public servant", rather than public service, broadcasting. The New Zealand Broadcasting service, like its counterparts in Australia and Canada, survived through self-censorship. New Zealand had its own Reith, Professor James Shelley, who in 1936 became Director of Broadcasting, running the non-commercial service. His legacy was outstanding radio drama, the National Orchestra and a chain of local radio stations. However, Shelley was not a controversialist and under his tenure little was done, according to Gregory, to develop "those public broadcasting functions deemed essential to the emergence of an open society" (p.29). There was extensive party-political use of broadcasting through the thirties and forties, with the result that "the party in opposition was always deeply suspicious of any broadcasting policy enacted by the party in power" (Cocker, 1994b, p.245). Television's start had been long-delayed. The Government deferred action, concerned, among other things, about the impact on the balance of payments of imports required to set up the system and manufacture or assemble television sets. Finally, pushed by industry interests and by public demand, the service began in Auckland in 1960 (Boyd-Bell, 1985; Rennie, 1992).

When news broadcasts began, the daily bulletin was first prepared by the Prime Minister's Department and later by Tourist and Publicity. The first journalists were not appointed until just before the New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation was set up in

1962. Gregory's (1985) study of the rise and fall of the NZBC analyses the struggle for control of the Corporation. It was initially intended that the Corporation should be protected from direct parliamentary control and questioning, but early battles soon brought this principle into question. Gregory found the independence of the NZBC depended largely on the personalities of politicians, board chairmen and broadcasting executives. Another problem was the contradictory role of the Corporation, which it owed partly to its imitation of the BBC, where Governors have to ensure it is run in the public interest by reviewing the worth of the institution. This puts them in conflicting roles, where they both reprimand broadcasters and support them under attack (Negrine, 1985). A further anomaly was that the NZBC was in charge of issuing private radio warrants. It was naturally reluctant to allow any competition with its own stations and became the target of a great deal of public criticism. The NZBC was also required to "comply with" government policy.

The conflicts of 1962-1975 set the scene for later political restructurings in New Zealand broadcasting. The first, the BCNZ, was developed by Labour in its 1972-75 period in office and set up in April 1975. The new corporation was divided into three major entities: Radio New Zealand (with its mix of commercial and non-commercial channels), Channel One (Television One, based in Wellington) and Channel Two (South Pacific Television, based in Auckland). The television channels were to be competitive yet complementary. Cocker (1994b) argues that Labour's reconstruction had three aims: to decentralise what it saw was a stifling conservative bureaucracy; to create independence, breaking the link from what had been National Party politician and politically appointed board members; and to create a competitive internal environment as an alternative to introducing a privately-owned second television channel.

Within a few months National was back in office and seeking to pull the structure apart, arguing duplication and waste. In television, competition was getting the upper hand over complementarity and, partly because of the hand-to-mouth accounting characteristic of the time, South Pacific Television was far from breaking even. The 1976 Broadcasting Act put the Corporation back together again, integrating the separate entities for radio and television under the control of a single board. The office of

Minister of Broadcasting was re-established, with powers to issue written directives, and the corporation was to "have regard to" government policy. Cocker (1994b) says that after encountering trenchant criticism the Bill was altered in its passage through parliament to ensure that matters concerning particular programmes or complaints became the responsibility of a Broadcasting Tribunal, also charged with granting warrants for radio and television stations and policing standards.

While independence of broadcasting under the Labour structure was at least an aim, even if it had not been achieved in practice, the incoming National Government clearly believed in control. Cocker (1994b) cites Broadcasting Minister Hugh Templeton: "No corporation as big as broadcasting should work without ministerial control... broadcasting is too important to leave to broadcasters alone" (p.251). The Labour appointed board was replaced by National appointees and further pressure applied to the Corporation over the licence fee. The licence fee was frozen in 1975, Harte (1988) argues, as a *quid pro quo* by Prime Minister and Finance Minister Robert Muldoon for settling \$38.9 million worth of BCNZ debts incurred in introducing colour television, covering the Commonwealth Games and finishing the Avalon television complex. While inflation soared, the BCNZ was pushed into increasing reliance on advertising throughout the nine years of National Government which followed. "Commercial imperatives arguably began to pervert public service commitments" (Cocker, 1994b, p.251).

Meanwhile, restructuring was not over. In 1979, Channels One and Two were united as TVNZ. Although BCNZ chairman and chief executive Ian Cross (1988) viewed this as a chance to ensure complementarity in programming, many broadcasters saw it as a further example of repression (Farnsworth, 1989). The legacy of the separate competing television newsrooms was to live on and influence the shape that news was to take in the study period.

Other smaller restructurings followed, putting constant stress on broadcasters. Radio New Zealand, in particular, ran a series of downsizing exercises, as the BCNZ felt the economic pinch. Meanwhile, there was pressure of another sort as Prime Minister

Muldoon kept up a running attack on the allegedly profligate ways of the corporation and the inadequacies of its television journalists (Cocker, 1994b; Farnsworth, 1992). Chapter Five explores some of the after-effects of this time. After years of political pressure applied through restructuring (both real and threatened), limiting licence fees and public attack on competencies, public service broadcasters apparently welcomed the possibility of broadcasting deregulation, even though it would almost certainly cause them to suffer financially. Broadcasters saw this move as a way of releasing the shackles which bound them to the Government and of giving them the freedom to meet the competition to be inevitably brought by the telecommunications revolution. Moreover, the NZBC was riven by the contradictory goals of public service programming and commercial revenue maximisation and, because of years of "state" broadcasting, had very attenuated links with its audience:

Of the three Dominions, New Zealand had the weakest and most politically sullied structures, lacking the strength of the national cultural role of the CBC or the commitment to non-commercial programming exemplified by the ABC in the Australian 'dual system' (Cocker, 1994b, p.253).

At the opening of the study period then, New Zealand's system of "mixed" broadcasting was ripe for yet another restructuring. Under the umbrella of public broadcasting in radio were non-commercial nationwide programmes and commercial local radio stations. In theory all these were eligible for licence fee funding. In reality most funds went to non-commercial radio and to expanding coverage. State radio competed against local independent commercial radio stations. TVNZ had the monopoly with its two television networks. These were theoretically complementary, but because of their dependence on advertising were not fully so. The balance of programming was tipping towards imported entertainment and away from domestic production and provision for minorities. A private third channel had been promised by both political parties. Rennie (1992) draws a picture of a television service long out of touch with its audiences and the country, although audience figures, which rose between 1982 and 1985 do not fully back this up (BCNZ, 1987). There was, however, considerable public pressure for a third channel.

2.3.6 The Problem of Defining Public Service Broadcasting

The varied examples above show a number of different systems, all claiming to be public service broadcasting. Defining PSB is characteristically difficult, but now, when the system is under threat, is particularly important.

In formalising their system, Americans were forced to ask themselves what public broadcasting is. As Katz (1989) points out, they were unsuccessful. The Carnegie Commission on the Future of Broadcasting had termed it "a major cultural institution that can play a decisive role in bringing together the pluralistic voices and interests of the American community" (quoted in Katz, 1989, pp.198-199). However, she says much of public broadcasting's identity is given by what it is not. It is non-commercial, has no advertising and provides a service not found elsewhere.

Are the British any more sure of their definitions? Alan Peacock, chairman of the 1986 British Government report *On the Financing of Broadcasting*, cites the Broadcasting Research Unit's eight principles, in turn derived from Crawford Commission and other documents:

1. Geographic universality of reception
2. Catering for all interests and tastes
3. Catering for minorities
4. Concern for "national identity and community"
5. Detachment from vested interest by government
6. One broadcasting system to be funded directly by the corpus of users
7. Competition in good programming rather than for numbers
8. Guidelines to liberate programme makers and not to restrict them (Peacock, 1989b, pp.52-53).

Peacock, whose report made a case for retaining a public service element in broadcasting, providing the system was consumer-driven, is perhaps understandably critical of the definition. He believes it fails to define terms and offers an after-the-fact

justification for whatever broadcasters chose to do. Further, he says it does not take into account that objectives have to be traded off one against another because of restricted funds.

Blumler, Brynin and Nossiter (1986) contend that the British system of combining safeguards for editorial independence with accountability has an impressive clarity of service. Their description of what has been achieved in Britain makes it clear that the tension between competing objectives is both acknowledged by supporters of PSB and is considered healthy. It includes:

Programming serving three objectives of equal importance: range, quality *and* popularity; ... Obligations to provide entertainment as well as information and education; ... balanced scheduling, taking account of the days of the week and the time of day at which programmes are presented (p.354).

Tracey's (1992) passionate defence of broadcasting restates and explains the Research Unit's eight principles as core theses around which PSB has been shaped. His changes include a distancing from *all* vested interests (not just from government), and an emphasis on serving minorities disadvantaged by physical or social circumstances. He drops the Research Unit's references to concern for "national identity and community" and to a single broadcasting system funded directly by the corpus of users. These are replaced by a commitment to education and to serving the public sphere. In doing so, he strengthens the case for the utility of PSB in a modern democracy.

Scannell (1990) narrows the essential characteristics of public service broadcasting to two: universality of service and the supply of mixed programmes. At the centre of his approach is the belief that PSB must provide an access to the whole spectrum of public life for everyone.

Gregory (1985) looking from the New Zealand perspective, describes independence as the *sine qua non*:

To the extent that it is diminished by illegitimate political influence or control, by commercial dependence, or by professional insularity, then the values of objectivity and comprehensiveness which lie at the heart of the public service ideal will be subverted accordingly (p.102).

Farnsworth (1988) in his submission to the Royal Commission on Social Policy cites Hoffmann-Riem for his discussion of what he terms the "public trustee model" in New Zealand:

Broadcasting is legally organised in trusteeship for the whole of society. Broadcasters are obliged to take account adequately of all social interests. Unbalanced and biased programming is not permitted. Broadcasting is not geared primarily for profit-making (p.459).

Tim Madge (1989) takes a more critical view of claim versus performance. Analysing the BBC in terms of responsibility to the audience, he says early broadcasters had the Reithian approach of guiding and forming public taste in the light of elite tastes. This was replaced in the 1960s by the theory of professionalism. Broadcasters believed they understood public taste and responded to it — rather than being led by it. Later, systems were put in place and the Peacock Committee praised the frequent and precise market research covering audience appreciation as well as ratings. However, to Garnham (1993), the long debated problem of how to ensure accountability to the public is still both crucial and unresolved. While various strategies have been tried, he says there is still a need to find a way to incorporate both public views and research on broadcasting into a coherent public input into broadcasting policy development.

A central concept in public service broadcasting is that of balance. Madge says this "has been taken to mean a strict reflection of the two-party system of British Government" (p.38). He says this concept underlies the structure of the whole system and refers to the balance of public service versus commercial impetus, of professionalism versus accountability and integrity versus access. Balance is incorporated into the moral code of broadcasters. But he adds that in the 1980s the whole notion of balance has emerged as a highly political idea, and that the nature of broadcasting is that it is locked alongside and into central political processes.

This brings into question the concept of independence or "autonomy" at the heart of public service broadcasting and professional journalism. A number of writers have examined in detail some crucial areas where public service broadcasting autonomy has been threatened and overturned by political pressure, both overt and indirect. Demonstrating the historical subservience of the broadcaster, Seymour-Ure (1974) tells the story of the Fourteen Day Rule, which meant that the BBC was not allowed to broadcast discussion on any subject to be debated in Parliament in the next fortnight, or on any legislation currently before either House. The rule was invented by BBC Governors in 1944 to protect the Corporation from ministers wanting to broadcast on the eve of parliamentary debates. But it stifled coverage of vital issues, and it was not until December 1956, after the Suez Crisis, and following several years of struggle by the BBC, that the Government suspended the rule. More recently, Schlesinger (1987) concentrates on conflict over the BBC's Northern Ireland coverage. Harding (1985) looks at the furore over the Clark lectures in Australia in 1976. On the New Zealand scene, Gregory (1985) details conflict over coverage of the Vietnam war, the dismissal of *Listener* editor Alexander MacLeod and the removal of NZBC news editor Ben Coury. Meanwhile, from the hot seat, former BCNZ chairman Ian Cross (1988) called broadcasting "the battered baby of New Zealand politics" (p.236). He gives his version of events surrounding journalists' protests about broadcasting restructuring in 1979, and the decision not to show the controversial film *Death of a Princess*.

Even from these few examples, it is clear that political independence has not been achieved in public service broadcasting. It is equally clear, however, that public broadcasters and their supporters cling to independence as a central tenet. Discussing the key recurring problems of British broadcasting, Garnham (1993) says:

The first problem is the search for an answer to the paradox of how to combine freedom for broadcasters from undesirable state control while at the same time ensuring the necessary level of desirable political accountability (p.18).

The various accounts of conflicts over the autonomy of broadcasters make it clear that the nature of PSB is influenced by the norms of its workers as well as by the confines of structure, and that the two are mutually dependent. Schlesinger (1987) found BBC news broadcasters stressed their commitment to objectivity and balance. This extended

to not revealing their own political preferences to colleagues. The concept of objectivity in journalism, has of course, long been under question (see for example Altschull, 1990; Morrison & Tremewan, 1992).

Schlesinger (1987) also says journalists felt conscious of the triple public service obligations of informing, educating and entertaining. The duty to inform is particularly invoked in times of crisis and is used to justify controversial subjects such as coverage of Northern Ireland. While broadcasters were aware of and had internalised these rather ill-defined public service goals, he says, they were also aware of the competitive reality in which audience figures were what really counted. This created an ambivalence which they tended to solve by concentrating on professionalism, in terms of speed and technical quality.

New Zealand broadcasters in the "mixed system", with its growing dependence on advertising, were even more aware of the competitive reality. Harte (1988) says the BCNZ had already acknowledged publicly in 1980 that it could no longer fulfil many of the demands made on its non-commercial services by the community. Or, as Atkinson (1994b) puts it, TVNZ was well advanced along the road to commercialisation *before* the advent of Rogernomics and deregulation described in the study. Chapter Five further explores the tensions between PSB and competitive demands in the newsroom.

It is recognised that PSB in practice falls short of the ideals and that its fuzzy definitions make PSB vulnerable to criticism. At its core, though, is the ideal of independence from commercial and political pressures which enables the provision of an accessible service to a wide variety of tastes, interests and segments of society in the support of democracy. The question raised by Madge (1989) and Garnham (1993) of greater accountability to the audience remains a difficult one. If, in effect, decisions are made by elites and without the need to attract an audience, programmes can degenerate to the self-serving (Tracey, 1992). But if audience size becomes a prime concern, PSB cannot serve minorities. Just as no effective systems have been developed to link PSB with its constituents, neither does there seem to be any agreement for measuring success in PSB. In this, as we shall see it is not unique, as the ratings system

underpinning commercial success is fundamentally flawed (Meehan, 1990; Sawers, 1989).

However, while arguments over the nature of public service broadcasting abound, there is agreement; public service broadcasting is under threat.

2.3.7 Threats to Public Service Broadcasting

The past decade has seen a widespread assault on the importance, and even the legitimacy, of public service broadcasting. Willard and Tracey (1990) see these challenges as coming from three different directions. First, the New Right has questioned the idea of public culture. Second, the New Left has attacked public service broadcasters as elitists, statist, unaccountable, divisive and exclusive. Third, the financial basis of the system has been eroded by diminishing support from public funds, increasing disparities in income between public funded and commercially funded broadcasters and escalating costs. This section looks also at threats from media theory and the growth of global communications.

2.3.7.1 Criticism from the Left

Criticism from the left covers a wide front. Marxists and culturalist critics (such as the Glasgow University Media Group, 1976; Hall, 1982; Hall, Chricter, Jefferson, Clarke, & Roberts, 1978; Herman & Chomsky, 1988; and Leitch, 1990) have attacked the elitist bias of programme output. Some have since become supporters, as PSB becomes increasingly endangered. But Burgelman (1986) says their earlier criticisms are still valid.

Other authors such as Madge (1989) and Schlesinger (1987) point out how little power is vested in the audience. Public service broadcasters have done little to identify the public for which they work, feedback systems are limited and such evidence of public opinion which does emerge (for instance through letters and phone calls) is often ignored.

Away from the academic world, minority groups and communities have become increasingly critical of the output of public service broadcasting. In New Zealand, for instance, there has been widespread dissatisfaction with programming for Maori and pressure from local and regional bodies for better news coverage.

Finally, its method of funding always leaves public service broadcasting open to the criticism of being too tied to state interests, and the previous section demonstrated its vulnerability to political pressure.

2.3.7.2 Criticism from the Right

In terms of the New Right, the whole concept of public service broadcasting is out of step with the growing commitment to monetarist policies and with a view of society that stresses individualism. Thinkers from the right extol the virtues of the marketplace as providing true consumer choice. The media mogul Murdoch, for instance, portrays government regulation and protectionism as the root cause of the lack of consumer choice and failure of economies (Weber, 1995). Rightists also see public service broadcasting as bureaucratic, inefficient and costly (Brittan, 1989; Jarvik, 1995; Veljanovski, 1989b). The Peacock Report pointed to many of these weaknesses in the BBC, while the BCNZ came under similar attack by politicians, private broadcasters, independent producers and newspapers throughout the 1980s (Farnsworth, 1992).

Another powerful argument from the right is to link public service with state bureaucracy and restrictive rigid thinking, while positioning competition as ensuring freedom of entry into the public sphere for any enterprise which thinks it has something individuals might like to hear, read or watch (Keane, 1991). For instance, a major argument used by American broadcasters against the Fairness Doctrine (which required broadcasters to "afford reasonable opportunity for the discussion of conflicting views on issues of public importance") was that such requirements led journalists to self-censor material that might be considered controversial. This was termed the "chilling effect" (Aufderheide, 1990). Murdoch's speeches link free market development with new technologies which will sweep away totalitarian regimes and feed the "information-hungry" (Weber, 1995, p.51).

In this way, "liberty of the press" arguments were used to bolster the deregulatory drive. Moreover, the right, with its emphasis on the individual and on private ownership, questioned the whole idea of public culture, one of the basic reasons for public service broadcasting (Willard & Tracey, 1990).

2.3.7.3 Finance

Monetarism, with its disapproval of state enterprise, has been one reason for the drying wells of public funding. In Britain, the citadel of public service broadcasting, monetarist based critiques of both public service broadcasting and its funding have been a feature of Governmental reports on broadcasting since the 1982 Hunt report. The Peacock Committee report on funding in 1989 shifted the terms of debate on broadcasting "from those based on subjective values, preferences and tastes to economic and factual propositions" (Veljanovski, 1989a, p.11). While advertising on the BBC was rejected, the BBC could look forward to a future where the licence fee would not keep pace with inflation and where it must seek to develop subscription television.

The debate about the BBC's financial future at the time of and after the Peacock Report was keenly observed among broadcasters aspiring to the ideal of public service all around the world. New Zealand legislators and broadcasters, already operating a "mixed" commercial/public service model, certainly took note.

Meanwhile, worldwide recession tightened the strings of the public purse. In New Zealand, where public service broadcasting is also supported by advertisements, the recession in the late eighties reduced funds from both public and commercial sources. The demise of many traditional industries led many governments to put their faith in the expansion of new technologies as a way to economic salvation. France, for instance, has spent large sums to kickstart a new technology industry (Rowe, 1986), while in Britain, regulations holding back cable and satellite television expansion have been eased (Rowe, 1986; Veljanovski, 1989a). Existing broadcasters have cut costs, in anticipation of a new range of competition.

2.3.7.4 Technology and the Growth of Global Communications

Technological determinism also characterises those who promote a global communication market, although, as Keane (1991) and Weber (1995) note, these enthusiasts often use the rhetoric of modernist liberalism. The role of technology in deregulation will be explored more thoroughly in Chapter Three. However, huge global multi-media organisations concentrated in a few hands have developed to exploit communications technologies in the international consumer markets (Brummer & Keegan, 1995; Tunstall & Palmer, 1991). These organisations wield great economic power on a global scale *vis a vis* national governments and represent enormous competition for public service broadcasters, who are generally restricted to national boundaries.

2.3.7.5 Media Theory

Current theories about media also contributed to the threat to public broadcasting. One of the most significant developments in media research in the 1980s was the revaluation of popular culture and its consumers (Jensen, 1990):

The position of recent research is that audiences have the ability to make their own sense out of the media and, further, that in the process of reception the media cater to a range of legitimate audience interests and pleasures (Jensen, 1990, p.57).

"Active audience" theorists see the reader interacting with a text, actively producing meaning by bringing certain conventions to bear on reading. A step further on from this is the position of Fiske (1989), that audiences actively interpret texts in a way that empowers them. So the girl fans of Madonna "are resisting the patriarchal meanings of female sexuality and constructing their own oppositional ones" (p.2). If the purpose is to educate, Fiske says, then programmers should aim to make events deemed of national importance as popular as possible, inviting participatory readings:

It is more important in a democracy to stimulate people into making national and international events matter in their daily lives than it is to teach them about the "truth" of those events (pp.196-197).

Cobley (1994) describes Fiske's stance with respect towards popular culture as "woefully uncritical" (p.680) and points out that active audience theory is far more complex, and that interaction with texts does not always result in empowerment. Croteau, Hoynes & Carragee (1996) make a useful distinction in this area between polyvalence, the tendency of viewers or readers to construct varied interpretations of a single text and polysemy, or the openness of the text to a variety of possible readings. In this sense an increased openness of news texts, where a variety of voices are heard and no particular point of view has dominance, is desirable to stimulate public discourse. They argue, however, that the sourcing patterns in news and the restricted frameworks of journalists restrict its polysemy.

The lack of precision surrounding the debate about audience interpretation of media texts, combined with the popularity of Fiske's writing, has encouraged the view that ideals of factuality and objectivity are irrelevant in the face of an empowered audience. So, as Cocker (1996) argues, active audience theorists and the associated cult of the popular played into the hands of broadcasting deregulators. It gave mass audience popular programming a legitimacy and appeared to champion the rights of the audience, conferring upon them the characteristic of free agency. In the mid to late eighties, New Zealand broadcasters, media writers and government advisors expressed such ideas in attacks aimed at "elitist" and "high-brow" programming (Cocker, 1996).

All these pressures have undermined public service broadcasting institutions, forcing them to adopt marketplace characteristics. Chapter Three examines the marketplace model, the process of deregulation and its effects on PSB. But first, the study reviews major news theory linked to the public service model.

2.4 News Theory Related to the Public Service Model

News theory relating to the public service model is normative theory, concerned with how the media ought to operate (McQuail, 1994). While communication scholars tend to leave normative and ethical matters to other specialists, McQuail argues this is unsatisfactory "at a time of considerable change and reconstruction of media institutions when normative questions need to be faced" (p.123). At the same time, when we

consider news theory and public service broadcasting we are immediately brought face to face with issues about the relationship between news media and democracy. As Croteau, Hoynes and Carragee (1996) point out, the questions surrounding this complex relationship have long been the focus of studies from a variety of disciplines including communication, journalism, sociology and political science.

Moreover, notions of democracy and democratic participation are crucial to the ideals of PSB, and news media scholars have long been concerned with the complex relationship between news and democracy (Croteau, Hoynes & Carragee, 1996).

The liberal pluralist theories that drive journalism go back to the seventeenth century. Altschull (1990) says the practice of journalism has been "indelibly influenced by the evolution of the American intellectual tradition" (p.2), which he traces to the English libertarians Milton, Hobbes, Locke and Hume and the French philosophers Montesquieu, Voltaire and Rousseau. These theories were grounded in concrete circumstance and experience in the fight for freedom of religion, for the separation of church and state and a concomitant freedom of speech.

In the 1920s, journalist and writer Walter Lippmann provided what Lasch (1994) calls "a founding charter" for modern journalism's code of professional objectivity. However, according to Lasch, Lippmann did not believe in the press promoting debate, believing debate to be a defect of democracy, because decisions should ideally be based on exact knowledge from scientific inquiry. This strictly informative conduit function, "the most rigid and absolute avoidance of expressions of editorial opinion, combined with an equally rigid refusal to omit or bowdlerise any news that is of sober public interest" (BBC Year Book, 1946, cited in Briggs, 1979, p.570), was the basis of BBC news in the early days.

Lippmann's views on opinion and knowledge were rebutted by Dewey who contended that scientific inquiry was only the beginning of knowledge, and that knowledge needed by a community emerges only from dialogue. So Dewey expressed "what well may be the most fundamental of the ideas held by American journalists, that the presentation of public questions in print and over the air is absolutely necessary for the future of democracy" (Altschull, 1990, p.232).

It is, however, the Hutchins Commission on Press Freedom, formed in 1942, that most writers invoke. Prominent academics on the Commission held the Chicago School of Sociology perspective that, in the new mass society, audiences were easily manipulated by elites (Davis, 1990). The press therefore performed a crucial role in allowing the voices of diverse interest groups to be heard.

The Commission's 1947 report outlined five basic services of the press:

- (1) an accurate comprehensive account of the day's news
- (2) a forum for exchange of comment
- (3) a means of projecting group opinions and attitudes to one another
- (4) a method of presenting the goals and values of the society and
- (5) a way of reaching every member of the society (Altschull, 1990, p.283).

In this way, according to McQuail (1994), the role of social responsibility was added to the press. He boils social responsibility theory down to six essentials:

- The media have obligations to society, and media ownership is a public trust
- News media should be truthful, accurate, fair, objective and relevant
- The media should provide a forum for ideas
- The media should be free but self-regulated
- Media should follow agreed codes of ethics and professional standards
- Under some circumstances, society may need to intervene in the public interest.

Social responsibility theory is applied in many of the news media codes of conduct, journalistic standards of ethics, press councils and bodies concerned with broadcasting standards.

However, news media researchers of the 1970s (Chibnall, 1977; Gans, 1979; Glasgow University Media Group, 1976; Tuchman, 1978; and others) exposed the gap between the normative theories and reality. Operational theory developed from these Marxist-structuralist sociological studies described the journalist's job as essentially one of selection and construction within a series of imperatives (such as time, money, or news values). Newswriters still cling to pluralist notions, describing themselves as gathers

of facts and reflectors of reality. Meanwhile, the news media's agenda is seen as serving to suit the interests of the powerful (Glasgow University Media Group, 1976; Herman & Chomsky, 1988) and the tenets of objectivity as undermining the search for truth (Koch, 1990; Lasch, 1994). At the same time, the language of liberal pluralists has been appropriated and used against their interests by market liberals (Keane, 1991).

There has, though, been a resurgence in pluralist thinking resulting from a gradual recognition of the effects of changes in news media since the mid 1980s. Recognising that we have seen a collapse of the political consensus and intensified media competition since the days of the Hutchins Commission, and that "high modernism" in journalism has passed (Hallin, 1992b), writers are readdressing the issues of the role of the news media.

Gurevitch and Blumler (1990) give eight significant functions of the news media in a democracy, including surveillance of the sociopolitical environment, platforms for an intelligible and illuminating advocacy, dialogue across a diverse range of views, mechanisms for holding officials to account, and a sense of respect for the audience member. In the light of findings from news media scholarship, they enumerate major obstacles to the achievement of this ideal. But they also identify opportunities for reform, asserting that major support for the movement could come from journalists, who are themselves experiencing a crisis of legitimacy. Since then, there has been a flood of writing from journalists and academics focused on the threat to democracy stemming from commercialisation of news, and providing a variety of ideas for reform. (See for instance Bernstein, 1992; Gordon, 1995; Rosen, 1992; Shepherd, 1995; Taylor, 1992.)

Some of this writing is reviewed in the next chapter, which opens with an examination of the marketplace model and then looks at deregulation, before exploring questions of the future of PSB and the democratic journalism model.

CHAPTER THREE: THE MARKETPLACE MODEL AND DEREGULATION

3.1 Introduction

The public service model examined in the previous chapter is contrasted with the marketplace model of the media which developed in the United States and is explored in this section of the thesis. It is the tensions between these two models of broadcasting and their approaches to news which became apparent during deregulation, as public service broadcasters began to take on the mantle of the commercialism, in response to competition and other financial and legislative pressures.

In this chapter the marketplace model is examined, first by a brief review of the early history of broadcasting in the United States, and then by a look at regulations developed to control broadcasting in the USA and the effects they had. The following section examines limitations of the model and some economic critiques. A commentary on news theory associated with the marketplace approach concludes the first part of the chapter. The second part deals with the causes and effects of deregulation and finishes with an examination of the New Zealand literature on deregulation. The chapter finishes by discussing some writing on the future role of public service broadcasting and on whether mainstream journalism can still perform the role it has set itself.

3.2 The Marketplace Model

The marketplace or free market model is based on developments in the United States. In this model, broadcasting is privately owned and operated and seen as a purely commercial activity. Production is funded by advertising and sponsorship, and while some broadcasting ventures are apparent loss makers, the ultimate purpose is to make a profit:

Networks may be operated by profit-seeking conglomerates at a loss, whether out of temporary expediency, or as part of a plan which uses the outlet as a stepping stone to other media interests, or plays off tax incentives in different sectors or countries (Lewis & Booth, 1989, p.5).

Supporters of the marketplace theory argue that freeing broadcasting from regulation and restriction ensures a free marketplace of programmes and ideas where the consumer can select from a wide choice. The 1985 Peacock Committee describes markets as:

a discovery method for finding out by trial and error what the consumer might be enticed to accept (as well as the least-cost method for supplying it) and for trying out new and challenging ideas (Brittan, 1989, p.28).

Cento Veljanovski (1989a) asserts: "If a richer and more varied service is to be provided it is the consumers and providers interacting in the market-place who must decide rather than governments or regulators" (p.24). Gallagher (1989), the director of telecommunications policy for Sky Television in London, states:

Several decades of experience confirm that regulatory efforts have generally inhibited television's growth, service to the public and economic benefits - whereas freeing market forces has encouraged innovation, the expansion of services, and consumer choice (p.190).

Compaigne (1985), reviewing media competition in the United States, concludes:

The empirical evidence indicates that the media structure in the United States is by far more open, diverse and responsive to public needs and wants than at any time in history, notwithstanding the contrary sense that is suggested by the headlines created when media companies merge (p.95).

While the model assumes that market forces create the best broadcasting systems, American broadcasting was in fact developed and sustained by state intervention, as the following brief review shows.

3.2.1 Historical Development in the United States

Like the British, the United States Navy also faced the post World War I dilemma of turning radio communication over to the State or to a private company. As Marconi was a foreign company, the Navy backed General Electric to create an American corporation large enough for the job. The British Marconi company was persuaded to

sell its American assets and by various licensing agreements the Radio Corporation of America acquired the necessary patents. Taking as partner the American Telephone and Telegraph company, which controlled long distance lines necessary to link stations, RCA began to accumulate concessions necessary to make it the giant of international wireless traffic.

Meanwhile, Westinghouse, feeling the post war slump in sales of radio parts, bought rights to other patents. RCA had already beaten it to the lucrative international market, so it looked for alternatives. Until then, radio telephony had been seen as a confidential means of communication. The success of amateur broadcasts by one of his employees made Westinghouse's vice-president realise radio's potential for instantaneous wide publicity. So the company set up its own station in Pittsburgh in November 1920, broadcasting regularly in the evenings to the simple receiving sets which it distributed. The interest was immense, and soon shops were selling radio sets throughout the country, and applications for station licences increased. Westinghouse obtained a 20 percent share in RCA, who could not overlook this lucrative domestic market (Lewis & Booth, 1989).

By the end of 1922 there were 670 licensed stations. Amateurs and industry-backed stations squabbled over frequencies and attempted to drown each other out with high-powered transmitters. Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover convened the first radio conference and concluded the country was unanimous about the need for some form of regulation. Subsequently, he attempted to allocate frequencies and transmission powers. A representative from the British Post Office attended the conference, and his report laid the basis for the British attitude favouring regulation and monopoly (Lewis & Booth, 1989).

The radio conference had also concluded that radio advertising was unacceptable, but within months radio commercials appeared on New York's WEAf station. AT&T, who owned the station, frustrated that their agreement with RCA forbade them to sell receivers, had hit on the idea of "toll broadcasting" (selling studio time in return for payment). Early on, factions developed in the industry over the use of long distance lines and advertising. By the time they were settled in 1926, advertising was firmly

established as the way to finance broadcasting, even though much public opinion and influential segments of the industry were opposed to it. Decisions about financing broadcasting were made, claim Cantor and Cantor (1985), not by informed discussion by policy makers or educators, but rather through default by business leaders interested in making profits.

After years of chaotic broadcasting, the Radio Act of 1927 established broadcasting as a system, with a commission given powers to allocate frequencies (Cantor & Cantor, 1985). The law was updated in 1934 to the Communications Act, which set up the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). The FCC is an independent American Government regulatory agency. Its five commissioners are political appointees, but not more than three may be members of the same political party. It has been a crucial player in the development of the American electronic media and the debate which has surrounded it.

3.3 How Free is the Free Market?

Just as public service broadcasting is open to attack on whether it offers a true public service, so can free marketplace broadcasting be criticised as to whether the marketplace is truly free. The American model, like the British, grew from historical circumstance and from the nature of the particular society. After the event, the market model, like the public service model, was acclaimed by its supporters as being in the best interests of the public.

Marketplace enthusiasts argue competition in broadcasting, as in other areas of economic endeavour, encourages an improved product, the public will choose that which it likes best and so is served better by competitive broadcasting.

However, there is a gap between discourse and practice. As Streeter (1983) says, policy makers in the United States have rarely, if ever, held that the existing system of network broadcasting conforms to the ideals of free market competition. It is instead "an integrated oligopolistic co-ordination between the major broadcast corporations and the

government" (p.247). The stated intention, he says, is competition, assumed to be a good thing, while the reality is monopoly by large corporations backed up by Government support.

Streeter (1983) contends the development of broadcasting in the United States belies the myth that the Government was not involved. It played a key role in forming RCA and legitimated AT&T's monopoly status, giving it a great advantage in establishing networking technology. Even more important was selective Government inaction. Streeter claims the uncertainty of early regulations allowed the emergence of privately owned broadcast networks. He adds that, meanwhile, the FCC has refused to actively question the fundamentally commercial, profit-driven nature of broadcasting. Therefore, he concludes, the FCC is a servant of the broadcasting industry, playing "an indispensable role in forging and maintaining the current structure of American broadcasting" (p.261).

Cantor and Cantor (1985) argue the system is unlikely to change because those in entrenched positions (the networks and media conglomerates) would lose the advantages of close collaboration with the FCC: "All of this raw struggle over profits is cloaked, of course, in the guise of 'public interest'" (p.187).

In the late eighties and early nineties there was a shift; Fox Television, a Murdoch subsidiary, challenged the dominance of the big three networks, and cable made increasing inroads. Cable Network News (CNN) became a vigorous competitor of the network news programmes. Between 1988 and 1991, "free-to-air" broadcasters lost eight percent of their audience to pay television. They downsized and sought new markets. In the 1994-1995 season, Fox garnered higher ratings than CBS among 18-49 year olds ("Murdoch expects", 1995).

Recently media and telecommunications companies across the globe have been linking and merging in hopes of being favourably placed to exploit the latest fruits of the technological revolution. America's free to air broadcasters and telecommunications companies have been a big part of what Brummer and Keegan (1995) call the merger mania. For instance, in 1995 Rupert Murdoch clinched a \$2 billion deal with MCI (the

world's second biggest telecommunications company). This gives MCI a 13.5 percent interest in Murdoch companies and, incidentally, gives Murdoch links to British Telecom, which has a 20 percent stake in MCI. In August 1995, the world's (then) largest entertainment company was born when Disney (with its cable channel and huge entertainment enterprise) bought Capital Cities/ABC (with its American television network and major investments in Scandinavia, Britain, France, Germany and Japan) ("Nothing Mickey Mouse", 1995). The FCC approved the deal in February 1996.

The new Disney Company was eclipsed in September, when the Turner Broadcasting System (with CNN, professional sports teams and Hanna-Barbera cartoons) announced a merger with Time Warner (with its vast cable television systems, publishing, music and movie operations). The merger gives the new organisation control of 40 percent of United States cable television ("Turner-Time forms media giant", 1995).

So despite the rhetoric of competition, the American television market remains dominated by giant corporations. In recent years the size and global reach of these organisations have grown, as has their control over a growing number of other media and telecommunications outlets. In the United States, the FCC has done little to slow the process.

3.4 Critiques of the Marketplace Model

Marketplace supporters take the moral high ground with phrases like "freedom of choice and information" (Keane, 1991), but whether this promise is delivered has been hotly debated. Bagdikian (1985), for example, argues that despite a vast number of local media outlets, American television is homogenised by the nature of media outlets and media economics. He decries the growing monopolisation of the media:

Systematic studies show that, even without observable owner intervention, monopoly and cross ownership by themselves reduce public information (p.102).

Kellner (1990) says that the worst aspects of commercial broadcasting intensified in the 1980s "when the television networks merged with other corporate conglomerates and thus fell into the hands of blatantly commercial and conservative interests" (p.181).

Linked with this, Bagdikian believes, is the central influence of media economics. The profit motive of media companies meant, for instance, that "media protectiveness towards corporate objectives kept subdued what ordinarily would be dramatic economic and public health problems" (p.106). Campbell (1994) contends that when corporations control media, they limit discussion of alternatives to the economic imperatives of the market, "despite protestations to the contrary" (p.205).

Bagdikian (1985) also argues that advertising changes media content. When spot advertising was introduced in American television in the 1950s, the big audience serious dramas were lightened up "in order to create a buying mood in support of the commercials" (p.108). He sums up:

The media marketplace of ideas cannot be measured by its size and technical virtuosity. Blandness and noise do not constitute ideas and information (p.109).

Herman (1991) asserts marketplace forces naturally constrain free expression and marginalise dissent through five factors: high capital entry costs; advertiser, government and interest group pressures; a demand for cheap, regular and credible sources of information, which keeps out most dissident sources; "flak" from powerful conservative lobbies; and a natural bias in favour of free enterprise and against State intervention.

Marketeers often rely on orthodox commercial analogies. Much of the New Zealand Treasury submission to the Royal Commission on Broadcasting, for instance, described broadcasting in such terms (Easton, 1990). However, other economists have criticised the equation of broadcasting with conventional industries. Collins, Garnham and Locksley's (1988) analysis helps clarify the dynamics of broadcasting economics and the probable consequences of market forms.

The cultural industry of broadcasting, they point out, produces a public good which is not destroyed by consumption and which by its nature is "non-excludable" (when a programme is broadcast to one consumer it is simultaneously broadcast to all). Moreover, broadcasting differs from the newspaper business in that while production costs are high, distribution costs are negligible. This in turn creates pressure to constantly expand audience share. Because a large proportion of cost lies in creating new products, television is labour intensive. Broadcasters compete, not in price, but in quality, designs, technical standards and so on. This too encourages spiralling costs.

As a result, broadcasters must exploit economies of scale to keep unit costs down. As channel numbers rise, the audience decreases. So broadcasters use three tactics: they attempt to penetrate foreign markets; they increase competition for national audiences by imitating schedules of their rival; they attempt to extend product life by repeats and syndications (Collins *et al.*, 1988).

Streeter (1983) questions the both FCC's assumptions that marketplace forces tend to encourage competition and that competition is in the best public interest. Size alone can be a competitive advantage in a field like broadcasting, with its very high production and low distribution costs. So a large firm can out-compete a small firm without producing better programmes. Therefore, smaller companies tend to be swallowed up and the marketplace works against competition. The cost of developing a network makes it unlikely that a highly diverse and competitive broadcasting network will ever be a reality.

Moreover, competition does not always give the consumers what they want. The marketer equation of audiences to consumers does not stand up to the evidence. Commercial television companies make money by selling audiences to advertisers, not by selling programmes (Curran, 1986). As Gomery (1993) puts it:

For advertising-supported media, the client is the advertiser, not the viewer or listener or reader. Advertisers seek out media that can persuade customers who can be convinced to change their buying behaviour and have the means to execute new purchases (p.192).

Ratings of audience numbers attract advertisers, and the ratings pursuit means the consumers do not always get their first choice. Ratings tend to measure *least disliked* alternatives and there is no way of measuring intensity of programme enjoyment (Sawers, 1989). While there are documented cases where advertisers have protested against specific programmes, their main influence lies in the promoting the type of programme they prefer. Advertisers prefer programmes which encourage a buying mood. Controversial or disturbing programmes work against this mood; entertainment promotes it (Bagdikian, 1985). The result, as Streeter (1983) claims, is imitation rather than diversity, as demonstrated in American network programming.

Despite these criticisms, the marketplace model, so in tune with popular monetarist theory, is the current predominant ideology. Free market supporters are highly critical of the public service model, which they see as paternalistic (Jarvik, 1995; Veljanovski, 1989a) restrictive (Gallagher, 1989) and costly (Peacock, 1986, in Budd, 1989). Their arguments have been effective, as for instance in the case of Rupert Murdoch, who used anti-state rhetoric in Britain in the 1980s to erode public and government confidence in public service broadcasting (Atkins, 1995).

3.5 News Theory Associated with the Marketplace Approach

Associated with the marketplace model of broadcasting are three areas of news study: studies of ownership and control, writing on the commodification of news, and narrative theories of news. All three are concerned with aspects of the commercial rationale of news, approaching it from different angles. Much of the writing, as McQuail (1987) notes, has been critical in nature:

Most theorists are committed to an idealist view of communication as a relationship, which can only be distorted or debased by the mass market. Most developed mass media, however, are inextricably involved both in doing business and in meeting the informational and cultural needs of their audience at the same time (p.104).

In this section, discussion centres around social theory, rather than what McQuail terms working theory. However, there is reference at times to writings of journalists and news management.

Set alongside the idealistic role for the news media outlined in the previous chapter is the contrasting role of media as entertainer. Seymour-Ure (1991) argues that people have long had the same interests. The nature of news has actually changed very little, and sex, crime and sport were staples of nineteenth century news fare.

News institutions are commercial entities. A number of studies have documented tendencies in news media ownership toward growing monopolisation and, more recently, globalisation (Bagdikian, 1985; Brummer & Keegan, 1995; Kellner, 1990; McGregor 1992; Murdock, 1980, 1990). Such writing, while generally deploring the trends, underlines the contention that in practice the news business is big business. Along with the mergers has gone a (generally successful) hunger for ever-growing profits and the replacement of older executives with those with a sharper business orientation (Gordon, 1995; Raskin, 1989).

Stamm and Underwood (1993) found ownership structure and the emphasis on profits over journalistic policies affected newswriters' job satisfaction at 12 American papers, while Gordon (1995) reports journalists in under-resourced newsrooms as newly conscious of the pressures to behave non-professionally to garner readers and viewers. However, news scholarship based on ethnographic studies has for some time understood news to be a product of institutional demands and processes (Chibnall, 1977; Hall et al., 1978; Soloski, 1989; Tiffen, 1989; Tuchman, 1978; and others).

This perspective of news as a commodity (Davis, 1990) has, along with historical studies, undermined key myths which characterise journalists as truth seekers, at odds with the commercial and political world. The professional value of objectivity had long been debated by journalists (Altschull, 1990), but social theorists describe it as efficient and convenient for journalists (Tuchman, 1978) and as a device enabling newspaper proprietors earlier this century to appeal to a wider audience than the original crusading papers (Murdock, 1980). Similarly, journalism's hallmark "inverted pyramid" style has been traced to a government censor, Edwin M. Stanton. Stanton, as Lincoln's Secretary of War, developed the objective, authoritative style to ensure his dispatches served the cause of the State (Mindich, 1993).

Professional journalistic imperatives such as simplification, titillation and the entertainment factor, dramatisation and immediacy (Chibnall, 1977) match the commercial demands of news organisations. Journalists acknowledge the commercial rationale by linking audience appeal to serving the needs of the ordinary person (Norris, 1992; Winter, 1994). But they are also conscious of aiming for a balance between entertainment and information in the news (Schlesinger, 1987). As Tiffen (1989) says:

There is an uneasy tension between, on the one hand, democratic rhetoric, where the size of the audience is seen as a virtue in itself and as authenticating the work of the media and, on the other, of acting as a watchdog or promoting controversy, where the audience is often spoken of as a constraint (p.57).

So core news practices, combined with growing commercial imperatives, propel journalism in the direction of tabloid journalism in its worst sense, aimed at big numbers through sensationalist coverage of crime, sex and entertainment (Baistow, 1985).

Another tradition of news research is relevant here. Narrative theories of news are concerned with cultural content such as myth or rhetoric and have developed from humanistic approaches (Davis, 1990). Writing from experience, Darnton (1975) describes the socialisation process through which reporters learn to recognise and swiftly reproduce news stories from a "traditional repertory of genres" (p.189). Newswriting is heavily influenced by stereotypes, preconceptions and conventional patterns and journalists, he says, "bring more to the events they cover than they take away from them" (p.192). Tuchman (1978) discusses the construction of narratives and describes how news film lends an aura of facticity to the story. Bennett and Edelman (1985) discuss the variety of competing news narratives, each creating a different world. Ehrlich (1996) reviews literature which suggests that tabloid and investigative journalism share common ground: "reporters in both genres may share a certain body of literary devices and lore in telling their stories" (p.3).

Such theory ties in with those who regard the technology of television as irresistibly shaping its product. Craft books for photojournalists, like that of Shook (1989), now go

well beyond filmic techniques for creating facticity observed by Tuchman (1978). Shook talks of the "language of television" (p.xxvii) and concentrates on techniques to enhance the compelling nature of visual story telling. TVNZ executive Norris (1992) describes television journalism as ineluctably different from other forms of journalism: "effective television journalism requires a number of variations of the narrative approach, and both drama and emotion are key ingredients" (p.18).

This deterministic approach culminates in Altheide and Snow's (1991) concept of "media logic". Entertainment pervades television, and television news in particular, because of the commercial rationale and the necessity of mass audience appeal. We, as audience, they say, are participants in promoting a media culture that is dominated by formats of entertainment. Organised journalism is dead, replaced by "information mechanics" expressed in formats which have been adopted by other social organisations to package their messages.

So studies of news show that journalistic practices fit the commercial imperatives of news organisations which have to compete to survive. This, combined with the new breed of television journalists trained to use the visual capabilities of the medium to tell stories (Atkinson, 1994b; Hallin, 1992a), made the practice of television journalism vulnerable to a rapid adaptation to the pressures to commercialise news, as the effects of deregulation and accompanying growth in competition swept through broadcasting. It is to a discussion of this recent deregulatory period that the study now moves.

3.6 Deregulation

During the 1980s, technological advances, economic pressures and changing political ideologies blended to fuel a series of rapid changes in broadcasting around the world. Most developed countries have moved to deregulate broadcasting, and state-run public service broadcasters have become subject to increased competition and reduced funding. While noting that a more accurate term for the current change in the mix of government and market activity may be "re-regulation" (Bell, 1993; Porter, 1989), this study opts for the commonly used term "deregulation".

Cave and Melody (1989) describe the moves as the third crucial stage in broadcast regulation. The first was the initial regulation of radio. Then came the introduction and diffusion of television. Now we are incorporating the newer technologies of cable, satellite and integrated telecommunication systems. They talk about cycles of regulation and deregulation and note, "most deregulation movements are driven primarily by a perception that regulation is failing to live up to its objectives" (p.225).

The following section of the chapter examines the basic causes behind deregulation and then looks at events in the United States and three key countries in Europe, before going on to examine current New Zealand writing on deregulation.

3.6.1 Global Technological Change

At the core of developments in broadcasting were technological advances and the responses of governments and large private corporations. The development of the microchip, in particular, heralded an enormous shift in the way we live and work, paralleling the industrial revolution (Rowe, 1986). As the implications of the explosive growth of new communications technologies and media became clearer throughout the eighties, the "information age" label became common parlance. The swift movement of information and ideas changed, among other things, our way of doing business, making the global economy a reality in the last decade. The new media meant quantum leaps in the amount of information available to people and, as Cheesbro and Bonsall (1989) point out, the media are becoming increasingly integrated and interactive.

Electronic broadcasting was both caught up in this change and a key player. In the last decade we have entered what Rowe (1986) terms the third age of broadcasting, "from radio, to television, to satellite and cable channels" (p.141).

At the outset of the study period, broadcasters and legislators were assessing the implications of new technologies. Satellites, fibre optic cables, digitalisation and compression techniques have changed the way we view electronic broadcasting. They put paid to the idea that broadcasting is a scarce commodity, opened up the national broadcasters to global competition and, because of the growing interface with computers, thrust television into the broader telecommunications industry.

As seen in Chapter Two, the limited number of terrestrial channels was part of the rationale for regulating broadcasting. Satellites and cable meant a huge expansion of the number of channels available. While both have been round for several decades, rapid advances since 1980 have changed the nature of their delivery. Each "generation" of satellite has been able to deliver more channels, and satellite dishes have gone from being the pride of a nation or corporation to a backyard phenomenon. All this, argue those who support deregulation, makes regulating terrestrial channels irrelevant for those countries beneath the "footprint", or transmission area, of a satellite.

However, as Rowe (1986) said, "it is when satellite and cable are used in conjunction that their importance becomes fully apparent" (p.136). While cable television had been steadily growing for many years, the invention of fibre optic cable, carrying thousands of times more information than copper wire, opened up enormous possibilities. This newer cable carries two-way telephone and computer information, as well as a large number of channels. At the outset of the study period, manufacturers were already working towards a television screen which would double as a computer screen.

These links, between cable and satellite, and television and computers, tie the future of broadcasting closely to the future of telecommunications. Broadcasting came to be regarded in a different way, as its purpose and function were rethought.

These technological challenges confronted regulators and broadcasters throughout the world, evoking a variety of responses. But while technology does affect form and content of programme output, it is not the only factor. Head (1985) describes the process of change as a series of complex three-way interactions among:

- (1) the universal attributes of broadcasting as a technology, (2) the universal attributes of humans as communicators and receivers of communications, and (3) the specific political, cultural and economic attributes of any given society (p.9).

However, the general response to the new wave of technological development was to move towards deregulation. In this, the developments in the USA, both at the theoretical level and in the practice of the FCC, were profoundly influential (Porter, 1989). Streeter (1983) characterises the response of the FCC as "a faith in new

technologies". Its 1980 *Final Report on New Television Networks* was critical of past regulatory efforts and suggested problems could be solved by eliminating current rules. FCC chairman Mark Fowler and his successor Dennis Patrick "profoundly believed that the marketplace could far better serve many of the needs that regulation had clumsily attempted to address in a less abundant past" (Aufderheide, 1990, p.49). Despite some counter-reaction in Congress, deregulation moved apace in the U.S. in the late 1980s.

Responses and debates in Britain were also influential in New Zealand, as Chapter Five demonstrates. Britain had operated in a highly regulated broadcasting market until the 1980s. Then the 1982 Hunt Report marked "a watershed in broadcasting policy" (Veljanovski, 1989a, p.9). The report was generally recognised as a liberal, strongly deregulating document (Rowe, 1986), freeing up cable television and allowing it to compete outright with the BBC and ITV for audiences. Veljanovski notes the Hunt proposals were designed to rejuvenate the telecommunications manufacturing industry and fit in with the privatisation of British Telecom and the overall scheme for telecommunications deregulation. It was the first of a series of reports and papers throughout the eighties advocating dismantling elements of the regulatory structure.

Bell (1993) notes the state motivation for broadcasting is everywhere couched in terms of the imperatives established by technological developments, with a major threat being the development of satellite broadcasting with footprints crossing the boundaries of nation states. But, she points out, nations are not helpless; they can regulate the sale of decoders and also, as Europe is attempting, link supra-nationally to maintain some control over satellite broadcast content.

3.6.2 Deregulation and Political and Economic Doctrines

The deregulatory response to the new technologies was ideologically based and closely linked with the huge upswing of the political right throughout democratic industrialised nations. As Kelsey (1993) says:

Global capitalism, facing a serious crisis of profitability, had begun to restructure. A new generation of liberal economists blamed the decline of profitability on the effects of government intervention and the

institutional arrangements of the welfare state. Their blueprint for change required less government, the privatisation of state assets and businesses, increased economic efficiency, reduced public expenditure, and rolling back the welfare state (pp.15-16).

Deeks (1993) describes the change as the rise of the "business culture":

the world of business has progressively expropriated the worlds of science and technology, art and literature, dispossessing them of their claims for pre-eminence in shaping our social and cultural experience (p.2).

In this sense, we can see business values increasingly shaping government decision-making during the 1980s. Similarly, the institutions and output of state broadcasters were judged in the light of business culture and found wanting.

Theorists like Wilkes (1989) say our economies are moving from "Fordism" (with mass production, mass consumption, economies of scale, rising wages and rising consumption) to "Post-Fordism" (small scale high quality production, highly differentiated patterns of consumption and increasing polarity in class relations). He outlines four major steps on the "neo-liberal" road to Post Fordism:

1. Deregulating the economy
2. Privatising the public sector
3. Introduction of commercial logic into any residual state sector
4. Opening the economy to international pressures as far as possible.

While many Western democracies were taking this road in the 1980s, some (like New Zealand) travelled further than others.

Mass communication has been central to this economic and ideological shift. As Sassoon (1985) put it: "the field of mass communications is one of the main terrains on which a radical restructuring of the world economy has been taking place" (p.119). There have been strong pressures to increase economic globalisation through deregulation (Bell, 1993).

The broader monetarist argument, of increasing efficiency through competition, forms a natural alignment with those who advocate free and open competition within broadcasting and a dismantling of regulation.

3.6.3 Broadcasting as a Consumer Industry

Integral to the conviction that freedom from regulation ensures a free marketplace of programmes and ideas is the concept of the viewer as consumer. The Peacock Committee, set up in 1985 by the British Government to investigate funding options for the BBC, uses the expression, as does the Director of Telecommunications Policy at Sky Television in London, Gallagher (1989).

The idea that the viewer is really a "consumer", who exercises a "choice" in orthodox economic terms, does not stand up to the evidence (see 3.4). However, the concept was in use in New Zealand and formed part of the new language of broadcasting in discussions about its function. Once accepted, it leads naturally to the idea that the amount of product "sold" - expressed in the viewer ratings - is the best way to judge the quality of the product. This neatly rounds off the commercial circle in broadcasting. Products (the programmes) are produced in order that consumers judge their merits and buy (view) them. It sidesteps the point that the true buyers of programmes are the advertisers, and that viewer ratings are a key mechanism aiding advertisers' judgement to buy (Gomery, 1993).

In summary, the global trends in technology, economic and political ideologies all provided an enormous push towards deregulation. As a small country, New Zealand is particularly vulnerable to global trends and, as will be seen in Chapter Five, it was a combination of such international pressures and of key local personalities that precipitated the dramatic shift of the study period.

3.6.4 Recent Deregulatory Moves in the United States

As discussed above, broadcasting in the United States is not as regulation-free as supporters of the marketplace model would suggest. However, the USA was a leader

in the move towards deregulation in the 1980s. Significant restrictions were lifted during six years of television deregulation (1981-87) when the FCC was led by former chairman Mark Fowler.

Ferrall (1989) says that earlier, during the 1970s, a number of the more complex and unnecessary regulations bedeviling small station owners had been dismantled. But the essential underpinnings of regulation (those that viewed station licensees as public trustees and government scrutiny as essential to create a broadcasting service responsive to public needs) were not challenged.

Chairman Fowler was avowedly anti-regulation, describing television as "a toaster with pictures" (Porter, 1989, p.12). According to Ferrall (1989), his moves to increase competition in broadcasting worked against the interests of both station owners and viewers. Fowler eased entry into broadcasting by raising limits on the number of stations which could be owned; lifting rules designed to prohibit "trafficking" in station licences, reducing financial requirements and simplifying applications. Ferrall says his initiatives increased the amount of commercial time available on each station and reduced pressure to present public service programmes.

Levin (1986) contends that the FCC report, which preceded the freeing up of broadcasting ownership and argued that diversity and issues-oriented programming would be enhanced by lifting the rules, was based on faulty statistics and insufficient investigation. He claims the commission's concept of "diversity" was unclear, and he argues that it confused the goal of market efficiency with programme quality, at one stage virtually equating quality with popularity. Further, he says, the report failed to consider the anticompetitive consequences of TV station acquisitions on potential entry into the under-utilized UHF band. In short, Levin believes the commission was "leaping to preconceived conclusions" (p.40).

Ferrall (1989) says the effects on the public interest have been most marked in the area of public service programming and diversity. Regulation, he argues, ensured stations had to provide public service programmes, and entry restrictions enhancing station profitability provided the money for the programming. In evidence, he cites the decrease in children's programmes with educational content.

Cantor and Cantor (1985) note that the phrase requiring the FCC to uphold "the public interest, convenience and necessity" has been at the heart of most controversy about broadcasting regulation in the United States. They argue that the public interest clause was purposely made vague to give the FCC leeway in licensing and regulating, and that "the public interest" has been defined differently by the FCC and the courts.

Two major constraints have ensured American broadcasters act according to the public interest: the Equal Time Clause and the Fairness Doctrine. The Equal Time Clause, part of the 1934 act, stated that if a station gives a candidate for public office the opportunity to broadcast, it must also afford equal opportunity to all other candidates for that office. The Fairness Doctrine required broadcasters to afford reasonable opportunity for the discussion of conflicting views on issues of public importance. The FCC required a reasonable amount of time to be devoted to controversial issues and a reasonable amount of time to be given to conflicting viewpoints.

The Doctrine has been very important to minority groups, although others say it violates the freedom of speech called for in the First Amendment. However, the Fairness Doctrine was upheld by the Supreme Court in 1969, when it decided broadcasting differed from print media because of the limited channels available (Cantor & Cantor, 1985).

Cable and satellite television, combined with non-interventionist policies of the Reagan administration undermined this argument. Broadcasters claimed the Fairness Doctrine caused them to back away from controversial programming. In August 1987, the FCC announced it would no longer enforce it. Subsequent attempts by Congress to reinstate the Fairness Doctrine have failed.

Aufderheide (1990) says while there was little evidence the Doctrine limited controversy, there were cases to show it widened public debate. Her study shows that since the suspension, controversial programming has not increased. Further, encouraged by the removal of the Doctrine, many stations during the 1988 election refused to provide time to air controversy on ballot issues. This occurred even though ballot issue fairness rules were still in place.

Fowler's chairmanship was followed by that of Dennis Patrick who held similar views (Porter, 1989). But with the Clinton administration came a more activist regulatory regime, with greater concern about the development of multi-media monopolies able to control an unfair proportion of the media superhighway. Triggered by complaints from civil rights groups and rival network NBC, the FCC investigated Murdoch's Fox network. A potential setback for Murdoch's ambitions was averted when the FCC found that, while ownership of Fox was technically suspect, it was not operating against the public interest (Brummer & Keegan, 1995).

The economic and political climate which supported deregulation has also impacted on public service broadcasting in the United States. Federal funding as a percentage of public television's budget dropped from 23.7% in 1981 to 13.5% in 1990, diverting stations' attention from programme-making to fund-raising (Twentieth Century Fund Taskforce, 1993). Congress has been debating large funding cuts for PSB, backed by arguments such as those of Jarvik (1995), who claims the service is elitist and not accountable to tax payers who fund it. He also believes there are plenty of funding alternatives.

3.6.5 The 1990 Broadcasting Act in Britain

It was not until Thatcher's Government in the 1980s that discussions about PSB in Britain took an economic approach. Seaton (1994) claims that the Government, thwarted (by the Peacock Committee Report) in its desire to end licence fee funding for the BBC, turned its attention to private television. She says the resulting 1990 Broadcasting Act was a disaster which "ended the carefully evolved pressures on television companies to compete, not just for audiences or revenue, but by making good programmes, and determined that in future they be driven by the simple need to produce profits" (p.31).

The Act separated the sale of advertising for different channels (effectively creating competition between channels three and four) and promoted the auctioning of commercial franchises (Sparks, 1995). However, Sparks notes, the Bill was modified in a hard-fought battle through Parliament. The newly-formed Independent Television

Commission was allowed to intervene in the purely market process of the franchise auction. Despite this, the franchise round saw the defeat of some long serving independent companies.

There are still limits on cross ownership, but now companies can hold two major franchises. The result has been a sharp contraction in the number of television companies holding franchises, with commercial television now dominated by three major companies, each owning two major franchises (Sparks, 1995). The power in commercial broadcasting, according to Seaton (1994), has switched from programme-makers to former accountants:

So called "de-regulation", combined with the collapse of advertising revenue in the recession, guaranteed the "tabloidisation" of commercial television, despite some last minute programme "quality" thresholds imposed upon franchise winners (p.32).

Sparks (1995) notes a reduction in number of hours given to news and current affairs because of changes in the regulations.

Meanwhile, there have been direct interventions in BBC affairs, especially in the selection and dropping of directors-general, and the Corporation has been "remorselessly" pursued by the Murdoch press (Seaton, 1994, p.33). Sparks agrees with this assessment and records the growing restrictions on BBC independence which come as a shock to those outside Britain.

3.6.6 The European Experience

While state owned broadcasters in Europe have been threatened by crumbling of ownership and entry barriers on the Continent, significant protections remain. Blumler and Hoffmann-Riem (1992) give several reasons for Western Europe's reluctance to abandon public service broadcasting. First, despite its limitations, European public service broadcasting had many widely appreciated achievements to its credit. Second, some of the strongest commercial forces in the broadcasting field are foreign, and large public broadcasters offer better defences against a flood of foreign programmes. Third, European countries have a strong socialist tradition, and the principle that a democratic

society should have some say in the direction of its broadcast media has been more readily accepted than in America. Finally, they say, there has been some recognition, based on the American experience, that an uncontrolled market has pressures that limit it: "It serves the consumer ... but shortchanges the citizen" (p.23).

Tunstall and Palmer (1991) say there has been a sea change in Europe. During the eighties there was a shift towards deregulation, but from 1989 onward there has been a strong trend to reregulate. This section summarises the experiences of three countries, Italy, France, and Germany, in response to deregulatory pressures.

3.6.6.1 Italy's Deregulation and Re-regulation

When the Italian Constitutional court removed the monopoly of the state public service television, there was an explosion of television growth, with wide public support. By 1983, Sassoon (1985) estimates, Italy had 700-800 private television stations. Within this were four semi-national channels. In 1985 he described Italy as:

The only country in Western Europe with a multichannel radio and television system *not subject to any form of regulation whatsoever* (p.121).

In all this, what happened to programming? High production costs meant private stations largely avoided local programming. They were forced into networking, first ignoring statutory restrictions and then using loopholes. By 1979, 80% of TV revenues went to three dominant private networks. Sassoon (1985) describes local companies as "mere terminals for distribution" (p.138). Moreover, he claims the growth of the private sector destroyed chances of a decentralised third channel for the state-owned RAI and had a negative impact on its financial base (which, like that of New Zealand, included advertising and licence money) and its programmes. RAI had to shift local production from quality programmes to cheaper games shows and debates, while buying overseas programmes to compete with private companies. Since 1981, Sassoon says, broadcasting has become increasingly liberated from political party dominance but increasingly subordinated to the commercial and cultural industries of the United States.

In the mid eighties a large number of local stations folded, bringing numbers back to about 250. Nationally, Silvio Berlusconi's Fininvest Group emerged, as enormously

dominant, having bought out two principal rival networks (Italia 1 and Rete 4). Fininvest also supplied programming and adverts to three other minor networks, and by the end of the 1980s controlled a major Italian advertising company, a radio network, several magazines, a publishing company, major film and record production companies and several cinemas.

After years of skirting the problem of broadcasting, the Italian Government became so alarmed by Berlusconi's power that it sought to re-regulate broadcasting. The 1990 Broadcasting Act allowed no company to control more than 20 percent of national mass media revenues and only one licence per person in each area (Cocker, 1992). There were also controls on scheduling, content and levels of advertising. However, Berlusconi remains hugely influential. His electoral victory in 1994 was marked by an intense use of infotainment media (McGregor, 1996), while his recent defeat in the polls and subsequent trial for corruption have not stopped his media activities.

3.6.6.2 Germany's Constitutional Approach

According to Porter (1989), West Germany provided a contrast to the United States in the role provided by public service broadcasters: "Private broadcasting is permitted, but only so long as public service broadcasting provides the fundamental pluralist needs of the German people" (p.16). He reviews the role of the Constitutional Court in five decisions concerning broadcasting, which laid down rules and developed models for regulating private broadcasting and outlined the essential role of public service broadcasters in providing universal service and a wider range of programmes, because they are not dependent on high audience ratings. Private broadcasters are required to permit all points of view and to exclude unbalanced individual broadcasters or programmes. The court also required regions to outlaw by formal legislation any cross-media cartels which jeopardized the need for pluralism.

The reunification of Germany saw an extension of West German media companies into the former East Germany (Kleinstaub & Peters, 1991), and within four years of reunification, the East was fully integrated with the Western broadcasting system, with its private and public broadcasting system based on the regions (Kilborn, 1993).

However, Kilborn argues, there is a strong sense that the system has been imposed on the East, dictated by West German political and economic interests:

One cannot entirely dispel the thought that the decision to dissolve the East German Television Service (DEF) in December 1991, was partly motivated by a desire to expunge any residual elements of a specifically East German identity (p.467).

Since 1990, Germany like most other European countries, has seen an increase in the number of private terrestrial channels, a rapid diffusion of cable television, and access to a large number of satellite programming services. However, policy makers have held back from injecting a full-blown commercialism into their television system (Blumler & Hoffmann Riem, 1992).

3.6.6.3 France's Deregulation with Moderation

Comparative broadcasting analyst Browne (1989) says transformations in the French system in the early to mid 1980s are "a case study of how a change in political leadership can alter an established system of broadcasting in a major way" (p.61). The socialist government of President Mitterand brought the era of state monopoly and blatant interference to a close. The Government, which had supported private radio while in opposition, first abandoned state monopoly in radio and then moved tentatively on television. In mid-1983 it announced the three channel ORTF would be supplemented by a pay television service, Canal Plus, and that cable television would now receive strong government backing. Browne says the driving force behind the policy change was economic, an attempt by France to capture some of the new telecommunications market.

Two years later, the Government authorised private commercial television, precipitating a scramble for licences. Critics charged the Government with granting licences for the two channels to "friends". Despite this, Browne (1989) sums up the socialist years as greatly increasing the diversity and objectivity of French broadcasting.

In 1986, the incoming Conservative government announced it was selling off TF1, one of the three public services. A year later, it went to a consortium headed by France's

largest construction firm, Bouygues, with a 10 percent shareholding by British media magnate Robert Maxwell. The Conservatives were also keen to ensure the two other private channels were in more sympathetic hands. In the 1987 relicensing, La Cinq was granted to a group made up of the former owners and Conservative publisher Robert Hersant, while Le Six went to another group chaired by a close friend of Prime Minister Chirac. The Government also said it was not prepared to subsidise the development of cable and satellite television to the same extent as the Socialists.

However, the changes wrought by the Government were closely fought and Porter (1989) reviews the role of the French Constitutional Council in "moderating some of the ideological excesses of the government of Jacques Chirac and, in particular, its wish to hand television over to the play of market forces" (p.17). He says the Council was important in three key areas. First, it laid out strict criteria for the sale of state-owned enterprises. Second, it tightened up the Government's proposals regarding press ownership, ruling that "pluralism of thought and opinion was a necessary goal for the regulation of the media" (p.18). Third, on the question of television deregulation, the Council ruled it was constitutional to replace the then current authority with a new commission and to delegate spectrum licensing to the commission. But it was unhappy with the government's proposal for a 25 percent limit for newspaper ownership. Porter says it took the view that there were two threats to the pluralist ideal of the constitution, "those emanating from the state and those emanating from the media moguls" (p.19). The council therefore obliged the new communication commission to ensure as a priority the pluralist expression of currents of opinion when allocating licences.

Porter concludes that France (along with Germany) has asserted the signal importance of pluralism, within both the public and the private sector, in regulating television. He does say, though, that there has been some concern about the way the new law has been implemented. Browne (1989) comments that, despite new obligations, the re-licensed fifth and sixth channels continued to rely heavily on imported material and that the privatised TF1 was placing a higher priority on light entertainment, with many news staff quitting, claiming a reduced commitment to news services. In April 1992, La Cinq, having lost its battle with the revamped TF1, succumbed to bankruptcy and went off air.

3.6.7 Effects of Deregulation: Summary

The writings of commentators (Aufderheide, 1990; Bagdikian, 1985; Collins, Garnham & Locksley, 1988; Ferrall 1989; Streeter, 1983; and others) combined with the experience of broadcasters in Europe, leads us to conclude the advent of commercial competition accompanying deregulation will have several adverse effects on a formerly protected public service broadcaster.

First, finances become shaky. Governments will argue there is less need to support public broadcasting when there is more choice available for the public. Advertising revenue is reduced, as it is shared with competitors. The organisation has to spend more money on promotion in order to keep its audience.

Second, it will attempt to cut costs. The first step is to reduce local programming as the RAI example shows. Drama and documentaries, being both expensive and easy to replace with cheaper overseas programmes, would go early. Unless the competition makes a feature of news and current affairs programmes, these costly services would also be cut.

Third, programming will become homogeneous with its competitors. New competitors are likely to be short of funds and favour overseas mass audience programming to attract advertisers. The older established station will imitate both, to keep its audience share and to keep costs down. Finally, the organisation will seek new markets overseas and different outlets within the country, diverting resources and creative energy from its core television business.

3.6.8 New Zealand Literature on Deregulation

Chapter Five covers deregulation legislation in detail. However, a brief outline of the main features is provided here, to serve as a reference point for the discussion of the literature on deregulation below. In December 1988, the BCNZ was split into two State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) with commercial objectives: TVNZ Ltd and Radio New Zealand Ltd. In 1989 responsibility for public service broadcasting was given to a

Broadcasting Commission (later known as New Zealand on Air, abbreviated as NZOA). NZOA was set up to collect licence fees and distribute them in grants available to private and public broadcasters. It also funds two national non-commercial public radio stations. Another act set up a market-based system for selling broadcasting licences. Restrictions on overseas ownership of broadcasting were reduced in 1989 and finally abolished in 1991. The result, as Cocker (1992) says, is arguably the most deregulated broadcasting system in the world.

Since 1990, there has been a steady cumulation in the literature on broadcasting deregulation. Informal observations were the rule at first, but recently results of more systematic news study have been published, as well as a book on the background and effects of broadcasting deregulation by journalist and media commentator Paul Smith. However, the limited tradition of local media scholarship has meant virtually no independent intellectual input into the broadcasting policy changes and a restricted discussion of the results.

Cameron (1991) deplores the paucity of New Zealand literature and research: "this unique broadcasting structure is being built without a clear policy on PSB (or indeed about whether there should be a policy), or on the role of government" (p.38). Farnsworth's (1988) submission to the Royal Commission on Social Policy addressing the issue of deregulation is an exception. He makes a plea for broadcasting as a public good, arguing that a commercial broadcasting market will produce neither socially equitable ends nor the broadest set of conditions for the public good. Deregulation in New Zealand would lead to an increase in "commercial" programming and, while giving us more potential channels, would mean some of them were controlled internationally. "Under the circumstances", he concludes, "it is hard to detect the advantages for the public interest in deregulation" (p.465).

What comment there was during the crucial decision-making phase of broadcasting deregulation in 1988 and 1989 largely came from a few articles in the *Listener* (Beatson, 1988; Cocker 1989; and Wichtel, 1989). While there were more regular reports in the press, the *National Business Review* and *On Film* perhaps missed the services of the late Warren Mayne, whose perceptive commentaries had shed light for the public in the early part of the study period through until late 1987.

Since the change, despite its far reaching effects, it has been the topic of debate in only a few of the more up-market magazines (primarily, *Metro*, *North and South* and the *Listener*), which have been critical of the change in news and current affairs coverage. Academic critiques, while generating some heat, have been small in their number and their effects. Winter (1994) characterised the debate as a "battle of grand theologies between TVNZ and its critics", generating little light. McGregor (1995) describes the recent dialogue about broadcast news as "an increasingly polarised and fractious debate between a tiny number of academics ... and Television New Zealand executives" (p.46).

Television New Zealand, the main target of both the press and academia, has reacted defensively. For instance, Graeme Wilson, head of TVNZ Networks, in refusing the researcher's request for access to TVNZ staff, cited the antagonistic print media and biased inaccuracies of academics as reasons (Wilson, personal communication, May 10, 1993).

Criticism of the new style of news and current affairs appeared in newspapers in 1989 (see Chapter Five for some examples). The *Listener* also published the occasional article on the effects of deregulation, the advent of TV3 and on debate about changing news styles. Beatson (1988) described the (at that time) new broadcasting policy as an inevitable outcome of the Labour Government and its general economic policies. Reviewing recent costs of local production, he predicted that as TV3 and other aspirants came onstream, costs would increase and the advertising pie would be sliced more thinly. Drama and documentary, "the very programme categories which make the greatest contribution towards the reflection and development of a culture" (p.21), would be under threat:

unless viewers and listeners are prepared to pay more for their pleasure, more broadcast media and less regulation is a recipe for less New Zealand content in programmes (p.21).

The comparative vulnerability of New Zealand public service broadcasting was also noted by Easton (1990). He argued that the introduction of TV3 would have a greater effect on public service television in New Zealand than in Britain or Australia because

TVNZ relied heavily on advertising revenue. He said there had been some public dissatisfaction with the new programme choice as TVNZ shaped up for competition and a feeling that it had cut worthwhile programmes.

Discussion about New Zealand content has been a prominent strand in the debate on results of deregulation, and Lealand (1990) charts the new dominance of Australian, or Australian-franchised, programmes during television prime time. He followed up with details of a study undertaken for New Zealand on Air. Lealand (1991) says with the introduction of TV3 and increased transmission hours of TVNZ the amount of broadcast television increased (from 870 hours in March 1989 to 1473 hours in March 1990). But, he adds, "even as the *number* of locally produced programmes have increased, as the result of TV3's contribution and TVNZ's renewed efforts, *local programming as a proportion of total programming has fallen markedly*" (p.6).

When Lealand presented his paper for a second time at a Broadcasting Summit in Auckland, in September 1991, television executives counter-attacked. Saying the amount of New Zealand production had in fact risen markedly, they described his "proportion of total programming" argument as specious. TVNZ's 1990 Annual Report claims an 18% increase in local production over 1989 and annual reports through the 1990s tell the story of increased local production, while Bell (1993) says local content research for the Broadcasting Standards Authority showed a level of 30 percent in 1992. Bell (1995) puts the increase in local hours of programming down to the "almost doubling of the licence fee (from \$65 to \$110) in 1989, the increased efficiencies in production as a result of deregulation and the prevalence of cheap programming genres" (p.191).

The argument is muddled by the question of what is local. Lealand (1990) points out that several "local" programmes in prime time are, in fact, Australian franchises, and there is a growing practice of localising foreign current affairs documentaries and sports by means of New Zealand studio introductions. It is clear Lealand's method of counting local content from listings in the *Listener* cannot make such distinctions.

Just as researchers are still coping with the concept of quantifying local content, they have only just begun exploring the more difficult concept of "quality". Bell (1993) says promotion of national culture has been enhanced by the 1989 legislation and the method of delivering funds through New Zealand on Air. TVNZ and TV3 "are keen to promote New Zealand content as a means of maintaining market 'position' and as good public relations" (Bell, 1993, p.38). However, she argues, because commercial broadcasters have decision-making power over NZOA, programmes made will cater primarily to the centre of the culture, reassuring and entertaining rather than exploring and challenging, as they would in a non-commercial system (Bell, 1995).

Cocker (1994a) takes a quantitative approach to questions of quality and deregulation. Building on work by Blumler, Brynin and Nossiter (1986), he finds the New Zealand public channels in 1986 have:

a reasonable range of programming across the two channels in prime-time with examples of arts, children's and minority programmes. These are lacking in American commercial channels and in the private stations Canale 5 in Italy and Ten, Australia. The spread across the spectrum of genres, however, is nowhere near as even as the European public service channels and New Zealand television betrays its heavy reliance on imported entertainment and its low level of local production (p.7).

Comparing 1986 (pre-deregulation) figures with those in 1990 and 1994, he finds "the programme range has narrowed with the genres of music; minority and special interest; arts, religion education and public access; and children's programming disappearing from the prime-time schedule" (p.8). Cocker says three factors are driving the trend: TVNZ's growing reliance on advertising revenue; the advent of competition, and deregulation, which removed regulatory impediments to solely ratings-driven scheduling.

Cocker (1994a) also uses a measure of programme diversity to show that, despite an increase to three channels, there is only a very marginal increase in choice for viewers in 1990 and 1993 over that offered in 1987, when only two channels were operating. He further measured the number of entertainment hours in prime time. This showed a notable increase in TVNZ entertainment programmes between 1986 and 1990,

especially on Channel 2. Cocker's findings, while generally limited to one week samples, provide backing for the informal observations of other writers. Further study is called for.

Closely linked with the question of local content has been the contention that television has tended to centre on the North Island, and on Auckland in particular. Chapter Five details the virtual closure of South Island stations, the end of the regional news programmes and the complaints of some reporters that the news has become Auckland-centred. Mahy (1995) indicts television in general, and funding body New Zealand on Air in particular, for neglect of the South Island. "Of the \$51.6 million NZ on Air spent funding television programmes by, for and about New Zealanders last year, just 14 percent came to the South Island" (p.81). She says not only is little produced in the South Island, but that which is, is generally not about the South.

On the more generalised impact of deregulation, Atkinson (1989) notes already in the newly-formed TVNZ Ltd, corporate values have begun to replace common good concerns: "The more television has a price on its head, the less room is left for public service broadcasting with its concern for the nurture of an active and well-informed citizenry and a strong national culture" (Atkinson, 1989, p.97). Farnsworth (1990) also predicts public service television will be marginalised. He says while NZOA finances public service programmes, it has no say over their scheduling. He points out that under the new legislation TVNZ has an unambiguous primary objective to maximize profits. However, in a 1992 paper Farnsworth says deregulation cannot be read as wholesale abandonment by the state to the market, but it is instead a reorganisation of this sector to ameliorate the intractable contradictions of cost and content: "Much of the 1980s, then, is marked by a search for some form of accommodation of these irreconcilable pressures and principally, for some form of balance between private and public interests" (Farnsworth, 1992, p.199).

In late 1990, the Institute of Policy Studies at Victoria University held a seminar on issues in public service broadcasting. The purpose of the seminar and the subsequent book was to encourage debate and "an informed reaction to policy decisions", (Hawke, 1991b, p.3). Much of the debate centred on funding and the need for local content, local

drama and a Maori perspective. Cameron (1991) believed public service radio was performing well and that debate centred on television. He feels the broadcasting legislation brought in by Labour did not successfully separate public service broadcasting from commercial broadcasting, nor did it solve the problems of adequate funding or assuring continuity of public service programmes for television. Without continuity of transmission, he says, there will be a loss of "image" and the loss of claim to public support.

Mulgan (1991) opposes Cameron over the separation of commercial and public broadcasting. Criticising what he calls "the clarity of objectives" being forced upon television, he compares it to newspapers, which have always had a strong culture that they are not there just to make money, but that they also have a public purpose.

Television journalists, he said, were being prevented from exercising their professionalism, and the push to separate the commercial from the public in broadcasting will decrease the quality of public service news and current affairs on television. Mulgan says television professionals should be encouraged to have a dual focus, "Make money, have your ratings high, but also win the plaudits of people who are listening to the Concert Programme and Morning Report" (p.91).

Hawke's (1991a) summary raises questions which in the intervening years we have made little progress in answering, but which remain at the heart of broadcasting debate in New Zealand. First, are the specific objectives of public sector TV broadcasting best sought through a dedicated channel or through structures that facilitate public sector programmes in prime time? Second, are the arguments for public sector broadcasting really the same as arguments for subsidising local broadcasting production? Third, what is the significance of public service ownership as a mechanism for ensuring an independent New Zealand medium, and where does this place TVNZ's membership of consortia in order to maximise marketing and buying overseas? He also asks what is the nature of the conflict between commercial objectives and quality products. Does "clarifying" objectives necessarily mean separating them into separate organisations? And finally, what is the place of news and current affairs programmes in commercial broadcasting?

The quality of television news and current affairs programmes since the formation of TVNZ Ltd has been an important component in the literature. News, according to Atkinson (1989), is a crucial part of the commercial mix as, along with sports and current affairs, it is the cheapest means of delivering an upmarket audience to advertisers. He reports TVNZ news executives at that stage had begun to talk about "commissioning news products" rather than "assigning reporters to stories", and that both the jargon and the changing professional codes herald the trend away from public accountability towards the goal of private profit (p.97). Farnsworth (1990) notes news staffing cuts mean reduced regional news gathering and dependence on "pre-gathered" news. Because news must become profit-making it, has become an increasingly centralised and streamlined process, packaged mass-production style for a wide variety of users.

Former broadcasting minister Jonathan Hunt described news and current affairs programming as "the weak link" in New Zealand television (Hunt, 1991, p.12). Mulgan (1991), praising the *Holmes Show* as an excellent democratic institution, blamed problems of television news on the requirement to operate in a highly commercial environment. He claims that funding through NZOA, targeted at specific programmes is not much help for news and current affairs.

Edwards (1992), in a collection of writing on the New Zealand news media, drove home several points made earlier in the *Listener* (by Campbell, 1989) and the *Metro* (Allan, 1990). Describing Television One's Network News bulletin as the "cootchie coo news", he lambasts it for loss of neutrality, providing examples of "editorial comment, emotional sub-texts and dramatisation" (p.19). He places blame for the change on deregulation and competition, saying, "The 'tabloidisation' of television news can be traced back to the run-up period to the arrival of Television Three" (p.20). Edwards criticises both the language of the news and the role of presenters in creating a "palatable form of propaganda" (p.24). He describes the move to a newsreading duo at the end of 1986 as a significant step towards a populist style which is "an undesirable and dangerous trend in a democracy". In Chapter Nine, this study reinforces and refines many of Edwards' points and traces the development of the trends he writes about.

Edwards' critique of the language of news is echoed by Smith (1996b): "The bulletin's news-speak was melodramatic and occasionally, absurd" (p.135). The language, he argues, hints at deeper problems within the news gathering process. While on one level it reflected an attempt to reach a broad range of viewers, it could also have been a cover for a lack of substance resulting from a reduction in the basic ingredient of reporting, reporters out on their rounds.

Also in 1992, political scientist Joe Atkinson launched an attack on declining standards in Television One's network news in an Auckland University Winter Lecture. Working from samples of five consecutive days in 1985 and 1992, Atkinson (1992) describes the news since deregulation as showing two major trends. These are: morselisation, the "reduction of everything to a short component of itself stemming from commercial pressure to divide up the television schedule into saleable segments"; and depoliticisation, the "removal of serious discourse about public affairs stemming from the drive to maximise ratings points and advertising revenue" (p.5). His research shows a reduction in length of film shot, sound bite and length of story, combined with a dramatic increase in coverage of crime, disaster and human interest items compared to politics, economics and industrial stories. These findings are demonstrated more clearly in Atkinson (1994b) and will later be compared with the findings of this study.

TVNZ's director of news and current affairs, Paul Norris, joined battle with Atkinson, and the spat raged across the press in Auckland, culminating in a public debate in 1993. A speech given by Norris (1992) to the University of Canterbury School of Journalism summarised much of TVNZ's response to criticism in the early 1990s. TVNZ defended its journalistic integrity, vindicated its approach by citing audience support, and finally characterised criticism as elitist and based on ignorance of the nature of television. Norris claimed much recent criticism, "expressed strongly by a self-serving press, is simply ill-informed and ill-judged" (p.13). News and current affairs were driven not by ratings but "a sense of mission" (p.15), which included informing accurately and fairly, analysing, acting as the public's watchdog and holding to account those who wield power. He argued for the different nature of television news, saying it required "a number of variations of the narrative approach, and both drama and emotion are key ingredients" (p.18). Stories needed to be "as sharp and compelling as possible" (p.19).

Atkinson (1994b) concedes two major improvements in news. First, there was improved technical capacity at TVNZ, along with a "more sophisticated understanding of the possibilities for constructing audio-visual narrative. Secondly, TVNZ news and current affairs programmes are now markedly less subservient ... though this may be as much a reflection of changing cultural mores as on any independent initiative by TVNZ" (p.157). Atkinson goes on to counter points which Norris made and to support his own charge of news being "ratings-driven". He outlines the dangers of morselisation and depoliticisation in weakening democratic discourse and makes the case for a return to more traditional news values:

The essential shift has been from thematic narrative frames to more episodic and personalised story-telling with built in moral viewpoints. The emphasis on drama, entertainment, action, simplicity, immediacy, and personalisation has almost nothing to do with any ineluctable characteristic of television, and everything to do with attracting a wider and more youthful audience (p.162).

Atkinson's study is the only current longitudinal content analysis of whole bulletins covering the deregulatory period. The present research attempts a more systematic approach with a larger sample size, using constructed weeks selected from key years during the deregulatory process.

McGregor and Comrie (1995), studying fairness and balance in news from 1985 to 1994 in four subject categories, found an increase in emotional language and unsupported assertions made by journalists, plus a blurring of fact and opinion in television news. These trends peaked in TVNZ news in 1990. In terms of geographic coverage, they found 71 percent of TVNZ stories sampled originated from Auckland and Wellington and only 12 percent from the South Island. The findings in Chapter Seven represent the first close examination of geographic origin of all stories in sample news bulletins during the deregulatory period and, although they too reflect a primacy of Auckland and Wellington, there are some important differences.

While content analysis of broadcasting news in New Zealand is infrequent, institutional analysis of news culture in New Zealand can be described as rare (Winter, 1990). Winter's (1993) comments on newsroom culture at TVNZ are based on participant

observer sessions in the Auckland newsroom in 1989 and 1990, immediately after deregulation. Despite the change in newsroom culture brought about by the discipline of the market, she says TVNZ journalists experienced the convergence of public service and commercial philosophies as unproblematic. Winter (1993) describes journalists as using the rhetoric of "a social responsibility to inform" (p.18) along with the "populist discourse of 'relevance' which celebrates the common-sense thinking of 'ordinary New Zealanders'" (p.19). Newswriters contrast the current "people" approach with the "institutional" and "worthy but dull" pre-deregulation journalism. She says journalists "avoided recognising the commercial interests intrinsic to the incorporation of 'relevance' and 'viewer appeal' into newsroom discourse and culture. They prefer to interpret the emergence of populism within the context of their professional ideal of creating an electronic version of the 'New Athens'" (p.24).

Winter (1994) argues that the centralisation and rationalisation of TVNZ news, its loss of experienced journalists and emphasis on efficiency means: less time for research and developing contacts and sources; a greater chance of mistakes and an increased susceptibility to manipulation by public relations practitioners. She claims it is the profit requirements placed on the SOE and the consequent structures and practices this engenders that are at the heart of the problem.

3.7 A Future for Public Service Broadcasting?

So in New Zealand, as throughout the Western world, public service broadcasting is in retreat and increasingly distorted by commercial practices and structures (Garnham, 1994; Willard & Tracey, 1990). While the foregoing commentary shows public service broadcasters have not always lived up to their creed, any replacement by a totally commercial system offers only illusory freedom. In Keane's (1991) words, "market competition produces market censorship" (p.90).

Democratic countries need a free flow of ideas, and public service broadcasting, with its basic tenet of universal service and its freedom from commercial restrictions which allow broadcast of a wide range of subject matter, is the only current workable option

for delivering ideas and information across the whole range of society. As Scannell (1990) puts it:

In my view, equal access for all to a wide and varied range of common informational, entertainment, and cultural programmes carried on channels that can be received throughout the country must be thought of as an important citizenship right in mass democratic societies. It is a crucial means, perhaps the only means at present, whereby a common culture, common knowledge, and a shared public life are maintained as a social good equally available to the whole population (p.26).

Since Habermas's *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* was translated into English in 1989, questions about the relationship between media and democracy have been located within the framework of the public sphere (Croteau, Hoynes & Carragee, 1996). Theorists are increasingly using this concept to justify continuance and growth of PSB.

Habermas conceived of a nineteenth century bourgeois public sphere which provided a widely-accessible social space for political dialogue. Croteau *et al.* say the original concept has been widely criticised but they, like others, see it as a useful one for analysing media systems. Media analysts, they argue, have overwhelmingly concluded that commercial broadcasting does little to enhance the public sphere and, in fact, works against active citizenship and participation.

Aufderheide (1991), too, acknowledges the public sphere is an illusive concept with its own contested history. What, she says, is not contested is that without a public sphere there is no real democracy: "Economic and government interests do not necessarily act in the public interest; they act in their own interests. And without a separate realm of society to act, the public shrinks down to isolated individuals. The public sphere is willy-nilly, a political sphere" (p.169). Mass media, she says, can foster the communication essential to a public sphere. But it needs public media to do it, not commercially driven media. Public television's survival, she says, depends on its becoming an electronic space within the public sphere.

While a mission for PSB in helping rehabilitate a public space may be articulated, it is evident that PSB will have to adapt, or perhaps radically change, if it is to survive to fulfil that mission.

At the simplest level, this will require some form of re-regulation, to ensure public service commitments are created and met. While this goes against the tide of market liberalism, experience in Italy shows it can be done. There are signs, too, that free market philosophies are on the wane. Hutton (1996) says their vigour of argument has not been matched by economic performance. He cites economists like Kruger and Akerlof, of MIT, and Mankiw, of Harvard, to demonstrate the weakness of rightwing policies. New Keynesians, he says, advocate subtle government intervention; laissez-faire economics has at last run its course: "A new range of ideas is emerging that will underpin a new politics. The only question is how long will it take to get there" (p.14).

On the New Zealand scene, Ian Cross ("Pull out the plug", 1992) and Edwards (1992) are among those urging re-establishing PSB. As funding is at the centre of the issue, they propose that Channel Two be sold off, and public broadcast television funding be concentrated on TV One, which would either become completely non-commercial or semi-commercial. This would, in Cameron's (1991) words, clarify its objectives, but it would not satisfy those (like Tracey, 1993) who feel it is vital for public broadcasting not to be marginalised but to attract audiences. This objection is even stronger in the case of proposals to place a "pure" PSB channel on the UHF band (Horrocks, 1995).

Atkinson (1994b) says:

The choice we face is not between either commercial broadcasting or public service broadcasting, but between having only commercial broadcasting or a more diverse mixture of commercial and public service broadcasting (p.174).

The local solution he advocates is for the Government to forgo its dividend from TVNZ and to allow the resources of the commercially successful Channel Two to subsidize fully-fledged PSB on TV One. Atkinson believes, in fact, that we should be improving on past models.

A number of writers overseas advocate a re-definition of PSB, so that it can fill "the qualitative gaps left open by commercialism" (Burgelman, 1986, p.175) and also adapt to the new technological realities.

Blumler and Hoffmann-Riem (1992) say public broadcasters must be in both a competitive and complementary relationship to private broadcasters and they must strike a careful balance between the roles. Public broadcasters must "work out a mission and role for themselves that can give principled guidance to their policies internally and justify their continuing claim on societal resources externally" (p.25.) This is difficult, they say, because no suitable models have emerged. The United States model is a "recipe for marginalization and cultivation of an elitist image" (p.25). Likewise they criticise the video publishing model (such as operates in New Zealand with the NZOA funding), because it surrenders the opportunities that public television offers for public service scheduling, presenting a diversity of programmes across a night's offering and overlooks the need to assemble a critical mass of talent under one organisational roof. They provide a series of normative premises, such as: providing information relevant to how people live and especially to what is shaping the social conditions that determine how they live; helping viewers understand why and how publicity events are staged; and providing entertainment that also aims to stimulate and quicken imagination and thought. While such prescriptions aim for the ideal, they say we should recognise the healthy support for PSB that is still in place in Europe:

Through the provision of diverse, imaginatively enriching and challenging programs, they must strive to keep alive the desire of viewers to look for alternatives to the more superficial satisfactions of commercial fare (p.34).

Burgelman (1986) has a different approach, seeing PSB pulling out of entertainment and becoming an information-oriented organisation concentrating on "the production, distribution and presentation of news and para-informational activities" (p.194). It would become a huge data bank exploiting, for instance, teletext and videotext, ensuring these technologies are not restricted to high income groups. He envisages it run as a non-profit commercial organisation with co-operative ownership.

Keane (1991) believes PSB needs to be redefined to be broader and more accountable. First, he says, it should be treated neither as a poor imitation of commercialism, nor as a "merit good" like a national monument. His thesis involves a radical restructuring of all media and opening up Government practices to scrutiny:

Communications media should not be at the whim of "market forces", but rather placed within a political and legal framework which specifies tough minimum safeguards in matters of ownership structure, regional scheduling, funding programme content and decision-making procedures (p.154).

However, he sees this regulation as being the opposite of restricting:

Public regulation of the market should seek the creation of a genuine variety of media which enable little people in big societies to send and receive a variety of opinions. It should aim to break down media monopolies, lift restrictions upon particular audience choices and popularize the view that the media of communication are a public good (p.155).

Steps to achieve this would include the regulation of private media, introducing new structures such as worker participation, weighting libel laws in favour of the small against the big, alternative ownership of media and public funding for new media enterprises. Above all, he says, media should be controlled neither by the state, nor by commercial markets.

Kellner (1990) says a new democratic broadcasting philosophy needs to begin by defining and making concrete the concept of public interest. Broadcasters also need to be made accountable for the effects of their programming, as providing adequate news, information and public affairs programming is a civic responsibility because of the central importance of television in our politics and society. "Quality programming" on television is about more than elite culture. It is about quality of information, and hence quality of democratic life. Unless we radically reform our communications systems, Kellner believes, a section of society will be condemned to perpetual information poverty and will be denied access to communications and social power. His thesis calls for:

(1) an enlarged, strengthened and revitalized system of public television and radio; (2) an expanded system of public access television; and (3) development of a people's satellite network complemented by people's communication centers and a people's information network that would use new technologies to broaden and diversify information sources and services (p.182).

While he admits these proposals have a utopian dimension, he says they are all based on existing technological, organisational and financial capabilities.

3.8 The Future for Journalism

Just as theorists and policy makers are struggling to reconcile the ideals of PSB with current economic and political realities, theorists and journalists are pondering the future role of journalism. As Bennett (1993) puts it, "It is hard to imagine a more opportune time than now to promote dialogue between academics and journalists about the democratic roles and social responsibilities of both journalism and communications scholarship" (p.180).

McChesney (1993) asks critical communications scholars to examine "why journalism does not serve democratic ends at present and what needs to be done so that we may have more democratic journalism in future" (p.102). This section looks at some of those who are undertaking this work.

Understanding contemporary journalism is an important starting point. Wyatt and Badger (1993) say traditional labels of "news", "opinion" and "features", although enshrined in textbooks, are misleading, and there is now a baffling list of new journalistic forms. Their typography uses modes of composition derived from rhetorical and literary criticism, combined with a subjective-objective continuum. The typography is intended to aid understanding of the variety of journalistic forms and how they operate in relation to their audiences. It is referred to in the qualitative analysis in Chapter Nine.

Roeh and Cohen (1992) analyse news stories from the perspective of being "open" (current, factual, neutral and standardised) or "closed" (timeless, poetic, mythological, loaded and stylised). The tenets of objective journalism call for an open approach, but journalistic coverage cannot escape the constraints in all writing for closure, which imposes a single correct reading: "News should be read as a battleground for the open and the closed, the professional and the poetic" (p.54).

Bennett and Edelman (1985) examine the narratives in political reporting "not to eliminate narrative from public discourse, but to learn to use the narrative form more critically and creatively" (p.161). They call for a new political narrative "designed to focus contradictions and normative dilemmas in the same story" (p.170), something which cannot be done with the standard form, which reproduces both sides in separate narratives (what Epstein (1973) terms the dialectical story model).

Bennett and Lawrence (1995) discuss the approach of media scholars who offer a "theoretical bridge" across the gap that separates liberal theorists and critical theorists of the press. Their aim, they say, is to explore the conditions under which media provide a channel to challenge cultural practice and under which they frustrate such challenges and reproduce products which reinforce the political and ideological status quo. Their study of news icons (strong images arising out of news events which evoke powerful cultural themes) shows how, in certain cases, these can provide an impetus for transforming both the news dialogue and promoting social change.

Ettema (1994) investigates the use of irony by journalists who "must honor objectivity but promote outrage" (p.7). Irony uses the forms of objectivity and helps investigative journalists to construct a "victims and villains" narrative. But in the current information-saturated, post-modern world, Ettema says, it is likely only to encourage cynicism, ironic knowingness, rather than moral indignation in the reader. Ehrlich's (1996) comments on the use of irony in tabloid journalism reinforce Ettema's warning.

Bennett (1993) calls for journalistic norms to be supplemented with other guidance systems to create a higher standard of political debate in the news. He gives seven suggestions, ranging from changing the beat system, running more news analysis pieces and systematically incorporating public opinion into policy debates, to propositions like recognising when potentially important stories are dying because of the lack of elite debate and finding other ways of sustaining coverage.

Patterson (1993), dealing with election coverage in the USA, goes back to Lippmann's distinction between "truth" and "opinion", to suggest that the press should neither judge candidates' motives nor speak for them. He wants substantial free airtime to allow

candidates to speak for themselves and a shorter campaign time. Australian journalist trainer Davies (1989) also turns to Lippmann and to Henry Mayer to recommend journalism as "a form of explanation rather than a form of division" (p.59).

Rising discomfort among journalists about their activities and their decreasing public credibility (Bennett, 1993; Fallows, 1996; Gordon, 1995; Hernandez, 1995; Wallace, 1995) is creating an impetus for change within the profession. Bernstein (1992), the epitome of the investigative journalist, in his indictment of modern journalism, calls for the press to examine itself:

We need to start asking the same fundamental questions about the press that we do of the other powerful institutions in this society - about who is served, about standards, about self interest and its eclipse of the public interest and the interest of truth" (p.21).

Readership and audience figures show the public's appetite for news is steadily reducing, despite brighter formats and more commercial formats. Rosen (1992) records the response of American newspapers like the *Wichita Eagle* and the *Charlotte Observer* that are experimenting with close involvement in community issues. Journalists, he says:

should announce and publicly defend their legitimate agenda: to make politics "go well", in the sense of producing a useful dialogue, where we can know in common what we cannot know alone, where the true problems of the political community come under serious discussion (p.25).

Cottle (1995), Ehrlich (1996) and others demonstrate that formats can be used for a variety of end results. They want to combine new or popular techniques with old verities and would maintain, with Taylor (1992), that the problem with new news is not that it fails to maintain standards of balance, nuance and perspective but that "it never aspired to these standards in the first place" (p.40).

From the New Zealand perspective, both Morrison (1996) and Palmer (1996) say that the new political system of MMP offers new challenges and opportunities for the media. For the system to work, policy must be debated as it is developed. Morrison argues

that experiences of the last decade tell us that the market will not produce that kind of journalism: "That is a strong argument for retaining a specialised public sector news media, state funded but free from party political control and accountable for delivering public good journalism" (p.44).

3.9 Summary

Events since the early 1980s have intensified tensions between two basic approaches to media and journalism, the public service or democratic approach and the marketplace or commercial approach. Commercially-driven changes in the ownership and organisation of media institutions and the products of the news media are currently leading to a reaffirmation of the place of the media and of journalism in democracies. Alarmed by the effect of developments in the media and the threat of an information impoverished underclass as new technologies come on stream (Golding, 1990), writers have begun to explore the concept of public space and how to ensure true citizenship through the media.

There has been, as Bennett (1992) comments, a recognition that all communications and idea markets are regulated in one way or another, whether directly by statutory means or indirectly by the market-based means. In response, some writers are exploring a rapprochement between the approaches, while others re-envisage public service broadcasting. In a parallel move, those concerned with journalism are talking of reforms which acknowledge limitations of present forms and the need for audience appeal, yet which retain basic tenets of good journalism.

Such, debate which connects communication scholars to the world of policy creation, must be welcomed (McQuail, 1994; Noam, 1993). Meanwhile, scholarship which explores the formation of current policies and the nature of news provides a vital foundation for this process. This study aims, in adding to knowledge about the effects of commercial pressures on news and public broadcasting organisations, to contribute to the debate. We move, in the next chapter, to a look at the scope of the methodology, before examining the development of recent broadcasting policy in New Zealand.

CHAPTER FOUR: SCOPE OF METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a background and general introduction to the three methodologies used in the research. Specific details of the methods are provided before the results are presented in each case. Sources for the historical section are described at the beginning of the next chapter, Chapter Five. The content analysis methodology is explained in Chapter Six and the methodology for the qualitative analysis of news content is described at the beginning of Chapter Nine. The relationship between the different methodologies and the central subject of research is shown in **Figure 2** on the following page.

The study centres on an analysis of television news content in a public broadcasting organisation at a critical time of change. The quantitative and qualitative research methods have been chosen to be complementary, both in interpreting the context and illuminating the phenomenon at the centre of the research (Fielding & Fielding, 1986).

At one level, this is an institutional study (Rubin, Rubin, & Piele, 1990), with elements of a case study of an organisation in change. The case study approach is considered by Yin (1984) to be valuable when phenomena under study are contemporary and not under the control of the researcher, and there is a desire to answer "how" or "when" questions. Williams, Rice and Rogers (1988) say case studies "are most relevant to communication media studies where we are interested in the adoption of an innovation, regulatory policy, or administrative issues" (p.108). A characteristic of case studies is the use of "multiple sources of evidence" (Yin, 1984, p.23). This study uses several sources of data: official documents, journalistic commentary, retrospective personal interviews and, most importantly, analysis of the news bulletins (the product).

This combination of research methods, adding breadth and depth to the study, is essential if a researcher is to cover more than one area of investigation into television news. This study combines two of Adams' (1978) three areas of inquiry: content and

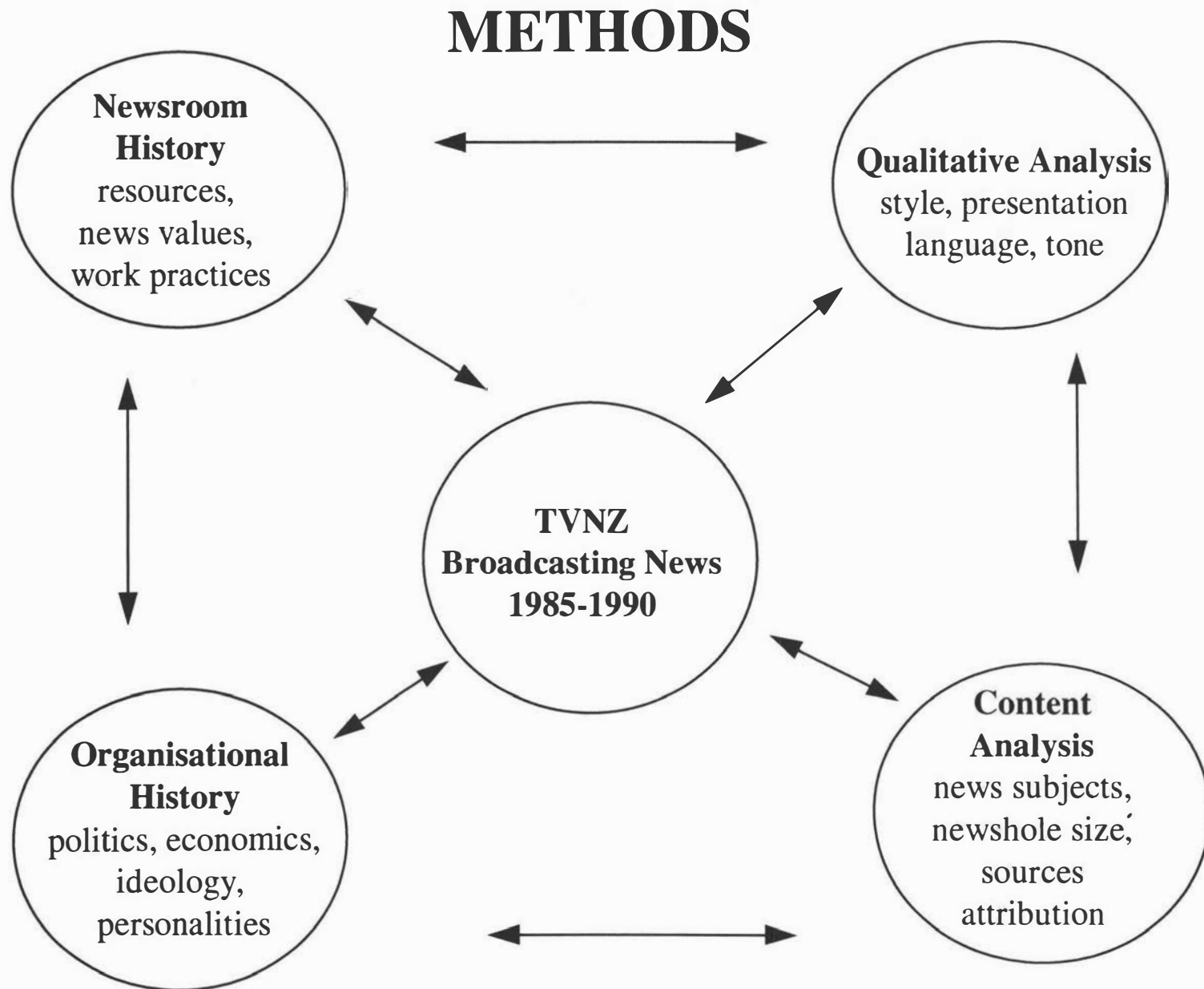


Figure 2: Relationship Between Methods

production research. Production research, according to Adams, asks "What factors influence the selection and shaping of newscast content?" (p.13). Content research (or content analysis) is concerned with the composition of broadcast news. Adams argues that content analysis is at the centre of television news research, complementing other research. Content analysis (combining both quantitative and qualitative elements) lies at the centre of this study, but is only one method used to understand the process of change.

Researchers such as Tuchman (1978) and Gans (1979) underline the importance of "contextualising" content research. Tuchman describes news as "contextually embedded" and "enmeshed in the social organisation of newswork" (p.191). Similarly, Ericson, Baranek & Chan (1991) see studies which rely totally on content for their interpretation of news as limited. They say key questions about news "cannot be addressed adequately through a reading of news content, but instead must be grounded in an understanding of the process by which the news is produced" (p.49). They therefore advocate a combination of research methods. In their earlier ethnographic studies, they analysed the "operational data" of the news production activities of sources and journalists. In 1991, they added the "presentational data" of news content, aiming for a more complete view.

Operational data in this study has been provided by a series of interviews with practitioners, both reporters and news executives. These cover questions of how the news product is created and the attitude of news workers to the job. Cottle (1995) calls journalists "a rich source of insight" into production and textual characteristics of news forms (p. 280). The researcher also draws on 17 years of experience as a broadcasting journalist and current affairs producer, and a decade of close association with television news reporters and camera operators, including the 1985 to 1990 period of study. The study aims to use these insights to throw light on patterns discovered in news content after the example of Ericson et al.

The research is also concerned with underlying management decisions affecting work practices and with pressures from the surrounding environment which influenced these decisions. In this, it reflects distinctions Paul Hirsch (cited in Adams, 1978) makes

among social science approaches to production research. Hirsch distinguishes approaches by the unit of analysis: the individual level, norms and socialisation; the news organisation; and the interorganisational level, covering the influence on media organisations exercised by other institutions and the political and social environment. The study aims to cover all three levels.

Content analysis of early evening news bulletins in four key years of the study period is used to make a quantitative assessment of the nature and extent of change in the news. This is accompanied by a qualitative analysis of changes in presentation. The production research uses historical research methods. To assess changes in newsroom work practices and philosophies towards news, the researcher interviewed journalists and news executives and complemented the data gathered with archival material, including official documents and contemporary newspaper accounts. To study changes associated with deregulation and major management decisions made during the study period, the researcher assessed Government documents, TVNZ papers and mass media reports, and interviewed some key participants from management and government.

4.2 Methodology for the Historical Narrative

Dunkerley (1988) promotes the importance of historical research for social scientists seeking to understand organisational practices. The study uses established historical tools, examining primary sources (official documents), secondary sources (contemporary press reports) and oral historical sources (interviews with key participants) (Rubin, Rubin, & Piele, 1990). The use of contemporary press reports is recommended by Startt & Sloan (1989) who remind us that journalists are often called contemporary historians and who say current affairs literature "can be used for attitudes, impressions and sometimes a type of early history of an event" (p.128). Documents are the bread and butter tool of historians, according to Dunkerley, but he speaks highly of the value of the oral historical approach and the strength of studies which combine both tools.

This part of the research, which provides the context for the study of content and, ultimately, an explanation for the changes, is presented as a historical narrative (Startt & Sloan, 1989). This contrasts with the more traditional social scientific presentation of

the content analysis. Historical analysis is a major thread of communication research, and institutional studies are an established element of that research (Rubin, Rubin, & Piele, 1990). However, there is some tension between the social science approach (represented by the news analysis) and the historical approach (telling the story of BCNZ and TVNZ), although writers like Dunkerley (1988) argue the boundary between the disciplines is somewhat artificial.

Nord (1989) tackles the debate between social science and history and the traditional criticisms that social science has of the discipline of history. Both sides, he says, are becoming more tolerant, and this "new era of good feelings should be especially helpful to journalism historians, who are (or should be) part of an interdisciplinary enterprise in the study of both the unique historical institutions of journalism and the broad social process of communication" (p.291). Nord argues that the methods and approaches of historians depend on their goals, and he, too, says the divisions between the disciplines are largely a non-problem. He also speaks of a trend in the social sciences, especially from the 1980s, to use the methods and approaches of history. However, Nord says, there is a difference in the social science and humanities perspectives in history. He cites Theda Skocpol: "Social historians will continue to have more to say about lived experiences, while historical sociologists will have more to say about structural transformations" (p.308).

The historical narrative, with its chronological approach, is therefore chosen as the clearest method of providing a context for the content study. The narrative is divided into two major stories. One deals with the interorganisational level, covering the environmental pressures and the decisions made by management. The second tells the story from the newsroom level, dealing with the effects decisions had its organisation and the responses of newswriters.

4.3 Content Analysis

Adams (1978) divides content study into two kinds. Agenda, dealt with in this section, asks about the priority of coverage, referring to story emphasis, frequency, length and placement. Depiction, dealt with in section 4.4, asks how a topic was covered and is

directed towards slant (bias), depth or form. Both agenda and depiction are considered essential for a full picture of content.

There has been a tension between supporters of quantitative and qualitative analysis of content. Ericson, Baranek and Chan (1991) believe that most quantitative content analysis:

is obsessed with methodological concerns (validity, reliability, statistical significance) and ideological concerns (showing the news is distorted and slanted against particular political interests) to the relative exclusion of theoretical concerns (especially about the significance of what is being counted) (p.52).

This study places due emphasis on methodological concerns but is also closely concerned with the "significance" of what is being counted. Indeed, Ericson et al. acknowledge that theorising is a hallmark of more sophisticated studies.

Winston, (1990) while acknowledging its limitations, makes an eloquent argument for quantitative content analysis as the "logical center" of broadcasting research:

If we cannot have such a description of television's content, then how, in any real sense, can we know what it is? And how can we plot its effects on the audiences, or the uses and gratifications that such audiences have in viewing it? Or, finally, how can we understand the processes of production without knowing what is produced? (p.62).

The aim of content analysis, as defined by Bernard Berelson, is "the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication" (quoted in McQuail, 1977, p.1). Stempel (1989) teases out this definition. He says "objectivity" is achieved by having the categories of analysis defined so precisely that different persons can apply them to the same content and get the same results. "Systematic" means a set procedure is applied to all the content being analysed, that categories are set up so all relevant content is analysed, and that the analyses are designed to secure data relevant to a research question or hypothesis. He defines "quantitative" as "the recording of numerical values or the frequencies with which the various defined types of content occur" (p. 126). "Manifest content", Stempel says is apparent content, meaning that

content must be coded as it appears, rather than as the content analyst feels it is intended. Chapter Six describes the sampling procedure, how categories were selected, and clearly explains the categories.

Ericson, Baranek and Chan (1991), in discussing the relative merits of quantitative and qualitative analysis, describe quantitative analysis as a valuable means of revealing patterns in news content and making evident previously unarticulated assumptions about how news is structured and presented. While quantification cannot tell the whole story about a communication message, the researcher supports Stempel (1989), who believes those who argue that content analysis should be qualitative rather than quantitative incorrectly assume the two are mutually exclusive.

4.4 Qualitative News Analysis

The 1980s were marked by what Jensen (1991) calls a "turn" to the qualitative approach in the study of the institutions, contents and audiences of mass media. Qualitative study, as Jensen says, implies an "*internal* approach to understanding culture, interpreting and perhaps immersing oneself in its concrete expressions". This is opposed to the "*external* approach that seeks to establish an external stance outside culture" (p.4).

The qualitative analysis complements quantitative content analysis, by providing additional information and taking the focus beyond predefined categories. Ericson *et al.* (1991) say the qualitative content analyst "picks out what is relevant for analysis and pieces it together to create tendencies, sequences, patterns and orders" (p.53). They claim qualitative analysis can pinpoint ways news operatives combine different items and stories to create new meanings and news themes. For instance, wrapping several items into a segment to create a theme suggests more than is available in each item taken separately.

Qualitative news analysis is particularly important in a longitudinal study, because if the way news is covered has changed, the categories established for a quantitative study

do not reveal the textures of change which become clear with a qualitative examination. So, for instance in the context of this study, a crime story in 1985 may be different in kind to a crime story in 1990. Qualitative study will pick up these changes.

Tuchman (1991) discusses the rise of qualitative analysis of news content, especially the growth of semiotic analysis in the 1970s and discourse analysis in the 1980s. She says such analyses of news emphasise "how the ideological significance of news is part and parcel of the methods used to process news" (p.83). The study makes use of van Dijk's (1988) methods of discourse analysis, qualitative analysis in the style of Ericson *et al.* (1991) and concepts of narrative and frames (central organising ideas) to describe the news.

4.5 Summary

While there are several paths to understanding the changes in TVNZ news over the study period, the literature leads to a conclusion that a combination of approaches gives the best chance of a full picture. Understanding of news content is strengthened by combining qualitative and quantitative methods. Understanding is further strengthened by combining content research with production research. Content analysis answers the question of what message the news is carrying. To answer the question why the news carries the messages and content it does, we need to study the context in which news is produced.

The following chapter deals with this context, describing the political and financial pressures which shaped the organisation over the study period and tracing the effects of these down through the organisation to the newsroom.

CHAPTER FIVE: HISTORY OF BROADCASTING CHANGES 1985 -1990

5.1 Introduction

The six years of the study period saw a profound change in attitudes to and structures of public broadcasting in New Zealand, which fed through to the news and its production. Chapters Two and Three have provided a base for comparing events in this country to those overseas, particularly in Britain and continental Europe. While the transformation of PSB in this country was very much a reflection of national and international technological, economic and political events, TVNZ embraced the change eagerly. Just as the Government wholeheartedly endorsed monetarism, so TVNZ management enthusiastically adopted the tenets of commercialism, from the SOE's overall strategies down to the minutiae of the entertainment values incorporated into its news programmes.

One purpose of this chapter is to explain the reasons for the eager switch to commercialism in New Zealand broadcasting. It traces the environmental pressures on the BCNZ and TVNZ between 1985 and 1990, pinpoints major management responses and explores their consequences from the board room through to journalists on the road. While much of the chapter details the broader organisational story, the ultimate focus is the news service at TVNZ. Chapter Three showed commentators linking changes in the news to deregulatory change and ensuing competition (Allan 1990, Edwards, 1992, Atkinson 1992, 1994a, 1994b). However, researchers have not systematically explored these links. This chapter shows how organisational developments underpinned those in the newsroom and how the alterations in work practices and attitudes to news explain changes in the news bulletins identified in Chapters Seven to Nine.

The chapter opens with a description of the methodology, describing the main sources used in the historical narrative which follows. The narrative is divided into two parts. The first tells the organisational story and is concerned with the environment and the

responses of BCNZ and TVNZ to the various financial and political challenges between 1985 and 1990. The second tells what happened in the newsroom during the same period.

The timeline of the organisational history is divided into four parts, closely related to Government and legislative events. The first sets the scene before 1985, taking some time to background events and describe the situation at the outset. The next covers 1985 to the re-election of Labour in August 1987, when the groundwork for the deregulatory changes of 1988 was laid and key appointments were made at the BCNZ. The third interval, from August 1987 to December 1988, looks at the restructuring itself and battles won and lost within BCNZ and TVNZ. The final period, 1989 and 1990, incorporates the first two years of TVNZ's existence as a state owned enterprise; 1989 being the countdown to competition and 1990 the first full year of broadcasting for TVNZ's competitor, TV3. Each section begins by examining the wider environment, particularly Government and legislative action. The focus then narrows, first to BCNZ and Board action and then once again to responses from TVNZ's management.

The newsroom story timeline is divided into the same four periods, reflecting the influence of organisational decision-making. However, a concluding section sums up the pros and cons of the changes as seen by journalists. These newswriters' views, combined with the review of New Zealand literature, provide the core questions for the analysis of the news bulletins in the later chapters.

5.2 Methodology

Material for this chapter and the timeline of Appendix B came mainly from three sources: contemporary reports in news media and magazines, official documents and a series of interviews. These were supplemented by published academic writing in the historical narrative. The opening description of the political scene in New Zealand gleans its material from academic literature in an approach similar to that in Chapters Two and Three. From this point onward, the chapter concentrates on the BCNZ, and

TVNZ in particular, and official documents and interviews become the most important source. The newsroom story develops largely through personal stories provided from interviews.

5.2.1 Review of Contemporary Press Reports

The first step was to examine hundreds of newspaper clippings from the Radio New Zealand reference library which has a comprehensive collection. The files explored included broadcasting (including legislation), television, private television, TVNZ, broadcasting personnel and broadcasting technology. The items reviewed were from material published between 1980 and 1992.

These press articles formed the basis of a timeline (Appendix B) and allowed the researcher to pinpoint the key actors, comparing what people said at the beginning of the process of change with their perceptions later. The news items, with their emphasis on the problems of change, also highlighted disagreements in philosophies. These contemporary reports supplement the retrospective reports provided by interviewees and help balance the tendency for after-the-fact rationalisation.

Most of the reports came from the major New Zealand metropolitan dailies. Also included were letters to the editor and television critics' columns which were regarded as reflecting some expression of public mood. The *National Business Review*, *On Film* and *The Listener* were important sources. Weekend papers, especially the *Sunday Star*, were also used. A useful source of TVNZ views was the staff magazine, *Networks*.

5.2.2 Review of Official Documents

A variety of public documents were examined. These included: BCNZ and TVNZ annual reports; the report of Royal Commission on Broadcasting; reports of the Broadcasting Tribunal; the Rennie Report on the Restructuring of the BCNZ; the report of the Officials Coordinating Committee on Broadcasting; the Broadcasting Acts and their amendments; the State Owned Enterprises Act 1986; and the Radio Communications Act 1989.

Other documents included: applications to the Broadcasting Tribunal from the BCNZ for warrant renewal; an unpublished BCNZ paper, *The Fifth Estate: Public Broadcasting in New Zealand*; a TVNZ planning department document January 1991, *New Zealand and the International Television Industry*; and a Commerce Ministry document on *Broadcasting Policy in New Zealand*. There were also notes from speeches given by TVNZ chief executive Julian Mounter and head of news and current affairs Paul Norris.

BCNZ chairman Hugh Rennie, BCNZ chief executive Nigel Dick, and Royal Commission member Laurie Cameron also provided some personal written commentaries, essays, reports, papers and the occasional letter written to key participants.

5.2.2.1 Limitations of Document Analysis

The document review was as comprehensive as practicable, in keeping with the place of the historical analysis in the overall study. The documents were used in collaboration with interview material and as a check on reportorial summary. Annual reports and warrant applications also provided essential detail on finances, staffing, equipment and so on, again confirming interviewee recollections.

5.2.3 Interviews

The ethnographic interviews with key informants (a method outlined by Fontana & Frey, 1994) were designed to throw light on reasons behind the changes and choices made and to show why certain developments occurred, from decisions about who can own broadcasting outlets down to what subjects are deemed suitable for the news bulletins.

Interviews were planned from four major sources: political, broadcasting management including those at Board level, news executives, and journalists. The interview selection was not meant to be exhaustive, rather a few key figures were selected after extensive reading of news files and other historical sources. In all, 16 in-depth interviews were conducted, each lasting from one to two hours.

The researcher interviewed two people from the broadly political area. The first was Jonathan Hunt was Minister of Broadcasting from 1984-1987 and again from November 1988 after Richard Prebble left Cabinet. The other, Laurie Cameron, was a member of the Royal Commission on Broadcasting who wrote a controversial and influential addendum to the Commission's report.

Several interviews were conducted with those in the upper echelons of the BCNZ. These were: Hugh Rennie, chairman of the BCNZ from 1984 until its demise and also chairperson of the Rennie Committee on restructuring the BCNZ; Nigel Dick, chief executive of the BCNZ from 1986 to 1988; Bill Foster, general manager of BCNZ Corporate Services and member of Excom; and David Beatson, managing editor of *The Listener* and member of a BCNZ futures "think tank". From TVNZ, Graeme Wilson, director of planning and public affairs from September 1986 until 1992 when he became general manager of TVNZ Network, was interviewed.

Nine newswriters were formally interviewed. These ranged from those in overall charge of regional news programmes to bureau chiefs, editors, reporters and presenters. The majority of these newswriters were laid off or left TVNZ in 1990 or 1991. Others continued with TVNZ into the early and mid 1990s. To protect those who wish to remain anonymous the newswriters are not named here. Where it is appropriate, names are included in the narrative. The researcher has spoken informally to other journalists and also knew a number of TVNZ newswriters during the study period. Their views inform the historical narrative although these journalists are not quoted directly.

The researcher generated a series of general questions developed after the document review and review of newspaper resources. Different question areas applied to political interviewees, management and newswriters. These questions which formed a basic interview guide (Patton, 1990) are attached as Appendix C. However, the conduct of interviews themselves varied according to the interviewees. Those with newswriters, particularly, were of the informal conversational interview style as described by Patton. Jonathan Hunt was interviewed in a slightly more formal, broadcasting-style question and answer format and Hugh Rennie talked to a series of query points that had been

faxed to him. Others were asked to recall what they remembered about key issues and events, and some were taken chronologically through a period. Most interviewees were keen to share their view of events and the majority suggested other sources to interview.

Patton (1990) says "the quality of the information obtained during an interview is largely dependent on the interviewer" (p.279). Prior investigation, combined with the researcher's 15 years experience in radio broadcasting and close association with television reporters, editors and camera operators over nearly a decade, ensured both credibility and speedy rapport (Fontana & Frey, 1994; Lindlof, 1995) and improved the quality of analysis.

News practitioners are extensively cited in the following narrative. In fact, these details of conflict over newsroom practice and news values of TVNZ staff form the heart of the chapter. Cottle (1995), in examining news formats, calls journalists a rich source of insight and maintains that their accounts deserve "increased attention in the empirical examination and theorization of the production domain" (p.280).

Interviews were designed to throw light on sources of tension between the commercial and public service approaches to journalism. The interviews with journalists concentrated on the Wellington newsroom, as prior observation indicated that conflict between news styles became most intense over the reporting of political items, and output from Wellington was overwhelmingly political in nature.

5.2.3.1 Limitations of Interviews

However, access to current TVNZ reporters was severely restricted. Buchanan, Boddy & McCalman (1988) stress the growing difficulty of getting access to organisations who are "deluged with requests" from interviewers (p.55). Further, Barretta-Herman (1990) notes that organisations undergoing change are characteristically resistant to efforts to track the change process and in particular to outsiders doing the tracking. In addition a number of writers (Comrie & McGregor, 1992; Schlesinger, 1987; Tiffen, 1989) have

commented on the reluctance of journalists and news organisations to be subject to scrutiny and their thin-skinned response to criticism. TVNZ proved no exception to this rule.

After a series of requests and a meeting, the researcher was denied access to management and newswriters, although TVNZ networks manager Graeme Wilson granted an interview. This restriction required some adjustment to the study design, placing greater emphasis on the content analysis element, on secondary sources and outside interviews. The current views of key management figures were obtained from sources such as *Networks* staff magazine, scripts of public speeches, radio interviews and newspaper and magazine reports.

Using only former employees, of whom almost two-thirds were made redundant, raises the issue of bias. However, some points can be made. Individual bitterness was lessened because layoffs were widespread. The journalists interviewed generally saw their departure as part of a larger political and economic change. Nearly all had sought voluntary redundancy and received what they acknowledged as fair settlements. Some interviewees had left TVNZ as part of normal career change well after the restructuring layoffs.

As a result of restricted access, the narrative which follows is as much the tale of "the losers" as of "the winners". Since the chapter, in describing the transition to a commercially oriented organisation, also describes the demise of the public service approach, this emphasis is appropriate. It also provides a contrast to the currently predominant official market-oriented rhetoric of deregulation (Johnstone, 1995). The narrative below aims to cover not only the major decisions and their consequences but also paths not taken, because an important purpose in the research is to understand the change as a matter of choice, rather than of inevitable pressure.

The chapter now turns to the historical narrative, telling first the wider organisational story of deregulation, then focusing on the changes which took place in the newsroom.

5.3 BCNZ and TVNZ: The Organisational Story

In New Zealand, the deregulation of broadcasting with its consequent undermining of public service broadcasting was, as in other Western countries, accomplished by a government espousing the predominant right wing monetarist philosophies. The New Zealand case was unique in that the ideologically-driven economic restructuring was conducted by a left-wing party, with a swiftness and vigour matched only by Chile's police state leadership (Haworth, 1992).

The broadcasting restructuring which dismantled the public service broadcasting corporation and turned the publicly-owned television channels into a commercial company has to be seen in the light of the concurrent dismantling of the public sector, which occurred without effective opposition.

When Labour came to power in a snap election in August 1984, it inherited an economy in crisis. Over the previous ten years, the tactics of Muldoon's National Party Government, of borrowing, big public investments, subsidies and wage and price freezes, had been unable to halt inflation and unemployment in the face of the loss of protected markets and international economic trends (Kelsey, 1993).

Muldoon's tactics were out of step with international economic thinking, and while there were some free market thinkers in his caucus, the real initiative came from Labour MP Roger Douglas, who was strongly influenced by Treasury advisor Doug Andrews (Oliver, 1989).

Oliver (1989) suggests two commitments had developed in the Labour Party caucus between 1981-84: the first to consensus or corporatism (formulating policy through a negotiated alliance between labour, capital and the state), the second to economic restructuring (strongly influenced by thinking in Treasury). By 1984, although featuring prominently in Labour's campaign, the concept of consensus was mere rhetoric. Mainstream caucus opinion supported restructuring.

By 1985, the Labour Government, despite a highly publicised Economic Summit which promoted the consensus approach, was poised to unleash "Rogernomics" on a largely

unprepared nation. A powerful alliance of Treasury, Labour Party supply-siders, the right wing Business Roundtable, financial pressure groups, and political and economic commentators formed:

Opposition to this point of view was fragmented and weak, particularly in the labour movement, which found itself disestablished by the Labour Government" (Haworth, 1992, p.28).

The broader political, economic and social changes wrought by the Government from 1985-1990 fed through to broadcasting in three ways. First, broadcasting, as part of the telecommunications industry, was central to the deregulatory thrust of the Fourth Labour government. Second, the political ideologies of the time were embodied in the reduced commitment to the ideal of public service broadcasting. Third, the economic restructuring and dominant economic ideology found expression in the changing funding pattern for state-owned broadcasting.

Such pressures and processes occurred, as discussed in Chapter Three, in a number of countries. The swift and far reaching changes in New Zealand resulted not only from these pressures and the strength of local political ideology, but also from a number of other factors. The structure and financing of the BCNZ, its recent political history, strong opposition from private broadcasting and independent producer lobbyists, a botched process for developing a third channel, and the enthusiasms of a few key protagonists all combined to ensure the demise of the Corporation. Abetting this was both a lack of public scrutiny and the absence of an enthusiastic mandate for PSB in a country where broadcasting had long been a political football and where many people were numbed by rapid and disruptive social change.

5.3.1 The Outset

The BCNZ was established by the Broadcasting Act in 1976. This had been amended several times, notably in 1979 to set up TVNZ from the separate TV1 and TV2 organisations. According to Section 3 of the Act, public broadcasting was to be controlled by a corporation which "(i) Acts as a trustee of the national interest; and (ii) Operates its Services with the maximum independence." Part iii laid out standards including in S22(a) "to provide and produce, with the maximum practical independence,

programmes which inform educate and entertain". Section 24(d) dealt with the news service and (e) providing balance when dealing with controversial issues.

In 1985 the BCNZ had 3548 staff. It operated two national commercial television channels through TVNZ. There were no competing privately operated channels. The Corporation's Radio New Zealand arm consisted of two non-commercial networks and a fleet of local commercial "community stations" (some operating as a public service in uneconomic areas). The Resource Services arm consisted of the transmission facilities and staff, the finance, planning and personnel activities and a new directorate of Information Systems. The weekly *Listener* magazine and the National Symphony Orchestra were also part of the BCNZ, and in 1984, BCNZ Enterprises had been set up to sell radio and television programmes.

5.3.1.1 The BCNZ and the New Labour Government

The Labour Party's 1984 election manifesto for broadcasting included two major promises: a Royal Commission on Broadcasting to be set up at once, and no disruption to moves begun by National to set up a privately-owned, regionally-based third channel with an independent news service. This new channel would aim for nationwide coverage in the shortest possible time. In the event, the Commission proved to be a paper tiger and the third channel developed in a totally different way (Harte, 1988).

After winning the July election, the new Labour Government appointed Jonathan Hunt as Minister of Broadcasting. Hunt, a long-serving MP, was generally viewed as sympathetic to public service broadcasting. Having supported the deregulatory changes, Hunt, in an interview on February 14, 1994, still described himself as having a "passionate belief" in PSB. But, he said, as Minister he had other considerations:

When I became Minister I had to work out how I was going to ensure there was good public service broadcasting while at the same time there was not going to be unfair restraints on commerce, because I was a supporter of most of the things we did in the economic field between 84 and 90.

For many in early 1985, Labour seemed to promise a secure future for public service broadcasting, despite a new era of competition in television. However, this feeling was not shared by all in the upper echelons of the BCNZ (Cross, 1988; Beatson, 1994).

Restructuring BCNZ's management began almost immediately upon Labour's gaining office. The BCNZ had already received ample signals this would happen whatever party had assumed power. In October 1984, long-term Board chairman Ian Cross, who was also Chief Executive of the BCNZ, was replaced by Hugh Rennie as chairman. Cross, a controversial figure who was judged as being close to the Muldoon Government, retained his chief executive position for the meantime.

Jonathan Hunt described "sacking" Ian Cross as his first act as Minister. "National had got themselves into a terrible mess because his whole appointment was illegal. There was no provision in the [Broadcasting 1976] Act for a chief executive who is also chairman of the Board" (personal communication, February 14, 1994). This view that the CEO and chairman's position should not have been combined was widely supported by those who spoke to the researcher.

But Hunt's dissatisfaction with the BCNZ went deeper. Backed by National's Prime Minister Muldoon, he had been instrumental in setting up a Commission of Inquiry in October 1983 to look into allegations of unfairness and financial impropriety arising from a controversy surrounding the *That's Country* show. The Commission criticised Cross's dual CEO-Chairman responsibilities and recommended the BCNZ should be restructured as "a limited liability company owned by the Crown, and that radio and television should be separately incorporated as a 100 per cent owned subsidiary company" (Cross, 1988, p.223). The National Government was setting up a special committee to study the BCNZ's management when the snap election of 1984 was called.

5.3.1.2 The Frozen Licence Fee and its Consequences

Political scrutiny of its management was not the only discomfort for the BCNZ. The licence fee had now been frozen at \$45 for ten years and in the years of high inflation since 1975, the BCNZ had become increasingly dependent on advertising. Figures from

the Corporation's Annual Reports tell the story. In the 1975 financial year the licence fee accounted for almost half of its income. By 1982 the figure was 23 percent, and three years later the fee brought in only 16.3 percent of BCNZ earnings. Television was the Corporation's major income generator. Gross advertising sales for television in the year to March 1985 were \$148.2 million (up 23 percent from the previous year), while radio advertising (up 10 percent) brought in \$46.9 million. As Atkinson (1994b) points out, TVNZ was well advanced along the road to commercialisation *before* the event of Rogernomics and deregulation.

There were still Government restrictions on the amount of advertising allowed per hour, what could be advertised during children's programmes, and each channel had two ad-free days a week. All this meant that the Corporation had felt financially squeezed over many years. The March 1985 Annual Report stated that the year's operating surplus of \$24 million (almost double that of the previous year) in fact masked a less healthy situation. The BCNZ claimed the surplus resulted partly from delays in replacing equipment and facilities, partly from a need to reorganise the fixed asset base and depreciation provision, and partly from an attempt to build capital for building work in the following year.

According to Harte (1988), four requests for licence fee increases made to the Muldoon Government were strongly opposed. The BCNZ's July 1984 approach to the new Minister Jonathan Hunt met with a different response. While throwing out the BCNZ's suggestion of Sunday advertising and advertisements on the Concert Programme, Hunt undertook to take the Corporation's case to Cabinet, saying the fee would probably rise. The result was rejection of a fee rise but approval for an increase in the number of advertising days. Introducing the "sixth advertising day" provided most of the operating surplus of \$14.92 million earned by the BCNZ in the 1985-86 financial year.

At the beginning of 1985 then, the Corporation was still battling for a bigger licence fee, despite the expectations Hunt had nurtured when he first took office, of an immediate and substantial increase. Instead, the BCNZ was getting strong indications from the Government that austerity and self sufficiency were the order of the day, despite approaching competition.

Furthermore, Hugh Rennie (at that stage BCNZ chairman) said, the Post Office's handling of the licence fee collection was extremely poor. "The Post Office didn't care because it was a lousy job and they hated it and nobody in the BCNZ paid any attention to collection" (personal communication, June 8, 1994).

But Rennie also casts a different light on BCNZ finances. The Corporation was not as hamstrung as it appeared to be:

It was quite extraordinary. We had TV in Auckland operating out of 13 different buildings, some of them real slums. We had cameras at Avalon which were so old that you had to turn them on two hours before you wanted to use them so they'd warm up. We had TV transmitters which were about to fall off air because they had been patched from black and white to colour in 1974 for the Commonwealth Games and no-one had got around to replacing them. We also had 23 million dollars in the bank.

There were myths about the extent of Government regulation at the time, Rennie argues. The BCNZ *was* empowered to borrow on overdraft, although by 1984 it did not need to because there was money in the bank.

5.3.1.3 Management and Board at the Outset

Hugh Rennie's appointment as part-time non-executive chairman of the BCNZ on October 2, 1984 was the first step in a review of the Corporation's management structure. Respondents all spoke highly of Rennie, though opinion was divided on whether he was a "strong" chairman, or whether indeed strength would have made any difference to the fate of the BCNZ. Hunt described Rennie as having "high integrity and an independent mind". Rennie said he considered the approach to run BCNZ "odd" because he was involved with a private radio company in Wellington, at that stage seeking an FM warrant and was also chairman of the *National Business Review* newspaper. He brought expectations from private industry into the BCNZ boardroom.

From the first (October 1984) meeting, Rennie said the Board were supportive, showing clearly they had wanted the separation of chairman and chief executive roles:

We then had to sort out the top end management structure which was a nightmare. That was sort of full time for two weeks. And it has always surprised me that we actually got it about right. It was in this period that I discovered that this ... was real hands on stuff. It shouldn't have been, but it was.

The review, in October and November designed to "streamline" the upper executive structure resulted in four main elements outlined in the Corporation's March 1985 Annual Report:

- The creation of a management committee of executives (EXCOM), comprising the Chief Executive, the Directors-General of Radio and Television, and the General Manager, Resource Services.
- The placement of activities, most previously comprised in the former Corporate Services, within a division entitled Resource Services...
- An enlargement of the role of each of the Directors-General and the new General Manager in the overall operations on the Corporation through their involvement in EXCOM ...
- An increasing emphasis on Resource Services functioning as a trading unit, supplying services internally and externally on a market-related basis (Broadcasting Corporation of New Zealand [BCNZ], 1985, p.3).

Rennie said the DGs of radio and television were not happy with the new General Manager Resource Services position. The tensions were never fully resolved and corporate resources ultimately had a different outlook from the radio and television divisions.

Rennie draws a picture of a neglected organisation. It was, he said, difficult to get financial figures to make forward planning decisions and the organisation seemed to have no idea of its objectives. Further, there were problems with the Corporation's relationships. What he described as "interfaces" with the unions, Treasury and so on were not working. Another major concern was the morale of staff, particularly in television. The *That's Country* Government Inquiry had left staff feeling "wounded, angry and betrayed", Rennie said. While the place was "bursting with people of ability", they felt frustrated and were leaving in droves:

I found myself in the strange position of having to ring people up and say, "Please don't go, we need you. We really are going somewhere".

Farnsworth (1989) and Smith (1996b) trace the dissatisfaction further back to the cost-saving merger of TV One and TV2 in 1980 and new management initiatives which senior production staff believed had compromised their artistic integrity and undermined quality production.

At the beginning of 1985, then, the Corporation faced approaching competition for its vital television advertising revenue and a Minister who had as yet failed to deliver a promised licence fee increase. The management restructure, which would take two years and see new faces in top positions, was just beginning. The Corporation had begun its response to the changing broadcasting and economic environment. Hugh Rennie was the new chairman to lead the Corporation into its more highly competitive future, and it was tacitly acknowledged that Ian Cross's time as chief executive was drawing to a close.

5.3.2 Changes from 1985 to August 1987: The Groundwork Laid

Having set the scene at the beginning of 1985, the organisational narrative now covers events from 1985 to the re-election of the Labour Government, in mid-August 1987. By the end of 1985, government papers foreshadowed the restructuring of government departments along private enterprise lines. A number of departments were swiftly corporatised following the enactment of the State-Owned Enterprises Act 1986, resulting in massive redundancies. In 1987, the government began its privatisation programme. Changes to broadcasting were part of this general movement, but also reflected historical tensions and political and social pressures.

The BCNZ's relationship with Government was dominated by lobbying to increase the licence fee and to ensure any proposed changes to broadcasting would not disadvantage the Corporation. More publicly, the BCNZ contributed to the Royal Commission on Broadcasting and spent energy fighting for concessions at the Broadcasting Tribunal hearings on the third channel.

5.3.2.1 In Pursuit of Higher Licence Fees

With some optimism, the BCNZ again sought a fee review in late 1985. Cabinet deferred it for consideration until the following year. Publicly (in its March 1986 Annual Report), the Corporation put this down to the debate on appropriate financing policies which was a major consideration for the Royal Commission currently sitting. Meanwhile, confident of a fee increase in 1986, the BCNZ pushed ahead updating equipment and buildings. Rennie predicted this would result in a deteriorating financial position for some years, but said the only alternative was a "rapid rundown in services" (BCNZ, 1986, p.4).

After examining alternatives, Hunt said he had come down in favour of licence fees:

I struggled for a long time to get an increase in the licence fee. Because the most disastrous thing for broadcasting was the way it was allowed to run down.

A widespread expectation that the licence fee would double was destroyed when the Government, in October 1986, raised the fee from \$45 to only \$65 (\$71.60 after GST). Hunt maintains he had no trouble in caucus and describes both the 1986 and the later 1989 increase he arranged as "significant". But he was not able to extract from Cabinet the size of fee increase he had told BCNZ it would receive (Mayne, 1986b).

The Corporation called the decision "financially irrational" and was forced into "sudden and radical economies" (BCNZ, 1987, p.3). The Government's delaying and temporizing on the financing of broadcasting can be ascribed to two major causes. A powerful minority (centred around Roger Douglas and Richard Prebble) favoured an end to state involvement in broadcasting, while the broader economic and political moves of the Government were gradually making deregulation a logical outcome for broadcasting. Other MPs chose to wait for the results of the Royal Commission, although these ultimately became irrelevant.

5.3.2.2 The Royal Commission

The Royal Commission into Broadcasting and Related Telecommunications had been announced in February 1985. It was chaired by Professor Robert Chapman, with members Judge Michael Brown, Laurie Cameron and Elizabeth Nelson. Hearing the 282 submissions began on August 1 and finished on March 4, 1986. The report was issued at the end of September 1986.

The Royal Commission was a chance to debate central issues about the future of broadcasting and make key decisions about financing public broadcasting, but its findings were briskly consigned to the scrapheap. There are a series of reasons for this. First, timing was against it. The lengthy third channel Broadcasting Tribunal hearings were concurrent. The Tribunal's decision, which should have supplied important information for the Commission, was not made until almost a year later. Hunt concedes this was a mistake, but blames Tribunal chairman Bruce Slane for being "tardy". However, others like Rennie (1995) see it as a disastrous policy choice. Furthermore, the concurrent timing meant that broadcasters and advertisers regarded the Commission as a sort of side-show to the Tribunal hearings where, as TVNZ's head of planning, Graeme Wilson, put it, "there was a known outcome".

Second, with approaching competition, threats from new technology, and Government policy shifting more clearly to the free market approach, BCNZ leaders felt they had to act to protect and strengthen the organisation. Their moves were already shifting the Corporation from a public service to a commercial model.

Third, the Commission's findings were not in tune with the new world of technology and economics. Commissioner Laurie Cameron, whose area was the financial organisation and corporate structures of broadcasting, and who wrote an addendum to the report, felt this strongly. Cameron (in an interview on June 28, 1995) said chairman Bob Chapman's interpretation of the terms of reference meant that they could not consider structural change, which he (Cameron) saw as the only answer.

Broadcasting sources such as Rennie, Listener editor David Beatson, BCNZ director of resources Bill Foster, and TVNZ planner Graeme Wilson all felt the biggest flaw in the

commission was its failure to adjust the traditional views of public broadcasting and to understand the impacts of developing technology.

The Commission's recommendations included setting the fee to correspond with a year's newspaper subscription, increasing in-house production, a points system to ensure local programming, forbidding advertising during programmes for under-sixes, requiring all warrant holders to provide programmes which educate, regulating the introduction of cable TV, and comprehensively educating the public before introducing new technologies.

Policies so opposed to orthodox economic thinking earned the Commission the derision of Prime Minister David Lange and the enmity of powerful independent producer and private broadcaster lobbies. Even the BCNZ, which felt vindicated, complained that the Report's legacy was uncertainty (BCNZ, 1987).

The dissenting opinion of Laurie Cameron was, according to Rennie (1991), "the most significant influence on Government in the following months" (p.17). Cameron says he was most influenced by meeting Alan Peacock, author of the report on financing of broadcasting in Britain, and by hearing the New Zealand Treasury submission. Economist Brian Easton (1990) describes Treasury policy as based on the commercialisation principle that "the best strategy for the broadcasting industry would be the corporatisation and subsequent privatisation of state owned broadcasting, in a competitively organised market" (p.278). Treasury suggested public service programme areas should be directly funded by the government departments which saw a need for them as a social service. Apart from that, the BCNZ should be entirely commercial. Cameron stressed he did not follow Treasury all the way:

I still believe that the Government does need to accept the responsibility for public service broadcasting. What you must do is separate out what is the commercial operation and not distort that and cause inefficiencies in that for the sake of public service broadcasting. Nor should you distort public service broadcasting for the sake of the commercial situation.

Cameron, believing "we would not be able to resist technology" and finding his views not reflected in the Commission's final document, drew on legal precedent to write an

addendum. "I didn't want to call it a dissenting report, because it wasn't really a dissension", Cameron said. However, Hunt, in particular, felt betrayed by Cameron's actions.

Hunt still defends the report, but the Commission's views did not mesh at all with Government ideas which were to emerge during the countdown to restructuring. In fact Richard Prebble, who as Minister of Broadcasting oversaw restructuring in 1988, described the report as "horse shit" (Lannon, 1992, p.6).

As Mayne (1986b) put it, Cameron's addendum had "a captive audience in the right places" (p.33). Treasury was to become a dominant player and meanwhile, Rennie (pers. comm., 1994) says, the BCNZ's relationship with Treasury had deteriorated. He puts this down to Corporation counsel "tearing the Treasury case to bits" at the hearings. "It had an immense impact, and there had certainly been an atmosphere, after that, of the 'we'll get you' variety in Treasury."

5.3.2.3 The Broadcasting Tribunal Third Channel Hearings

As the Royal Commission was deliberating, the Broadcasting Tribunal was mired in 22 months of litigious, expensive and controversial hearings to decide who should hold the warrants for private television. The hearings precipitated the Tribunal's demise, its decision was questionable, and the future it outlined for private television was soon overturned.

The Broadcasting Tribunal, headed by Bruce Slane, was set up under the Broadcasting Act of 1976 to advise the Minister, licence broadcasters and judge complaints. The hearings were the last battle in a twenty-year campaign to establish private commercial television in New Zealand. The call for applications, delayed by the election, was renewed in November 1984. Four regional warrants were to be issued to cover the whole country with separate warrants for a news service. Hunt, believing separate regional organisations might not be economically viable, ended National's proposed 30 percent cross ownership limit. This, according to Wilson (1992), effectively relaxed the regional requirement.

The hearings became a drawn out debacle for several reasons; in particular, the large number of applicants, the judicial nature of the Tribunal, and the high stakes for both the applicants and the BCNZ. According to Rennie (1991), it had been expected that there would be only a few warrant contenders. But, in the months leading up to the August hearings, a number of consortia representing big names in business formed, shifted and reformed.

Eventually, eight companies applied for station warrants. Four major consortia, each with several subsidiaries and backers, applied for all of the warrants. Aotearoa Broadcasting Service (negotiating for backing from BCNZ) applied for a Maori channel, while two other companies applied for regional warrants in Auckland and the South Island. Five companies applied for the news warrants (three were wings of companies seeking station warrants).

Rennie (1991) said "neither the Tribunal's planning nor its resources were adequate to the task which now confronted it" (p.13). In hopes of speeding the hearings, contenders were given six months lead time to prepare evidence, exchange papers and prepare evidence in opposition and rebuttal. Six weeks were set aside for the hearings but, as Warren Mayne (1987a) put it:

The false optimism evaporated when the first witness faced a succession of half a dozen Perry Masons probing interminably on behalf of each of all the other parties (p.31).

Jonathan Hunt called the lengthy hearings his "biggest failure", saying he should have "insisted" they be over in six months. He blamed Slane, although the chairman was reported throughout the hearings as impatient with the pace, giving three procedural directions in an attempt to speed up the process. Wilson (1992) said the "extremely litigious" hearings were necessary because of the Tribunal's administrative law responsibilities (p.2).

Rennie also views the Tribunal as a prisoner of its regulatory system, which allowed arts, cultural, production and other groups to claim hearing time to present their views. But he also believes the Tribunal was "a prisoner of its own dogged determination to

pursue its particular vision of broadcasting" (Rennie, 1991, p.16). He believed the Tribunal should have stood back, reassessed its position and allowed some groups to combine and others to wait for later, more appropriate hearings.

In its Decision document, the Tribunal document said the core of the problem was the requirement to act judicially with a consequent lack of direct control over its own procedures. This requirement was highlighted by the Court of Appeal decision allowing the BCNZ to introduce new evidence.

During the hearings, the BCNZ, influenced by its new CEO, Nigel Dick, shifted from a consultative to a combative approach to the third channel. At first the BCNZ's stance had been to ensure third channel contenders took on a public service commitment. Then a month after the hearings opened, the outgoing CEO, Ian Cross, announced BCNZ's \$84 million dollar backing for the Aotearoa Broadcasting System. The Maori channel could be seen as complementary rather than competitive with the BCNZ. Nigel Dick took a different stance. In a personal interview on December 6, 1993, Dick said the first thing he was confronted with on taking the job as BCNZ chief executive, was the arrangement to top up Aotearoa's revenue. He estimated the audience share would be so small that they would have to pay an enormous sum:

Therefore, I recommended to the board that we try and negotiate out of it and, because Aotearoa Broadcasting had been unable to fulfil some of the undertakings that they had given us as part of this deal, we were able to tell them that we weren't going ahead.

After that, Dick persuaded the BCNZ to change tactics at the Tribunal. He was convinced that there was no "room in the market" for a third channel in New Zealand. More media outlets would not mean advertisers would spend more on advertising; they were more likely to bargain for cheaper deals from competing media outlets. As a result, the BCNZ applied to the Tribunal to participate in the hearings "to object to the grant of new warrants on the basis that there wasn't sufficient room in the market, unless the Government was prepared to increase the licence fee" (Dick, 1993).

The Tribunal originally refused to hear the case, largely on the grounds that procedural dates had passed. The Corporation went to the High Court and was turned down.

Finally, the Appeal Court allowed the application. The case took several months, and it was November 1986 when Dick took the witness stand.

Dick described that time in the witness box as the worst period in his life, trying to keep his cool while "being harangued" by economics professor Geoffrey Schmitt. Dick believed himself not competent to present the Corporation's economic modelling, but said Corporate Affairs Manager Bill Foster was not allowed to be present.

The Corporation had most to gain from dragging out the hearings. But, during the hearings and subsequently, Dick denied ulterior motives and Rennie attests to Dick's sincerity. Warrant contenders, however, remained sceptical. Tom Parkinson of TV3 described the moves as delaying tactics, saving TVNZ a million dollars a month in advertising revenue otherwise lost to the new channel ("\$500,000 Bill for BCNZ", 1986). The Tribunal, unconvinced by Dick's arguments, rejected the Australian comparison and said it could not use its power to grant warrants to pressure the government.

The hearings finally ended on February 13, 1987. The *Evening Post* estimated the 126 days of hearings over 18 months had cost contenders \$10 million altogether; each spending between \$1.4 and \$2.5 million dollars on presenting their proposals. The Tribunal itself had cost \$447,000; of that, \$238,000 went on members' salaries and \$102,000 on accommodation and expenses ("Third channel decision reserved," 1987).

A further six months of deliberation followed, and the results of the hearings were not announced until after the 1987 election.

5.3.2.4 Deregulation: Hunt and the First Term

While the Commission and the Tribunal worked, the rules were being changed and indeed the Tribunal's slow progress and unsatisfactory decision fed the deregulatory forces. The promises of the incoming Labour Government and the style of Jonathan Hunt had given little hint to outsiders, including many in the media, that massive change was in the wings.

But as the 1987 election neared, Hunt's position on broadcasting had less support. In December, Mayne (1986b) described "a growing public unease about whether the BCNZ's idea of public service was primarily that or really self-preservation" (p.32). The BCNZ's tactics at the Tribunal had tarnished it, he said.

Five months later, Mayne (1987b) added that ructions within the BCNZ about "perks" for some in top management had reinforced criticisms of the Royal Commission's report. He reported that Deputy Prime Minister Geoffrey Palmer was impressed by Cameron's minority report and had signalled more Government agencies were on the agenda to become SOEs in 1988. Mayne said Hunt had "locked himself into a public defence of the status quo, despite strong indications that others of his colleagues would like to look more closely at broadcasting organisation after the election" (p.30).

National's May 1987 broadcasting policy proposed selling Radio New Zealand's commercial stations and the rights to use the TV2 channel, and using the proceeds for public broadcasting. There were innovative proposals for reducing licence fee evasion, and a probable fee increase to \$120 a year. Mayne (1987b) concluded: "Either way, it seems the BCNZ organisation in its current form is doomed" (p.30). The prediction of a dismal fate for the BCNZ was an idea which was gaining public credence.

Meanwhile, from 1985 to mid 1987 there were major changes in personnel at board and management level in the BCNZ.

5.3.2.5 Board and Management Changes

Within 15 months of Hugh Rennie's arrival as chairman, only one of the original eight board members remained. There were changes the day he arrived and, although Rennie said he tried to persuade the Government to renew appointments, arguing for continuity of knowledge, he managed only to retain Richard Rowley.

The new deputy chairman, Brian Corban, was closely involved in helping the BCNZ to reach a favourable deal on land for the new network centre in Auckland and helping in financial moves to set it up. He was to prove a staunch ally of TVNZ's new top man, Julian Mounter.

The overall lack of commercial expertise on the revamped board has been criticised by both BCNZ chief executive Nigel Dick and BCNZ's manager of corporate resources Bill Foster. Foster said in an interview on April 8, 1994: "At the time they were really more sympathetic with programming issues rather than the business aspects".

There is debate about whether a "strong board" could have wrested more concessions from Government or held the Corporation together. But pressures from both within and beyond the Corporation were extremely powerful and were part of the then current raft of social and political changes.

From 1985 through to the election in August 1987, wholesale changes at Board level were matched by pivotal personnel changes in BCNZ management which helped shape the Corporation's actions in its final years and set TVNZ on its course of development. Rennie discovered there been no attention to employees' final retirement dates. In 1985 a number of old Corporation hands retired, many of them key executives. Rennie said it put them in a "horrible position", where damaging gaps in management were possible.

At the same time the management restructuring of TVNZ, called for in the 1983 Commission of Inquiry, was also proceeding. The old structure, with its eight controllers, managers in each region and, off to the side, the department heads, was complex with indistinct lines of accountability. The new structure announced in April 1986, was simpler with clearer lines of control, especially at the top. However, the Royal Commission pointed out that at middle management it was still unclear whether regional managers or central managers had authority. The Commission, Rennie, and journalists all mention the device of staff using the multiple lines of authority to get their own way. Such fuzzy boundaries were to disappear over the next few years.

Rennie said that Hunt had wanted him to just keep the organisation "ticking over" while the Royal Commission deliberated. But they could not afford the luxury:

Here we were; we had this lumbering television monster with out of date equipment, inappropriate locations, hopelessly overstaffed, poor internal industrial relations... I could just go on and on. It was about to face competition with a very lean and trim television channel which

everybody thought would be on the air by the end of 85. So we had no space in which to move at all and we just had to really get stuck in and get on with it.

5.3.2.6 Dick and Mounter: A Clash of Styles

It was the two top appointments, though, which shaped the future. Ian Cross retired at the end of 1985, to be replaced by Australian media consultant Nigel Dick. Allan Martin, the long-serving Director General of TVNZ, retired in February 1986. His replacement was Julian Mounter from the BBC. The two men arrived at about the same time but differing approaches fostered an abrasive relationship.

The appointments were controversial, with both broadcasters and Maori groups dismayed at the choice of outsiders. Rennie said the BCNZ was paying the penalty for not having nurtured and trained potential top managers, with obvious successors like Des Monaghan the most harmed. The search, he says, was both rigorous and open-minded, but hampered by low salary ceilings. Ultimately, the jobs were sold on their "challenge" aspects.

Australian Nigel Dick was 57, with extensive experience managing commercial television and nine years lobbying on behalf of regional stations as a member of the Regional Television Development Committee.

Julian Mounter, at 41, was British, with a background in reporting and London Weekend Television current affairs. At the time of appointment, he was heading Thorn EMI's Satellite and Cable Programmes Division in London, establishing and arranging programme and production methods for three European channels.

Nigel Dick was widely expected to provide commercial savvy, in an economic climate where no special favours were likely to be granted to the BCNZ (Mayne, 1986a). However, impelled by his "no room in the market" view, he brought public service concerns to the fore. He was also conservative about spending, scornful of the "bricks and mortar outlook" epitomised in the "monstrous" network centre the BCNZ was

already committed to. He viewed the organisation as top heavy with management and was also critical of plans to diversify, wanting TVNZ to concentrate on making television. His concept of "regional" was representing different areas within New Zealand.

Conversely, to Mounter "regional" meant the Asia-Pacific region. He believed the profit-making TVNZ to be best placed well away from risky radio. While constantly restating his support of New Zealand programming, he believed the organisation should first be "positioned". With his background in satellite broadcasting, he thought New Zealand should look outward, form alliances, and expand to become a regional presence, so as to exploit profits which might come in the new telecommunications era. Mounter was speaking the language of the time; of the future, of opportunity and expansion. Dick was speaking the language of the past, of compromise and consolidation.

Graeme Wilson, TVNZ director of planning, believes Mounter was crucial to the organisation's transformation. In the past, he said, TVNZ had coped with frequent government tinkering by resisting change.

So the key mindshift was a viewpoint driven by knowledge of the huge changes that technology would bring irrespective of what regulation brought ... And I think it was that message, the recognition of the inevitability of change and the next step of determining not to invest all of the organisation's management and other energy into resisting change. Instead to try and determine what was going to happen in the technological future and adapt to it as quickly as possible and go on to embrace it. That made the big difference.

Mounter used a simple analogy to bring the message home, Wilson said. No regulatory fence would be high enough to keep out satellite television. "So erecting fences no longer became the preoccupation. And certainly over the long haul it was 100 percent the right decision, as the examples of other broadcasters show."

From the word go, Dick said, he and Mounter did not get along. Others at management level attest to the strength of their antipathy and it was known well down in the organisation. The core of the discord, according to Dick, was that "Julian wanted

to run his own race. He wanted to separate TVNZ from the Broadcasting Corporation". Dick felt he did not get the support he needed from the board, compared with the "clever and articulate" Mounter. He believes most members did not understand the role of chief executive. Foster said while Dick gave autonomy to radio and television, there were "problems of coordination" and Dick was "constantly undermined by the Board".

Beatson supports this view, saying that because no-one had established the hierarchy between the operating divisions and the corporate structure, both radio and television felt they could circumvent the corporate structure and go directly to the board.

Rennie, however, maintained that individually both men got on well with the board and their differences were "overblown" although the board had to "moderate" their relationship:

Because Dick had run regional television in Australia he really found it virtually impossible to contemplate not having some degree of involvement in how the TVNZ side ran; whereas Mounter felt as an article of faith - which was the absolute foundation of his management style - that it had to stand and run independently, or it wasn't going to work.

Additionally, Rennie said, Mounter felt there were broad corporation decisions which TVNZ needed to have an impact on. In retrospect, he thought the relationship might have been different if they had appointed the chief executive before the TVNZ director general as planned, but the organisation gained from having both men.

5.3.2.7 Debates About the Future: Excom and Major Players

At the top of the BCNZ there was intense debate about threats and opportunities presented by the telecommunications revolution. The BCNZ was expecting change to the Broadcasting Act. Excom (made up of the chief executive, the two directors-general, and the manager of resources, Bill Foster) was set up and met regularly to discuss strategic directions. A sub-group was formed to provide analyses and proposals for the future for Excom, the Board and the Government. It worked through until the new shape of broadcasting was firmly decided. Bill Foster and *Listener* managing editor David Beatson were members.

According to Beatson, they were all impelled by the notion of achieving "a broadcasting system which would still play a role in sustaining the culture of New Zealand". But they all had different visions of what it should be and how to achieve it. He said the BCNZ hierarchy was full of tension. Radio and television had different goals and were competing for resources and advertisers. After the first vigorous round of strategic analysis which provided common ground, he says, they were inclined to go their own way. Debates concentrated on who would pursue business opportunities "who would establish the next telephone company ... who would get into the satellite business". He saw the situation as "basically an alliance between a radio company and a television company not letting their rivalries interfere with cutting out the third party, the corporate structure".

Despite pressures driving the BCNZ apart, there was strong argument from the centre about the strength and synergies of a single media organisation in a competitive environment. Nigel Dick's plan was to sell off radio's commercial stations to finance the new BCNZ, retaining National Radio, the concert programme and another regional service. One commercial television channel would compete with TV3 and the second would become semi-commercial, a public service channel. These ideas caused further conflict with Julian Mounter.

While there were rifts within the Corporation, it was facing united foes in the Treasury and the Commerce Division. Beatson described Treasury as the "thinker" and Commerce, the "implementer". The dominant attitude in government was to "open up the whole thing to competition and let it rip" and the few friends (like Hunt) could not really "stop the juggernaut". Foster said privatisation was not really on the agenda, but "they didn't want a strong organisation clamouring for fee increases and they did want to create an opportunity for the private sector to extend."

5.3.2.8 TVNZ Consolidates in Auckland and Responds to the Financial Squeeze

Within TVNZ, key personnel changes accompanied management restructuring. In May 1986, Des Monaghan became the new Director of Programmes and Production, in charge of all programme scheduling and production, including news. In June, Director

of News, Sport and Current Affairs Bruce Crossan was shifted sideways to become Director of Special Projects. Ric Carlyon was to take over Crossan's position for almost a year until a replacement was found. The new controllers of TV1 and TV2 were appointed in September 1986, as was the Controller of Planning and Public Affairs, Graeme Wilson (formerly the Editor of TVNZ news).

Appointments and resignations, as they would for the next few years, fed media speculation about the new director general's management style. Mounter (1991) said the restructuring gave TVNZ the opportunity to "part company with those managers who couldn't or wouldn't adapt to the new competitive environment" (p.9). In his first 18 months TVNZ made more than fifty senior management changes.

In a 1991 paper, Mounter describes the TVNZ he took over as a product of "being kicked around for 25 years". Echoing Rennie, he said management was weak and ineffective with no real performance measures, financial management systems were "almost unknown" and the budgeting system was "a shambles" (pp.2-3).

In 1985, the Corporation was tackling the backlog in equipment replacement and got plans underway for the Network Centre in Auckland. Work on the centre began in September 1986 and was fast tracked in 1987. News broadcasts began from the building in March 1988. The organisation did need better facilities in Auckland, but was the costly network centre the answer? Foster saw the division over the TV centre, which had originally been planned for both radio and television, as crucial:

I think the TV centre was something of a break point within the ranks. That was the point at which Julian and Beverley first started to work out things that they wanted to do, or could perhaps do jointly, in association with Brian Corban - the stage when the property development was being planned. Well that [joint approach] didn't come to anything but what it did, I think, was to start this process of division, because Nigel was pretty well opposed to the concept of spending a hell of a lot of money on constructing Avalon North at a time when we needed to make sure the treasury was in good shape for meeting the broadcasting competition.

Meanwhile the news of the meagre licence fee increase in October 1986 sparked a round of cuts intended to trim \$20 million off the budget. The Corporation was already

aiming to increase the percentage of staff on contract and to employ more part-timers. In November, Dick announced that 150 jobs (four percent of the staff) would have to go. In the end fewer were affected; according to TVNZ management, 30 in Dunedin and 17 in Christchurch. Current affairs shows were trimmed back, other programmes delayed and some future drama series shortened. Expansion of the television signal reception was also put off. The axe affected production, while news, sales and advertising were largely untouched.

Moves to shed jobs outside Auckland continued over the next few years. Dick said he was party to the scheme and while he wanted local news and interview programmes, the organisation could not afford to duplicate drama and other facilities. Dick's regional programming plans fitted well with the regional delivery emphasis of the third channel contenders. TVNZ did make plans to beef up its own regional input. In July 1987, Mounter announced that regional programming and advertising on Television 2 would begin soon, starting in Christchurch. All four regional stations would be asked to come up with low budget studio-based formats, such as late night chat shows, quizzes and regional current affairs (Mayne, 1987c). Such plans never got off the drawing board, as TV3's regional focus swiftly vanished under the onslaught of Government policy and financial realism.

The centralisation of TVNZ in Auckland was a particular blow to Wellingtonians. But for Graeme Wilson, who oversaw the development of the network centre, it was almost a natural reflection of social and political changes in the country. Auckland was the centre of population, and in an organisation centred in the capital, Wellington, "it might be difficult to have other than an undue preoccupation with Parliament as the source of all important news". Moreover, as the Government moved towards a "hands-off" approach, the country's politico-economic centre of gravity moved more towards Auckland.

However, consolidation in Auckland did not, to Mounter, mean a narrowing of horizons. He was determined to change the internal culture and encourage entrepreneurship. From the outset, Mounter (1991) said, he planned strategy with a core of people who "knew the system was moribund and who knew deregulation was inevitable" (p.4).

Mounter looked outward. In June 1986 he announced that TVNZ would compete for the Pacific market. In March 1987 he announced an agreement for a fully leased satellite signal (increasing capacity by 900 percent) and commercial interest in the South Pacific Television service. TVNZ was "positioning itself to ensure its future role in the Pacific and protect future revenue which could be threatened by huge media conglomerates operating satellites" (Smith, 1987). Opposition to diversification, such as ventures into narrowcasting, was on the wane. Des Monaghan, a key opponent within TVNZ, was now occupied with its feature film division, South Pacific Films (SPF), and was to leave the organisation altogether in 1987.

5.3.2.9 New Look Programming and Advertising Fees

The appointment of separate controllers for the two channels in September 1986 formalised a key competitive strategy; channel identities. Des Monaghan began the channel revamp which was a return to the kind of identity the channels had begun to develop in the late 1970s, before they had been pushed back together under the TVNZ umbrella in 1980. Television One was to be geared towards older viewers, information and sport, and Channel Two to move towards capturing the young with more populist entertainment. Mayne (1987b) says some programming moves were made in early 1987 but local shows (despite some cutbacks) were to be strongly promoted in the second half of the year. The aim was to build audience following for local shows and loyalty to a particular channel. TVNZ said audience figures justified the move. Having dropped steadily in 1986, they began to pick up in 1987.

Meanwhile, advertising revenue went up, following a 20 percent fee increase in August 1986. The March 1987 Annual Report, citing escalating costs, said another 20 percent rise was planned in 1987. According to the report, the rises had provoked "vociferous reaction" in the advertising world, but were only one of a "number of measures of a number of measures to be put in place up to April 1988" (BCNZ, 1987, p.7).

The fee increase brought in some extra money, but more important in Mayne's (1987b) view was the fact that BCNZ had arranged its own debt collector and run a controversial promotion campaign, netting it an extra \$9 million in fees. Low fee

collection levels had been a concern for some time, and National claimed fee evasion cost the BCNZ \$20 million a year. So the BCNZ was tightening up its financial act and exploiting its monopoly position while it could.

5.3.3 August 1987 to December 1988: Restructuring Decisions

The 14 months following the 1987 election was a crucial period when it became clear which factions within the BCNZ were to win and the legislative framework was devised for the new shape of broadcasting. It also encompasses the October 20, 1987 sharemarket crash and ensuing recession which affected advertising earnings.

When Labour was re-elected on August 15, in what was taken as a vote of confidence in its radical restructuring policies, Richard Prebble became the new Broadcasting Minister. Prebble's appointment has been variously interpreted as an expression of no-confidence by Lange in Hunt; a desire to speedily settle the broadcasting conundrum; or by some, like Dick in the BCNZ, a desire to "teach us all a lesson". It seems likely to have been a combination of all three.

Hunt described the decision to give up the post in 1987 as a personal choice stemming from his appointment to the demanding position as Leader of the House:

And so I said I didn't want anything else which meant that Broadcasting had to go as well. I thought long and hard about giving up Broadcasting, and in the end it went to Prebble. He was Broadcasting as well as the SOEs. Now that was a mistake.

Prebble, a 'dry' in political terms, was a strong supporter of the Treasury's view on broadcasting. But before any of his policies could bear fruit, the Broadcasting Tribunal finally made its announcement.

5.3.3.1 Third Channel Hearings: Results and Reactions

Ten days after the election, the Tribunal granted the warrants to the TV3 group of companies (four Tele-Vid regional companies and Tele-Vid News). It said TV3 was the only group with four regional applications, each with separate shareholdings.

Given the financial and political implications, it is no wonder the Tribunal decision was controversial. Mayne (1987e) says, the decision could be seen as a victory for professional broadcasters and TV3's genuine commitment to regionalism. But losing parties felt that because the Tribunal had decided on an across the board award to one group, it "picked TV3 then wrote the decision backwards to de-emphasise TV3's weaknesses and downplay merits in the losing applications" (p.26). Losing contenders claimed the report held excessive criticism of their motives and top personnel. Mayne reported the BCNZ was bitter that few programming conditions were imposed.

Not surprisingly, Dick disagreed with the decision, calling it a "hodge podge of contradictions", resulting from the Tribunal not listening to the evidence:

I made one mistake. I said to the Tribunal that I believed the third set of warrants would go broke within 12 months. But it was six months.

Broadcasting Minister Jonathan Hunt was another who disagreed with the Tribunal, saying that while he could not comment at the time he thought TV3 were credible but were "the least hard-nosed" of the applicants and would not be able to deliver on their promises.

Hunt remains frankly hostile to the Tribunal, saying "In hindsight, I should have abolished it on the day I became Minister." Rennie (1991) believed the hearings led to a level of frustration and anger in the broadcasting industry which became a prime influence in the growing campaign for deregulation.

By September 1987, the BCNZ and four contenders had lodged appeals in the High Court against the decision. The appeals were later withdrawn, and after two applications (from the BCNZ and the Film Commission) for a judicial review were dismissed, the Tribunal finally granted the warrants in September 1988. In the meantime, the Government had deregulated television and thrown the spectrum open to commercial tenders. The head of news and current affairs at TV3, Marcia Russell, (1990) summed up the whole warrant application process as a waste of time.

5.3.3.2 The Prebble Approach

There is some interest in the question of whether Prebble's appointment turned around the direction of broadcasting or whether it merely speeded things up. Hunt says he supported the changes introduced by Prebble, although he did not support all his ideas. Undoubtedly, Richard Prebble moved broadcasting deregulation along with the same push that characterised many of Labour's restructuring moves in its first term. He also held no particular candle for broadcasting and was widely reported as "never watching television".

BCNZ director of corporate planning Bill Foster described the different approaches this way:

Jonathan Hunt was an orchestra man. Jonathan was always concerned that the quality of broadcasting didn't suffer. And he was always at least amenable to arguments that whatever the changes put into place by government, it might make things worse. Whereas Richard Prebble wasn't; he just wanted to get on with the job. And therefore, I think was quite instrumental in having the changes put in place.

Foster believed, though, that Prebble's arrival was more a "crystallisation of what was taking place" than a change in direction. He did, however, think that Prebble was vital in the choice of the SOE model which Foster sees as not appropriate for the already corporatised BCNZ. But, he said, Prebble's "advisors would have expected it, and the officials knew how to do it".

Rennie described Hunt as pretty much hands off, but approachable:

He liked to have a cup of coffee on Monday, at which he and I would have an informal chat. Very, very rarely did Hunt have something to pass to me. But it had the great advantage that it meant I could raise matters that we wanted to try and have happen.

Prebble, as SOE Minister, had an enormous workload and on Rennie's first visit in September 1987 he made that clear:

He said to me "Well, I've got thirteen of you to deal with, somebody's got to be thirteenth and you're it. See you in three months. In the meantime," he said "I'm going to get somebody to get together a few ideas for me, and I'll undertake when I've got it together I'll have a chat with you about it."

In fact, the paper, put together by Treasury and Commerce officials, did not surface until February 1988 and went directly to Cabinet. Meanwhile, though, Rennie said that on the few times he did meet Prebble, the Minister made it clear that telecommunications was being deregulated and, consequently, so too was broadcasting: "And that was pretty much bad news for us, because by mid 87 we had got television into shape for being a two-channel operator in a three-channel market".

Rennie (1992) and Smith (1996b) both see broadcasting deregulation as a logical consequence of deregulation in the telecommunications sector. While the BCNZ recognized change was inevitable, the question was how far would it go. Treasury opinion was for wholesale change to broadcasting. But Cabinet would not go all the way, and Hunt says an early proposal by Prebble to sell off Channel Two had no support.

However, the BCNZ felt extremely vulnerable. Beatson said the Corporation argued to Treasury that the BCNZ was crucial to New Zealand's participation in the technological revolution, but that was not part of the Government's concern: "I think they were just thinking: 'How can we package this up so we can sell bits of it to pay off debt'".

Despite the prevailing atmosphere, the February 1988 paper on broadcasting put to Cabinet came as a "bit of a bombshell" according to Rennie. He said he wrote two papers on it which, "to Prebble's credit although he had put out the paper without consulting about it first, he did circulate my stuff with his".

There followed a "very short, very sharp, very brutal" battle which Rennie said took place in March and April of 1988:

Was [broadcasting] going to be totally deregulated? How many entrants were there going to be? Were there going to be any programme standards at all? What was the position of the BCNZ in all of this? Surely there were public and social objectives of broadcasting, where were they? They certainly weren't in the Treasury model.

5.3.3.3 The April Announcement

On April 26, Richard Prebble announced principles for the reforms. He called them a key step in the Government's programme of economic liberalisation which would leave New Zealand with one of the most open communications environments in the Western world (Munro, 1988). The major points were:

- continued state ownership of TV1 and TV2 and at least two radio networks;
- the BCNZ would be restructured along state-owned enterprise lines and could become several enterprises;
- abolishing the Broadcasting Tribunal and ending the warrants system;
- a market based system for allocating radio frequencies;
- no special restriction to be placed on introduction of new services like direct satellite broadcasting and cable TV;
- Broadcasting's social, policy advice and regulatory functions would be separated from commercial activities;
- a Broadcasting Commission to be set up to help the government meet clearly defined social objectives in broadcasting;
- these objectives to be achieved through publicly funded contracts (probably financed by the licence fee);
- public and private broadcasters allowed to compete for the funds.

In the frantic lobbying, the BCNZ had made no dent in the position on deregulation, Rennie said. They had, however, succeeded in getting the Government to adopt some social and public broadcasting policies, "to the fury of Treasury and Commerce, who spent most of the rest of the year trying to sink them, ultimately reasonably successfully." Another gain was that while Prebble's initial paper had suggested the

change should be entirely in the hands of officials, it was now proposed that the restructuring should be considered by a committee headed by the chairman of the BCNZ.

Reported reaction from industry sources was largely favourable. TVNZ was prepared and would "take advantage of the opportunities and cope with the changes", according to Mounter ("TVNZ in gear...", 1988). Private radio and TV3 welcomed the deregulatory moves but criticised the abolition of the Tribunal, saying an independent body was still necessary ("Broadcasting changes hailed", 1988).

5.3.3.4 The Committees

Two committees were set up to implement the objectives. An Officials Coordinating Committee on Broadcasting was headed by Jim Stevenson of the Department of Trade and Industry and included representatives of Treasury. Its task was to report on implementing the broadcasting policy reform. Stevenson also sat on the Steering Committee on the Restructuring of the BCNZ along State Owned Enterprise Principles, chaired by Hugh Rennie.

The Rennie Report came out in July 1988. The committee of businessmen, including millionaire Bob Jones, was advised by consultants Booz-Allen & Hamilton International (UK) Ltd, and Fay Richwhite & Co. The Committee's task was to provide recommendations "on the optimal organisation and financial structure" of the BCNZ based on SOE guidelines (Steering Committee, 1988, p.(i)). Rennie said broadcasting's social and cultural objectives were outside the Committee's terms of reference.

Nigel Dick, having lost a series of battles and on the verge of retirement, criticised the shortage of broadcasting knowledge among committee members. He said the BCNZ would tell the committee it must recommend a system providing greater identification with the community. They would approve the reduction of costly and heavy bureaucratic overheads, so savings could be directed to local programming. "We will resist any system that deregulated New Zealand programmes into oblivion" (A. Cross, 1988, p.3).

Wilson (1992) criticised the European bias of statistics given the committee, the lack of information from Australia and the technological determinism of the advice supplied. Cocker (1996), who had been the Committee's executive officer, judged the Booz-Allen data as optimistic and selective. Their case studies were questionable as New Zealand was comparable neither in scale nor in broadcasting environment. In an interview Alan Cocker said the advisors were in the country only ten days and, while their figures were effectively distorted and their arguments were not rigorous, the committee was overcome by the "white heat" of their approach (personal communication, Auckland, March 7, 1991). The goal, he said, was to push things through, and the only people speaking out against the change seemed to be the Friends of the Concert Programme. But Rennie said the BCNZ was more than resigned to deregulation; they wanted the process over and done with:

We had no enthusiasm at all for fighting a year by year rearguard battle for a regulated system on the British or Australian line, because we just didn't have the resources to do it... And so our attitude was that if it was going to happen then we should get there fast, but we wanted to see built into the system commitments to audience service and public service and the maintenance of standards. We felt that as it was clearly going to happen we should go there enthusiastically. Be in first and grab it and turn it to account.

The Committee worked from the basis of the State Owned Enterprises Act of 1986 and related legislation, adopting 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, 1988, p.25).

The committee recommended radio and television be separated into two SOEs because they competed for advertising, had conflicting goals, and because television earnings had subsidised public radio.

TVNZ, however, should operate both television channels, sharing resources and ensuring complementary scheduling and increased market power. Separate channel management would enhance competition. Production facilities would be retained, but most drama, documentaries and some series would eventually be contracted out to independent producers. A separate SOE to control transmitters and distribution links would not be appropriate, unless it would serve outside customers, and could do this better as a separate entity.

For Radio New Zealand, the Committee recommended public service functions should become a wholly owned subsidiary, funded by the new Broadcasting Commission. The Commission would also support independent Maori radio and the *Listener* would be run as an independent business by RNZ and TVNZ. The orchestra would be funded directly by Government.

Cocker (1989) summed up the Rennie Committee as "generally kind to the organisations under its scalpel. Chunks were not to be broken off and privatised" (p.39). However, Laurie Cameron felt insufficient provision was made for the public service element, nor was it clearly separated from the commercial element. He lobbied for change over several months.

David Beatson described retaining the two-channel system as a "great victory". But he believed radio's needs in an already heavily competitive environment were ignored because of the concentration on television. The issue of what kind of radio the state should be supporting was never fully thought through.

Former BCNZ Corporation planner Bill Foster sees the result as a triumph for Julian Mounter:

Julian was politically very effective during that period... He won his battle with Nigel with the board. He won his autonomy with the Television Enterprise. He won the right to carry on running the two channels... BCL was always a natural monopoly and it had tremendous opportunities... It became a subsidiary of TVNZ and that was another bad move ... If you want efficiency you would have said make BCL [stand alone] not part of TVNZ. But again they were persuaded by television that it couldn't afford to let go of the means of its transmission because it would be held to ransom.

Yeabsley, Duncan and James (1994) in their report to the Ministry of Commerce say the decision to keep both channels under the TVNZ umbrella, with the strengths it gave TVNZ in technical and managerial resources, the ability to run complementary programming and the market power available from a large proportion of airtime supply, was made because emphasis had been placed on the commercial success of the SOE and that intense competition was anticipated. They say "A different model might have been chosen if the primary goal had been to ease the way for new entrants" (p.18).

The other architects of change, the Officials Committee, reported in August 1988, endorsing the Rennie Committee recommendations. To ensure freer competition in the broadcasting market, it recommended removing legislation it saw as either advantaging or hindering state owned broadcasting. The committee also advised lifting the restriction on overseas ownership from five to 25 percent. It recommended decisions about aggregation of ownership be left to the Commerce Commission, saying that more competition would offset the dangers of aggregation, because it would increase editorial independence and programme diversity.

The committee recommended "grant funding" rather than regulation to achieve public broadcasting objectives, defining the three main goals of broadcasting assistance as:

access in small or remote communities, achieving sufficient local content to reflect and develop New Zealand culture, and providing sufficient coverage of minority interests (p. 17).

The Officials Committee also specified the role and size of the Broadcasting Commission and outlined the role of what became the Broadcasting Standards Authority.

5.3.3.5 Deregulation Legislation

Both reports then went through the round of parliamentary committees: the broadcasting subcommittee, the SOE committee, cabinet and caucus. On 22 August 1988 Cabinet approved the new shape of state-owned broadcasting.

Three statutes were used to implement the reforms. Their provisions are briefly outlined here. First, the *Broadcasting Corporation of New Zealand Restructuring Act* (1988),

which disestablished the Broadcasting Corporation of New Zealand and provided for reorganisation along the following lines:

- Television One and Channel 2 to be managed by a state-owned enterprise, Television New Zealand Ltd.
- Transmission lines and facilities used by Television New Zealand under the BCNZ to be managed by Broadcast Communications Ltd, a subsidiary of TVNZ.
- The 32 publicly-owned commercial radio stations, National Radio, the concert Programme, the shortwave Pacific Service and some other non-commercial services to be managed by a state-owned enterprise, Radio New Zealand Ltd.
- Responsibility for providing broadcasting policy advice to the Government, and for issuing licences for the use of radio frequencies, to pass to the Department of Trade and Industry (later the Ministry of Commerce) (Ministry of Commerce, 1993, p.8).

The *Broadcasting Act (1989)* which became effective on 1 July, repealed the *Broadcasting Act (1976)* and:

- Disestablished the Broadcasting Tribunal, the old warrants and licensing system, from 31 December 1989.
- Established the Broadcasting Commission to collect the public broadcasting fee and distribute it in grants designed to achieve stated social objectives in broadcasting.
- Established the Broadcasting Authority and required broadcasters to adhere to certain standards in programming and develop codes of practice.
- Reduced restrictions on foreign ownership [allowing overseas ownership of up to 15%].
- Provided for election broadcasting.
- Restricted the scope for political interference in the management of TVNZ and RNZ, and in their programming.
- Reduced restrictions on advertising hours, making Sunday advertising possible (Ministry of Commerce, 1993, p.9).

The third act, the *Radiocommunications Act (1989)*, dealt with allocating the frequencies. Tradeable spectrum property rights were established to be offered for sale. Any broadcaster willing to pay the market price for licences could enter the industry. Existing broadcasters were issued with property rights to be paid for by annual or lump sum levy related to the market value of licences.

5.3.3.6 BCNZ: How Inevitable was the Split?

The division of radio and television was a major feature of the new legislation. Like many state-owned broadcasters, the BCNZ had combined both media, and this amalgamation is generally considered a source of strength, where the organisation can exploit the synergies of both operations. However, the BCNZ's reliance on advertising made television and radio natural competitors, compared with public broadcasters, for instance in Britain and Australia. Radio and television had been running their own operating divisions since 1975 and, as a decreasing percentage of funding was derived from the broadcasting fee, they came to regard the corporate structure as a financial burden and a restrictive force, rather than a resource bank. Foster, Beatson and Dick portrayed the two divisions as united only in defiance of Corporate Services.

Rennie's conclusion was that while keeping the Corporation whole was logical, it was not going to work. The arguments for synergy and convergence of technology which he spent three years making were nothing in the face of the divisions' desire to be separate. Because of the strengths of the argument, he had assumed the ultimate finding of his committee might be for a combined organisation. The BCNZ's case for remaining together was, he said, presented persuasively by Brian Corban and Nigel Dick:

But when you got alongside RNZ and TVNZ they said, "Look it's very embarrassing for us, but what we have to say is that we need to draw in on our core business and focus on it, and there is just no future in the idea that we are going to work together." So we split up. And I am sure in retrospect that that was right; right in the pragmatic sense that that was what those entities needed. It was sad, but there it is.

Rennie draws comfort from the fact that in the private sector there are few examples of integrated systems, and suggested that in the public sector they may merely be the result of historical development.

Foster saw the split as a natural evolutionary process. He also believed that Jonathan Hunt, while not (as Muldoon had been) interested in controlling the media, was happy to be guided by his advisors and saw "less particular benefit than threat, perhaps, in a single integrated organisation." Private sector broadcasters were also an important influence and, Foster said, their contentions were particularly in tune with thinking from the Douglas-Prebble camp:

I don't think they really perceived broadcasting as particularly inefficient. But they didn't want a strong organisation clamouring for increases in the licence fee. And they *did* want to create an opportunity for the private sector to extend; TV3, for instance. And, of course, there was a great cry for autonomy from within the organisation. That meshed very nicely with that sense of Government direction.

From the outside, Laurie Cameron also saw the split as inevitable. He believed the mixed commercial and public service broadcasting objectives had "hopelessly muddled the waters", ensuring that the Corporation did not know its purpose or direction. This dual purpose, he felt, contributed to the dominance of the resources management division over programming elements, and so to the drive for television and radio to go their own way.

As it became clear that the BCNZ was doomed, its chief executive withdrew. Having lost his battles with the Board and with policy makers, Nigel Dick retired early from the BCNZ in mid-June 1988.

5.3.3.7 TVNZ Gears up for Competition

While restructuring battles were going on in late 1987 and early 1988, the BCNZ was still contesting the advent of TV3 on legal grounds and disputing frequency rights. At the same time TVNZ sought to strengthen itself to face competition. As Smith (1996b) comments, it had the luxury of time and money on its side.

As well as changing scheduling and programming, TVNZ took up options on programme rights to pre-empt TV3 and "secured exclusive access to some of the world's top rated programmes" (Wilson, 1992, p.4). In 1988, the scramble for programmes sent prices soaring, up to 1000 percent for some top rating programmes. Later, the rate

settled to about three or four times the price TVNZ had paid when it was a monopoly (van Wetering, 1989a). TVNZ also put more effort into programme export through TVNZ international.

Sales and Marketing was to have a key role. Under executive director Michael Dunlop, who came in from Radio New Zealand in August 1987, it was being sharpened up. Conceding advertisers had not had the best deal in the past, he revamped the sales section of TVNZ. He recruited from outside and promoted from within appointing new general managers of sales in Wellington and Auckland, and two trainers. Sales teams were reorganised to be more "client focused". Dunlop aimed to streamline services and reward loyal customers and big spenders. Rates went up in April 1988, and 10 and 20 second adverts were replaced by 15 second ads in line with overseas practice. There were further ratecard changes in October. In the meantime, TVNZ was coping with the aftermath of the 1987 sharemarket crash which had driven down demand for advertising.

Looming competition meant both tightening belts in some areas and spending in other areas where TVNZ might be vulnerable. In August 1988, Julian Mounter wrote to staff saying TVNZ had to trim costs by between \$20 to \$40 million and that up to 250 jobs might be lost. Ten days later, plans to re-open the Hamilton studios (closed for ten years) were announced. Meanwhile, centralisation moved ahead, with the organisation saying in September that administrative and technical staff would be centred in Auckland by 1990.

In late 1987 Des Monaghan had resigned as director of programmes and production. He moved over to head South Pacific Films, which he left, for Australia's Channel 7, in October 1988. SPF was due to become a subsidiary of TVNZ and Monaghan wished it to be independent. He had also opposed the policy of co-productions with other organisation and ventures into narrowcasting. In a parting interview, he spoke out strongly against deregulation saying, "This will almost certainly give us more television in New Zealand, but less New Zealand on television". The battle for broadcasting had been won and lost in the late 1970s and early 1980s, he told Belinda Meares:

I think we should have been much more positive and assertive in our dealings with politicians. We should have articulated our views as to what was the most appropriate structure for broadcasting and our belief in the importance of New Zealand programming (Meares, 1989, p.5).

5.3.4 1989-1990: SOE and Competition

This section covers the first two years of TVNZ's existence as an SOE and completes the study period. From December 1988 to December 1989, TVNZ Ltd was busy making final preparations to beat TV3 in the ratings. The new channel's debut was gradually postponed until late November 1989. This section goes on to describe events during the first full year of television competition.

5.3.4.1 Government Moves

TVNZ became an SOE on 1 December 1988. Over the next year the Broadcasting Bill and the Radiocommunications Bill became law. There were some victories for established broadcasters, including amendments to the Radiocommunications Bill giving existing broadcasters 20-year licences. Debate on public service broadcasting resurfaced in early 1989, as Parliament considered the Broadcasting Bill. Independent producers and viewer groups attracted headlines in their push for local content quotas. The PSA's submission called for the Bill to be axed, describing the new broadcasting system as "alien to New Zealand tradition" and a threat to public service traditions of broadcasting (van Wetering, 1989d, p.12).

The licence fee increase in July 1989, from \$71.50 to \$110, was described in the press as a victory for Hunt. New Zealand on Air's annual report (1989-1990) said the increase brought in an extra \$22 million, bringing total fee revenues for the year ending 30 June 1990 to \$81.9 million. NZOA commented, however, that if the 1975 fee of \$45 had kept level with inflation, it would by 1990 have been set at \$269 a year. For state-owned broadcasters it was a hollow victory; the broadcasting fee was no longer theirs by right. Private broadcasters and independents could now bid for fee funds and were doing so successfully.

In 1990, the spectrum sell-off went ahead with little public debate. Smith (1996b) calls it one of the most powerful measures of deregulation, opening the way for a host of new broadcasters. The auctions held in February 1990 disposed of seven national networks along with 63 regional frequencies. Smith describes Sky (pay TV) as the clear winner, picking up numerous regional frequencies needed to boost service throughout the country. TVNZ's transmission arm, BCL, bought up another national channel which in 1995 was to be used for a series of regional stations.

Meanwhile, TV3's parlous financial position became apparent soon after it went to air. By March 1990, chief executive Trevor Egerton was meeting Hunt, asking him to increase the overseas holding limit from 15 to 25 percent. While Hunt's spokesperson said the limit would not be lifted, Prime Minister Geoffrey Palmer left the option open (Tattersfield, 1990). As the year moved on and various buyers were mooted for TV3, there remained the possibility that some temporary and specific lifting of restrictions might occur.

This was a time of turmoil in the Labour Party. On November 4, 1988, Richard Prebble was dumped from Cabinet, and Hunt took back the broadcasting portfolio, which was now combined with Communications. Hunt therefore shepherded the deregulation legislation through the House. Prime Minister David Lange accepted Roger Douglas's resignation on 12 December, but himself resigned as Prime Minister on August 7 1989, after MPs voted Douglas back into Cabinet.

Elections were held on 27 October 1990 and the Labour Government under Geoffrey Palmer was soundly trounced in the polls. New Broadcasting and Communications Minister Maurice Williamson equivocated over the future of Channel 2, saying it would probably be sold when the market warranted it. A sale would presumably finance the conversion of TV1 to a public service oriented channel, as mentioned in National's manifesto. But National's plans for TVNZ were not taken up. The Government had not, apparently, the political will for further restructuring and, despite frequent references to the possibility of sale the of TV2, it was still state owned in 1996 and seemed likely to remain so for the immediate future.

However, there was change in line for foreign ownership restrictions. In December 1990, Maurice Williamson announced the Government might increase the allowable foreign investment stake in New Zealand broadcasting companies to 49.9 percent.

Submissions to the Bill were based on this premise. With a short time for submissions, Smith (1996b) says, there were only 11, of which eight were for the change. Then, on March 21, 1991, the Government announced its intention to allow foreign investors to purchase 100 percent of New Zealand broadcasters. Smith believes the lack of debate in the press can be put down to the fact that both the New Zealand newspaper monopolies as potential broadcasting buyers stood to benefit from the Treasury-inspired ownership changes. The ensuing legislative amendment came into law in May 1991, completing the transition for New Zealand from highly regulated broadcasting to perhaps the most deregulated broadcasting industry in the world.

5.3.4.2 TVNZ: The SOE's commercial orientation

For TVNZ, though, 1989 and 1990 were years of success. Yeabsley et al. (1994) say TVNZ Ltd came into being with some major strengths including: "a robust balance sheet; two channels, its own distribution arm (BCL) and a history of monopoly in free-to-air television broadcasting; long established relationships in advertising, programme procurement, production and distribution; detailed knowledge of New Zealand audiences; and an expanding advertising market relative to other media" (p.17).

While, privately, board chairman Brian Corban described how TVNZ "had fought long and hard" to be allowed to include a cultural and social element in its mission statement, chief executive Julian Mounter was enthusiastic about commercialism. In August 1989 he described himself as, "Chief Executive of a private company with a balance sheet of around \$300 million" and spoke of "healthy profits" and "excellent dividends" for shareholders (Farnsworth, 1990, p.20). In the first year, TVNZ returned \$8.5 million to the government in dividends; and in the year to June 1991, \$11.25 million.

As an SOE, commercial considerations were necessarily paramount. Section 4(1) of the SOE act says: "The principal objective of every State enterprise shall be to run a commercial 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, 1991b, p.23).

The comparative weight of the "social responsibility" requirement for SOEs 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).

As a state-owned enterprise, TVNZ split further into a series of divisions and subsidiary companies. South Pacific Pictures, already functioning separately for some time, was by 1989 firmly on the path of international co-productions in its area of strength (family "kidult" movies). The key strategic asset, the transmission arm of TVNZ, became a subsidiary company, Broadcast Communications Limited (BCL). Owning BCL meant TVNZ's transmission system was safe from international competitors and allowed the company to participate in the converging television/telecommunications business. BCL also serviced Radio New Zealand, private radio and TV3. In 1990, Sky TV brought its total number of outside clients to 45 and was looking for telecommunications partnerships and expansion outside New Zealand.

Avalon studios (once the centre of production and now becoming a white elephant as production was contracted out and other functions shifted to Auckland's Network Centre) was made an independent division. Large numbers of staff were laid off at Avalon and the cutting continued well into the 1990s. Avalon was to be positioned as Australasia's biggest production house for use by independents, TVNZ, TV3 and overseas companies.

In late 1990, TVNZ bought the National Film Unit "as part of its strategy to position itself as the pre-eminent supplier of studio, sound and editing facilities in New Zealand" (TVNZ, 1991a, p.13). During 1989, the Auckland design services and the outside broadcast fleet were also restructured as profit centres. The following year they became "strategic business units". In 1990, First Scene (the former design services) earned 25 percent of its income from outside sources, up from almost nothing the year before.

This was part of a pattern to be repeated over the next few years, so that by 1991, 26 strategic business units were set up within the divisions, and divisions operated as stand alone profit centres actively seeking business outside TVNZ.

TVNZ was adopting tactics to enable it to meet three objectives: to benefit from the growth of channels and satellite delivery systems; to gain a foothold in the telecommunications industry; and to strengthen its relationships with big telecommunications businesses. With Radio New Zealand, it set up Datacast Services to use spare capacity in the TV and FM spectrum to transmit computer information for business users. In 1989, after two years of planning, it purchased a 35 percent share in Sky TV, making a partner out of a potential competitor (van Wetering, 1989b). Sky TV was launched first in Auckland and then the Waikato in 1990. Julian Mounter said subscription television was the fastest growing sector of the industry and "if TVNZ was not to be outflanked and lose market share to these new products, it had to enter this market itself" (TVNZ, 1991a, p.18).

TVNZ was also closely involved in developing the country's first narrowcast venture, TVXTRA. Launched in October 1989, the sports channel was aimed at hotel and hospitality industry subscribers. In 1990, TVNZ took a leading role in forming a consortium comprising Todd Corporation, MCI of the United States, Bell Canada and New Zealand Railways to set up Clear Communications, a phone and data transmission company. TVNZ's 25 percent stake was gained by awarding Clear exclusive rights to under-used BCL capacity.

TVNZ was also pursuing its policy of expanding into the South Pacific. Its Pacific Service helps set up locally-owned and operated television in Pacific island nations and

provides programming and technical support. Nuie accepted the TVNZ service in late 1988, dumping an American cable service. The Cook Islands' service was established on Christmas Day 1989. In 1990, work began in Nauru and Fiji, where services were established in May 1991.

Meanwhile, programmes and services from the BCNZ days were under threat. TVNZ's expansionist strategy, along with competition and associated promotional activities, had diverted resources. Moreover, the SOE found it difficult to extract licence fee funding from the newly formed Broadcasting Commission (NZOA). TVNZ put considerable energy into negotiations and one (anonymous) TVNZer involved in the discussions described it as a "dreadful time", when the two organisations appeared to be talking a totally different language. In September 1989, TVNZ's frustrations surfaced in the press, particularly its dissatisfaction with funding for independently-produced popular items scheduled to be broadcast on TV3. In his chairman's report for 1989, Brian Corban criticised the Commission for supporting the popular commercial component of television, rather than being "a prudent steward of the public funds... to ensure that minority programming was not lost in the deregulated market's necessary focus on competitive commercial performance through mass programming" (TVNZ, 1990, p.3).

One of TVNZ's funding bids was for backing for the regional news programmes. In December, NZOA announced it would not support the two North Island programmes but would provide interim funding to keep the South Island regional news magazines on air. The decision to axe Auckland's *Top Half* and Wellington's *Today Tonight* was announced officially in February 1990.

5.3.4.3 Meeting the Competition

In the Networks division of the SOE, 1989 was the last lap before competition. Programming, advertising and marketing were crucial. Mounter (1991) says they used the language of war to gear up TVNZ staff. Rhetoric was particularly strong in Sales and Marketing led by Michael Dunlop. Slade (1989a) talked about the "brash proclamations of both sides". Dunlop is quoted, "I thrive on competition. I'm dying to put in some of our changes - I'm holding some back because, dammit, they won't

come on air" (p.10). His counterpart from TV3, Maurice Ulrich (newly recruited from TVNZ) hits back with, "I believe for years it [TVNZ] has screwed the advertiser" (Slade, 1989a, p.10).

Accusations and counter-accusations about sales tactics surfaced occasionally. TVNZ wanted to tie up advertisers, and could certainly outlast TV3 if advertising slot prices were driven down for any length of time. TVNZ also sought to maximise its last few months as a monopoly, with the advertising industry becoming bitter over Dunlop's tactic in April of cutting out pre-emptive buying. According to Slade (1989b), "The row is just one of many spats in the prickly relationship between the advertising industry and TVNZ since the introduction of a floating rate card last year" (p.5). However, advertisers were soon to benefit. In the first few months of competition, an advertising ratings war saw television prime time rates become even cheaper than radio advertising (Wakem, 1992).

Meanwhile, minute attention was paid to scheduling. Mounter (1991) says they hired a top Australian consultant, Ron Haynes:

The schedules on both TV1 and Channel 2 were overhauled over a 12 month period prior to competition, so that new viewing habits were well embedded by the time our competitor started on air" (p.14).

Haynes was helped, according to Smith (1996b), by the already established separate channel identities.

The costly fight to obtain top overseas programmes was still in progress, but by March 1989, TVNZ had come to some agreements with the new TV3 management. Trevor Egerton had taken over from Tom Parkinson in December 1988, and Mounter described his approach as "much more professional" in recognising the need for industry co-operation (Wichtel, 1989, p.21). As well as scaling down the price war, the companies got together to lobby for frequency allocation, reaching agreement on TV3's leasing of TVNZ transmission sites and facilities.

The new news and current affairs package went to air in April 1989. The news hour had, over the last few months, been paired on Channel 2 with two comedy repeat

shows. For the new season, *Neighbours*, with its high youth appeal was shifted to 6.30 and the new Australian-franchised *Sale of the Century* followed at seven. The aim was for TVNZ to cover all audiences. But the new season was not quite as TVNZ had planned. Big programming drawcards were to be saved until close to TV3's launch date. But as the competitor faced a series of difficulties, the launch was progressively postponed, from October 1988, to April 1989, to July and finally to November. Meanwhile, reviewers and the public, through letters to the paper, complained of the programme drought. Julian Mounter said TVNZ's strategy had been to stop using its prime programming weapons over the summer, between December 1988 and April 1989, when audiences were smaller. If not, they would have used up all the good programmes by the time TV3 was launched and would have lost out in the ratings. Shown up by the delays, he said, TVNZ was now planning to bring out some high-rating overseas programmes, "we have to worry about viewer loyalty and getting the total ratings back up" (Wichtel, 1989, p.19). Over the next few months, some top-rating programmes emerged, but TVNZ was able to hold others back until launch time. In addition, it introduced breakfast TV on Channel 2 in November.

Moreover, TVNZ continued to hold the cards giving access to satellite coverage. By July 1989, it had signed the last of four multimillion dollar contracts giving it improved access to news and sports programmes from all over the world. It put more energy into forming special links with overseas companies, such as Australia's Channel 9 and the BBC, and was investigating buying into overseas production companies.

The company began heavy promotion of the separate channels and its overall identity. TVNZ estimates a total expenditure of \$4.2 million on channel branding for the six months to December 1989 (TV3's launch). However, because television promotions were aired during spare advertising time, it says the actual cost to TVNZ was \$1.3 million. It compares this to the ABC's \$A20.7 million spent on merchandising and promotion in 1989 (TVNZ, 1991b).

The private channel was outgunned when it came to air on 27 November 1989. TVNZ was able to both match or pre-empt TV3's programming plans while providing complementary planning on its other channel. At the crucial opening to prime time,

for instance, it faced a well established half hour news show with a relaxed American-style duo, followed by a half hour current affairs entertainment show. On the other channel was a popular soap opera.

Moreover, TV3 was launched at the beginning of summer, when audience figures (and advertising) drop off considerably. To top it off, the Commonwealth Games were staged in Auckland in January. TVNZ was the official broadcaster and the opening and closing ceremonies and many of the sporting activities proved a huge audience drawcard. AGB McNair research figures for the first four weeks revealed a trend of TVNZ dominance with no TV3 programmes in the top thirty (Smith, 1996b). It was the start of a great year for TVNZ.

Although it quickly became clear that TV3 was no real competition, TVNZ kept up the pressure throughout 1990 to ensure dominance. Exclusive coverage of vital sports matches went to TVNZ. In March 1990, TVNZ said it had paid the rugby union an undisclosed sum (reputed to be \$1 million) for rights to broadcast. TV3 was to shoot no footage of test matches or major provincials, and could not talk to players and coaches until they were outside the ground. TVNZ would provide a maximum of two minutes footage to TV3 (Hartfield, 1990). In April, a cash-starved TV3 sold back to TVNZ the rights to the World Cup Soccer finals. TVNZ also gained the rights to basketball coverage.

5.3.4.4 What Happened to TV3

Overseas experience, especially in Europe, had shown State broadcasters as imperilled once private television began broadcasting. TVNZ's dependence on advertising made things look even worse. But despite its high hopes and upbeat public rhetoric, TV3 did not provide the anticipated threat.

From the start, the underfunded channel was in financial trouble. Hunt and Dick maintain this was because TV3 was unrealistic and had insufficient financial acumen. Yeabsley et al. (1994), also put TV3's troubles down to misjudgment: "It appears that the TV3 promoters underestimated the scope for the incumbent broadcaster, TVNZ, to

respond and perhaps the overall costs of entry" (p.27). Rennie blames external causes; the changed industry structure, the depressed economy and debt from the Tribunal hearings. His view reflects that of Marcia Russell, TV3's first head of news and current affairs, who says the time factor was crucial. They had planned to start in 1987, but by the time warrants were secure in late 1988:

the financial markets were in turmoil, the country was headed for a depression, investment was a dirty word and the Government had decided to change all the rules (Russell, 1990, p.12).

Although it appealed to its younger target audience, TV3 did not manage to deliver the ratings it had promised, and figures dropped further during the year in response to the financial crisis. Its average channel share for prime time in 1990, according to TVNZ's Annual Report was 12 percent, as opposed to 47 percent for TV1 and 41 percent for TV2.

After two months, its flagship *A Current Affair*, the direct competitor to TVNZ's *Holmes*, was axed and the news hour trimmed to 30 minutes. By mid-March 1990, TV3 had laid off about 40 of its 276 staff, resignations at the top were continuing and an executive from the shareholding NBC had been brought in. Television advertising was down for TVNZ as well, but TV3's low ratings made its position worse. Advertising buyers waited until the last moment to see what shows would be running before ordering time (Manion, 1990). By the end of March, TV3 share prices had slumped from an original \$2.50 to 64 cents and the company was admitting the need for another \$12 million. In early May, Westpac Bank, owed a reported \$39 million, froze TV3's accounts.

Manion (1990) believed TV3 was too ambitious and might have done better to emulate Belgium's VTM rather than try to tackle TVNZ head on. On its first anniversary in February 1990, VTM had 40 percent of the market, beating the established network with a format of cheap, local light entertainment. In fact, Manion (1990) said, TV3's then 18 percent average prime time share was high, compared with a number of new channels overseas. Smith (1996b) agrees with this assessment, commenting that the damage was done "not by ratings, but by eager expectations" (p.71).

TVNZ was now in an awkward position. While it could not afford to let TV3 snatch its audience and profits, it was not politically safe to blast its competitor from the water. Both Labour and National were committed to the idea of competition in television and there was also a sense that the public (at least as represented in the press) would see an overly-victorious TVNZ as a bully. More dangerous was the dormant threat of political intervention to trim a too-dominant TVNZ down to size. In the National Party's case, selling off Channel 2 or converting TV One to a semi-commercial channel could always be moved closer to the top of the agenda.

At this stage, TVNZ was at pains to stress its success with New Zealanders and its commitment to local production. In a letter to the *Dominion Sunday Times* on April 15 1990, Julian Mounter wrote:

TVNZ is making and funding more local programmes (including more drama, more documentaries, more Maori programmes and more comedy) than it has ever done. TVNZ is attracting larger audiences than it has done for many, many years and in a recent survey New Zealanders expressed themselves pleased with what TVNZ gives them. In the same survey the majority believed TVNZ should own two channels. True complementarity of programmes can only be ensured through two channel ownership. On the world stage, three small operators would have less influence and far less success. Surely the policy should be to give TV3 time to get through its problems and, for once, leave broadcasting alone (p.8).

In the event, overt political intervention was of a different kind. The new National Government's lifting of restrictions on overseas ownership in 1990 was, in part, motivated by a desire to rescue the bankrupt TV3. And in late 1991, Canadian Broadcaster CanWest took up a controlling 20 percent in TV3. TVNZ has since held back a little and the new channel is currently a firmly-established, though rarely top-rating, element of the broadcasting scene.

5.3.4.5 Slimming the SOE

Running in parallel with the glittering new programmes, the global outlook, and the rhetoric of competition and success, were the cutbacks and the redundancies which saw significant staff reductions at TVNZ from 1988 through until the end of 1991. It is

difficult to get a consensus on job loss. In April 1991, Julian Mounter said that to preserve local programming and stay in profit, TVNZ had to shed more than 1000 jobs and virtually close two stations. Some of these may have been in peripheral activities or casual jobs. Yeabsley et al. (1994) give the following figures (sourced to TVNZ) for TVNZ employee numbers in television activities: 2193 (1988), 2094 (1989), 1955 (1990), and 1496 (1991). Before the formation of the SOE, they say, "more than three-quarters of TVNZ's staff were involved in programme production (compared with 23 percent for Radio NZ)" (p.27). Production jobs in the new climate were especially vulnerable to outsourcing and cutbacks.

Job losses had been in the air since Mounter's May 1988 announcement that \$20 million would have to be trimmed from the 1989 budget. The first wave of redundancies occurred within a month of TVNZ becoming an SOE. At Christmas, 150 workers, among them well-known performers, were laid off; 90 in Christchurch, 40 at Avalon in Wellington and 20 in Auckland. A further 40 staff from Avalon were transferred to Auckland. TVNZ was increasingly using independent television production houses, concentrating its own production in the North Island and particularly in Auckland. Independent production had been increasing gradually through the 1980s, and was now very important. Not only was it part of government policy, reinforced by the fact that private companies would soon be eligible for broadcasting fee funds, but Graeme Wilson says it simply made economic sense to farm out programmes which could only be made once in a while.

Wilson sees the layoffs as an inevitable consequence of competition which affected TVNZ across the board:

When you go from being the whole of the television industry to being part, albeit a very big part, that means you don't have the whole of the resources of the television industry, you don't have the whole of the staff of the television industry. It was never going to be the case that Sky, Television Three and the other entrants were going to lie completely on top of the monopoly. They were going to take a share of it.

But, Wilson adds, TVNZ did not shrink as much as it could have. It had two options: either to shrink to just servicing TVNZ, or to retain a proportion of jobs and resources by making them available to other players:

So the Avalon studios make programmes for TV3, and our outside broadcast fleet works with TV3, and naturally the transmission company provides transmission facilities for TV3. Independent producers could also use our resources. So jobs were saved and resources were effectively used by that strategy, and Television New Zealand was preserved overall.

In March 1989, TVNZ spokesperson Aline Sandilands said they had lost another 130 jobs by attrition in the previous three months. Revamping Avalon as a subsidiary was to take another 50 jobs, as TVNZ announced in May 1989. About a hundred more jobs across the board were shed during the year.

Job losses among newswriters came later, but were severe. In April 1990, 15 jobs were cut in TVNZ newsrooms; ten in Wellington, four in Auckland and one in Christchurch. These were a direct result of the decision to cut regional news. However, job loss was greater than the figures indicate, because large numbers of newsroom staff had left voluntarily in the previous three months. The two top positions in Wellington were also terminated at the end of 1990, bringing journalist numbers down from 32 at the end of 1988 to eight. In the same time the number of Christchurch journalists had dropped from 20 to six and in Dunedin from eight to three. The reduction of journalists was particularly ironic, as at the end of 1988 they had been paid a \$2000 bonus for loyalty in staying with TVNZ.

The late 1990 job reductions were blamed on the advertising downturn and the loss of revenue to TV3. However, Chris Ineson, executive director of the Association of Advertising Agencies, said the advertising market, while soft, was not a real problem for television, and TVNZ was capitalising on the downturn as a way to reduce high staff levels ("News jobs go," 1990, p.10).

5.3.5 Summary

The technological pressures driving broadcasting have been uniform throughout the world; the task of the organisational narrative has been to explore unique factors driving New Zealand's response. Broadcasting in New Zealand was caught up in the huge political and economic restructuring of the fourth Labour Government. Morale at the BCNZ was low following the years of the Muldoon Government, and people at

all levels felt that things could and should be done better. Many imagined competition would help them sharpen up and that deregulation would bring freedom from Government shackles.

Within the BCNZ, the appointments of Nigel Dick and Julian Mounter reflected the major conflicts. Nigel Dick, as BCNZ's CEO, wanted to hold the organisation together. While recognising the Corporation needed paring down, he wanted to go the "low tech" way, with resources placed in regional programming and a heavy commitment to public service broadcasting in the form of national public radio, community public radio and a semi-commercial television channel funded by a commercial channel and a substantial hike in the licence fee. Dick was up against several barriers. His Board was unconvinced by his arguments. The Government wanted less regulation, open competition and a financial return rather than a liability from broadcasting. The radio and television divisions of BCNZ wanted to be independent. The head of TVNZ, Julian Mounter, had a clear vision which meshed with the prevailing political direction and he had quickly developed a power base within his own organisation. Furthermore, Mounter had the support of key Board members and spoke to them and others of a future of growth, expansion and commercial strength.

Meanwhile, the Royal Commission and the fiasco of the Third Channel Hearings fed the forces of deregulation and strengthened the arguments of private broadcasters and independent producers against "privileges" for public service broadcasting. The Broadcasting portfolio was turned over to the hard-driving Prebble, a stalwart of the Douglas monetarist camp and change was rapidly pushed through in 1988.

Broadcasters won some battles for public radio, and public service broadcasting commitments were retained, but made the responsibility of a Broadcasting Commission. Although TVNZ would have to fight for its share of the licence fee, it was, at the time of its transformation to an SOE, in good shape for a future of competition. Mounter had successfully battled to retain both channels and the transmission arm of the BCNZ.

While the recession made things tight for TVNZ, it battered the competitor, TV3. Moreover, TVNZ took its SOE profit-making mission seriously, using all its advantages

of size, capital and established linkages. The channels were differentiated and then strongly promoted. The crucial 6 o'clock news hour was revamped with a strong entertainment slant, while Channel Two's offerings were designed to pull in younger viewers. The strategy was to leave TV3 no obvious niche to fill. Overseas programmes were bought up, satellite access assured and local sports codes tied in. An aggressive sales and marketing campaign was put into motion.

Mounter energised his organisation with the competition battle, but never allowed it to feel under siege. He provided the organisation with a sense of momentum, with strategies of buying into Sky pay television and telecommunications company Clear, expanding in the South Pacific, formalising links with other broadcasters and seeking outside customers for TVNZ services.

But preparation for competition, building a new network centre and expansionist strategies were costly. As well the organisation was vulnerable, reliant on surprisingly few major advertisers in the middle of a recession. Cutting staff was inevitable. Costly local programmes were trimmed back in favour of franchised entertainment programmes with studio formats. Production staff were laid off and South Island stations cut back to the minimum. Regional news was dropped in favour of a national magazine infotainment programme.

5.5 TVNZ: The Newswriters' Story

All the organisational changes had their impact on management and resources in the newsroom. TVNZ's adoption of the commercial model, combined with the influence of overseas examples and a tradition of newsgathering established in Auckland, profoundly affected the style and presentation of the news. The narrative below uses newswriters' views to trace the change.

5.4.1 Newswriters At the Outset: The Post-Muldoon Malaise

While some critics outside broadcasting, such as Edwards (1992), look back at television news of 1985 as a sort of golden era, newswriters I spoke to described a malaise

following the years of skirmishes with the Muldoon administration. On the production side, Farnsworth (1989) found a similar drop in staff morale, following the 1980 merging of the two television channels.

Many journalists felt Cross had not protected them and was too cosy with the Muldoon Government. Cross (1988) outlined his version of battles won and lost in *The Unlikely Bureaucrat*. Whatever the truth, the perception among journalists in both news and current affairs was that the organisation had been bullied by politicians, particularly Muldoon, and that Ian Cross had not done enough to protect them.

Former *Listener* managing editor and Cross supporter David Beatson (1994) says, "a good deal of antagonism had built up". He believes Cross's detailed knowledge of the processes of journalism allowed him to be an effective critic of flaws in practice. For instance, Cross worked hard to produce a training scheme to build a skill base and worked with news and current affairs journalists to produce a manual of practice:

I don't think many people thank him for what he did, because those in the front line felt they were being exposed, and they weren't getting any backing, and this move was a reflection on their judgement. Well, in my view it wasn't. It was a necessity for the board to establish a framework for the relationship it would have with people in this area.

Journalists, then, felt vulnerable and alienated from their chief executive. Beatson, who had been in charge of news on Channel Two and a prominent current affairs journalist for some years before his appointment as *Listener* editor, believes newswriters came out of the Muldoon era in "pretty sad shape":

They were pretty exhausted. Meantime the Government got off; it developed a whole set of policies which would put broadcasting under threat yet again. Energies were diverted into dealing with those arguments which could have been applied to the business of "let's make news and current affairs". Anxiety, uncertainty, instability, constant pressure to contain costs; all those things get reflected in how people behave in the workplace. Some actually say, "That's a provocation and I'm going to show the bastards". Others say, "Oh no, not another row." So it was a demoralisation process.

Neil Billington, who later became one of the first duo to present the news in the new look 1987 bulletin, began work in TVNZ in early 1985. His perspective was current affairs journalism in radio, most recently for the BBC World Service. He said news and current affairs needed reviving:

In the early eighties, when people like [Bruce] Crossan [head of news and current affairs until 1986] were running Television New Zealand, it had rather lost its way. It had been ground down under the influence of Prime Minister Muldoon. Journalism was a demoralised occupation and it had not acquired the kind of social standing, prestige and clearly demonstrated professionalism to be able to withstand public pressures and political pressures (personal communication, October 22, 1993).

Another journalist, recently returned from Australia, described newswriters' approach as drab, unimaginative and moribund. More importantly, he described them as in a fairly heavy political grip:

TVNZ was very, very reluctant to bite the hand of the Government in its reporting, which I found absolutely astonishing because I worked for purely commercial organisations in Australia. And to feel in a way that you were being censored - implicitly if not explicitly. There was that general feeling about anything political, that we had to be very, very careful what we said about it. I found that galling. You're here either to present the news and present it honestly, or you are not. At that stage, I don't think we were (personal communication, February 25, 1994).

Several reporters referred to an incident in 1984, when a story of national importance had not been run because of fears from those at the top. The incident was obviously part of newswriters' lore and the consensus was that it would not have happened in the post-deregulatory period. Former Wellington editor Pat Plunket said in an interview (January 20, 1993) that he believed there was pressure on individual reporters because of the way political control was exercised:

There was no question that the political trepidation came from those higher up the channel. But to a fair degree, too, reporters were captured by political interests.

Gregory (1985) documented political pressures on broadcasting in New Zealand, and while his study concentrates on the NZBC years (1962-1973), he makes it clear that such

problems not only continued into the 1980s, but that the new BCNZ structure ensured independence would be a greater problem. Cross's appointment as full-time chairman and chief executive was a backward step; "as had been the case for 26 years of direct departmental control, once again the public broadcasting organisation's top official is appointed by and holds office at the government's pleasure" (p.106).

However, replacing Cross as chairman, and Hunt's avowed stance of non-interference did not mean the end of political pressure. The impending Royal Commission, the Third Channel Warrant Hearings and the push for increased licence fees meant close political contact, compromise and negotiation. Moreover, the very smallness of New Zealand (and particularly of the capital, Wellington) results in close relationships between key members of the community (political, business and fourth estate). Political journalists in the small press gallery are much closer to politicians than in larger countries. Nigel Dick's reminiscences reveal the relaxed interaction between himself, as chief executive, and members of the Government. In this hothouse atmosphere, pressures at the top can be quickly translated downward to working journalists, who are also vulnerable to direct pressure by politicians.

John Spavin was in the gallery for some years before becoming assignments editor and later bureau chief for Wellington. He continued working for TVNZ until early 1994 when he became press secretary to the Minister of Broadcasting and Communications, Maurice Williamson. Spavin (in an April 8, 1994 interview) described working conditions this way:

We ran round like blue-arsed flies trying to cover everything that moved in Wellington. And they [Auckland national news executives] were also always in awe of Parliament. They weren't scared of politicians, but they were totally in awe of them. And if something happened, it was "Oh, get the Minister". Auckland [TVNZ news central office] would see a press release and say "Oh, Roger Douglas said this, you'd better go and get it" and you'd say, "Don't be stupid, he's doing that because it's quiet today and he hopes he'll get on page five of the *Herald*." "Oh, no, it's really important". They had no idea.

Greg Smith paired as duty editor with John Spavin. He was made redundant in 1990 when the Wellington base was trimmed back further. Greg Smith (personal

communication, February 14, 1994) believed news production in the study period was profoundly affected by two things which had occurred in the early eighties. The first was Ian Cross's determination "to break what he saw as the political power base in Wellington", which in turn influenced content in news bulletins. The second was the tightness of the budget. Seen from his perspective:

Cross was dead scared of spending money... So you had this incredible downgrading of equipment over a very long period. We bought in hardly any new news equipment over that period ... at the same time you had Bruce Crossan, who had become head of news, who wanted to up the amount of output. So you had News at Ten ... plus the 6.30 news which was an hour show, plus the current affairs show, and they all came out of the same resources pool for news.

Cross, Smith said, had failed to depoliticise the news, despite the shift of the network to Auckland in 1980. The shift meant, however, it was harder to obtain resources for Wellington, affecting not only how journalists covered news, but also what was covered:

Where before, you could send a camera crew away up country for a day or away for a week overseas, you couldn't do that any longer. You had to husband the resources so tightly that reporters were getting crews for half an hour or an hour to go out and film a job. So we ended up building up large amounts of library stock and operating with pictures out of libraries and going out and filming interviews.

Spavin concedes they frequently had to "churn out" items, but claims the lack of imagination in news coverage was due to the outlook of older journalists, especially in Wellington. They did not write "picture stories":

People almost went out of their way to avoid pictures in stories... in Wellington we had old NZBC hands who had been trained in radio and I don't think ever understood what they were doing in television. So then we got the piece to camera in the studio. If they were really creative we threw in a freeze frame. If they weren't creative, they didn't. So they were visually utterly boring, just dreadful. If you look at it now it's almost comical, which is sad because they did some very good stories. But they never had the skills to present them and they had the arrogance that said they would become superficial if they wrote to pictures. So they never bothered, and I think they wasted their time, because I would defy anybody to take their stories in.

Spavin described the eighties news as "grey" in management style, writing style and presentation.

5.4.1.1 Technology and Resource Problems

There were also technical reasons for the lack of visual excitement. Delays in replacing and updating equipment were felt as, Greg Smith said, at newsroom level. Video technology, in the form of Electronic News Gathering (ENG), had only just arrived, reaching Christchurch and Dunedin in 1984. It was several more years before stringer camera operators (paid by the story) moved to video. Its potential was just beginning to be felt. Bill Alexander, Wellington Assignments Editor from 1980-1990, says video tape could be viewed right away, was easily edited and could be shot in marginal light conditions:

With the video camera which you can carry around with you, you can get right amongst the action. It just gives you so many more visual opportunities to put together a story using the different pictures that are relevant (personal communication, December 22, 1992).

But there were problems with the introduction of the new technology. Spavin, seeing it from the journalistic perspective, is impatient with what he calls management's lack of spine. ENG was the province of the Cinetape group of workers, while sound film belonged to the Film Operations Group. He recalls the demarcation which resulted:

If you shot ENG, and you wanted to do some fancy editing, it had to be live fed to the Beehive, where cinetape staff were brought in in a little minibus each day. And they would do the editing for you, but then you weren't allowed to just feed it back into Petrocorp House into the newsroom, because we only had Film Operations Group sound recordists, who weren't considered skilled enough to record on a video tape machine. And so if you wanted something on an ENG cassette fed from Avalon to Petrocorp House, you put it in a taxi and drove it in. It was just so frustrating. And if you wanted to have graphics edited into your item you had to either walk across or line feed the video cassette over to the Beehive studio. It was like having a car when you had a driver, but if you wanted to turn a corner you had to stop, while someone else works the indicator for you and someone else has to start the car up for you. It was mad.

Furthermore, Pat Plunket said that because of industrial action, Auckland used a different method of handling ENG tape than Wellington. Auckland, where network news had originated since 1980, had its own problems. Television operations were spread over 14 buildings around Auckland, and for journalists that meant a newsroom on one side of the city and a studio on the other. Graeme Wilson (later General Manager Networks) told a favourite story in an interview on May 10, 1993:

I was editor at that period. News was desperately ill-equipped by any standards ... getting a good news service on air was very difficult in the circumstances of having to go from one side of the city to another. You would shoot film in the field, take it to Hargreaves Street for processing, bring it to Hobson Street for editing and then to Shortland Street for transmission. And the legend was - and it's not a myth - there was a very competent retired woman who used to walk across town with a leather shoulder bag containing the evening's news broadcast, and she did it really well. We even got her a pair of Reeboks!

Insiders then, draw a picture of an organisation bruised by political pressure, running on outdated equipment, "handcuffed" as one reporter described it by union practices, and somewhat hidebound in outlook and production. Certainly, some of the physical stresses of the system came through in the news programme. There were relatively frequent "glitches" on air. Cartoonists and satirists made much of the moments where Philip Sherry would introduce an item, gaze solemnly at the camera for a few seconds as no film appeared, then would pick up a phone handset, listen intently and then inform the audience that there was a technical problem and we would return to the item later. (This occurs once in the 1985 sample of bulletins selected for content analysis.)

5.4.1.2 News Management: Relative Decentralisation and Independence

However, there is another side to the story. Journalists testify to an independence and freedom within the job at that time and democratic debate about the best way to cover stories. As John Spavin explained:

The programme editor in Auckland and the programme editor in Wellington conversed on the phone in the morning, and between them said, "Here's what we'll do today", and off we went and did it. And the good thing about that was that people who had a bit of flair were

allowed to use it, not just in individual items but in looking at angles and whatever. But the bad thing was that if the Auckland editor was a bit scared of being light that night, he over-ordered.

Greg Smith said editors in each centre spoke separately with Auckland:

The role of the Wellington news editor at that stage was much more important. You could actually say, "No, as a news editor I believe this is not a goer", or "We must run this one". And while the ultimate control of the bulletin rested in Auckland, it could take a trip to the head of news to settle it out. The Auckland bulletin editor did not have the final authority to say, "You will do this". Or they never exercised it. It was much more a cooperative exercise.

Bill Alexander, as chief reporter in Wellington, said within the newsroom it was important not just to give orders:

You talk to them about how they should do it and get them help if they want help. But many reporters don't; they think they already know how to do it. It's a multi-way process at times, because sometimes the whole newsroom will sit round and say, "This is the way we should do this story" and "No, I don't agree with you". A lot of people don't realise that that goes on in newsrooms, but it did in ours, because it was relatively small, and we were close together.

According to former editor Pat Plunket, the Wellington system deliberately encouraged individual approaches because of political criticism going back to the Kirk era in 1972 that all television news reflected a single viewpoint. (Labour's experiment of two channels with independent news services, described in 5.5.1.3, was short-lived). But this encouragement of individualism, combined with confusing layers of management and lines of communication, could allow reporters more licence than was wise and this carried on right through the 1980s. He cited a case of two parliamentary reporters who supported rival camps in the Lange/Douglas split:

Now single control, in an editor who had banged their heads together and made them co-operate, would have been thanked. They both had information and were not pooling and were not reconciling with one another. We could have had the whole revelation of the split about two months before, in fact, it emerged.

A journalist working away from the major centres reported both through Wellington (to two different editors, for regional and network news) and direct to Auckland. He said he could play off the various enthusiasms and biases of the three editors to ensure an item was or was not covered, according to his own judgement. It is possible that the perceived timidity of management also encouraged such tactics.

Part of the strength, and consequent independence, of the Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin offices in relation to head office in Auckland was due to the regional news programmes. These 20 minute shows following the network news each had a different character and (with the generalised exception of Auckland's *Top Half*) had very high ratings.

There was a potential for competition, with the Network editors sometimes accusing editors of the regional programmes of "hiding good stories" from them. However, Frank Campbell (long-time chief reporter in Dunedin) dismissed this. In an interview (on February 2, 1995), he said reporters themselves had nothing to gain from hiding stories, as they welcomed the kudos gained from a network appearance. Moreover, editors of the regional news, with its "soft" features approach, were generally looking for something different from the network news. There is no doubt, though, that the interests of the two news programmes did at times clash. Partly to overcome this, some reporters were assigned predominantly to network coverage rather than local coverage. However, they generally still worked through a local editor who was striving to service both programmes, and that regionally-based editor could have a profoundly different outlook on the news values of certain stories and how they should be covered. For the reporters in the regions this was confusing but, for the strong minded, it allowed greater independence of action. For Auckland network news, the system would be viewed as a hindrance.

A picture of relative decentralisation emerges which, while encouraging individuality in journalistic approaches, could result in uncertainty and inconvenience for Auckland.

5.4.1.3 Auckland, Wellington and Political Dominance

Wellington's relationship with Auckland had another element. Broadcasting's news service had started in Wellington. In the early days of television, the news power-base was in the nation's political and financial capital, where the Corporation ran a combined radio and television newsroom. In 1975 there was a brief experiment, introduced by the Labour Government, of three news services within the Corporation: Radio New Zealand news, TV One news in Wellington, and Channel Two (South Pacific Television) news in Auckland. The two television news services were designed to compete with each other. Beatson (1994), who ran South Pacific Television News, said the heritage of this time lingered. The Auckland approach had to be different:

I said, "We can't beat Television One in terms of responsible and comprehensive news coverage; we don't have the resource to do it". We didn't even have a microwave link. "So we are going to become the bells and whistles and fire brigade ambulance chasing, down-in-the-gutter type news operation. And I'm going to build a spirit which says this is what we are going to do because that's how we are going to succeed against the competition. It's slow, but we'll eat them, because we are in the biggest market and we'll unashamedly go and chase it." And that was the thinking I encouraged people in Auckland to develop.

The separation of the two channels was ended in 1975 under pressure from Muldoon, when Television One had to prop up the financially ailing South Pacific. But Beatson, who left after the amalgamation, said the spirit of competition (of Auckland "against those bastards in Wellington") lived on.

By 1985, although the network news now originated in Auckland, the Wellington newsroom was still a dominant source of news. About 50 newswriters and support staff were stationed there. As Bill Alexander explained it:

We had the specialist reporters in Wellington: the economic roundsman, the industrial relations roundsman, agriculture. We had all these people in Wellington and of course there was no point having such specialists in Auckland, because they didn't really have the sources.

Journalists viewed the news of the mid eighties as highly political. Wellington journalists believed they dominated the news bulletin. The newsroom itself frequently put out 14 to 18 stories a day, many of them political, but others destined for the nightly regional news. Greg Smith:

Wellington in those days was supplying the bulk of the network bulletin. In one day alone we put 14 stories into a network bulletin. When you consider you are talking about a commercial forty minutes of news with commercial breaks with three minutes taken in each and you've got seven minutes of sport - you take the rest from Wellington! The news was very, very politically dominated then. The view in Wellington has always been that politics must dominate news, that politics generally affects everybody in the country, and it's political decisions that affect everybody. Therefore the public should be made aware of these.

John Spavin felt the political emphasis was sometimes misplaced:

They reached for a Minister too quickly when they should sometimes have gone to the source. If, for example, there was a bad crash on the motorway, they would say "Oh, let's get the Minister" Why? Let's get the families, and the cops, and the engineer who built the road, and the people who live by the road. But it was "Let's get the Minister", on any number of subjects.

Politics was therefore at the centre of differences among journalists about what should be in the news and how it should be covered. The debate was to get fiercer.

Altogether newswriters of the mid-eighties draw a complex picture. They felt politically pressured, especially in Wellington. Looking back, they see the news as unadventurous and the management hidebound. But they also report that journalists (outside Auckland, at least) did have freedom in the way they structured a story and could use their professional judgement. There is agreement that equipment was rundown and outdated, and reports that industrial practices slowed news production. There were also tensions between network news headquarters and other centres, particularly Wellington. Journalists had different attitudes to what makes news, and these seemed to reflect the Auckland-Wellington divide. It was a climate in which journalists were looking forward to change. Many reporters, remembering the rejuvenating effect of the introduction of private radio news in the 1970s, welcomed the advent of competition for television.

5.4.2 Newswriters from 1985 to August 1987: Styles and Divisions

The news was to be a central part of TVNZ's strategies to meet competition. Julian Mounter, with his background in news and current affairs, took a close interest in the product. And for Corporation chief executive Nigel Dick too, news was essential:

I've always believed that news is an absolute vital cornerstone in a television station's image. It's part of its identity and it's part of its heart and soul.

Paradoxically, then, although the news received a "new look" in 1987, many newswriters believed there was a lack of a clear philosophy, while those with differing approaches clashed but kept on their own way. It is clear in hindsight, though, that the "commercial, entertainment" approach to news was gaining ground.

While old-style Corporation hand Bruce Crossan was not shifted sideways until mid-1986, newsroom rumour had long said he was on the way out. The question was what style would his successor bring. In fact, news was in for a long interregnum. Ric Carlyon was to fill in for more than a year, until Paul Norris arrived from England in mid-1987. All respondents spoke highly of Carlyon, his loyalty and competence, but clearly he was not intended to take the news in new directions.

Julian Mounter's arrival from England in early 1986 gave certain signals to staff. As Neil Billington said, many felt he would bring in a BBC influence:

This was resented by some, who had never worked anywhere but in New Zealand. They felt it was a colonial imprint being foisted upon us...I did not mind particularly...it did really need reviving. And if it was to be along the lines of the BBC model I thought, given that there will be cultural nuances that will make us different from that, in general terms, the model nonetheless was a good one - for journalism certainly.

Mounter felt strongly that the news was not professional enough. He made it clear to staff that standards needed to be raised, as Greg Smith put it, "he went round complaining a lot about the shape of the news and that items weren't properly polished and so on". But deeper changes took a while. Many news staff felt "battles for

supremacy" at the top were taking precedence. One newsworker with an Australian background hoped the new management would bring more courage and imagination, but instead it brought stasis:

Dick seemed to be offering the prospect of "there's some stuff just over the ditch you can go and have a look at", but, of course, Mounter was from England, and so we weren't getting any further ahead.

Meanwhile, BCNZ decisions meant more resources from 1986 onward. More ENG equipment went to newsrooms in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch and equipment ordered for covering the Commonwealth Games also came their way. Newsrooms went on to computer technology. The Auckland Network Centre was to offer the latest in newsroom technology and, in 1987 and 1988, Christchurch facilities were upgraded.

Since the early 1980s, TVNZ had spent money to purchase satellite access, and this was to be a key item of expenditure in Mounter's era. Bill Alexander said that over the years, news values were imbibed and new techniques tried from the satellite feed:

We could see that overseas they had changed. There've been commentaries made overseas as to whether they've moved in the right direction, or whether they've become too much chasing fire engines and human interest and not enough informational role for the television news. So we were a bit late coming to that. As a small country we would have copied. But perhaps we wouldn't have gone as far as we have, if it hadn't been for the internal political struggle that developed here.

During this time, contenders for the warrants at the Tribunal hearings were outlining ambitious programming plans. At TVNZ newsworker level, there was a widespread optimism that regional news resources would be strengthened to match the regional emphasis required of private television. It was a hope never to be fulfilled.

5.4.2.1 News Values: Three Main Groupings

Results of interviews and long-term association with broadcasting journalists suggest there were three major approaches to news at TVNZ in this period. I have labelled

them the "old-style Kiwis", the "British public service advocates", and the "Auckland pragmatists".

The stronghold of old-style Kiwis was Wellington, but many were employed in the regions. They saw themselves as favouring a straight down the middle approach, letting the story tell and sell itself. Politics merited a serious approach with no frills. Lighter subjects rated a lighter approach where more "tricks of the trade" were appropriate. While they acknowledged the importance of overseas news, they wanted more resources placed in New Zealand coverage to bring light and shade to the news.

Bill Alexander and Pat Plunket represent this approach. As Bill Alexander said:

We had a slightly different attitude in New Zealand. Like the newspapers here, they tend to be more serious. I always believed that in New Zealand we were more serious about our political input and our informational role.

Pat Plunket's view was:

They talk about picture stories. Well for me a story either is or isn't. As a story, it may lend itself to particularly interesting visual treatment or it may not. But it is still, because of its importance, its significance and where it fits in the fabric of our lives, it can still be a very important story, even if it is not visual.

The other groups tended to regard this approach as old-fashioned. Those attuned to the visual values of television felt this group were dominated by a newspaper or a radio approach and that their stories lacked flair and interest. Those who subscribed to a British public service approach felt the old-style Kiwis were parochial and not always "professional". As Schlesinger (1987) points out, BBC "professionalism" is often enshrined in exact timing and smoothness of delivery. While many among the old-style Kiwis were both experienced and able, those with different news values felt that they had not moved with the times.

The overseas (largely British) public service approach attracted fewer advocates, but some were in influential positions. Their push was for more overseas news, more

analysis of political and economic subjects, and at the same time a greater emphasis to be put on presentation and excitement within serious subjects. Neil Billington epitomises this group:

Those three years at the BBC had quite an important influence upon me, because it made me realise that there was an important quality of professionalism to journalism which made it justifiable, not just as a good job to work in, but as a role which has important political and social consequences.

For this group, new graphics opened the way to presenting abstract and important but unexciting events in a more interesting way. Billington favoured the ITN style, which showed that "in England you could still have a vigorous journalistic approach to presenting news". Paul Norris, when he arrived in late 1987, was at first a strong supporter of this approach. Such advocates were a definite minority, distrusted by both groups who saw them as outsiders and intellectuals, not in touch with the audience or the country.

The core of the third group, the Auckland pragmatists, had been trained in Auckland's South Pacific Television. They were strongly influenced by the Australian style (with some roots in American local television). Their desire was for more human interest and less politics, shorter items and a more upbeat approach. They gained more influence as the study years progressed, and their style dominated by 1989. Two 1988 appointees, Shaun Brown, editor of news, and Paul Cutler, editor of the mid-evening news bulletin, were central adherents of this philosophy. John Spavin who remained with TVNZ until 1994, supports their news style:

It's ten times better now in informing and being relevant than it was ten years ago. I think of serving up sandwiches with two inch thick bread and a bit of butter slapped on - or nice little club sandwiches. It's not the subject, it's how it's done. And even though you are doing a minute ten now on a story that once may have been three minutes, I thought I was giving people more in the minute ten than I used to be in three minutes - boring them.

The first two groups distrusted each other so strongly that there was no chance of their seeing that they were potential allies. It is perhaps idle to speculate that Norris might

have formed a power base with Wellington, if both sides could have seen what they had in common. Instead, Auckland pragmatists, in the position of strength, with strong personalities and a clear approach backed by a commercial drive towards entertainment-oriented television, won the day.

Well into the study period, the outcome of the news values clash remained unclear, although Bill Alexander said the Wellington newsroom was facing increasing pressure during 1987:

It was just a matter of time before the regional output and the Wellington output reduced substantially, because it was clear that that was what Auckland wanted. They'd made that clear in all the conferences that they held... that they were unhappy with the Wellington output. It didn't suit the type of news - that they said they wanted. They kept saying "Look, your items are too boring; they're too political; they're too corridors-of-power stuff." And we said, "Well, if you don't like the items, don't take them in your bulletin." And that used to get the Auckland people really angry, because they didn't have the kind of input or the type of bulletin structure that would allow them to fill the bulletin from Auckland. So they had to rely on our material although they didn't like it, and they made that very, very clear.

5.4.2.2 The 1987 New Look News

For the audience, the first visible sign of change was the new look news of 1987. It was immediately a bone of contention between Dick and Mounter. Dick felt that Mounter had acted without consulting and without considering local needs and wishes:

I woke up one morning to discover that Philip Sherry had been dropped and the news presentation was changing. I felt that that was not only something that should have been discussed with me as chief executive of the Corporation, but I also felt it was something that at least the Board should have been advised about. Both things were nasty shocks. And I had been around regional television and Australian television long enough to know that it's not what I as a broadcaster thought should be the personalities who succeed; it's what the local community thinks.

There were public grumbles and letters to the editor about the loss of the very popular Philip Sherry. However, if not all the public were ready for the change of style, many

in the newsroom welcomed the presentation changes and the emphasis on professionalism. Improved graphics capability meant they could tell their stories better. But there was still the question of what story the news was to tell. Everyone in the newsroom was using the same language, saying that news should be both informative and entertaining, and that it offered a public service. But their approaches differed.

It was both election year and the year of the stockmarket crash and the analyses in Chapters Seven and Nine show that the 1987 news signalled both an increased emphasis on the analytical and political *and* on the human interest and entertainment. The set and music were more up-beat. The authoritative, silver-haired Sherry was gone, to be replaced by a duo in the tradition of American local news, with its chatty style. The signal that TVNZ had not adopted the full American local news model was that one of the new duo was Neil Billington, with a firm commitment to the BBC style and established as a "serious" journalist. He said newswriters with access to new technology and exposed to new techniques on the satellite feeds were ready to try something new. The 1987 news, he believed, represented a chance to try out the best of the overseas approaches:

I did gain understanding from those that I was working to, that I would be able to work as a journalist in presenting the news. I would have the liberty to write and re-write scripts, for example. And also when certain key events occurred over the news day that there would be the opportunity to do short live interviews. This is very similar to the ITN style of news presentation, particularly Channel Four, which is a more extended news programme. We could make the presentation of news much more journalistic, as was clearly the case in ITN.

However, he said his view was not shared by others in Auckland:

They had more of the old small town view of news reporting. Exciting stories were the fire engine stories and things like that. They didn't like the intellectual aspect that might be associated with news and current affairs. And their view of the new technology was that it simply made the whole process of news gathering more exciting. These things weren't necessarily seen simply as tools to increase our facility for getting across information. The story wasn't covered as it should have been, even though a lot of effort had gone into the dressing up of the story, the graphics and things of that sort. So we weren't necessarily being better journalists.

At the same time, Billington said, because of the lack of leadership he was able to exert influence:

It was possible for someone like myself - in what was perhaps the most important and certainly the most widely watched programme - to exert a change which would have an effect on that programme. I would push for us to do certain sorts of stories and to perhaps have a live interview. And the editor would say, "Yes that's a good idea. Let's do it." Now this was not in accordance with any sort of overall direction which the programme was meant to be achieving. We kind of muddled. But then others on the programme said, "We don't like to do things that way, we will do it this way". And so then the programme began to take on a different sort of character the day after, or the weeks after.

As the year advanced, it became increasingly clear to Billington that his view was not gaining ground, and he was without support. The appointment of Paul Norris as head of news and current affairs in mid 1987 gave him brief hope, but it was to prove a delusion.

5.4.3 Newsworkers August 1987 to December 1988: Commercial Style Dominates

When Paul Norris was finally appointed, his BBC background seemingly heralded a shift back to British public service values in the news. But if that was Norris's agenda, he failed to make any headway. There was little support for such an approach in Auckland, and the "old-style Kiwis" in Wellington were scornful. Greg Smith said the news had been swinging towards the American style - "a short sound bite wrapped up with pictures" - when Norris espoused a return to two minute interviews. He tells what may be an apocryphal story:

There was a satellite track came in on an attack in a Belfast graveyard where someone threw a hand grenade and killed the mourners. *Panorama* [BBC's nightly current affairs programme] that night opened up their bulletin on it with a three or four minute interview in the studio, and then moved to about a minute's worth of pictures on the event. And Norris went around hailing this as very, very good television, which to us was just horrifying. I mean you start with the pictures and show the people what's happening before you talk about it.

In terms of news management style, Crossan's approach had been held as direct and at times domineering. Carlyon, as interim controller, was regarded as reasonable and approachable, but his strategy was, of necessity, "hold-the-line". Norris, in his turn, was viewed by several as a rather shadowy figure. Pat Plunket said centralised control strengthened with Norris, but he was not accessible:

He never at any stage gave me a picture of his views of the future of the news service; what its strengths and weaknesses were. And I tried. I was very direct with him at times. He seemed to avoid those sort of contacts.

Billington had entertained hopes that Norris would "reassert basic journalistic principles". Initially, he said, Norris "applauded anything that reminded him of his English experience", but that he was "not the most decisive of bosses" and spent a lot of time trying to assess his new environment. Billington said ratings increased throughout 1987 from about 500,000 viewers in 1986, to up to a million on exceptional nights in 1987.

There may be some virtue in saying, well perhaps we were on the right path because we did increase the audience so substantially... But I felt that we were departing quite frequently from broadcasting principles, or certainly journalistic principles, in our desire to increase audience. We saw increasing the audience as almost the only measure aside from perhaps a degree of public controversy about some item that we broadcast. Public response, whether it was shown in surveys, or telephone calls to the station, letters to the editor, or critical comment in the newspapers from so-called reviewers. Those things should be surely somewhat incidental to what you are doing. In the end, they became the major reason for what we were doing. It seemed we were losing sight of why we were producing a news and current affairs programme.

Two other appointments followed in early 1988, which journalists felt had a greater effect on the direction of news than Norris's. Shaun Brown became editor for all TVNZ's news programmes, and EyeWitness producer Paul Cutler was appointed as editor of the 6.30 news. At the time, Cutler (in van Wetering, 1988) told the *Evening Post* his approach would be to cover fewer stories at greater depth and encourage reporters to approach stories from many different angles. There would also be a move to cover stories best covered by television, "The 6.30 news should be a programme of event rather than record... our effort should be for more rounded, more qualitative

items than perhaps in the past" (p.20). The article also said new systems to be put in place by May included more story producers, whose job it is to support and act as a sounding board for reporters.

One newsworker who had welcomed the "general cleaning out" found the new appointments disturbing:

It started to occur to me there was going to be a new sort of old boys network set up instead of the old boys network that we were getting rid of. Mounter had worked with Norris, Norris had worked with Shaun Brown, and Shaun Brown had worked with Paul Cutler when Paul Cutler had been in England, on one of the learning trips that they seemed to go on. So, while we were getting a younger and more vibrant team to run it, it wasn't in my book necessarily healthy the way it was shaping up in Auckland again.

The feeling among journalists was that Norris swiftly lost a battle for his news style. Greg Smith described him as "undercut" by Brown. And Billington, who left network news presentation in late 1987, said Norris asked him to stay on, saying he needed people like him:

He, I think, recognised he wasn't going to be capable of introducing what he thought Television New Zealand should be doing, unless there were to some extent like-minded people. And I was demonstrably one of them. But what eventually dawned on him was that people like me ... were in a relative minority in the organisation and not in positions of great influence or power. Power, I would say, was more particularly in the hands of producers or editors, and almost none of them that I could recall held views that he might have held, or I held, about what television journalism should be about. Any people like that had long since gone.

From Wellington it was perceived that the real shift in centralisation and directives given from Auckland came with the appointment of Shaun Brown. Greg Smith said they received more resources, and at the same time the number of requests for Wellington stories dropped abruptly, from ten or more down to about five. Several newsworkers commented on what they perceived as Brown's autocratic style. Greg Smith explained how decision-making became more centralised:

At half past eight or nine o'clock there would be a news conference by telephone round the country with the four main centres and Shaun. In that you put up all the story ideas of the day, and theoretically the news editors were meant to structure the news bulletin and talk about what they were going to cover, but in practice Shaun Brown sat there and said "This is the lead, this is what will come next" and so on down the bulletin.

According to Pat Plunket, increasing pressure put on programme editors for a polished product, meant an increasing tendency to become locked into a structure earlier and earlier in the day, undermining the traditions of hard news. John Spavin, however, approved the new meeting style introduced by Norris and Brown:

You had the input of half a dozen people on what the angle should be - the chief reporter in Auckland, chief reporter here, programme editor here, programme editor Auckland and head of news in Auckland (the titles change but it's still Shaun Brown). This is much better - much more professional. I know exactly what is expected of me and why.

Gradually, he said, the system did become "dictatorial", although he still judges it a better approach. Spavin also liked the new directives:

I no longer got "Oh, you'd better get the Minister". Now we got "That's a good angle, people are worried about this. Let's get the Minister, but don't forget that as well you've got people that are affected by it". So it was better. They were thinking finally in TV terms. The way I'd always thought.

But others, like Greg Smith, were critical:

He [Brown] viewed news in terms of what was easily identifiable. This was the murder, fire, rape, disaster syndrome. So if you had a good rape, you could lead the news with it. He also concentrated that idea on Auckland.

Meanwhile, technological improvements continued. In March 1988, final touches were put to the new electronic news network for BCNZ, which linked the major centres. The ultra-modern Auckland newsroom began operating in mid-year.

On 23 July 1988, the 6.30 news was shifted to 6 o'clock. At the same time, a new-look weather segment with more exciting graphics was launched. New weather presenters Jim Hickey and Penelope Barr were based in Auckland and given a star billing. Some viewers, naturally, objected to the earlier news slot. TVNZ replied it was in response to demand, although commentators speculated the change was linked to TV3's intention to run news at 6 o'clock and to the concept of pulling viewers in early to a channel so they would stay with it the whole evening. The earlier news was part of the new season's television, which included shifting the late *EyeWitness* TV2 news across to One, tightening it and bringing it forward to 9.30. This strengthened the "information channel" image for TV One.

In October 1988, overseas news correspondents were appointed; one in Sydney and a European correspondent based in London. This was a move TVNZ had long contemplated and would give it a significant advantage over TV3, at that stage planning to go to air in mid 1989.

In 1988, consultants from the United States began visiting TVNZ to shape up the news for commercial competition. Atkinson (1994a) says the team consisted of Fred Shook, professor of broadcast journalism at Colorado State University, Bill Brown and Barry Nash of Media and Marketing Incorporated in Dallas, and Ron Atkinson, an audience research specialist based in Minnesota. Brown's speciality, according to Atkinson, was "promotional strategy and bulletin window dressing", while Nash was retained to work on the on-camera appearance and voice performance of news and weather presenters and performers. Ron Atkinson helped non-journalistic staff to improve viewer research, and Fred Shook, who returned regularly for several years, worked with journalists.

5.4.3.1 Stepping Back from Commitment to the Regions

Financial difficulties at TV3 were pushing back the starting date and threatening the regional development which had been a crucial element of its warrant. The deregulated market and the new legislation were now effectively removing requirements and expectations for regionalism. The new warrant tendering system and the prospect of a number of private regional stations would also allow broadcasters to shrug off

regional responsibility. Regional television within the national network, a burden for both state-owned and private broadcasters, could be left on the shelf for TV3 and allowed to fade quietly away in the case of TVNZ.

Graeme Wilson said TVNZ had to choose between the regional route or the national route. A strong regional network could never have been put together:

If you decide to go down the regional television route, you don't actually achieve it, because ownership and control is as important as artificial setting up of little satellite operations all over the country within a national umbrella organisation. The local community ought to own and control the regional station. That's how it really works.

He said, however, that the emphasis on regional development only began to fade when the shape of the new Broadcasting Act became clear. He believes TVNZ understood its implications before TV3:

They had trapped themselves, almost fixed themselves, in a mindset which said the regional route was the way they were going to do it, and they took a long time to adjust out of that.

In 1988, plans to revamp the national news and to shift the regional news to Channel Two were being discussed in the press, but not confirmed by TVNZ. In fact, Pat Plunket said, the writing was clearly on the wall for the regional news quite early on.

The only effective way of cutting costs was to get rid of people, and the only effective way of getting rid of people was to remove the duplication of the regional programmes. TV1 in stringent times previously had cut back on local content. It was the tried and true solution ... So as far as I was concerned, from 1987, I knew the regional programmes would go, even if the management didn't know, because the realities of their situation hadn't yet arrived to them. This is where the cuts had always been made, this was the most politically acceptable thing.

As TVNZ made the transition to TVNZ Ltd, the regional news was definitely under threat. Many in the newsroom suspected change was coming, and those most closely involved with regional news programmes were beginning to worry about their jobs. However, the danger of job loss was far more immediate for those in programme production than in news.

5.4.4 TVNZ Ltd: The New News Hour and the Death of Regional News

Rumours of a new look in the 6 pm to 7 pm news slot were rife by the beginning of 1989. As the highest rating show for TVNZ, it was bound to take the brunt of competitive pressure, and TV3 had been fairly open about its plans for a broadly appealing news hour. In mid-March, the official announcement was made. The Network News was to be reduced to half an hour and the other half hour filled with a new current affairs magazine show, fronted by rising star Paul Holmes.

Regional news programmes would be shifted to Channel 2 at 5.50 and reduced from 11 to just over 8 minutes. The reason given was "to halt declining viewing figures and to prepare for competition with TV3" (van Wetering, 1989c, p.12). In the same article, Shaun Brown said they would be tightening up the Network News bulletin: "There is just a little fat at the moment" (p.12). He denied the changes were a response to TV3's plans for a youth-oriented, fast-moving package. The plan was to attract younger viewers, while retaining high viewing figures among those aged 40 and older.

Holmes, previously a top radio talkback host, had proved his television skills in a positively reviewed summer interview show. The half hour *Holmes* show was to be well resourced, with eight or nine reporters (five in Auckland, two to three in Wellington and two in Christchurch). In the South Island particularly, the change was seen to be a drawback, and Holmes told the *Christchurch Press* that he saw the programme as expanding rather than replacing current TV coverage. "We're committed to being a programme that goes everywhere...The challenge is to make it exciting. If it can, I'd like it to be unpredictable; I would occasionally like it to make people angry; to move them" (Airey, 1989, p.18).

Within a week, the strongly-promoted show fulfilled its promise of making people angry. On the second night of broadcast, *Holmes* consisted of an interview with an ex-psychiatric patient who had several times "confessed" to the murder of a missing teenaged girl, an item on an elderly "cat woman" and, to cap it off, a provocative interview with American yachtsman Dennis Conner which resulted in his walkout (closely filmed by conveniently prepositioned cameras). There was an enormous public uproar, a reputed 600 calls to TVNZ (with only three favouring Holmes) and huge press

coverage of the incident. The PSA's vice-president, Bernard McDavitt, said Holmes's "electronic freak show" was typical of deregulated market-driven television. He claimed many journalists felt humiliated by the commercialised "lowest common denominator" journalism being pushed by their employers. "The old standards of public broadcasting will no longer apply in privatised television and it is the public who will ultimately suffer" ("Holmes' tactics...", 1989, p.3.). Letters to the paper and reviews were uniformly critical, except the *National Business Review's* Paul Smith, who said it was good interviewing, and that Holmes had asked the question persistently (Smith, 1989).

Among all this, one can only assume that the programmers were happy. *Holmes* was instantly notorious. The new approach to current affairs was on everyone's lips. Graeme Wilson, in a letter to the editor in the *Auckland Star* on April 7, described critical response as "extravagant". He pointed out that the Holmes Show was not the only TVNZ current affairs programme and said that Eyewitness continued to provide daily current affairs "of the traditional type". He concludes:

The *Auckland Star's* definition of journalism cannot be so narrow and stuffy as to exclude this provocative new contribution because Paul Holmes failed to meet the paper's standard of deference in questioning one of the toughest operators in a no-holds-barred sport (Wilson, 1989).

Smith (1996b) concurs. Holmes's talents, he says, make him a natural target of the "clobbering machine" but his programme with its "superb reporting team" broke new ground each night even though the coverage often "skidded over the surface of issues" (p.134).

The network news, too, was receiving some adverse comment. The *Auckland Star's* TV critic, Doug Coutts, was particularly cutting about the interaction between presenters Richard Long and Judy Bailey:

The presenters on Network News are so cosy, sometimes it's like watching Leeza and Rob on *Entertainment This Week*. But then this is Happy Talk News, where Judee and Ritch are encouraged to chuckle and quip and smile while everyone else's hearts are breaking. Fortunately Happy Talk has gone out of fashion overseas, where news editors have realised there's nothing intrinsically humorous in stories about murder,

starvation and massive oil spills. So, knowing how closely TVNZ follows overseas trends, we're stuck with the Bobbsey Twins for another 10 years at least." (Coutts, 1989).

However, such shots across the bow did not faze TVNZ management. The strongly promoted package was doing well in the ratings; they could dismiss the criticisms as being from an elitist minority.

Meanwhile, the old style regional news was fading gently on Channel Two. While Shaun Brown had denied the shift was a "resting place" for the regional items, it was widely perceived by staff to be just that. Journalists who supported the regional news were devastated, and among these the view was that the shift was "tantamount to killing it". Regional news programmes on TV One had substantial ratings especially in Christchurch, Dunedin, the Manawatu and, to a lesser extent, Wellington. In the first three areas, audiences for the regional news clearly rivalled that of the network news segment, consistently the top-rating programme. Of the four regional programmes, only Auckland was regularly well below the ratings for the network segment. But on TV2, regional news would be unlikely to regain audience levels of any significance.

In early 1989, layoffs of regional staff were reported in Dunedin, where three *South Tonight* reporters and three production staff were laid off, while another moved to Christchurch. Jack McClenaghan, in the *Christchurch Star*, claimed TVNZ resources were now concentrated in Auckland, and that the local news staff had been "decimated by 'voluntary' retirements and redundancies". He added, "Soon there will not be the resources to compile a worthwhile local programme, because these are being depleted to the point where only a skeleton staff exists. Also regional news is nothing without personalities and now they are all but gone." (McClenaghan, 1989). In March, Christchurch's new station manager, David Howell (up from Dunedin), took over the station which had recently lost 90 people through redundancies, redeployment and early retirement and was now reduced to 150, the same size as Dunedin. Howell was reluctant to give assurances about newsfeed to network and continuation of network news. "I can't give you any guarantees because constraints are placed on us by the network operations. What we do is attempt to influence the amount of time made available to us." (Hay, 1989).

The Auckland and Wellington regional news programmes disappeared at the end of 1989 while the *Mainland Touch* and the *South Tonight* lingered on for another year, as magazine programmes running three to five times a week on TV One at 5.45 and funded by NZOA.

5.4.4.1 Newsroom Debates

The controversies surrounding Holmes, and the new approach evident in the network news fuelled debate and disagreement in the newsroom about news content and values. At this stage too, more newswriters were coming into contact with the overseas consultants. Dallas consultant Bill Brown's bulletin strategy and promotion work was largely over before the new news package was launched. His partner, Barry Nash, was a more controversial figure, according to Atkinson (1994a), although his ten day visit to Auckland in early February to spruce up news presenters was apparently received favourably. Toni McRae (1989) says he worked with Richard Long, Judy Bailey, Tom Bradley, Angela D'Audney, Ric Salizzo, Louise Pagonis, Richard Brechts and Nicola Salmond. While she received little comment from Nash and none from Paul Norris, McRae reports in the *Sunday Star*:

The consultant was warmly received by his subjects, largely because they felt that at last the TVNZ hierarchy was allowing them to relax more on air. Said one: "He was very positive about what we were trying to do and into freedom and informality". Nash told presenters US research showed people chose between channels not always because of news content, but more because of the manner in which the presenters related to one another.

Professor Shook conducted sessions with most journalists in the lead-up to competition. Atkinson (1994a) praises his teaching techniques, describing him as "highly knowledgeable about the complex business of television news story and bulletin construction" (p.96). Shook and Brown, he said, earned plaudits from many of those with whom they worked. While journalists interviewed for the study had no quarrel with Shook's technical competence, some in Wellington, at least, questioned his news values:

He did help our reporters. He allowed them to see a better way of putting stories together with a bit more immediacy and relating the pictures to the story a bit more. So technically that was good. But as for the general philosophy, well that's another question.

Plunket dismissed his approach as "American provincial". Others were concerned that his method, which required a "commitment" (a pithy statement about the core news angle or theme of the story) from the journalist before leaving the office was inflexible. It was considered inappropriate for developing hard news stories, in a country which used little back-up research. One journalist called it "a classic journalistic disaster". Another complained that the formal commitment, and consequent expectations from editors about the final shape of the story, pressured journalists into ignoring later evidence in interviews, if it did not line up with the original story angle.

A newsworker describes a seminar with Shook, where a series of demonstration items were shown. One story, he said, made him realise he had no place in the new system:

A cyclone had swept through a Southern coastal state, wiping out three shacks on a rural hillside. We were shown them and told that, of three generations of inhabitants, only one, the father, had survived. Two black men came into shot, picking through the flattened wreckage. One is our star reporter, the other an oldish, poorly dressed man, obviously a local. We see in tight closeup, the tears as he digs a framed photograph out of the rubble. We look over his shoulder at the portrait of a young girl ... his daughter. To an accompaniment of weeping noises in the background, we look up the hill to where his ancient mother met her death alone. Then, in graphic detail, the reporter elicits how the lone survivor *feels*.

When the item ended, I blurted out that I did not do that sort of thing to people. Professor Shook explained that the old man had agreed to the interview. I replied that I wouldn't even ask anyone to do such a thing.

Five years later, the newsworker says he still feels disgust "at the way TV news demeans victims of tragedy, just to pander to voyeuristic impulses in the audience". This can in fact be viewed as a double exploitation, as the stories of victims are often followed up in greater depth and emotional intensity during *Holmes* following the Network news.

But John Spavin sees the changes entirely differently:

Fred Shook was hired as a consultant and, to my mind, just speaks common sense. If you've got a picture story, then write to your pictures. If you are going to see a truck, don't talk about a tree, talk about a truck. Tell me why I'm seeing the truck and why it's relevant. Particularly people who were recruited from radio ... they were proud they could gather 50 facts and shove them all into the story. Whereas we are arguing now, put seven facts in the story. The rest are a waste of time. Go and work for a newspaper if you want to put all that in and write a thousand words.

Moreover, Spavin said, bringing in contracts, getting rid of demarcation actions, and tighter checking on reporters to make them "more accountable" were big steps forward. But the "decision of the decade" was to ensure tape editors and camera operators worked full-time for news, not on rotation from other areas like drama:

The cameramen were given cars to take home and their own camera. That was their camera to look after, and they were people who worked on news because they wanted to work on news, not because *Country Calendar* wasn't shooting for a month.

As a result, he said, the pace and filmic quality of the news was hugely improved.

Despite such positive moves, the changing news values kept tensions between Auckland and Wellington at a simmering point. Early in 1989, Pat Plunket was told he would no longer have any responsibility for the news department. He left (after protracted negotiations for a voluntary severance package) in September. Ian Smith, widely viewed as sympathetic to the Auckland approach, was brought in. However, Bill Alexander said, it was not long before Ian Smith began to realise the effect of the news style on political coverage:

So a lot of arguments would occur over the black box; a lot of sarcasm would pass backwards and forwards. And if you made the wrong kind of political comment you'd get told off. Wow - from on high, too, because they had one of the top guys sitting at the other end ruling the roost. So we went through this. It was not a nice situation, as the philosophy and content was changing. It wasn't nice to be on the losing end and trying to do your job and put in more informational stories.

One editor, who had welcomed competition, new technology and ridding television of the "tired old brigade", says a great opportunity was missed because no-one stopped to think what TVNZ would have to offer to capture and maintain the audience and what elements of the news service would be required to achieve it:

They opted for what I think was the wrong choice; crime and fire engines. We would have morning conference calls and, obviously in Wellington, we offered up a mini-smorgasbord of political and business offerings. And I will always maintain that people are interested in politics, and I think that recently that's been shown to be pretty accurate.

They would quite clearly say "No, no, it's too much politics. We need more action." So they shied away from good solid stories, which *can* be presented well on television and *do* attract viewers, to the blood and guts and the fire engine chasing. I don't think they have yet climbed out of that.

The climate in the newsrooms in 1989 and 1990, according to another journalist, was ideal for producing hyped-up items. Competition was rife and not only from TV3. As the newshole (both for network and regional news) shrank, journalists (and stations) became pitted against each other, striving to get their items on air. Combine this with editors demanding items with more punch, and you had a dangerous atmosphere for fair and balanced news. Such pressures might account for the trends noted in TVNZ news in a separate study. Such factors as the use of unsupported assertions, the use of emotional language, being unfair to someone in a news story, and imbalance caused by unequal treatment by the interviewer reached a peak in 1990; then declined in 1992 and 1994 (McGregor & Comrie, 1995).

Not surprisingly, there is debate about how much "fat" could be trimmed from the newsroom. Most believe there was overstaffing, which was naturally exacerbated when the programmes were shortened. Plunket said, though, certainly until 1987-1988 there was, if anything, a shortage of staff:

I worked out ratios of reporter, crews and time on air. We were putting out up to 16 items a day out of Wellington. We were adequately resourced. We had driven hard to ensure that ratios were adequate. There was an establishment of 50. That included everybody ... film editors, camera crews. At its top level there were 32 journalistic staff, including myself and programme editors. It's down to four or five now.

But, you see, they're not putting out 16 items a day. And we also had staff on for the late news; we were doing seven days a week cover. We instituted a system of hiring casuals at the weekend, because the rates were lower, which is still used. Our method of editing was adopted because it was more economic. We just watched the pennies. You had to cut your cloth according to the money that came in. And it was simple, as long as they reduced minutes on air, they could reduce staff.

Bill Alexander, however, felt staff could have been trimmed by about a third, especially as the demand for political items dropped. Spavin, who worked well on past the change period, spoke of "people coming out of our ears" and of those who spent four days working on a feature. From 1990, the newsroom no longer had specialist reporters with their rounds, although, as Spavin said, journalists still have "areas of interest". To him, this fits well with the new way of doing things:

We don't do strikes any more. We used to do every strike. We would do a three minute item on the Federation of Labour annual conference, and a minute-15 of that was a piece to cam. And we used to do the opening of Parliament, and a look ahead at the Bills coming up. We did everything then, two or three minutes long. Most of them pieces to cam because there was no way of illustrating them. I defy anyone to remember those stories 10 minutes later, rather than five years ... So we needed more people, because we were doing that, and we needed people who knew the round and knew the people involved in the round. It's a different emphasis now. You don't need somebody who puts out one story every four days, because they are not looking for that any more; they are looking for the story of the day.

The direction of the corporate culture and the news values which went along with it were now very clear to newswriters. Some journalists were enthusiasts for the change. Others accepted it with equanimity, working to adapt to the new style:

I remember the era came in where we were talking about "crafting" stories rather than just writing stories. It would be so easy just to report a story, which was what I had always done. *Crafting* was a whole new ball game; trying to make a picture story speak ... It was something that I struggled with here for a while.

Basically, it was a honing-down the ability to speak simply even further. It involved looking at a picture and saying something off the wall ... Instead of saying there was a large fire causing X thousand dollars worth of damage, you would say something like "It wasn't just a fire ..." If you watch *Cheers* and listen to the script, it's pretty smart and clever. The same sort of stuff was coming into stories, you were becoming a gifted script writer.

They are looking for the more quirky story, definitely the more odd-ball story. But they are also looking for action, mayhem, disaster on a massive scale. If you can have a fire that shows flames, well you can get it on. If you can't show flames, well you can't get it on any more.

Others, some more highly placed, objected strongly and fought openly:

I made immense pressure for myself, I suppose, by arguing constantly that people were going to be more interested in something from Parliament which affected everyone throughout the country than another murder in Auckland that really didn't affect anybody but a few people perhaps in Auckland. There are exceptions. Don't misunderstand me. A good crime story such as we had in Wellington last week [the "assassination" style killings of the Thomas brothers] - it makes good copy. But rapes, murders; it just became really a crime bulletin on some occasions.

So I did create immense pressure on myself by constantly arguing with them as to what the content of the bulletin should be. And I suppose I had some success, but even I in retrospect see that it was diminishing all the time. The more the Auckland choice of story was contested, the more resolute they would become that they just wanted to do it. I used to champion the cause of the South Islanders, because I probably felt they had more clout in Wellington than they did in ever-diminishing numbers down there. They would back off far more readily than me. I would often pick up the cudgels for them if they had a regional story and argue the toss on their behalf as well.

One journalist used more indirect means to avoid covering stories he found distasteful:

There was one they wanted - biased, inaccurate and racist in slant - about pig sticking in [a small town]. I'd checked it, it was wrong, it wasn't news. But I was told to go ahead. I came back to them later and just lied and said I couldn't get hold of people or they wouldn't speak.

Covering another story, culled from a British tabloid about an "affair" Prince Edward (then teaching at Wanganui Collegiate) was allegedly having with a 16 year-old schoolgirl, he said:

We went to her house. The family was there. I knocked on the door, and ensuring the microphone wasn't going, shouted loudly "Please don't come to the door. We're from television, but I have to have it on film that I've tried." Of course, they [management] suspected I was

sabotaging such stories, so they punished me by sending someone up from Wellington to cover the decent stories. But by that stage we all knew that I would be one of the ones to go in May.

The May 1990 redundancies cleared out a number of the older style of journalists. Interviewees said generally the redundancies were handled well. One believed that often reporters knew they had no place in the new culture and that the SOE met its obligations honourably (except for a brief flurry about the taxability of holiday pay) and tried to soften the blow by a farewell party and gifts. The months leading up to May, when a number of journalists were laid off, and many more left voluntarily, were a depressing time in Wellington. With the end of the regional news, a number of reporters were quite literally redundant. Spavin spoke of the drop in morale as regional news was first cut back and then dropped:

I could look across the newsroom and see ten people there, and I had two stories on that day. No one said it, but we all knew that you just can't do that. And I suppose, when they were laid off, some of those were ones that we had complained about for years under our breath. People would have felt guilty about it and they would have thought, "They shouldn't have laid them off should they. But thank goodness he's gone." They were selective about who they put off. And after that, morale picked up because we were a smaller tighter team and we were putting out a much better bulletin. And the ones who were left were the ones who had arisen from about 84 on, who wanted to write television stories. Most had gone already from the old days, but those who were still left were from the bureaucratic side of it rather than on-the-road reporters. So I think morale did rise gradually after that.

Auckland's newsroom, Spavin said, does not have the same morale, because of its bigger size, and he described the South Island as "utterly gutted". For all journalists though, new working conditions and contracts have made a difference:

We went off staff onto contract, and you just work until the job's done. So I used to leave home at 7.30 in the morning, and I got home at about quarter to eight, eight o'clock at night. And I used to work really hard at work, because I was a bureaucrat as well as a "hands on" editor. So I was getting pretty tired, and a lot of reporters would work from 8 or 8.30 in the morning, and we'd want their story for the late bulletins, so they were still there at 9 o'clock at night, some of them. And they didn't get the compensating time off. There is a bit of a carrot and stick. The carrot is the extra salary, but everyone still remembers that when the

contract comes up for renewal, they might say, "We're not going to renew it". There's nervousness two months before your contract comes up ... But other than that, their mood depends on us doing good work and breaking stories.

By the end of 1990, dissenting voices, in Wellington at least, had gone. The new style of news was well established, and TVNZ's approach was vindicated, as the network news left TV3's well behind in the ratings and continued to dominate the top five positions.

The bulletin style and the presenters introduced in April 1989 were to prove durable. The format remained relatively unchanged until the beginning of 1995, when a new hour-long network bulletin was introduced, still fronted by Richard Long and Judy Bailey. Holmes was shifted to 7 pm, where his ratings slipped from the top five, which he had always shared with network news, to far lower in the top 20 programmes.

5.4.5 Newswriters Assess the Changes

Among journalists interviewed, there is strong disagreement about whether changes between 1985 to 1990 were for the better or for the worse. Those who speak of "journalistic values", the majority of whom left or were made redundant in 1990, see the changes as damaging. Those who talk of "television values" and continued to work for TVNZ regard them as improvements.

A key change affecting news style and content during the study period was growing centralisation and control in Auckland. To Spavin, this was good, resulting in a more unified bulletin and in erring journalists called to tasks for mistakes. However, others saw a narrowing of focus, as one editor says:

The great bulk of the resources went into Auckland, and the regional centres became just servicing centres for what Auckland saw as the product they wanted to put out each night.

All agree that the network news looks much better, and the visual quality of stories has improved; Chapter Nine analyses these changes. But the question to be asked is

whether this has been at the expense of quality of content. Plunket sees the preoccupation from Auckland as being on improving appearance and packaging, rather than content. One editor talks about the news becoming a matter of "timed segments". All respondents agreed the shape of the bulletin, the angle of the news and the camera treatment were all decided increasingly early in the day. Much less was left to the judgement of the reporter on the road. Several respondents believed that as a result, the news had become less responsive, less likely to cover breaking stories. As one put it, TVNZ missed a great opportunity when the ENG equipment was used to "upgrade studio production and not newsgathering":

The stress was on a coherent "news package"; in other words, on a centrally planned, carefully crafted in-studio product; not on a quick reaction capability.

Along with the studio emphasis came the growing role of presenters. Reporters too, particularly political correspondents, became "stars", and Plunket speaks of a tendency for the cameras to cover the personality rather than the event.

Respondents agree that the news became less "political" in content. For most who left in the first wave of change, this was a loss. The hole, they say has been filled with "fire and ambulance chasing" and tabloid style items. As Plunket sums up the new approach:

I don't know that the coverage is more sensational. I think it is less proficient. In my opinion, it optimises the American school of provincial journalism. The Truth type beat-up is used. It's fully familiar to those of us who have worked in tabloid journalism... In more conservative journalism, sensational stories are created by their facts; a shocking revelation. But now, the "shock horror probe" label sums it up. So what they are trying to do is dramatise what they have got - over-dramatise what they've got - rather than letting the story tell itself. There should be light and shade. Not every story ... There *are* important stories, and television should have that balance of importance.

But Spavin reflects the view of many who stayed on. He believes the old style political news was boring and unnecessarily detailed, and that the news now provides more digestible information. And he denies that the news has become more tabloid:

If you look at our lead stories, our first six stories for the last year, you would find the same stories popping up on the *Herald* and the *Dom*... We are chasing the same news. The morning dailies are our competition, not TV3 ... But most days we'll lead with a political story, or a story of impact on our trade or economy or something. If we were leading on a car crash three nights a week or a murder three nights a week, maybe. But we ignore murders now. People say, "Oh you've got crime on all the time". That's rubbish...I liked politics and parliament. And I think that people have a right to see their democracy in action and all that. And I got all the stuff on I wanted. And there were very few stories that I thought we were falling down in our duty as a publicly-owned channel not doing.

The results of the news analysis puts the comments of both sides about subject matter into perspective, showing where and how tabloid and commercial elements have increased.

All respondents agreed on one area of improvement; the news is less timorous in the face of authority than it was. Reporters were confident that those at the top would not now block a political story of national importance as had happened in 1984. However, there was some concern that the new bravery might be superficial. Several felt that while news might be prepared to ask the "hard questions", the absence of time and research resources, the lack of specialisation, the story format which encourages simplicity and drama all work against true "hard" and investigative reporting. As Pat Plunket says, journalists need to be both precise and sceptical. He believes journalists from 1990 on exhibited cynicism, but not scepticism and that they remained vulnerable to public relations packages, particularly from the Government.

All respondents also agreed that less of New Zealand was covered in the bulletin which developed in 1989 and 1990. Plunket calls it an Auckland bias, "that's where the market is. That's where the advertisers, they believe, are going to sell their wares".

Greg Smith reflects bitterly:

If it was a rape in Wellington, or Christchurch or Ekatahuna or anywhere else, nobody was interested. But an Auckland rape was great; we could lead the bulletin on that.

But John Spavin and Graeme Wilson do not admit to an Auckland bias in the news; only the national and international bias to be expected in a national programme. However, both do say that with the loss of regional news, people can no longer see their own area on television. For Wilson, this is an unfortunate by-product of having to "go down the national route", and the solution will only come in the form of regional television stations. Spavin feels it is a genuine shortcoming, caused mainly by lack of time in the bulletin:

There's a huge gap there. People ring up newsrooms and say "Oh, we've got the Miss Taranaki Gumboot Festival on next week". There's a whole sector of New Zealand society that just doesn't see itself... The fun runs in Auckland get 10 seconds, but 50 thousand people turn up. Dragonboat races in Wellington harbour attracted something like 10, 20 thousand people... We didn't even send a camera. The only time we did a story on Masterton in a year, I think, was when that guy shot his kids and defacto... I mean Lower Hutt - people live there - I live there. They don't get on, unless a police chase with a mad gunman happens to pass through a suburb. They'll get five seconds on of their main street. It's a shame. It's 14 minutes of news. So how do you put Lower Hutt on? Do you put it on before Yasser Arafat? Do you put it in after the two African heads of state being assassinated? It just doesn't fit.

Spavin's view, then, is that parish pump news is the only real hole, but others believe that by concentrating resources in Auckland, news is missing out on more significant developments around the country. Pat Plunket says, "Journalism must reflect the society it exists in. And this does not; that's all there is to it. They are not putting in the resources to do it properly."

Essential to the debate about the changes in news was how necessary they were. Spavin argues, and most would agree, that TVNZ is now under pressures that were not there in 1985:

TV3 constrains you a lot. And you are not being a responsible husbander of the Government's shareholding in TVNZ if you throw out all commercial considerations. If you hand all the ratings to TV3 on a plate, because you are boring people with gumboot-throwing contests in Taihape and they're not, then you are not actually giving them the full brief that you are given. You are not just given a brief to inform New Zealand. You are given a brief to look after the government's investments in TV as well. So they can't just say, "Oh we're a public

service channel; we'll have news for four hours a night" and go back to parish pump, because people won't watch. With TV3 there, they'll get the audience and the loyalty and we'll be on an uphill battle trying to get it back.

Spavin's comments perhaps highlight the fact that TVNZ management began to equate public service broadcasting with massively extensive, detailed and boring programming; and that local coverage was equated to gumboot-throwing. This left them with the assumption that public service meant audience turn-off and the only possible model was the commercial one. This view ignores evidence that there is a high tolerance for extensive news coverage (as the success of CNN and BBC World have shown). Further, it focuses blindly on news and programmers seem unaware of times when other genres (such as sport or comedy) dominate a schedule. It may also underestimate the interest New Zealanders have in seeing themselves in their regions and communities; part of the enormous success of Telethons in this country must surely be owed to this trait.

The narrative has shown there was little exploration of alternatives and local responses, rather an acceptance of commercial wisdom from overseas. A number of the respondents saw 1985 to 1990 as a time of lost opportunity, where the improving technical resources and greater understanding of the visual medium were not matched by improvements in journalistic techniques.

5.5 Summary

Changes in the newsroom came from a number of sources. Overseas programmes, particularly from the highly competitive markets of America and Australia, provided a model which gained increasing ground. This featured shorter items and an emphasis on pictures, pace and production. There was a stress on keeping things simple and ensuring the audience was not bored. The change was driven from Auckland and became entrenched as centralised control was strengthened, especially from 1988 onwards. Political items from Wellington bore the brunt of criticism from Auckland. Under head office direction, political coverage was reduced. However, journalists disagreed about whether important subject matter had been replaced by tabloid topics. Overseas consultants helped develop a new format in which presenters became

personalities, putting a human face on the news, while reporters were trained to produce items that emphasised pictures and were built around a simple "commitment" that produced an emotional response.

These changes were typical of the commercially-driven infotainment focus developing in news overseas. A central theme of the chapter has been the linking of deregulation and competitive pressures to commercialisation of television content, in an attempt to make it more attractive to audiences. The newsroom philosophies and work practices were, therefore, profoundly influenced by the same deregulatory and competitive pressures which affected the whole organisation.

The rest of the thesis explores in greater depth the commercialisation of the news; through the content analysis (in Chapters Six to Eight) and a qualitative analysis (in Chapter Nine). The larger questions of the "quality" of news and its relation to the purpose of journalism and of public service broadcasting will be examined in the final chapter.

CHAPTER SIX: CONTENT ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

6.1 Introduction

The overall purpose of the thesis is to explore the influence of deregulation and competitive pressures on the nature of news through five research questions. The previous chapter investigated the nature of deregulation and competition at TVNZ and its effects on newsroom practices and philosophies of news. This chapter introduces the content analysis at the heart of the study, providing quantitative data to answer the first two research questions:

1. Did the TVNZ early evening news bulletins change significantly during the period 1985-1990?
2. If change has occurred, what is the nature and extent of that change?

The literature review, combined with informal observations and initial results from newsworker interviews, led to a number of assumptions about what happens to information programming and news in particular when an organisation is subject to commercial pressures. Some of these changes can be most effectively measured with a quantitative content analysis. Following Stempel's (1989) advice that a successful content analysis begins with good questions, the researcher developed the following questions as a subset to the major research questions:

1. Has there been a reduction of time given to news (a reduction in the newshole) during the study period?
2. Will news stories be shorter in keeping with the movement towards entertainment?
3. Will sound bites become shorter, as found in overseas studies?
4. Has there been a decrease in serious, informational or political topics in the news?
5. Has there been an increase in topics with an emphasis on entertainment and audience appeal?

6. Is there a tendency to reduce costs by increasingly centralised news coverage, reflected in geographic sourcing?
7. Has there been any change in news sources which might reflect a move towards entertainment values in the news?
8. Has there been an increased tendency to obscure or veil sources in the news?

The methodology designed to answer these questions is described in this chapter. The approaches and categories used are in line with those used by overseas news researchers, particularly in the United States.

6.2 Defining the Population

The population from which the sample was chosen was defined as the early evening network news on Television One between 1985 and 1990. These years encompass the deregulatory change, when the organisation was transformed from public service to commercial orientation. The early evening news is the premier news show on either of the TVNZ channels, the flagship programme of TVNZ and regularly its top-rating programme. The study included all material contained within the bulletin from the opening "sting" of the network news to the final close. This was because an important element of the study, in addition to the news stories, was the measurement of time given to promotions, teasers and asides.

6.3 Sample

Kaid and Wadsworth (1989) point to the need for the sample to be both representative of the population from which it comes and of sufficient size to adequately represent it. The years of study encompassed the beginning of 1985 to the end of 1990. Within that, four key years were chosen which reflect events in the operating environment:

- 1985 - the starting point (benchmark) before management restructuring designed to meet the challenge of competition.

- 1987 - when TVNZ was gearing up for apparently imminent competition from a privately-owned, regionally-based network which would be expected to have public service commitments.
- 1989 - the first year of the SOE, TVNZ Ltd, operating in a deregulated environment with licence fee provisions drastically changed, but as yet without competition.
- 1990 - the first full year of competition with TV3.

The sample size is three constructed weeks. The adequate sample size for television news remains a matter of conjecture, rather than detailed investigation. Any discussion has centred around the adequacy of print media samples. As Wimmer & Dominick (1991) point out, there are only rough guidelines available on sample size. They cite Stempel's research of 1952, which found in newspaper analysis that increasing sample size beyond 12 issues did not significantly improve accuracy. Riffe, Aust and Lacy (1993) reviewed studies on sample size, finding these generally dealt with small populations. Their study showed, when using a constructed week procedure, "one week was as efficient as four, and its estimates exceeded what would be expected based on probability theory. By extension, two constructed weeks would allow reliable estimates of local stories in a year's worth of newspaper entire issues" (p.139).

Much television content analysis centres around limited subject coverage and a short time period such as a political campaign. Hallin (1992a), for his study of sound bite length in election coverage from 1968-1988, chose a sample of 20 week days in each of the six years covered. Bernstein, Lacy, Cassara and Lau (1990) and Scott and Gobetz (1992) are two of many research groups who use a two week sample of television news, while Fowler & Showalter (1974) found a single five-day week adequate. In New Zealand, Atkinson's well-publicised discussions of TVNZ news broadcasts (going back to 1985) are based on a single consecutive five-day week for each sample year (Atkinson, 1992). He acknowledges the figures come from "a relatively small sample of news and more research needs to be done to ensure their reliability" (Atkinson, 1994c, p.56).

The sample size of 21 days in each year (three constructed weeks) reflected a desire to include enough stories to provide reliable and valid data. This was particularly

important, as it seems likely New Zealand news media research has erred on the size of small samples (McGregor & Comrie, 1995). The sample size reflected a balance between an attempt to ensure all categories had sufficient entries for statistical analysis and an efficient use of coding resources.

On the sampling method, the study was guided by the basic principle that every day should have an equal chance of being selected for the sample. Because worlds of commerce and government operate primarily on a five-day, forty hour week and a substantial amount of news comes from these sources, weekday and weekend bulletins tend to be different in content (Stempel, 1989). On a similar principle, the December and January "silly season", which in New Zealand combines both Christmas and summer holidays, was excluded from the sampling process, because it provides a significant departure from the norm.

The study uses randomly selected composite or constructed weeks as recommended by Stempel (1989) and used in many studies, including the British Royal Commission analyses of press content (McQuail 1977). While studies such as Scott & Gobetz (1992) and Atkinson (1992) use "natural" consecutive weeks, it was decided the composite week was a sounder methodological choice. The composite week choice increased the randomness of the sample and ensured a wider spread of coverage from throughout the year, increasing its likelihood of being representative of the population. It also lessened the chance that a major news event would distort findings for a whole year. The advantages of this methodological selection were retrospectively confirmed by Riffe, Aust and Lacy (1993). Comparing the efficiency of simple random date selection, consecutive day samples and constructed week samples over a six month period, they found the constructed week samples gave a smaller range of results and were always closer to the population means.

Using a random number table, 21 days (comprising three of each day of the week) were selected from 1985. To maintain close parallels between each year, the nearest equivalent day was selected for each of the years chosen, as seen in **Table 1** on the following page.

Table 1
Dates of Sample Bulletins: TVNZ Early Evening News

1985	1987	1989	1990
15 Feb (Fri)	13 Feb (Fri)	17 Feb (Fri)	16 Feb (Fri)
24 Feb (Sun)	15 Feb (Sun) *	26 Feb (Sun)	25 Feb (Sun)
25 Feb (Mon)	23 Feb (Mon)	27 Feb (Mon)	26 Feb (Mon)
9 March (Sat)	7 March (Sat)	4 March (Sat)	10 March (Sat)
13 March (Wed)	11 March (Wed)	15 March (Wed)	14 March (Wed)
14 March (Thur)	12 March (Thur)	16 March (Thur)	15 March (Thur)
26 March (Tues) *	17 March (Tues)	28 March (Tues) *	20 March (Tues)
23 April (Tues)	21 April (Tues)	18 April (Tues)	17 April (Tues)
4 May (Sat)	2 May (Sat)	6 May (Sat)	5 May (Sat)
4 June (Tues)	2 June (Tues)	6 June (Tues)	5 June (Tues)
7 June (Fri)	5 June (Fri)	9 June (Fri)	8 June (Fri)
10 June (Mon)	8 June (Mon)	12 June (Mon)	11 June (Mon)
9 Aug (Fri)	7 Aug (Fri)	11 Aug (Fri)	10 Aug (Fri)
10 Aug (Sat)	8 Aug (Sat)	12 Aug (Sat)	11 Aug (Sat)
18 Aug (Sun) *	20 Aug (Thur)	24 Aug (Thur)	23 Aug (Thur)
22 Aug (Thur)	23 Aug (Sun)	27 Aug (Sun)	26 Aug (Sun)
9 Sept (Mon)	7 Sept (Mon)	14 Sept (Thur)	10 Sept (Mon)
12 Sept (Thur)	10 Sept (Thur)	18 Sept (Mon)*	13 Sept (Thur)
22 Sept (Sun)	20 Sept (Sun)	24 Sept (Sun)	23 Sept (Sun)
25 Sept (Wed)	23 Sept (Wed)	27 Sept (Wed)	26 Sept (Wed)
20 Nov (Wed)	18 Nov (Wed)	22 Nov (Wed)	21 Nov (Wed)

* Indicates replacement bulletin

The study used video recordings from the Audio Visual Archives of the Political Studies Department at Auckland University. Four of the 84 selected bulletins could not be used, either because they were missing from the archives or there had been recording problems. When this happened, the nearest equivalent day in that year was substituted. In this way, Sunday August 18 was selected when Sunday August 25, 1985 was unavailable.

While the constructed week sampling lessens the likelihood of results being skewed by spectacular news events and cyclic variations in the year (for instance the fixed events in the political and financial calendar), there were some major news events which occurred during the study period. Notable among these were the Rainbow Warrior bombing (which dominated coverage in 1985 and led to an increase in stories coded as "diplomatic") and the lead-up to the Gulf War (which was covered intensively in the latter part of 1990). The sample also included two election years, 1987 and 1990. One of the bulletins (also randomly selected for qualitative analysis) fell very close to the 1987 election. Such events and their effect on news coverage and study results are discussed in Chapter Seven.

6.4 Developing Subject Categories

Kaid and Wadsworth (1989) describe the formulation of categories as the most crucial step in content analysis. Stempel (1989) cites the advantages of using category systems already developed by other researchers: the researcher knows the system is workable; other studies give an indication of likely results; and validity and reliability will be lesser concerns. He acknowledges, however, that researchers may need to create their own categories for the purposes of the research.

The aim was to develop a system of categories which reflected "'common-sense' criteria" and "professional practices" (Glasgow University Media Group, 1976, p.42). The researcher also considered it desirable to use a category system similar to one recognised by the academic community and used across a variety of media over the years. Finally, the categories needed to reflect particular New Zealand news values.

The category system, developed by Deutschmann in 1959 for studying newspapers and widely used in American research, looked suitable. After examining a modified Deutschmann category system (Stempel, 1985) used to study network newscasts and a variety of newspapers, the researcher developed a variant of Deutschmann's categories to accommodate New Zealand conditions and changes in society since 1985.

Of particular concern was the apparent ethnocentricity of Deutschmann's categories. The "culture" category in this research was initially designed to reflect the New Zealand interest in things Maori that could not always be easily slotted into other categories. It would also reflect the rise of interest in popular culture. It was later decided that Maori issues needed a category to themselves. Education also presented a problem. In New Zealand, it has been closely aligned with government policy and decision making (as opposed to its place in the USA). Although this centralised approach has diminished in recent years, education would still fit inappropriately into Deutschmann's "education and classic arts" category. Because of the traditional emphasis given to sport in New Zealand media, this was given a separate category. Agricultural issues have always been important in New Zealand, and the last decade has seen a growing interest in the media in environmental issues. A category has been made to accommodate these issues. It also contains other vital primary industries, and sub categories allow differentiation between primary industries and environmental issues.

Deutschmann's original categories are: war and defence; popular amusements; general human interest; economic activity; education and classic arts; politics and government; crime; accident and disaster; public health and welfare; science and invention; and public moral problems.

Stempel's (1985) modified categories are: war and defence; diplomacy and foreign relations; popular amusements; general human interest; economic activity; transportation and travel; agriculture; education and classic arts; politics and government acts; crime; accident and disaster; public health and welfare; science and invention; and public moral problems.

The 15 categories used in this study are set out in **Table 2** on the next page.

Fourteen initial categories were developed, after studying the literature and viewing a week of 1992 network news programmes (Thursday November 5 to Wednesday November 11). The researcher also discussed potential categories with two former journalists (one from the print media and another from television).

Table 2
Subject Categories Used in the Study

<i>Politics and Government Acts:</i>	Government acts and politics at local, regional, national and international level.
<i>War and defence:</i>	War, defence, rebellion, armed intervention, military use of space. Includes World War II anniversaries and Nazi hunts.
<i>Diplomacy and Foreign Relations:</i>	Both foreign and domestic items dealing with diplomacy and foreign relations. Includes United Nations. Covers such issues as ANZUS and the nuclear debate.
<i>Economic Activity:</i>	General economic activity, sharemarket, money, prices, labour, wages, natural resources, transportation and travel.
<i>Agriculture and Environment:</i>	Includes fishing and forestry as primary export industries (sub category of environment).
<i>Public Health and Welfare:</i>	Health, public welfare, social and safety measures, welfare of children and marriage and marriage relations.
<i>Education:</i>	Includes resourcing and industrial matters.
<i>Science, technology and invention:</i>	Science and technology other than related to defence or health and medicine.
<i>Crime:</i>	All crime stories, including criminal proceedings in court, police stories and police resourcing.
<i>Accidents and Disasters:</i>	Both human-made and natural disasters.
<i>Sport:</i>	Organised sport (includes climbing).
<i>Culture:</i>	Classic arts, history, ethnic (excluding Maori), entertainment and amusements, media (sub categories popular and classic).
<i>Maori:</i>	Maori issues includes political issues, resources and culture (Maori moral problems and crime sub-categories).
<i>Human Interest:</i>	Human interest, obituaries, animals, cute children, juvenile interest, Royals and weather, when not part of accident and disaster category.
<i>Public Moral Problems:</i>	Human relations and moral problems, including alcohol, divorce, sex, race relations and civil court proceedings.

The initial categories were also examined in the light of records of 422 television stories compiled by a TVNZ reporter for regional and national television between in 1980 and 1987. These had been recorded under the TVNZ computer filing system as used at that time. The system did not give enough details about the story to test subtle distinctions of categories but showed them to be a good start.

The researcher then examined two randomly selected composite weeks of news bulletins and current affairs programmes from 1985. The separate category for Maori issues was added at this point and several subcategories were developed.

6.4.1 Key Decisions on Subject Category Boundaries

Demarcations between subject categories were not always clear. Stories were only coded once, and so careful decisions had to be made on which items would be placed in which categories. Major decisions are outlined in this section.

Television news, more than newspaper or radio news, commonly practises the current affairs technique of a using "news peg" (current news angle) to introduce a short item on an on-going situation. This may cause the item to cross boundaries. For instance, the newsreader announces the South African President is visiting Washington for talks (Diplomacy and Foreign Affairs). He then goes on to say that violence continues in the black townships of South Africa and the pictures will concentrate on civil unrest in South Africa (War and Defence). These items are coded according to the major part of the story, rather than the opening part of the introduction, often merely a news peg or linking sentence.

The political category required particular thought, because many subjects have a political dimension. However, categories had been carefully chosen so the public service restructuring taking place during the time of the study, which saw the government withdrawing from overt involvement in many public service areas, would not distort the subject categories. Thus alteration in Government funding for hospitals (September 25, 1985) was counted as public health and safety, as was the air industry blaming falling standards on the revamped Transport Ministry (June 5, 1990). The

banning of cigarette adverts (August 23, 1990) was counted as health. However, the announcement of National Party policies on drug dealing and solvent abuse became politics, as part of the election build-up. Politicking, such as the Opposition accusing the Minister of Agriculture of telling farmers early about the currency float (March 13, 1985), counted as politics. Similarly, parliamentary rows and point scoring, such as accusations in Parliament of interference in an immigration consultancy scandal (March 20, 1990), were coded as political. However, politicking from the union viewpoint (for instance, union allegations that the government was interfering with the wage claim) was coded as economics.

War, politics and diplomacy were often difficult to distinguish. Most items on the Gulf crisis were coded as war (including succour of refugees and reactions of various world leaders). Diplomacy was restricted to specific initiatives such as the Helsinki summit (August 23, 1990) or the Cairo summit of Arab leaders (August 10, 1990). Items which covered diplomacy or defence and yet were centred on political outcomes counted as politics. So Reagan's battle with conservatives over arms reduction policies (September 20, 1987) was coded as politics, as were the Iran Contra Deal hearings.

Spying counted as diplomacy and foreign relations, as it was deemed to be dealing with and for foreign powers. Internal unrest of various sorts were classified according to the level of violence. Terrorism was coded as war and defence, while protest marches, even with minor violence, were classified as politics, or, if they concerned the nuclear debate, as foreign relations and diplomacy. While history was generally categorised as part of culture, war history and anniversaries, were coded as war and defence. Similarly, war criminals were categorised as war, unless the story's concern was with court and legal problems or involved wrangles between countries.

The human interest category also provided difficulties, because human interest can be viewed as a treatment, as much as it can be viewed as a subject. The coder had to check the tendency to overuse this category. One criterion which helped distinguish this category was that human interest stories are usually about an event that in itself is not important or significant, but combines with an element of emotional appeal to make it newsworthy. Unusual escapes and near accidents were human interest.

Weather stories (including road closures, heavy rain warnings and the like) were classified as human interest unless they were linked with genuine disasters such as floods and avalanches involving loss of life. Royal and Papal visits were classified as human interest. Unusual items, like the argument over whether a nun killed during the war because she was a Jew should be beatified, were also counted as human interest. Zoo stories, even if they were given an environmental slant, like the arrival of the golden tamarinds at Wellington Zoo (September 13, 1990), were classified as human interest.

The category of public moral problems was another which provided some demarcation questions. Child custody battles, such as the 1990 Hilary Morgan case, were termed moral problems. Most debate over the homosexual law reform bill counted as moral problems rather than politics, as did John Bank's complaint about the behaviour of unemployed people attending a conference at Parliament buildings. Other stories bordered on crime, or health and welfare, or economics and so on. For these, the overall tone of the story was taken as a guide. For instance, one item from Britain was about the abuse being directed at the wife of a British strike breaker in a coal town. Another item concerned the debate surrounding allegations that public money was given for work on a gang headquarters. One element in these stories was the broadening of an instance or event to discussions or implications of society-wide concerns.

6.4.2 Developing Subject Categories: Summary

The 15 subject categories developed for the study allow an extremely detailed and valid study of the news. While based on firmly-established categories which have been used in both print and electronic media in the United States, they have been carefully modified to suit both the social and political scene in New Zealand. The categories were tested against current bulletins, checked for their utility and transparency by experienced journalists and meticulously compared with filing categories used by TVNZ.

6.5 Geographical Source of Stories

The employment of journalists in certain places, and the coverage of certain geographical areas reflects an allocation of resources based on news values (Bernstein *et al.*, 1990; Tuchman, 1978). Therefore each story was also analysed to reflect its geographic source. Eight geographical categories were used:

- Overseas feed (items of the regular satellite feed)
- Overseas request (requested item or TVNZ correspondent)
- Auckland
- Wellington
- Christchurch
- Dunedin
- Provincial North Island
- Provincial South Island.

Short spoken stories with no obvious geographical source were deemed to have come from Auckland (these would most likely have originated "off the wire" from the Radio New Zealand news service and have been rewritten in the Auckland office). When stories contained elements from more than one geographical source, the predominant source was the one coded. The exception to this was where a reporter or photographer had been sent to an out-of-town location and provided a substantial part of the story (usually on location film and an interview), and the story was edited and a voice over added in head office or regional office. In this case the story was coded as coming from the out-of-town location, as this reflected resources put into the story.

6.6 Length

The study also measured item length. Story length is not such a simple concept as first appears. To give the news bulletin a feeling of natural flow, sub-editors tend to group similar or associated items together. The Glasgow University Media Group (1976) noted the tendency of British journalists to "package" items, and the then current professional

judgement that longer was better. Packaged items were also at the beginning of the study period considered to be a useful way to handle the "big" story, by getting several reporters to tackle different aspects of the story.

The Glasgow University Media Group (1976) relied on the scripting at the beginning and end of stories to decide whether they belonged together. For instance:

Statistical and general city stories are often used to introduce or payoff and close particular business and economic stories. In such cases these elements would count as one item with the particular story so introduced or paid off (p.276).

In this study, this process would have meant stretching the limit of an "item" far beyond the boundaries of commonsense, as bulletin editors frequently overstretched the notion of linking. (A typical example was on May 4, 1885, with the newsreader linking a super-power summit meeting with the story of climbing Mt Everest, with the words "and now to summits of a different nature".)

It was the New Zealand practice to combine two or three reports into one story which had a studio or newsreader introduction, each report coming hard on the other with no studio linking; for instance, the opening two items on February 15, 1985. Item one, on the Lyttleton crane wreck, consists of two reports one on the wreck and reaction at the port, the second on reactions from local manufacturers. The second item, on the ANZUS controversy is in three parts: the first a locally compiled report of American reaction; the second of the potential effects on our agricultural exports and the third on a demonstration supporting the Government's actions.

In the end, studio links were judged to be a good demarcation of such items, with some exceptions. In the later part of the study the news bulletins often contain a "foreign round-up"; a series of brief 20-30 second visual stories. Instead of returning to the studio with each item, producers use a wipe to indicate movement to another story. Each item in this case is counted separately.

6.7 Prominence

Story length is only one way of measuring the importance given an item. The study also coded various other ways of drawing attention to the story, in order to measure some common aspects of prominence. Each item was numbered according to its position in the bulletin order. For each story, the following categories of prominence were also recorded:

- promoted in initial headlines
- one of first three items of bulletin
- promoted in headlines prior to advertising breaks
- items immediately preceding the advertising break
- items immediately following advertising breaks
- final item
- no special position.

Headlines and initial stories need little explanation, as they parallel the newspaper world, with its front page and headlining tactics. The final item has long been counted as important, as the final item or conclusion of any presentation is deemed to a position of high recall for the audience. The first item following an advertising break is can be frequently of high interest, and is headlined *before* the break so that people will stay with the channel through the advertisements. Another tactic to keep an audience across an advertising break is to have a high interest item, designed to promote discussion, just before the break (Campbell, 1992).

6.8 Sources

Sources are at the very centre of news (Gans,1979; Hall et al., 1978; Schlesinger, 1990). Television acknowledges their importance in the Codes of Broadcasting Practice developed during the study period which say that broadcasters should keep the integrity and reliability of news sources under constant review.

Sources were deemed to be those either cited by newsreader or journalist, or those actually speaking on air, either on-camera or (when this was not possible) recorded speech played over photographs. Sources were divided into the categories outlined in **Table 3** on the following page. These were adapted from categories used by initially Sigal (1973) and later by Berkowitz (1987) and Brown, Bybee, Wearden and Straughan (1987). They are listed with a brief explanation where appropriate. The list is followed by a description of categories developed by the coder and a rationale. Each category includes both New Zealand and overseas sources.

The researcher was interested in changes in the use of official and accredited sources but wished to make a distinction between elected leaders and officials. This was in response to the often-voiced criticism of journalists that "we spend too much time just covering what politicians say" (personal observation based on extensive journalistic experience). It was also felt that such a division would reflect the claim (Spavin, 1994; Wilson, 1993) that television news from 1989 onward was moving away from politicians and towards people.

The researcher also wished to trace any changes in the use of official or accredited sources as opposed to the greater diversity of sources to be expected with "enterprise journalism" (Hansen, 1991). It was considered that a useful distinction could be made between the more easily accessed officials of non-government organisations and the ordinary members.

A number of categories were developed from what was the "unaffiliated citizen" category of Brown *et al.* (1987) and Berkowitz (1987). These were formed to see if certain kinds of sources, favoured in "popular" journalism (especially victims and celebrities) had increased across the study years. There was some concern that some categories, for instance the "celebrity" category, might overlap with others. The judgement was made in the light of how that person was treated in the story. For instance, a well-known rugby coach, while a member or even an official in his organisation, would be coded as a celebrity when commenting on forthcoming play. When talking about the concerns of coaches, he would be coded as official or affiliated citizen, whichever was the case.

Table 3
Source Categories Used in the Study

<i>Government/local government elected:</i>	also included leaders of non-democratic countries.
<i>Government/local government official:</i>	included are all departments and ministries, SOEs, police, traffic officers, local and regional council officers, hospital board officials, Quango members and so on.
<i>Non-government organisation official or representative:</i>	these are based on Harris's list of affiliations, as quoted in Brown et al (1987): medicine, religion, business, law firms, unions, special interest groups, higher education, the media, and political parties.
<i>Non-government organisation affiliated citizen:</i>	member of a group in same categories as above: medicine, religion, business, law firms, unions, special interest groups, higher education, the media, and political parties.
<i>Unaffiliated citizen:</i>	citizen whose affiliation is not identified in the story but excluding the categories which follow (victim, observer, celebrity, central participant).
<i>Victim/close family of victim:</i>	this included crucially adversely-affected people.
<i>Observer/unofficial commentator:</i>	this can generally be viewed as an eye witness category.
<i>Celebrity/sports personality:</i>	includes performers in the classical and popular arts, media figures, sports performers and well-known coaches, etc.
<i>Central participant:</i>	people cited or speaking on camera because of their position as a central participant in the story. Includes such people as rescuers, those accused of crimes, otherwise obscure achievers, those who have escaped from danger, etc. It excludes politicians and officials acting in their usual capacity and interest groups speaking about organised events.

6.9 Attribution

Attribution is the term used to describe the kind of identification given to sources cited or speaking in each story. It is important for the credibility of journalism that the public has knowledge of sources of information in stories (Wulfmeyer, 1985). As Burriss (1988) reminds readers, one of the basic tenets of journalism is that news reports deal with verifiable facts. To verify accuracy of the news, the audience has to depend on:

- (1) the reputation of the news organisation, (2) the reputation of the reporter, (3) information within the story itself (Burriss, 1988, p.690).

Quotations, therefore, become the prime way of verifying a report and using unnamed or veiled news sources becomes a matter of concern. At the same time, Culbertson (1978) and Wulfmeyer (1985) acknowledge that veiled or anonymous attribution can serve a useful purpose by allowing the reporter to obtain information otherwise unavailable and to protect a fearful source.

Such commentary demonstrated that the type of attribution used in television news and the nature of change over time would be of interest in the study. The researcher measured attribution based on categories used (in chronological order) by Culbertson (1978), Wulfmeyer (1985) and Burriss (1988). There were nine categories, eight of which dealt with different terms used in veiling sources. These are shown in **Table 4** on the following page. The spokesperson category was included as part of the "subordinate" grouping in Burriss but was separated out for this study. In New Zealand, spokespeople for organisations are frequently cited and often hold high office in the organisation.

Table 4
Attribution Categories Used in the Study

<i>Full attribution:</i>	the use of a person's name, or a pronoun directly referring to that person.
<i>Organisation:</i>	a named or unnamed organisation, country, etc.
<i>High status:</i>	a term indicating power or prestige.
<i>Expertise:</i>	a term indicating competency in an area.
<i>Subordinate:</i>	low level assistants.
<i>Neutral:</i>	a term that says little about the person being quoted.
<i>Pro-con:</i>	a term that shows a particular stance being taken by the person being quoted.
<i>Association:</i>	a term indicating connection with a group or person.
<i>Spokesperson:</i>	identified as spokesperson for a group or organisation.

Following Culbertson (1978), unattributed description of some action (for example Search and Rescue calling off a search) was not coded. Also a legal brief, or a report "reflecting an apparent formal action by an organisation as a whole was not defined as a veiled attribution. However, an organisation quoted as stating a fact or opinion was coded" (p.459). The study also followed Culbertson's rules in deciding where attribution ended and began. If the same phrase was used more than once in a story it was assumed to refer to the same organisation or person (unless the context clearly indicated otherwise). If different words or phrases were used they were assumed to refer to different sources.

TVNZ news stories frequently followed the pattern of using veiled attribution in the newsreader introduction or journalist report (for instance "police say") and following this up with a fully attributed interview clip. This was coded as one on-camera

attribution and the veiled reference was not coded (unless other elements in the story indicated there were other spokespeople). Attribution was coded both for sources who were only cited or quoted by newsreaders or journalists and for those who spoke for themselves on air.

6.10 Sound Bite Length

A sound bite is a portion of a statement or interview broadcast in a radio or news story (Atwater & Green, 1988). Sound bite measurement is seen as an important component of electronic news analysis, because it indicates the amount of time given to the source's voice in the news and also gives researchers an indication of the degree of mediation between source and viewer (Atkinson, 1994b). This research used similar criteria to Hallin (1992a) in the measurement of sound bites. The term refers to "a film or tape segment, within a news story, showing someone speaking" (p.5).

Like Hallin, this study excluded straight interviews without voice-over narration. A question and answer exchange during a press conference or interview was counted as a single sound bite, as were continuous exchanges between two people - during a meeting, for example. The study also followed Hallin in his distinction between what he calls *ellipsis jump-cuts*, two or more segments of the same person speaking in the same setting (counted as one sound bite) and *juxtaposition jump-cuts* or contrasting segments, usually from different settings, spliced together (treated as separate sound bites).

6.11 Inter-coder and Intra-coder Reliability

All material was coded by the researcher, but three additional coders helped in inter-coder reliability checks. The additional coders worked on a random selection of five bulletins from the sample. This made up a composite Monday to Friday week and was randomly chosen across the sample years. Reliability check dates were: Monday

February 27, 1989; Tuesday April 23, 1985; Wednesday September 23, 1987; Thursday March 16, 1989; and Friday February 16, 1990.

The coders recorded subject categories, attribution and sources for each bulletin. Little training was given, because the purpose was to see if the researcher's coding met "commonsense" criteria. Results were compared by using the simple percentage of agreement between coders which Stempel (1989) asserts is the appropriate reliability measure. For subject categories, the percentage agreement with the researcher was 73%, 75% and 85%. (The order of agreement with the researcher paralleled coders' self-reported exposure to, and interest, in television news.)

Lacy and Riffe (1993) also point to the importance of reporting intracoder reliability, testing the reliability of the coder across time. At the end of the coding, the coder re-coded five bulletins randomly selected from the first ten coded. The intracoder reliability was 94% (a total of 430 agreements in 459 decisions made).

6.12 Limitations

The content analysis, of course, possesses inherent limitations in the study of news, which are covered by Ericson *et al.* (1991), Kaid and Wadsworth (1989) and Wimmer & Dominick (1991), among others, and which were discussed in Chapter Four. But there are additional limitations which have been partly addressed earlier in the chapter and are examined below.

As discussed, the three week sample across carefully selected study years stands up well in comparison to other studies. However, at times some categories contained too few entries to make generalisation practicable. The selection of categories and their boundaries is always open to question and the researcher took care to develop categories that were established and adapted to the New Zealand experience. The methodology clearly outlines reasons for their choice. Subject categories in particular were extensively pre-tested. The subject categories allowed for a detailed description of content but may have crossed the thin line between a sufficient number of categories

and too many (Wurtzel, 1985). The methodology clearly outlines category boundaries and the rationale for selecting them and the following Chapter at 7.5 discusses the effect of the choice of boundary between diplomacy and politics categories on the results in 1985.

The study of sources would have been much strengthened if a method had been developed to identify repeat sound bites and provide cumulative totals per source per story, and, in doing so, compile an accurate count of the numbers of separate sources.

Relying on the researcher as sole coder, rather than using independent coders, produces its own problems. While the intracoder reliability level was high, showing a high consistency in coding, the intercoder reliability was disappointing. Differences found were mainly in the categorisation of sources. The two coders who rarely watched television news described themselves as highly uncertain as to whether sources were from government or non-government organisations. Given the recent restructuring of government departments, this was perhaps unsurprising. The mistake was to believe that the categories were self evident. While results showed this applied to the subject categories, the attribution categorisation clearly required some training and the sourcing a sufficient level of general knowledge. In retrospect, these results perhaps do as much to confirm Kaid & Wadsworth's (1989) recommendations on training and experience of coders as to tell us whether the categories were clear and consistent.

6.13 Summary

The methodology above describes a television news content analysis that, while subject to inevitable limitations, is unparalleled in New Zealand news scholarship in scope and depth. The sample size is both larger than other comparable studies and uses the constructed week to give more valid results. The years selected for analysis were closely matched to key developments within the organisation.

As well as calculating time spent on the detailed subject categories, the researcher developed measures of prominence which suit the practices of television. This is a new area of research and allows for a more accurate assessment of importance given to

subjects than time spent alone. This is the first time in local research that geographical sourcing of all news stories in the bulletin has been measured. It is an important measurement because New Zealanders have strong regional loyalties (Farnsworth, 1992) and because of the PSB obligations of representing national identity.

The analysis of news sources and attribution strengthen the findings, as both are important indicators of journalistic standards. The categories are comprehensive, well-tested and are adapted to New Zealand while, for the first time, allowing direct comparisons with overseas studies.

Having covered the methodology, the study now turns to the major results of the content analysis in the following chapter. Chapter Seven moves from a discussion of overall characteristics of the bulletin, or newshole, to characteristics of the story, emphasising story length and subject matter. Finally, the chapter looks at the characteristics of news sources and the way they are identified. These results are discussed in Chapter Eight.

CHAPTER SEVEN: RESULTS OF THE CONTENT ANALYSIS

7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents results of the content analysis, as described in the methodology in Chapter Six. The results will be discussed in the following chapter. Both the content analysis and the qualitative analysis of the news to be presented in Chapter Nine aim to establish basic descriptive categories of content and presentation of the news and to explore some changes across the study years. They form the core of the research.

This chapter first briefly describes some overall features of the sample to provide a perspective for the findings. Second, it looks at news bulletins, concentrating on the size of the newshole across the study years. Then it moves to examining some details about stories: story length, number of stories, subjects covered by the news, the geographical sources of stories and which subjects are given prominence by headlining or key placement in the bulletin. Finally, news sources are analysed, studying sound bite length, what types of sources are either cited or feature in sound bites and how clearly news sources are identified.

7.1.1 Some Characteristics of the Sample

A total of 84 news bulletins were examined, 21 for each of the four sample years. These consisted of a sample of three constructed weeks. There were 1490 news stories in the sample: 419 in 1985, 387 in 1987, 323 in 1989; and 361 in 1990. The sample contained 1627 sound bites (edited interviews or actuality of people speaking on camera) and an additional 867 news sources who were cited but who did not speak on camera.

7.2 Size of the Newshole

TVNZ is financed largely by advertisements, so the news programmes are part of a "commercial hour" which may have 13 or more minutes devoted to advertising or promotions of future programmes. A first measurement in content analysis is the amount, in this case, of news. This is done by calculating the newshole, or the amount of space (in the press) or time (in broadcasting) devoted strictly to news. To calculate the newshole for the TVNZ main evening news bulletins, the researcher discounted advertising content, the weather segment, headlines or teasers, transitions and chit chat between presenters.

In 1989 and 1990 there is a decline in the size of the newshole, as shown in Table 5. This table depicts five aspects of newshole size: the total time spent on the news each year; average bulletin length across the years; a comparison of newshole size using 1985 as a baseline; the average bulletin length excluding sports items; and the amount of time spent on actual news (the newshole) as a proportion of bulletin programme time.

Table 5
Size of Newshole for Each Study Year

*Expressed As: Total Time, Relationship of Newshole Size of All Years to First Year
(in Percentage Terms), Average Length of Bulletin, Average Bulletin Length
without Sports Stories*

NEWSHOLE	1985	1987	1989	1990
Total Time	555'14"	557'15"	454'37"	404'29"
Av Bulletin Length	26'26"	26'32"	21'39"	19'16"
Time Expressed as %	100%	100.4%	81.9%	72.8%
Newshole Minus Sports	19'25"	20'07"	17'35"	14'40"
Newshole as % of Total Bulletin Time	80.0%	74.7%	66.1%	63.4%

Note: Each year consists of 21 sample news bulletins of comparative dates. Times are expressed in minutes and seconds.

Using 1985 as a base line, the table shows the size of the newshole increases very marginally in 1987, drops sharply in 1989 and drops again in 1990. Using the Scheffe procedure, 1989 and 1990 are found to be significantly smaller at the 0.050 level than either 1985 or 1987. In 1985, viewers had an average of 26 min 26 sec of news each night in the main national news bulletin. By 1990 that was reduced by more than a quarter, to 19 minutes 16 sec.

The major reason was the revamping of the network news in 1989 associated with the advent of the *Holmes* show (see Chapter Five for the rationale behind these developments). The pattern of bulletins until the *Holmes* show began in April 1988 was 40 minutes of national news on week days (followed by a 20 minute regional news bulletin). Half hour bulletins were the rule at weekends. From April 1989, the network news was reduced to 30 minutes.

Second, as explained in Chapter Five, there was a steady increase in the amount of advertising permitted on television during the study period. In early 1985, there were no advertisements on Friday evenings or Sundays. The BCNZ was given permission to run advertising on Fridays in mid 1985, and two of the three Friday bulletins sampled in 1985 contained no advertisements. Despite more advertisements in 1987, the total newshole was marginally longer. This was because of two exceptionally short Sunday bulletins in 1985. The practice of running short Sunday bulletins stopped after 1985, except occasionally during cricket broadcasts (e.g. Sunday February 25, 1990). Generally, however, the Sunday bulletins were half an hour with no advertisements, until Sunday advertisements were introduced in mid 1989. During the first part of the study period, Saturday bulletins, while only 30 minutes long, provided relatively large newsholes, because there was only one commercial break. However, when Sunday advertising was introduced, both the weekend bulletins moved to a format with two advertising breaks.

The bottom row of Table 5 makes clear the difference between the commercial hour, or the apparent bulletin length, and the actual time given to news. The total bulletin time covers the time from the opening credits until the closing music. The total also included the concluding separate segment of the network news (the weather forecast

before 1989 and after that, the headlines and weather summary) following the regional news or *Holmes* on weekdays. The table shows the newshole going down from 80% of the bulletin time in 1985 to 63% in 1990, mainly as the result of more advertisements.

7.2.1 The Newshole and Sports

The small amount of time given to "real" news is emphasised if the amount of time given to sports is excluded. As can be seen in Section 7.5.1, sports related news provided the largest single segment of the news (filling generally about a quarter of the time available). There is a case for not considering sports coverage as news. Many measures of news content (especially newspaper content) do not include sports. When discussing the total time spent on news, New Zealand writers such as Edwards (1992) and Atkinson (1992) do not include sports. Some TVNZ journalists, such as Spavin (1994) also believe that "you don't count sports as news" (personal interview). Subtracting the sports segment gives us a very small newshole by the end of the study period (14 min 40 sec). But because sports items are a significant part of the network news coverage, they are counted as part of "news" and analysed as such throughout the rest of the study.

7.2.2 Effect of Chit Chat on the Newshole

Another factor apparently affecting the newshole was the increase in time spent in chit chat between presenters during the study period. True chit chat was virtually non-existent in 1985, with most of the eight instances being more properly called comment (as only one presenter was on screen). Transfers, where most chit chat occurs, were from a single newsreader to the sports presenter and vice versa. They were unadorned ("And now sports with X", or "Back to the news with Y".) In March 1987 we see the first example of the dual-presented news format during weekdays. Immediately (March 11) there is chit chat with an element of humorous banter after the sports segment. Chit chat is a little sporadic in 1987 (11 times in the 21 bulletins) in keeping with the "experimental" nature of news presentation at this stage as discussed in Chapter Five. But by 1989 it is well established (in 16 bulletins, often more than once) generally

formalised in a scripted "ad lib" leading into sports. In 1990, chit chat occurred in every bulletin, often in both the lead in to sport and weather and took up an average of 13.2 seconds per bulletin.

Year	1985	1987	1989	1990
Time on Chit Chat	30"	45"	123"	277"
Av. Time Per Bulletin	1.4 sec	2.1 sec	5.9 sec	13.2 sec

There was a large increase in chit chat and, as we have seen in Chapter Five, its presence was noticeable to viewers and to critics such as Campbell (1992) and Edwards (1992) who deplore its presence. But in terms of absolute time, its effect on the newshole is quite small. Moreover, it frequently took the place of formal transfers between presenters, which routinely took 2 to 3 seconds per bulletin in 1985. Its importance lies instead in building mood, expressing personality and in conveying an attitude to the news by presenters. This function is dealt with in the qualitative analysis in Chapter Nine.

7.2.3 The Effect of Headlines on the Newshole

Headlining - running a few seconds of film or video footage with a brief spoken headline to "hook" the audience - occurred throughout the study period. These headlines served the same purpose as most newspaper headlines, "expressing the most important information about a news event" (van Dijk, 1991, p.51).

Headlines were run at the start of the bulletin (just after the opening music theme and graphics) and before advertising breaks, in an attempt to encourage audiences to stay with the programme during the break. Over the study years, headlines doubled in number:

Year	1985	1987	1989	1990
No. of headlines	70	101	144	140*
Time spent on headlines	416 sec	464 sec	670 sec	694 sec

(* a technical hitch meant one opening set of headlines was not recorded in 1990)

This increase in headline numbers reflects several things. First, improved technology and operating conditions (see Chapter Five) made the process easier. Second, as legislative changes allowed advertising on more days and more advertising time per hour, the number of advertising breaks increased and so did the opportunities and need for headlining. Third, an increasing emphasis on professionalism and consistency in news presentation meant a pattern of headlining was established and stuck to more closely.

During 1985, the news usually opened with two or three headlines with video footage. On days without advertising these were the only headlines. On Saturdays, the one advertising break was usually preceded by a spoken (no video footage) sports headline. On weekdays, there were two advertising breaks. The normal practice was to close the first section by saying "Back with more news after this break". Before the second break, there would be one spoken headline, usually a sports or human interest item. In 1987, with the emphasis on professional presentation, there were almost always two teased items at the middle break and one or two at the end. This pattern continued in 1989 with the new format of news, which saw more headlines at the first advertising break. Such descriptions remain generalisations, because headlines, responding to the daily changes in the news, are variable, despite a drive for consistency in the overall look of the news product.

Total time spent on headlines increased across the study period, but not as much as the numbers would suggest. This is because headlines in later years were usually snappier, and much of the increase in headline numbers occurred in headlines preceding the ad breaks, which tended to be shorter than the opening headlines.

7.2.4 Newshole Size: Summary

The newshole became significantly smaller in 1989, reflecting the new half hour network news and the increase Sunday advertisements. The newshole also shrank relative to bulletin time right across the study years. This is largely because of the increase in advertising and, to a lesser extent, the growth in headline numbers in 1987 and 1989 and the increase in chit chat.

7.3 Story Length

In Chapter Five, several respondents spoke about the pressure to reduce story lengths from 1986 onward. Table 6 below shows average length of the news stories sampled does decrease, but not until 1990. The maximum story length took a drop in 1989. Graphs in Figure 3 will further flesh out the picture of what happened.

Table 6
Average Story Length and Maximum Story Length for Each Study Year

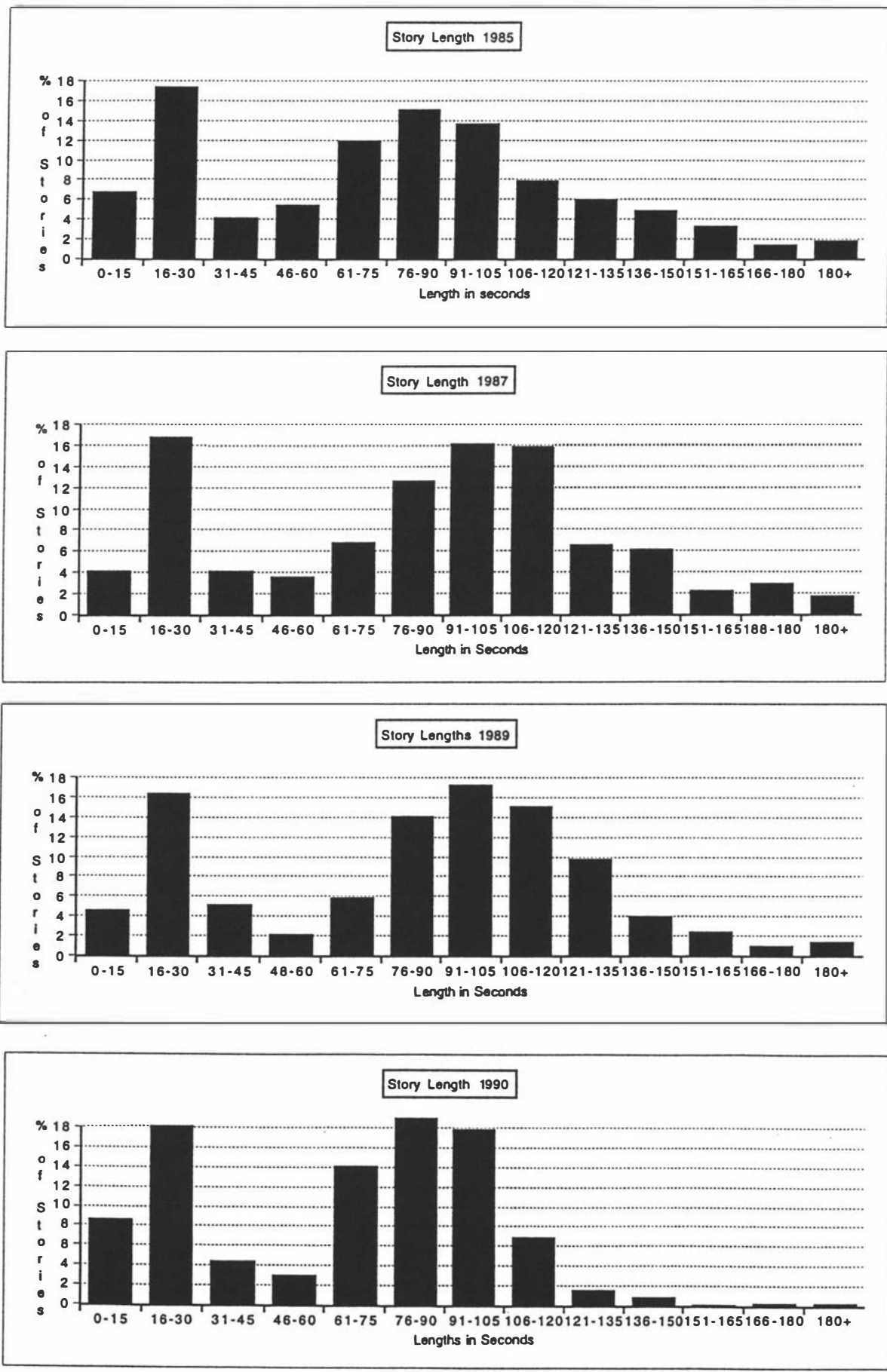
Date	1985	1987	1989	1990
Average Story Length	1'20"	1'27"	1'24"	1'07"
Maximum Story Length	4'50"	5'27"	3'32"	3'15"
Number of Stories	419	387	323	361

The mean story length increases in 1987, then decreases slightly in 1989, but the average story length does not become shorter than in the 1985 sample until 1990, when there is a sharp drop off. When tested for statistical significance (using the Scheffe procedure), the length for 1990 is shown to be significantly shorter from all the other years. However, a clearer picture of what is happening is shown when we examine the maximum story length for each year. These show a decrease in the number of very long stories from 1989.

The maximum story length in 1985 was 4'50" (with eight stories longer than 3'0"). In 1987 the longest story was 5'27" (a marathon lead on 19 September 1987 about a National Party reshuffle). There was also a story of 4'55" and seven stories were over 3'0" in length. By 1989 the maximum story was 3'32" and five stories were over 3'0". In 1990 the longest story was 3'15", with the next longest 2'46".

The distribution of story lengths across the study years is presented Figure 3 on the following page. The graphs use percentages of stories of different lengths, rather than raw numbers, to allow a clearer comparison between the years. They show the drop off in longer stories, especially in 1990, when the percentage of stories longer than 2

Figure 3: Distribution of Story Lengths



minutes dropped from 19% to 3%. Stories lengths are distributed bimodally, with distinct short and long stories. This bimodal distribution becomes sharper from 1989. The majority of short (under 30 second) stories in earlier years had no visuals, but from 1989 short stories with video clips became common. The length for longer stories became more uniform as the years went by. In 1985, longer stories were anything from a minute to two minutes. In 1987 and 1989, the majority of longer stories were between 1'15" and 2'00". In 1990, the longer items had become shorter, generally between 1'00" and 1'45", with 23.5% of stories between 1'30" and 1'45".

7.4 Number of Stories

The number of news stories in each of the three week sample periods provides another angle to examine the size of the newshole and the amount of information being made available to audiences. The table below sets out the number of stories in each year and the average number per bulletin.

Table 7

The Number of News Stories and the Average Number of Stories per News Bulletin

Year	Overall	1985	1987	1989	1990
Number of Stories	1490	419	387	323	361
Av Number Per Bulletin	17.74	19.95	18.43	15.38	17.19
Number of Bulletins	84	21	21	21	21

Note: Abbreviations: Av Number Per Bulletin = Number of stories divided by number of bulletins for each year. Overall = cumulated totals 1985-1990.

In 1985 there were 419 stories. The drop in 1987 to 387 reflects the increased average story length, caused mainly by the tendency to run occasional longer showcase stories. In 1989, the dramatic shrinking of the newshole with the advent of *Holmes*, is reflected in a 16% reduction in the number of stories (to 323). In 1990, producers shortened story length significantly, and so, despite the even smaller newshole, there was an increase

in the number of stories (to 361). This pattern is reflected in the figures for the average number of stories per bulletin. **Table 7** shows that bulletins in 1989 had the fewest stories, but that the number rose again in 1990.

7.4.1 Summary

Across the study years, along with the reduction in the size of newshole, there is a reduction of amount of information available to audiences. The reduction in story length reflects a reduction in depth of coverage, and the reduction in numbers of stories reflects a reduction in range or width of coverage. Compared with 1985 and 1987, the post deregulation bulletins had fewer longer stories (less depth of coverage) and had fewer items per bulletin (less breadth of coverage).

7.5 Subjects Covered By the News

As this is a complex area, this section will be taken in several stages. It will first look at the amount of time spent on subjects and the number of stories in each subject category, in a brief examination of **Table 8** on the following page. Then, using measurements of the amount of time spent on subject categories, expressed as a proportion of the amount of time in the newshole, it will next discuss the overall patterns of subjects covered in the news, before moving on to look at changes across the years.

7.5.1 Time Spent on News Subjects

Table 8 on the following page sets out total time spent on each subject for the whole sample, and then for each study year. Beside the total is the ranking for each year. So, for instance, sports news was the largest category for each year, and politics, while being overall second in size, was the fifth largest category in terms of time spent in 1985. On the second line of the table are the numbers of stories in that category. The subject categories and their derivation are explained in the content analysis methodology in the previous chapter.

Table 8

**Time Spent on Subjects, Ranking by Time Spent and
Numbers of Stories in Each Category**

Subject	Total	1985	1987	1989	1990
Sport	464'01" (1) 391	147'36" (1) 124	134'53" (1) 105	85'14" (1) 62	96'18" (1) 100
Politics	244'51" (2) 159	42'50" (5) 29	87'41" (2) 55	56'40" (2) 30	57'40" (2) 45
Diplomacy	187'12" (3) 130	87'21" (2) 59	57'02" (4) 35	21'48" (10) 18	21'01" (8) 18
Economic	182'29" (4) 168	52'29" (3) 38	57'28" (3) 52	44'25" (4) 43	28'07" (5) 35
War	159'51" (5) 108	47'57" (4) 33	38'17" (6) 26	28'19" (8) 19	45'18" (3) 30
Human Int	134'35" (6) 100	30'19" (7) 23	32'36" (7) 22	29'24" (7) 21	42'16" (4) 34
Accid/dis	129'56" (7) 111	20'52" (8) 23	30'54" (8) 21	51'22" (3) 40	26'48" (6) 27
Crime	119'34" (8) 98	16'48" (11) 17	46'28" (5) 29	34'54" (5) 30	21'24" (7) 22
Health	107'47" (9) 68	38'55" (6) 24	24'45" (9) 14	30'11" (6) 18	13'56" (10) 12
Agric/envir	63'12" (10) 41	19'21" (10) 15	6'54" (14) 4	23'26" (9) 12	13'31" (11) 10
Moral Prob	60'17" (11) 39	19'24" (9) 13	11'03" (10) 6	9'40" (14) 5	20'10" (9) 15
Cult	31'43" (12) 23	10'11" (13) 7	7'55" (12) 7	9'42" (13) 6	3'55" (14) 3
Sci/Tech	30'54" (13) 20	10'54" (12) 6	9'20" (11) 5	6'18" (15) 6	4'22" (13) 3
Maori	28'29" (14) 19	5'22" (14) 5	6'59" (13) 3	12'40" (11) 8	3'28" (15) 3
Educ	26'44" (15) 15	4'55" (15) 3	5'00" (15) 3	10'34" (12) 5	6'15" (12) 4
TOTAL TIME	1971'35"	555'14"	557'15"	454'37"	404'29"
TOTAL NO.	1490	419	387	323	361

Note: Abbreviations: War = war and defence, Human Int = human interest, Accid/dis = accidents and disasters, Agric/envir = agriculture and environment, Moral Prob = public moral problems, Cult = elite and popular culture, Sci/Tech = science and technology, Educ = education.

The table demonstrates the dominance of sports. At 464 minutes and 391 stories, it was almost twice the size of the second largest category, politics. Following politics, diplomacy and economics were the next most important in terms of time spent on subjects. If we compare the length of time spent on these two with the number of stories, the table indicates diplomacy stories were on average longer than economics stories. War and defence, human interest and stories about accidents and disasters were next (with between 160 and 130 minutes spent on each of them across the study years). Crime came about halfway down the league table. Half as much time was spent on crime as on politics and, as there were comparatively more crime stories, the table indicates crime stories were generally shorter than political stories. Health was next in line and, at 108 minutes and 68 stories, received far more attention than education, at 27 minutes and 15 stories. Agricultural/environmental stories and those concerning public moral problems received similar amounts of coverage, at just over 60 minutes. Then there was another drop to subjects which receive hardly any coverage: science, culture, education and Maori issues.

Comparing the amount of time given to a subject and the numbers of stories indicates that sports stories were generally shorter than political stories. In some rows, the table above illustrates the decreasing length of stories. For instance, only one more minute was spent on politics in 1990, compared with 1989, but there were only 30 political stories in 1989 compared to 45 in 1990. **Table 8** also serves to remind us that the sample size in some categories, such as Maori issues and Culture, is very small and that little inference can be made about trends across time in these cases.

Table 8, dealing with time given to subjects, is a key measurement of the overall amount of information available to viewers. In the diplomacy category, for instance, there was only a quarter of the information (in terms of amount of time spent on the subject matter) available to viewers in 1990, compared with what they were receiving in 1985. On economics, the 1990 audiences were getting a little over half the information that they got in 1985. Because of the overall shrinkage of the newshole across the years, the decreases in percentage of time spent on subject matter as shown in **Table 9** are actually greater than they appear (in terms of real time given to the subject compared with earlier years) and the gains are less significant.

7.5.2 Percentage of Newshole Devoted to News Subjects

Table 9 is therefore a clearer basis for comparison across years. It depicts time spent on each subject for each year as a percentage of the newshole for that year, overcoming the problem of the varying newshole size. It also ranks subjects for each year.

The table shows few clear cut trends across the years, but closer investigation in this section, especially where categories are combined, brings out some interesting points about news changes in the study period.

Table 9
Percentage of Newshole Devoted to Each Subject in Rank Order

Rank	Overall Subject %	1985 Subject %	1987 Subject %	1989 Subject %	1990 Subject %
1	Sport 23.5	Sport 26.6	Sport 24.2	Sport 18.7	Sport 23.8
2	Pol 12.4	Dip 15.7	Pol 15.7	Pol 12.5	Pol 14.3
3	Dip 9.5	Econ 9.5	Econ 10.3	A&D 11.3	War 11.2
4	Econ 9.3	War 8.6	Dip 10.2	Econ 9.8	Hum 10.5
5	War 8.1	Pol 7.7	Crime 8.3	Crime 7.7	Econ 7.0
6	Hum In 6.9	Health 7.0	War 6.9	Health 6.6	A&D 6.6
7	A&D 6.6	Hum 5.5	Hum 5.9	Hum 6.5	Crime 5.3
8	Crime 6.1	A&D 3.8	A&D 5.6	War 6.2	Dip 5.2
9	Health 5.5	Moral 3.5	Health 4.4	Ag/Env 5.2	Moral 5.0
10	Ag/Env 3.2	Ag/Env 3.5	Moral 2.0	Dip 4.8	Health 3.4
11	Moral 3.0	Crime 3.0	Sci 1.7	Maori 2.8	Ag/Env 3.3
12	Cult 1.6	Sci 1.9	Cult 1.4	Educ 2.3	Educ 1.5
13	Sci 1.6	Cult 1.8	Maori 1.3	Cult 2.1	Sci 1.0
14	Maori 1.4	Maori 1.0	Ag/Env 1.2	Moral 2.1	Cult 1.0
15	Educ 1.3	Educ 0.9	Educ 0.9	Sci 1.4	Maori 0.9

Note: Abbreviations: refer to Table 8.

7.5.2.1 Overall Results

As already mentioned, sports was the largest single topic, approximately a quarter of all news coverage. Sports was also consistently the "top poller" across the years, with almost twice as much time spent on sport as the next contender, politics.

Three "heavyweight" and closely related news subjects come next: politics, diplomacy and foreign affairs, and economics. Along with war, they make up 39.3% of the newshole. The bottom four were: culture (both popular and "elite"), science and technology, and education, each with about 1.5% of the total, comprising a cumulative 6%.

The middle ranking subjects, which showed considerable variety in their ranking across the years, were: human interest 6.9%; accident and disaster 6.6%, crime 6.1%, health 5.5%, agriculture and the environment 3.2%, and public moral problems 3.0%. Cumulative total: 31.3%.

These overall figures show that, with the exception of sport, there was a strong weighting towards heavy, often political, subjects in the news. Politics, diplomacy, and economics made up 31.2% of the newshole. (If war is included this jumps to 39.3%, but it was decided to keep this category separate, as war is also a subject strongly featured in tabloid journalism.) In fact, the news was more political than these figures show, as a good proportion of the health, education, agriculture and Maori categories were "political" in their nature (see Chapter Six at 6.4.1 on determining subject categories).

The figures which would represent tabloid news matter were smaller. Human interest, accident and disaster, crime, and public moral problems made up 22.6% of the newshole. This should be very slightly inflated by the popular culture element of the culture category (see section on minor categories later), although, at 1.6%, culture was one of the smallest of all categories.

But the "tabloid" versus "political" balance is more subtle than the figures suggest. Human interest can be seen as much as a treatment of news as a subject category in its own right, so the way subject matter is treated has as much effect on the

perception of tabloidisation of news as does the apparent manifest subject matter. This is dealt with in the qualitative analysis.

7.5.2.2 Sport

Sport represents prime entertainment subject matter in news terms, so the expectation was for it to increase later in the study period. It was the largest subject overall, retaining its dominance across the years. At its peak in 1985, it showed a tendency to decrease with a particularly large, but apparently temporary, drop in 1989, when for a while there was no separate sports section in the news. However, its increase in 1990 did not bring it quite to the level of earlier years.

7.5.2.3 Politics

Politics was second ranked in all but 1985. We see an apparent paucity of material in 1985 followed by a peak in 1987, a slight dip in 1989 and a smaller rise 1990. In the political cycle, 1987 and 1990 were election years. In 1987 there were three news bulletins within eight days either side of the election and a bulletin the day a major National Party reshuffle was announced following the election results. The 1990 bulletins included two in the opening week of the election campaign of that year.

The figure of 7.7% political content in 1985 reflects the coding protocol. 1985 saw two major news events: the row over New Zealand's involvement in ANZUS, and the bombing of the Greenpeace vessel Rainbow Warrior in Auckland harbour. Both of these were essentially matters of international diplomacy and were coded as such. This is reflected in the relatively swollen diplomacy category for 1985 (15.7%). However, the stories also involved leading politicians of the country and were the subject of political debate and party politicking not reflected in the overall results for the year.

7.5.2.4 Diplomacy and Foreign Affairs

The figures for diplomacy and foreign affairs are of interest in the debate about news as information. As we have seen, stories in this category are closely related to politics and provide us with a view of our nation in relation to the rest of the world and of the

various relationships and power balances between states. Even allowing for the unusual events of 1985, there was a clear decrease during the study period, especially from 1989 onward, when diplomacy and foreign affairs stories dropped to half the amount of previous years. The low figures for 1989 and 1990 (when the diplomacy category was ranked 10th and 8th respectively), came despite the super-power arms talks and the lead up to the Gulf War. There was also greater opportunity for a New Zealand diplomatic perspective on the news, as two correspondents were based overseas from mid-1985 onward. Despite the large flurry of diplomatic activity before America's invasion of Kuwait, the detailed coverage of events in September 1990 overwhelmingly emphasised the "war" aspect (the qualitative analysis details the approach). This was also reflected in the large (11.2%) figure for war in 1990.

7.5.2.5 Economics

Economics, ranked fourth overall, maintained a more even ranking across the years. In third place in 1985 and 1987, it dropped to fourth in 1989, although it took up almost the same percentage of the newshole. In 1990, it dropped to fifth place and to 7% of the newshole.

7.5.2.6 War and Defence

War and defence, ranked fifth overall, is also a significant news subject. It featured more in 1985 and 1990. The third ranking place in 1990, was, as mentioned earlier, due to the lead-up to the Gulf War, which was heavily covered by television (Shallcrass, 1992).

7.5.2.7 Human Interest

After the serious subjects (always with the exception of sports) comes the 100 human interest stories in the sample. In seventh ranking in 1985, 1987 and 1989, these stories became more important in 1990, when they took up 10.5% of the newshole and moved into fourth place in the news hierarchy. These results are partly caused by the design of the bulletins. Bulletin editors have long considered human interest (and sports items) as good ending points for the news, and the tendency to finish on a lighter note became

more formalised, along with the increasingly careful construction of bulletins. When *Holmes* was introduced (a third of the way through the sample selection in 1989) the second advertising break was shifted towards the end of the now shortened news bulletin. It was followed by the final story in the bulletin and then the weather. *Holmes* began directly after the weather (always a high interest item). There developed a practice of placing a human interest story between the second advertising break and the weather segment. This happened five times in the 1989 sample and eleven times in the 1990 sample.

7.5.2.8 Accidents and Disasters

Stories covering accidents and disasters were ranked 8th in both 1985 and 1987, although in 1987 they took up a little more of the newshole. In 1989, however, coverage more than doubles to 11.3% and third placing. While the category dropped back to 6th rank and 6.6% in 1990, accident and disaster stories still took up more of the newshole than in either 1985 or 1987. In 1989, the bulletins contained large segments on: the aftermath of a United Airline flight where a door was torn off, directly affecting a number of New Zealanders; the massive Exxon Valdez oil spill; and the Sheffield soccer disaster. These disasters either involved New Zealanders or were centred in Britain and the United States, from where TVNZ gets most of its overseas satellite content.

7.5.2.9 Crime

Crime, as a staple of tabloid journalism (Baistow, 1985), is of particular interest. Here 1987 stands out as having the highest level of coverage (moving up from 3.0% in 1985 to 8.3%). After that the level dropped a little in 1989 and again in 1990, although, at 5.3% it was still above the percentage in 1985. The rankings also show that crime coverage was given greater importance after 1985. In 1985 crime was ranked 11th, in 1987 and 1989 it was in 5th position and in 1990 it was 7th. Measures of prominence (see section 7.6) attest to this increasing emphasis on crime.

7.5.2.10 Public Moral Problems

The public moral problems category (consisting of human relations and moral problems including alcohol, divorce, sex, race relations and civil court proceedings) can be

considered a contributor to the "tabloid" or "scandal" element in the news and has been pulled out for separate analysis. This did not show a clear cut rise, as might have been predicted. It is also a small category (11th overall in terms of ratings), so care needs to be taken in drawing conclusions about trends. Moral problem stories took up 3.5% of the newshole in 1985, this dropped in 1987 and 1989 but rose to 5% and 9th ranking in 1990. The tone and emotional impact of moral problem stories are dealt with in the qualitative analysis in Chapter Nine.

7.5.2.11 Health and Agriculture/Environmental Stories

Health stories, at 5.5% of the newshole, are a relatively important category. They fluctuated across the study years, with no apparent trend. The agriculture/environment category (which also included fishing and forestry) was created because of the economic importance of these primary industries in New Zealand and because of the high popular interest in environmental issues. At 3.2% of the newshole overall, it was a small category. It, too, fluctuated, with a drop in 1987, a relative peak in 1989 and a return to the 1985 level in 1990. As part, perhaps, of a shift away from rural concerns to urban concerns, there was a swing away from agricultural to environmental stories during the study years (there were only five fishing stories and no forestry stories). In 1985, there were eight agricultural stories and three environmental ones, while the 1990 sample contained one story on agriculture and eight on the environment.

7.5.2.12 The Smallest Categories

The four categories of culture, science and technology, Maori issues, and education were consistently at the bottom of the subject rankings. Comment will be made on the culture category, because of its linkages to the entertainment function of the news, and on the coverage of Maori issues.

In the culture category, a distinction was made between popular culture and elite culture, or the classic arts. It was assumed there would be an increase in items on popular culture, as part of a move to make the news of interest to younger viewers (Campbell, 1989) and to increase the entertainment value of the news. While popular culture items went from 42% of the culture category in 1985 to 100% in 1990, and rock

music made up a greater proportion of the popular culture category as the study period went on, the numbers of stories were too small to draw any conclusions. However, it is clear that with only five popular culture stories in 1989 and three in 1990, there was no drive in TVNZ to replace the more serious informational stories with those covering popular culture.

Maori issues took up a very small proportion of the newshole; 1.4% at 14th ranking. The study period covers what has been generally seen as a renaissance in Maori culture, the acceptance of the Treaty of Waitangi as a key document in the New Zealand constitution, the declaration of Maori as an official language and important debates over Maori land and resources. While coverage in the sample reflected some of these issues, the level of coverage of Maori issues is small, 19 stories in all; of these eight were in 1989.

7.5.3 Collapsing Categories: Political and Tabloid Groupings

Among the 15 categories there are two coherent groupings which can be made, reflecting the two major opposing functions of news. The categories of politics, diplomacy and foreign affairs and economics can be combined to represent the bulk of the serious informative side of the news in a "political grouping". The four categories, human interest, accidents and disasters, crime, and public moral problems collapse to form a recognisably "tabloid grouping", representing the tendencies, always inherent in the news, to provide excitement, shock and titillation. The subject of war and defence has been separated out, so it can be clearly seen. War as a category can be closely related to politics and diplomacy. But, depending on treatment, it can also, as conflicts in the Falkland Islands and the Gulf have shown, be a staple diet of tabloid newspapers. Sport has again been left separate (although McQuail (1977) found sports coverage was more important in popular dailies). The other categories have been grouped together. With the exception of health, they are all small categories in terms of the newshole. They do not fit clearly into either the political or tabloid grouping. While some could be considered as political (for instance, problems in Auckland's public hospitals), an equal number could fit into the tabloid grouping (for instance, a lighthearted item on sea lice at the beach). The table on the following page shows the percentage of the newshole taken up by each of these various groupings.

Table 10

**Percentage of newshole spent on subject groupings
(achieved by collapsing categories)**

Subject	Overall	1985	1987	1989	1990
Sport	23.5%	26.6%	24.2%	18.7%	23.8%
Political Gp	31.2%	32.9%	36.2%	27.1%	26.5%
Tabloid Gp	22.6%	15.8%	21.8%	27.6%	27.3%
War & Defence	8.1%	8.6%	6.9%	6.2%	11.2%
Others	14.6%	16.1%	10.9%	20.4%	11.2%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Note: Political Gp = cumulated percentages for categories of Politics, Diplomacy and Economics. Tabloid Gp = cumulated percentages for categories of Crime, Accident and Disaster, Human Interest and Public Moral Problems. Others = Agriculture and Environment, Health, Education, Science and Technology, Culture and Maori Issues.

With the exclusion of sport, Table 10 shows that, overall, the serious political grouping was greater than the tabloid grouping. But it also shows that across the years there was a decreasing commitment to political subjects. With the exception of 1987, when political subjects were at their peak (see 7.5.2.3), these decrease across the study period. By contrast, the percentage of the newshole spent on the tabloid grouping increases, both in 1987 and 1989. In 1985, twice as much of the newshole was given over to subjects in the political grouping, compared to the tabloid grouping. In 1987, the gap had closed a little; in 1989 the two subjects are level pegging, and in 1990 the tabloid grouping is very slightly larger. Between 1985 and 1990, there was a 57.5% increase in stories centred on crime, accidents and disasters, human interest elements, and public moral problems. When this is combined with an increasing prominence given to these stories and a decreasing emphasis on the political element, we see a definite shift towards tabloidisation in the content of news during the study period. Chapter Nine enhances these findings by demonstrating that tabloidisation is not confined to content, but is important in the presentation of news.

7.5.4 Subject Matter of News: Summary

The content analysis began with two research questions concerning subject matter:

Has there been an decrease in serious informational or political topics in the news?

Has there been an increase in topics with an emphasis on entertainment and audience appeal?

The questions were based on findings in the literature and the assumption was that there would be a shift from serious to entertainment-oriented subject matter.

However, when dealing with separate subject categories, results were not as clear-cut as had been expected. The occurrence of the ANZUS and of the Greenpeace bombing stories in 1985, and their subsequent coding as "diplomacy", meant a blurring of the politics and diplomacy results for that year. Perhaps because of this, and because of election years in 1987 and 1990, political coverage does not demonstrate a large decline over the study period. Diplomacy and foreign affairs coverage does reduce. Even if we discount the 1985 sample as artificially high, the coverage of diplomacy and foreign affairs dropped markedly after 1987. The agriculture and environment category fluctuated, but a trend to decreasing coverage of agriculture and increasing coverage of environmental stories was apparent. Science and technology made up too small a portion of the newshole (1.6%) to draw any conclusions.

In terms of subjects with an entertainment focus, again individual results did not fit expectations of a steady increase. Results for sport ran counter to expectations. Sport was highest in 1985 and lowest in 1989, but was always the major subject in the bulletin. Crime showed a jump in 1987. From this peak, it declined a little in 1989 and again in 1990 (although not to 1985 levels of coverage). Accidents and disasters did show an increase, peaking in 1989 and then dropping (but remaining above levels in the early part of the study). Human interest items also increased, with an especial jump in 1990. The public moral problems category reduced slightly in 1987 and 1989 and then enlarged in 1990. The culture category was too small to draw conclusions, except to note there was no real increase in items covering popular culture.

It is only when categories are collapsed that a trend of the kind envisaged by the researcher is to be observed. The "serious" political grouping of (politics, diplomacy and economics) did show a drop from a peak of 32.9% in 1987 to 26.4% in 1990. Correspondingly the "tabloid" grouping (crime, accidents and disasters, human interest and public moral problems) steadily increased across the study period from 15.7% in 1985 to 27.4% in 1990. The balance in the bulletin subject matter has been shown to shift from the "serious" to the "tabloid".

The major finding not anticipated when the research questions were developed, was the different nature of the 1987 bulletin, with its emphasis on both serious and tabloid elements. Politics, economics and diplomacy issues were covered in some depth, sometimes with live studio interviews with experts and correspondent. These jostled for attention with a large increase in crime coverage (especially from overseas). Chapter Nine also describes how 1987 differs in style of coverage, and Chapter Five covered some of the debates about "worthy and dull" versus entertainment and people-oriented approaches to the news that were being held in the newsroom at the time. While the news was changing, there was still no clear mandate on the ultimate direction it was to take. This did not become truly apparent until 1989.

7.6 Headlines and Other Measures of Prominence

As well as the amount of time given to different subjects, the amount of prominence given to them also indicates news priorities. Some simple measures of prominence have been devised for the study, based around the headlines and position in the bulletin. The purpose was to see whether particular kinds of stories are more likely to be given prominence and whether there was a change across the study years.

7.6.1 Subject Categories in the Opening Set of Headlines

Television news headlines are sometimes also called "teasers". They consist of a brief summary of important items read by the presenter, often accompanied by a short video clip, and are read at the beginning of the bulletin and before each commercial break. The opening headlines are the most important headlines, covering events of highest

interest and designed to keep the viewer tuned into the news. Because of the visual element of the medium, a good "picture story", not otherwise of significance, can make the opening headlines.

Table 11 below looks at subject categories covered by the opening set of headlines. This is expressed as a percentage of the total number in each year, to allow a clearer comparison across the years. The total number of headlines in the opening set in the sample for each year are featured in the bottom row of the table.

Table 11
Subject Categories in the Opening Set of Headlines,
Expressed as a Percentage of the Number of Headlines

Subject	1985	1987	1989	1990
Sport	20.0%	11.3%	12.9%	15.6%
Politics	7.3%	20.8%	14.3%	14.3%
War	14.5%	11.3%	11.7%	12.9%
Economics	9.1%	17.0%	7.8%	6.5%
Diplomacy	20.0%	9.4%	2.6%	7.8%
Accid/Dis	9.1%	9.4%	6.5%	9.1%
Crime	7.3%	5.7%	11.7%	7.8%
Human Int	9.1%	3.8%	5.2%	7.8%
Health	3.6%	7.5%	7.8%	5.2%
Moral Prob	-	-	3.9%	6.5%
Maori	-	3.8%	3.9%	1.3%
Educ	-	-	3.9%	2.6%
Cult	-	-	2.6%	1.3%
Agric/envir	-	-	3.9%	-
Sci	-	-	1.3%	1.3%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
Number	55	53	77	77

The number of headlines in the opening set increased in 1989. In 1985 and 1987, there were frequently days where only one headline was used. In 1989 and 1990, headlining was more consistent, with a minimum of three, but more often four, opening headlines.

Table 11 shows that, across the years, sports was the subject most represented in the opening headlines and was at its peak in 1985. Political stories were given prominence. While taking up less of the newshole than sport, they featured almost as often as sport in the opening headlines. The results in 1985 again reflect the impact of the Rainbow Warrior bombing and the ANZUS row, in the large percentage for diplomacy and the relatively small percentage for politics. Political stories made up a fifth of the opening headlines in 1987 but dropped a little in 1989. War was a relatively attractive subject for headlines throughout the study period and economics was also important, especially in 1987 (the year of the stockmarket crash). Diplomacy dropped off after 1985, particularly in 1989. Accidents and disasters and crime are represented in the opening headlines in about the proportion which might be expected from their representation in the newshole, although the peak of accident and disaster stories which occurs in 1989 is not reflected in the headlining. While crime was an important ingredient in the content of the 1987 news, it was given little prominence in the opening set of headlines for that year and only slightly more prominence when all headlines are considered.

The last two study years, and especially 1989, showed a greater spread of subject matter. This could, perhaps, be partly accounted for by the growing number of opportunities to be included (more headlines in the 1989 and 1990 sample). In 1985 and 1987, agriculture or environmental stories, and the health, education, science, culture and moral problems categories were not represented in the opening headlines.

To draw a clearer picture of changes, **Table 12** on the following page collapses categories from **Table 11** as was done in earlier sections.

Table 12
Subject Matter Groupings (Collapsed Categories) of Opening Headlines

Categories	1985	1987	1989	1990
Political Group	36.4%	47.2%	24.7%	28.6%
Sport	20.0%	11.3%	12.9%	15.6%
Tabloid Group	25.5%	18.9%	27.3%	31.2%
War & Defence	14.5%	11.3%	11.7%	12.9%
Others	3.6%	11.3%	23.4%	11.7%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Note: Political group = politics, diplomacy and foreign affairs, and economics. Tabloid group = crime, accident and disaster, human interest and public moral problems. Others = health, Maori, education, culture, agriculture and environment, science and technology.

Table 12 shows that the political grouping, which was most strongly represented in the headlines in 1987, dropped markedly in 1989. Although the percentage of headlines in the political group rose again in 1990 (election year), they remained well below the 1985 level. The tabloid grouping showed an overall increase. They dropped in 1987, regained a little more than the initial level in 1989 and showed a further increase in 1990. The "others" group clearly demonstrates the greater spread of subject matter in the opening headlines. It showed a tripling of the 1985 figures in 1987 (when the diplomacy headlines dropped markedly, and both Maori and health issues featured in the opening set). In 1989, with the larger number of opening headlines in the revamped news, the "others" figure reached 23%, representing a wide spread of subject matter. This peak, however, seems only temporary, as in 1990 there was a return to the level of 1987. But the overall widening of the variety of subject matter of the lead headlines should be noted, because it means that there was not been a simple shift in emphasis from "political" subjects to "tabloid" subjects. A greater variety of subjects (across the whole range) had been deemed suitable for the bulletin's opening headlines.

7.6.2 Subject Categories in All Headlines

Table 13 below looks at the subjects of all headlines across the study years. Again this is expressed as a percentage of the total number in each year. The total number of headlines in the sample for each year is featured in the bottom row. Subjects are ranked in order of their percentages across the whole study period.

Table 13
Subject Categories of All Headlines, Expressed as a
Percentage of the Number of Headlines

Subject	1985	1987	1989	1990
Sport	32.4%	21.8%	21.5%	23.7%
Human Int	12.2%	8.9%	14.6%	17.3%
Politics	5.4%	14.9%	11.1%	10.1%
War	10.8%	6.9%	7.6%	8.6%
Diplomacy	14.9%	6.9%	2.0%	5.7%
Economics	8.1%	10.9%	4.9%	5.1%
Accid/Dis	6.8%	7.9%	6.3%	6.4%
Crime	5.4%	7.9%	7.6%	5.0%
Health	2.7%	7.9%	6.3%	3.6%
Agric/envir	-	2.0%	4.9%	3.6%
Moral Prob	-	-	3.4%	5.1%
Maori	-	2.0%	2.8%	1.4%
Cult	-	1.0%	2.8%	1.4%
Educ	-	1.0%	2.8%	1.4%
Sci	1.3%	-	1.4%	1.4%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
Number	74	101	144	139

The number of opportunities to headline a particular news item increased across the study period. This was largely because of the increase in numbers of headlines preceding advertising breaks in the bulletin. Looking at the subject matter of all headlines (Table 13), and then comparing it with the subject matter of the opening

headlines (Table 11) gives an opportunity to make generalisations about what subjects were seen as particularly important or newsworthy.

In both tables sports dominates heavily. The reduction of sports headlines after 1985 covered all headlines and did not just represent a relegation of sports to headlines later in the bulletin.

In terms of all headlines, human interest stories come next, but rank much lower as opening headlines, showing that these stories are more likely to feature in the later headlines than the opening ones. In contrast to Table 11, the figures for human interest in all headlines increase in 1989 and again in 1990, when the last section of the news was reduced to a human interest, or other light item, and the weather forecast. This item was headlined before the second commercial break in the news.

Comparisons to Table 11 show politics, diplomatic, economics, war, and accident and disaster stories were more likely to be in the first group of headlines than in other headlines. Table 13 also shows that a wider variety of subject matter was likely to be represented in the headlines in the later part of the study period.

Table 14 below collapses categories from Table 13 as before.

Table 14
Subject Groupings (Collapsed Categories) of All Headlines
Expressed as a Percentage

Categories	1985	1987	1989	1990
Political Group	28.4%	32.7%	18.0%	21.0%
Sport	32.4%	21.8%	21.5%	23.7%
Tabloid Group	24.4%	24.7%	31.9%	33.9%
War & Defence	10.8%	6.9%	7.6 %	8.6%
Others	4.0%	13.9%	21.0%	12.8%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Note: Political group = politics, diplomacy and foreign affairs, and economics. Tabloid group = crime, accident and disaster, human interest and public moral problems. Others = health, Maori, education, culture, agriculture and environment, science and technology.

Table 14 again shows trends more clearly. The political group of subjects (which are generally confined to the opening headline set) showed a lift in 1987 and then a definite drop to 1989, with a slight rise in 1990 (election year). Meanwhile, the tabloid group demonstrated an increase in 1989 and another, much smaller, increase in 1990. The "others" category (which includes health, education, science, culture, and Maori items) tripled between 1985 and 1987, almost doubled again in 1989 and then dropped back to the 1987 level in 1990, this generally reflects figures for the opening headline set (**Table 12**).

7.6.3 Other Measures of Prominence: Opening and Closing Items

The study also recorded the content of the first three items in the bulletin and the last item. **Table 15** on the following page shows the subject categories of the first three items in the news bulletins for each study year. The figures are expressed as a percentage of the total number for each year.

The first three stories are major items in the bulletin. But all of these stories were not always represented in the headlines at the top of the news bulletin. This is because, while the lead item was almost invariably the subject of the lead headline, the second item might well present another aspect of the lead, or be closely linked, and therefore not offer the opportunity for a headline.

Table 15 shows that sports stories (the major content category in the bulletin, judged as of high interest to viewers and therefore prominent in headlines) were frequently included in the opening headline set, but generally not deemed significant enough in news terms to be in the top three items in the bulletin. In the four sample years, sports was in the top three only three times, out of a total of 252 opportunities.

Cultural topics did not appear at all, and the small numbers of education, science, agricultural or environmental, and Maori issues reflect their general absence in the news as a whole. However, as discussed above, such subjects as these were more likely to be represented in the headlines in the later part of the study. **Table 11** also shows they were more likely to be in the top three later in the study period. For instance, of the

five Maori stories in the 1985 sample, none was in the top three, but two of the three 1987 Maori stories were in the top three. Maori stories also featured in the top three in 1989 and 1990.

Table 15

**Subject Categories of the First Three Items in the News Bulletins
Expressed as a Percentage of Total**

Subject	1985	1987	1989	1990
Politics	6.3%	31.8%	17.4%	25.4%
Diplomacy	44.5%	19.0%	4.8%	7.9%
War	15.9%	6.3%	12.7%	23.8%
Accid/Dis	7.9%	11.1%	19.0%	15.9%
Economics	7.9%	12.7%	9.5%	7.9%
Crime	3.2%	11.1%	12.7%	1.6%
Health	3.2%	1.6%	7.9%	4.8%
Maori	-	3.2%	4.8%	1.6%
Moral Prob	-	1.6%	-	6.3%
Human Int	6.3%	1.6%	-	3.2%
Agric/envir	1.6%	-	4.8%	-
Sport	3.2%	-	1.6%	-
Educ	-	-	3.2%	1.6%
Sci	-	-	1.6%	-
Cult	-	-	-	-
Total (N) & %	(63) 100.0%	(63) 100.0%	(63) 100.0%	(63) 100.0%

Table 15 shows politics, diplomacy and war and defence were the subjects most likely to occur in the first three items of the bulletin. Again we see in 1985 the relatively very small political category and large diplomacy category. Political stories also reflect the election years, being larger in 1987 and 1990. The war and defence category was small in 1987 and much larger in 1990 (the Gulf War build-up dominated the first part of bulletins for several weeks towards the end of the year). Economic stories also figure strongly in the top three items. They were at their peak in 1987, reflecting Labour's economic policy moves and the coming election.

Accident and disaster stories are frequently found in the top three stories of the bulletin, and this is more likely from 1989 onward. Accident and disaster stories are twice as likely to be present in the top three items at the end of the study period as at the beginning. Crime coverage had a much greater likelihood of being in the top three stories in 1987 and 1989, but in 1990 only one crime story made it to the top three items in the bulletin. In contrast to expected findings, there were more human interest stories in the top three items in 1985 than in the rest of the study period. Public moral problem stories rarely occurred in the top three, and the examples in 1990 reflect high profile coverage of the Hilary Morgan custody case.

Table 16 below looks at the first three items, by collapsing categories in the same way as earlier in the chapter.

Table 16

**Subject Groupings (Collapsed Categories) of the First Three Items
of the Bulletin Expressed as a Percentage**

Subject	1985	1987	1989	1990
Political Group	58.7%	63.5%	31.7%	41.2%
Tabloid Group	17.4%	25.4%	31.7%	27.0%
War & Defence	15.9%	6.3%	12.7%	23.8%
Sport	3.2%	--	1.6%	--
Others	4.8%	4.8%	22.3%	8.0%
Total (N) & %	(63) 100%	(63) 100%	(63) 100%	(63) 100%

Table 16 reflects findings earlier in the chapter, by showing a general increase in prominence of the tabloid group (as measured by being in the top three items) and a general decrease in prominence in the political group of subjects. Prominence of both the political and tabloid groups increased in 1987. In 1985, well over half the stories in the top three items were in the political grouping. By 1989, that had dropped to below a third. In 1990, there was an increase, but political stories were still well below their 1985 level of prominence. In contrast, stories in the tabloid grouping, from having been only two-thirds as likely to be in the top three as stories in the political grouping, were by 1989, just as likely to be in the top three. In 1990, tabloid stories were less prominent by this measure but still far more prominent than they were in 1985.

Placement at the end of a bulletin can also be termed a measure of prominence, because the last item in a news bulletin has a special function. It has traditionally been the place for lighter items which "round off" the bulletin. More recently, greater attention has been paid to the last item, by those who compile the bulletin because of its importance in keeping the audience interested and therefore tuned in to the channel. This is reflected in the subject choice of the last item, as shown in **Table 17** below. Because overall numbers are small and there is only one entry in several categories, the table uses the number of headlines, rather than percentages.

Table 17
Subject Categories of Last Item in the News Bulletin

Subject	1985	1987	1989	1990
Sport	11	13	6	2
Human Int	5	4	10	12
Cult	1	1	2	1
Agric/envir	1	-	2	1
Diplomacy	-	2	-	1
Accid/Dis	1	1	-	-
Crime	1	-	-	-
Economics	-	-	1	-
Health	-	-	-	1
Maori	-	-	-	1
Moral Prob	1	-	-	-
Sci	-	-	-	1
War	-	-	-	1
Educ	-	-	-	-
Politics	-	-	-	-
Total	21	21	21	21

Figures in **Table 17** make a clear contrast to other measures of prominence. Heavier items in the political grouping are out, and sports and human interest form the vast majority of end items. Subjects in other categories are generally tackled humorously or are late and urgent items.

Sports stories made up over half the sign off items in 1985. By 1990, that had dropped to two stories out of 21. Throughout the study period the final sports story was likely to be an unusual or human interest style sports story, if one was around. Examples include the retirement of a well known race horse, a marathon runner's 50 years of action, or the "real blokes and sheilas'" triathlon. However, most of the sports stories were just "straight" stories. In the earlier years this represented the traditional structure of the bulletin; news followed by sports items. The pure human interest story as the sign off item became increasingly frequent as the study years progressed. With human interest items more likely to end the bulletin (and so more likely to be recalled) and more likely to be headlined from 1989 onward, they become increasingly prominent in the news. There was also some indication of change in the type of human interest stories. Humour, royalty, pop stars and animals were always popular in the last spot, but in 1990 there was also a more serious "tear jerking" approach, with stories about the death of captive killer whales, a touching story about a celebrity with AIDS and a story about a white woman in South Africa harbouring homeless black children.

Culture stories rarely appeared in the sample, but were more likely than other categories to be chosen as final items. In the agriculture and environmental category, it was animal environmental stories that featured at the end of bulletins.

Political stories do not feature. If politicians did appear in this slot, it was in human interest stories presented with a strongly humorous slant (such as Prime Minister Mike Moore being forced to eat a "humble pie"). Items in other categories were also frequently light in touch; the one economic story was about the price of new potatoes, or a bizarre crime story where officials in Florida sent a convicted prostitute home to Santa Monica, which retaliated by returning a convicted rapist to Florida. The few war and accident and disaster stories appearing in this slot were late items.

7.6.4 Measures of Prominence: Summary

Headlining and positioning of stories within the bulletin (here restricted to consideration of placement close to the opening, or at the end of a bulletin) were selected for study, as easily quantified ways of giving stories prominence.

Headlines became more frequent in the sample across the study years and, from 1987 onwards, there was a greater use of video film to add impact to headlines. The findings show that politics, diplomacy, economics, war, and accident and disaster stories dominate the opening headlines. Sport and human interest are also strongly represented in opening headlines in 1985, but are less important in other years. When all headlines are considered, sport is the major category, and human interest is also important, especially in 1990. The political grouping of subjects (politics, diplomacy, and economics) was less likely to be represented in the headlines in 1989 and 1990, while the tabloid group of subjects (accident and disaster, crime, human interest and moral problems) increased in headlining prominence.

The first three items of the bulletin are generally "serious" stories and sport rarely featured in this measure of prominence. Matching other findings, the political grouping peaked in terms of the first three items in 1987 and was at its lowest level in 1989. The tabloid group increased after 1985 but these subjects were generally less likely to be represented in the top three items, except in 1989, when tabloid and political groups were equally represented. There was also an increase in other subjects represented in the headlines.

In journalism lore, the last place in the bulletin is traditionally occupied by a lighter item and results confirmed this. In 1985 and 1987, sports items were likely to conclude the bulletin, but in 1989 and 1990 it was most likely to be a human interest story.

Over all, the measures of prominence used here offer further evidence for the emphasis of the news bulletin shifting from serious and political subjects to sensational and tabloid subjects as the study years progressed.

7.7 Geographical Sources of the News

Geographical sources were divided into eight categories: stories originating from: Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, Dunedin, North Island provincial areas, South Island provincial areas, stories from overseas commissioned by TVNZ (overseas request), and from overseas, off satellite feeds (overseas feed).

Table 18 below features the number of stories from each geographical source, expressed as a percentage

Table 18
Percentage of Stories from Each Geographical Source

Geographic Source	1985	1987	1989	1990
O/seas feed	33.3%	37.2%	29.3%	30.2%
Auckland	25.6%	23.5%	27.2%	29.4%
Wellington	21.5%	20.9%	17.6%	15.2%
Nth Is Provinc	5.3%	5.2%	6.5%	7.2%
Christchurch	5.5%	5.2%	5.6%	4.2%
O/seas request	3.1%	2.3%	5.9%	8.3%
Sth Is Provinc	4.3%	3.4%	5.6%	3.3%
Dunedin	1.4%	2.3%	2.5%	2.2%
Total Percent	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Number	419	387	323	361

Note: Abbreviations: O/seas feed = stories from one of the satellite news feeds which TVNZ buys into; Nth Is Provinc = North Island provincial sources (outside the immediate surroundings of Wellington and Auckland); O/seas request = stories ordered from TVNZ correspondents abroad, local "stringers" (see glossary) or from New Zealand staff sent temporarily overseas; Sth Is Provinc = South Island sources outside Christchurch and Dunedin, plus the Chatham Islands.

Throughout the study period, overseas stories (of both kinds) formed the largest number of stories in any category. Auckland and Wellington were also dominant sources, and only 17.2% of stories in the sample came from other sources. In 1985 and 1987, Christchurch and Provincial North Island stories were level pegging. But in 1990 there were 26 stories from the provincial North Island, as against 15 from Christchurch. This may reflect the cutbacks in the Christchurch newsroom in 1989 and 1990 and the fact that TVNZ continued to employ a "detached reporter" in Hawkes Bay after large cuts in the main centres. The cutbacks in regional coverage are referred to in Chapter Five.

7.7.1 Overseas Stories

Throughout the study period, stories originating from overseas were the largest single category, in terms of numbers of stories. Overseas news stories were divided into two categories: first, those originating from regular satellite feeds (from which TVNZ selects stories it decides are of particular interest); second, special tailor-made stories requested from overseas correspondents or from local reporters abroad on a particular news mission. The figures below combine both of these categories. The percentage of overseas stories showed no particular trend across the study years:

Year	1985	1987	1989	1990
Overseas Stories	36.4%	39.5%	35.2%	38.5%

More than 90% of overseas stories originated from overseas satellite feeds as part of TVNZ’s access to these services. However, the number of stories especially commissioned for Television New Zealand increased during the study period (going from 3.1% of total stories in 1985 to 8.3% in 1990). This reflects the policy to put funds into this area and to employ overseas correspondents in 1988 in Sydney and London.

7.7.2 Auckland’s Dominance and Wellington’s Fading Influence

As Table 18 shows, the second largest category of stories came from Auckland. The percentage of stories from Auckland (except in 1987) steadily increased. This growth was matched by an even clearer decline from Wellington. This occurs particularly in 1989 and reflects both news managers’ decisions to call for fewer political stories and the growing centralisation in Auckland.

7.7.3 Neglect of the South Island and Provinces

Perhaps the clearest fact demonstrated by the geographical figures was the scant coverage of anything that occurred in New Zealand away from Auckland and Wellington. This neglect of the South Island and provinces in terms of the National News is evident throughout the study period and not new to the competitive, deregulatory time. However, in 1985 and 1987 four 17 minute regional programmes

followed the news, giving audiences a reflection of events closer to home during the news hour. The regional news was cut to 12 minutes and shifted to an earlier time slot on TV2 when Holmes began in April 1989. In 1990 it was dropped altogether in the North Island, while New Zealand on Air supported regional news programmes from Christchurch and Dunedin for a further year. The loss of the regional news hit provincial centres hardest. As John Spavin and others mentioned in Chapter Five, stories which featured quite prominently in regional news stood very little chance of making the national news.

7.7.4 Time Spent on Stories From Each Geographical Source

Table 19 below shows that calculating time spent on news from each geographical source, rather than counting stories, puts a slightly different perspective on the figures.

Table 19
Time Spent on Items from Each Geographical Source
Expressed as a Percentage of the Newshole

Geog Source	1985	1987	1989	1990
O/seas feed	28.6%	37.1%	24.5%	27.0%
Auckland	26.4%	20.2%	26.1%	26.4%
Wellington	21.9%	21.8%	21.9%	17.5%
O/seas request	4.5%	3.4%	6.7%	11.7%
Nth Is Provinc	6.4%	5.0%	6.4%	6.9%
Christchurch	5.3%	6.0%	6.0%	4.3%
Sth Is Provinc	5.3%	4.1%	5.6%	3.8%
Dunedin	1.6%	2.4%	2.8%	2.4%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Note: Abbreviations as for Table 18. Geog source = geographical source where the story was produced.

The figures in Table 19 also reflect the presence of the correspondents in Sydney and London with overseas "request" figures rising especially in 1990. The amount of time spent on stories from all overseas sources again showed a similar pattern to figures from Table 18 which dealt with the *numbers* of stories from overseas.

Year	1985	1987	1989	1990
Overseas Stories	33.1%	40.5%	31.2%	38.7%

Turning to the New Zealand figures, the picture is somewhat different. The Auckland dominance, while still there, is slightly less clear than when numbers of stories are taken. Except for 1985, the number of stories sourced from Auckland was generally about 3 percentage points higher than the amount of time spent on the stories. This indicates that generally stories from Auckland were shorter than those from other areas. When we look at the Wellington figures for time, we do not see the steady reduction shown when we look at the number of stories. Wellington stories filled almost 22% of the newshole from 1985 to 1989. So while Auckland was asking for, and getting, fewer stories, it was generally getting, and running, longer ones until 1990. This confirms newswriters' comments on Wellington's style and the relative importance given to political stories. A clear reduction in the amount of time spent on Wellington stories does not occur until 1990, when it dropped to 17.45% of the newshole. By 1990, there was a significant drop in average story length for all stories.

7.7.5 Geographical Sources: Summary

Overseas stories dominate the bulletin. These mainly come off the satellite feed and are therefore "free". However, the figures also show the money invested in overseas correspondents, with a small but increasing percentage originating from this source. Auckland stories accounted for about a quarter of the newshole, and there was a greater percentage of stories from this source during the study period. The number of stories from Wellington decreased as the study period went on, but Wellington retained its share of the newshole until 1990, by sending relatively longer items. Several of the respondents in the study spoke about the increasing scarcity of New Zealand news from

outside Auckland and Wellington. But there was no real reduction in this during the study period. The paucity of stories from the South Island and the provincial North Island was apparent well before the deregulatory period and was not a result of it.

Having looked at characteristics of newshole and of stories (especially subject matter and geographical sourcing), the chapter now moves on to examine the characteristics of sourcing within the stories.

7.8 Changing Characteristics of Sound Bites

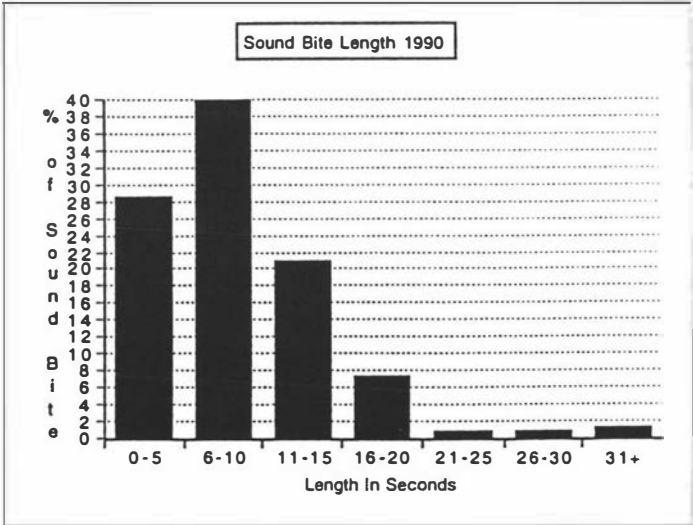
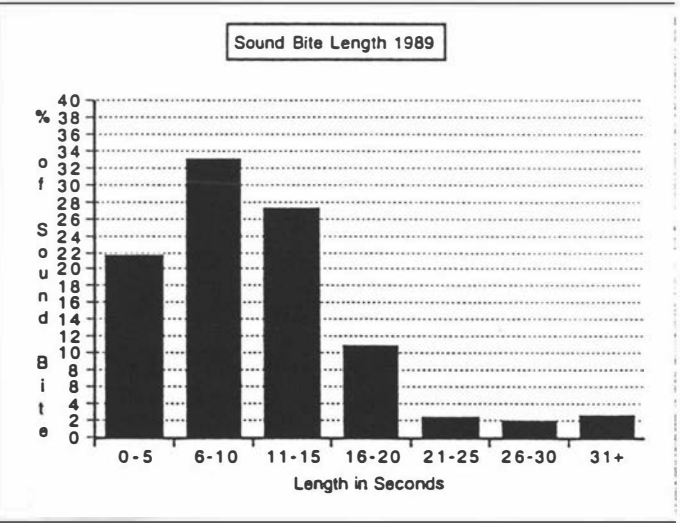
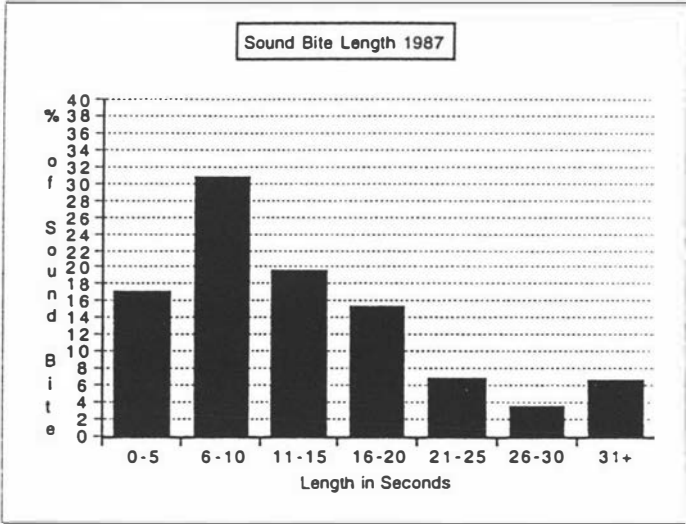
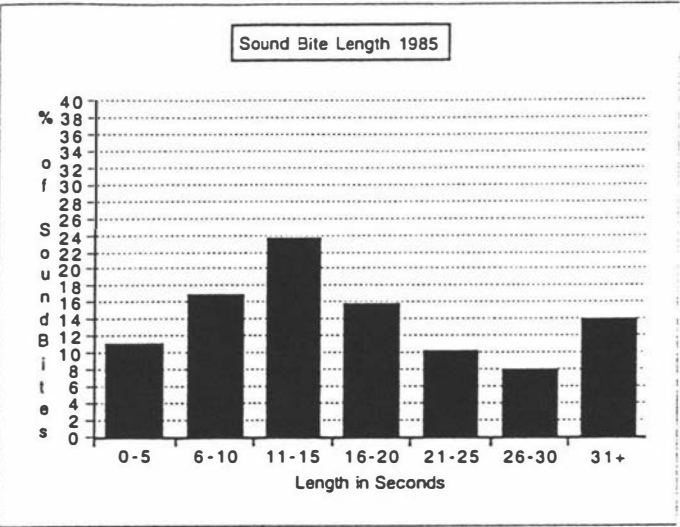
The length of the sound bite, or amount of time spent by sources speaking on camera, decreased steadily during the study period. The length of the average sound bite halved. Table 20 below looks at some characteristics of sound bites in the sample, while graphs in Figure 4 on the following page give a clearer picture of the changes.

Table 20
Average Sound Bite Length, Shortest and Longest Sound Bites
and Number of Sound Bites

Year	1985	1987	1989	1990
Average Sound Bite Length	18.47 sec	13.73 sec	10.91 sec	9.04 sec
Shortest Sound Bite	2 sec	1 sec	1 sec	1 sec
Longest Sound Bite	84 sec	76 sec	71 sec	38 sec
% 10 sec and Under	28.1%	48.0%	54.8%	68.5%
Number of Sound Bites	346	442	456	383
Av Number per Story	0.8	1.1	1.4	1.1

Table 20 shows the average length dropped steadily across the years. The Scheffe one-way analysis of variance test indicates a significant difference between each of the years of the study. The average sound bite length for each year in the sample was significantly smaller (as measured at the 0.050 level of confidence) than the figure for each preceding year.

Figure 4: Distribution of Sound Bite Lengths



The ranges are also informative. They indicate a drastic reduction in the longest sound bite (from 84 sec in 1985 to 38 sec in 1990) and a steady increase in very short sound bites. The percentage of sound bites of two seconds and under went from 2% in 1985 to 6.8% in 1990. In 1989, the longest sound bite of 71 seconds was an isolated case, with the next longest being 47 seconds. The graphs illustrate the process of reduction, with a fairly even spread of sound bite lengths in 1985 and an increasing standardisation, with a concentration of sound bites below 10 seconds in length during the study period. Chapter Eight discusses the significance of these shrinking sound bites.

There was, however, an increase in sound bites numbers. These jumped in 1987, and despite the shrinking newshole in 1989, sound bite numbers rose again. In 1989 there were 30% more sound bites than in 1985. By 1990, with the newshole even smaller, there was a substantial drop in the number of sound bites, but they remained above the 1985 level. The figures for the average number of sound bites per story (Table 20) reflect the trend.

7.8.1 Sound Bites: Summary

The results clearly supported the research assumption that there would be a decrease in the length of the sound bite. In summary, the trend was for more people to talk on camera (especially in 1987 and 1989) but for them to spend significantly less time talking on camera at each appearance. Some comments about who talked on camera will follow, in section 7.9.2.

7.9 Characteristics of News Sources

Sources of information in the news were divided into two types. First were sources quoted or cited by the journalist or news reader (cited by broadcasters), but who did not actually speak on camera. The others were those speaking on camera. These sources were generally cited as well but were only coded as on-camera sources (sources of sound bites). Sources were classified using categories developed by Sigal (1973) and other writers and also using Harris's list of affiliations. The categories of victims,

participant, eye witness and celebrity were coded to investigate whether TVNZ was widening its source base beyond official and elite categories, and if so, in what direction. See Chapter Six at 6.8 and Table 3 for a fuller description.

7.9.1 Sources Cited by Broadcasters

Table 21 on the following page shows what sources were cited by broadcasters across the study years. The top line in each cell gives the percentage of each source for each year.

Across the study period there was a reduction in the number of sources cited by broadcasters. (As newsreaders' copy in New Zealand is mostly written by journalists and sub-editors, this has sometimes been labelled as cited by journalists.) In 1990 there were 56% fewer sources cited than in 1985. The totals for each three week sample are:

Year	1985	1987	1989	1990
No. of cited sources	296	220	186	165
Cited sources per story	0.71	0.57	0.58	0.46

When we allow for the shrinking bulletin and story length by calculating the average number of cited sources per story, the trend looks less steady, although there is a reduction in citation in 1987 and 1990 and a 35% reduction across the study years. Across the study years there was a tendency to cite and quote others less frequently and instead to describe events as having happened. When taken in conjunction with patterns in attribution, it is a quantitative reflection of a change in the style of news coverage. The change is from reporting an event (frequently seen through the eyes of another source) to describing an event, "telling a story". This approach is described in Chapter Nine, the qualitative analysis. In Chapter Five, references are made to attempts to let "pictures speak for themselves" and of Fred Shook's techniques of story telling.

Table 21

**Number of Sources and Percentage of Sources Cited
by Broadcasters for Each Source Category**

Source	Overall	1985	1987	1989	1990
Gov/Loc Official	277 32.0%	83 28.0%	83 37.7%	57 30.6%	54 32.7%
Orgn Official	233 26.9%	94 31.8%	52 23.7%	50 26.9%	37 22.4%
Gov/Loc Elected	153 17.6%	56 18.9%	46 20.9%	27 14.5%	24 14.6%
Eye Witness	58 6.7%	20 6.8%	8 3.6%	15 8.1%	15 9.1%
Participant	48 5.5%	10 3.4%	15 6.8%	10 5.4%	13 7.9%
Non-Affil Cit	41 4.7%	7 2.4%	5 2.3%	16 8.6%	13 7.9%
Affiliated Cit	25 2.9%	12 4.0%	4 1.8%	5 2.7%	4 2.4%
Celebrity	19 2.2%	10 3.4%	5 2.3%	2 1.1%	2 1.2%
Victim	13 1.5%	4 1.3%	2 0.9%	4 2.1%	3 1.8%
Number of Sources	867	296	220	186	165

Note: Overall cumulates figures for all study years. Abbreviations: Gov/Loc Official = national government officials including those in departments, ministries, hospital boards and SOEs, along with local council officials; Orgn Official = official representatives of non-government organisations, which includes business, media, higher education, and political parties; Gov/Loc Elected = elected politicians at national and local government level; Eye Witness = source cited in capacity of eye witness to an event; Participant = person quoted in capacity as central actor in an event (excluding politicians and officials acting in their usual capacity); Non-Affil Cit = citizen being cited with no apparent affiliation; Affiliated Cit = a citizen being cited because they are part of a non-government organisation; Celebrity = refers to sports people, cultural figures and others, excludes politicians; Victim = source being cited in capacity as victim or family member of victim.

7.9.1.1 Official Sources

Table 21 shows a heavy reliance on official sources in journalistic citation. Government and local government officials were the biggest single source. Combining government sources (adding both elected representatives and officials) shows these were almost half of all cited sources. Figures across the years show a greater reliance on government sources in 1987:

Year	Overall	1985	1987	1989	1990
Government Sources	49.6%	46.9%	58.6%	45.1%	47.3%

In the study years, 1987 and 1990 were election years. This would be expected to increase the amount of political subject matter (see section 7.5.2.3) and political sourcing. However, the citation of elected government sources declined in relation to citation of government officials from 1989 on.

Officials from non-government organisations were the second most cited source overall. In 1985, citation from non-government officials was at its peak and greater than government officials. There was a drop in 1987, and thereafter non-government officials were cited less than government officials. When all official sources are cumulated (government and local government sources plus officials from non government organisations) over three quarters of cited sources are official in origin:

Year	Overall	1985	1987	1989	1990
All Official Sources	76.5%	78.7%	82.3%	72.0%	69.7%

The greater use of official sources in 1987 reflects the reliance on government sources in that year. The decline from 1989 on reflects decreased citation of elected sources and non-government officials.

7.9.1.2 Victims and Celebrities

It was assumed that there would be an increase in sources from victims and celebrities, as part of a move towards more popular, or tabloid, journalism. This did not show up

in broadcasters' citations. Both categories were small and showed no real pattern, except a decline in citation of celebrity sources by journalists. The small numbers would mean that few conclusions could be drawn from this.

7.9.1.3 Diversity of Sources: Non Elite, or "Enterprise" Sources

The reliance on official sources is in line with findings overseas (Brown et al., 1987; Culbertson, 1978; Gans, 1979; Sigal, 1973; and others). This lack of diversity in sources is seen to be a drawback in terms of journalism. However, Wilson (1993) and Spavin (1994) said in Chapter Five that a major feature of the new style of news for TVNZ is the attempt to go beyond politicians talking in Wellington. The study sought to examine whether this had occurred. It looked at sources to see if they demonstrated a shift to a more enterprising style of journalism, where journalists seek out sources not readily available through routine news channels such as press conferences (Sigal, 1973). This would reflect a desire to broaden the range of "voices" represented on the news.

Sources demonstrating attempts at enterprise journalism in the classification are: non-government organisation affiliated citizen, non-affiliated citizen, victim and central participant. With the two "citizen" categories, the journalist can be seen as going beyond easily accessed "official" sources to get a wider (possibly more representative) view. The observer or eyewitness classification was not included, as it frequently contained journalists. (Further subdivision in the classification may have been desirable.) The citation of non-elite sources does increase across the study period. The percentages:

Year	1985	1987	1989	1990
Non-elite	11.1%	11.8%	18.8%	20%
Eye Witness	6.8%	3.6%	8.1%	9.1%

The increases in non-elite sources appeared from 1989 onward. The main component was from non-affiliated citizens and central participants. This should be seen as an move towards a diversity of voices in the news.

7.9.1.4 Cited Sources: Summary

As the study progressed there was a steady reduction in the number of sources cited by newsreaders and journalists, indicating a growing tendency (discussed further in Chapter Nine) to present the news as narration or story, rather than reported fact. This reduction of cited sources starts in 1987 and is greater than the increase in sound bites across the stories. Another change in citation by broadcasters is a reduction in the number of officials quoted and an increase in the number of non-elite sources. This occurred from 1989 onwards.

However, this is only one element of the sourcing in television news. The sources speaking on camera (sound bite sources) are highly visible in the news mix and are dealt with in the next section.

7.9.2 Sound Bite or On-Camera Sources

On-camera sources showed greater diversity than sources cited by broadcasters. Chapter Five described newswriters' drive for lively on-camera speakers (rather than "talking heads"), and these findings reflect that. This section is divided into two parts. The first deals with the number of sound bites and the percentage of sound bites for each of the source categories, enabling us to judge, for instance, if official sources have more sound bites than celebrities, and whether these increase or decrease over the years. The second part recognises that sound bites vary in length and is concerned with the average sound bite length for each type of source across the years and also with the proportion of sound bite time given to particular type of sources. Both of these measure aspects of the representation of on-camera sources in the news.

Table 22 on the following page deals with sound bites from on-camera sources. Sources are categorised in the same way as sources cited by broadcasters. The top line of each row in the table gives number of sound bites in that particular category for each year. The bottom row gives the percentage of sound bites. The table is ranked in order of the number of sound bites for each source type for the whole study period.

Table 22

Number of Sound Bites and Percentage in Each Source Category

Source	Overall	1985	1987	1989	1990
Orgn Official	339 20.8%	85 24.6%	88 19.9%	102 22.4%	64 16.7%
Gov/Loc Elected	328 20.2%	69 19.9%	95 21.5%	83 18.2%	81 21.2%
Participant	249 15.3%	48 13.9%	68 15.4%	77 16.9%	56 14.6%
Celebrity	238 14.6%	52 15.0%	72 16.3%	61 13.4%	53 13.9%
Gov/Loc Official	209 12.9%	46 13.3%	52 11.8%	63 13.8%	48 12.5%
Victim	107 6.6%	16 4.6%	29 6.5%	24 5.3%	38 9.9%
Non-Affil Cit	93 5.7%	21 6.1%	10 2.2%	29 6.3%	33 8.6%
Observer	33 2.0%	1 0.3%	14 3.2%	13 2.8%	5 1.3%
Affiliated Cit	31 1.9%	8 2.3%	14 3.2%	4 0.9%	5 1.3%
Number of Sources	1627	346	442	456	383

Note: Overall cumulates figures for all study years. Abbreviations: as for Table 21.

Non-official sources assume much more importance with on-camera sources than with sources who were cited only. Government officials, who were the most cited source, are here in fifth place. Officials from non-government organisations are first ranked and MPs (along with a few local body members) take second place. Participants in the news (central actors in an event, excluding politicians and officials acting in their normal capacity) are also important, taking up 15.3% of the sound bites, while celebrities (generally sports players) are fourth ranked with 14.6% of the sound bites. Victims also assume more importance as on-camera sources than as sources which are cited only.

7.9.2.1 Number of Sound Bites from Official Sources

As mentioned, there was less reliance on official sources speaking on camera. Elected Government sources are inclined to appear more on camera in election years in the sample (1987 and 1990). But when all government sources (both elected members and officials) are counted, the percentage remains fairly static, at about one third the total of on camera sources, across the study period (see sub-table below). However, the number of officials from non-government organisations speaking shows a decline, especially in 1987 and 1990. This makes for an overall reduction in the use of official sources speaking on camera across the study period.

Year	1985	1987	1989	1990
Government Sources	33.2%	33.3%	32.0%	33.7%
All Official Sources	57.8%	53.2%	54.4%	50.4%

7.9.2.2 Number of Sound Bites from Celebrities and Victims

Celebrities (particularly sports figures), are important as on camera sources, but there is no increase in the frequency of celebrity sound bites during the study period, as would be consistent with attempts to popularise the news. After a small increase in 1987, there was a small decrease in 1989 and 1990. However, although victims never compete with official sources, there was an increase in the percentage of victims talking on camera, especially in 1990, when, at 9.9%, it was more than twice the percentage in 1985. This increase is emphasised when considering sound bites numbers, which went from 16 in 1985 to 38 in 1990.

7.9.2.3 Number of Sound Bites from Non-Elite Sources

Sources speaking on camera in their role as central participant in an event were important. Overall (across the study years), they made up 15.3% of sources, a higher percentage than government and local government officials. The number of central participants speaking on camera did increase over the years, but not in any simple pattern. There was a bulge in the middle years, particularly 1989, and although there

was a decline in 1990, there were still more sound bites in this category speaking on air at the end of the study period than at the beginning (48 in 1985 and 56 in 1990).

The percentage of non-elite sources speaking on camera showed a steady increase. If we cumulate the affiliated citizen, non-affiliated citizen, victim and central participant (as in section 7.9.1.3), we get the following figures in the sub-table:

Year	1985	1987	1989	1990
Non-elite sources	26.9%	27.3%	29.4%	34.4%
Eye Witnesses	0.3%	3.2%	2.8%	1.3%

A good part of this increase can be accounted for by an increase in the percentage of victims speaking on camera. But there was also an increase (though smaller) in the number of non-affiliated citizens in 1990. Again, it can be viewed as an increase in diversity of voices in the news. The number of eye witnesses' sound bites increased in the middle years of the study, but never became very large.

7.9.3 On-Camera Speaking Time for Different Source Categories

So far (with Table 22) we have considered the representation of different sources in the news by counting the number of sound bites in each source category. A measurement of time spent speaking on air shows some source categories generally have longer sound bites. Table 23 on the next page shows average sound bite length for each source category in each year. On the second line it gives total time for each on-camera source, expressed as a percentage of the yearly total, to allow comparison across years. It is rank ordered in terms of the percentage of sound bite time for each source category across the whole study period.

Table 23 reflects the general shrinking of the sound bite as discussed and the variation in sound bite length for different sources. Across the study years politicians have the longest average sound bite, except in 1989, where the average sound bite length in the observer or eyewitness category was considerably longer. However, the observer/eye witness average is based on only 13 sound bites, two of which were exceptionally long.

Table 23

**Average Length of Sound Bite, Percentage of Total Sound Bite Time
for Each Source Category in Rank Order**

Source	Overall	1985	1987	1989	1990
Gov/Loc Elected	15.2" 23.9% (1)	23.2" 24.9% (2)	15.1" 23.7% (1)	13.2" 22.0% (2)	10.7" 24.9% (1)
Orgn Official	14.1" 22.8% (2)	19.9" 26.3% (1)	14.8" 21.5% (2)	11.6" 23.8% (1)	9.3" 17.1% (2)
Celebrity	12.8" 14.6% (3)	20.2" 16.4% (3)	12.2" 14.5% (4)	10.3" 12.6% (5)	9.4" 14.3% (3)
Participant	11.6" 13.8% (3)	16.3" 12.1% (4)	14.8" 16.5% (3)	8.2" 12.8% (4)	8.6" 13.8% (4)
Gov/Loc Official	12.5" 12.5% (5)	16.6" 11.9% (5)	12.4" 10.7% (5)	11.7" 14.8% (3)	9.5" 13.2% (5)
Victim	11.0" 5.6% (6)	16.8" 4.2% (6)	12.0" 5.8% (6)	8.8" 4.2% (8)	9.3" 10.1% (6)
Non-Affil Cit	6.8" 3.0% (7)	7.3" 2.4% (7)	9.3" 1.5% (9)	8.0" 4.7% (6)	4.7" 4.5% (7)
Observer	14.6" 2.3% (8)	15.0" 0.2% (9)	14.3" 3.3% (7)	17.0" 4.4% (7)	8.2" 1.2% (8)
Affiliated Cit	10.3" 1.5% (9)	13.0" 1.6% (8)	10.9" 2.5% (8)	8.3" 0.7% (9)	6.2" 0.9% (9)
Average Length	12.1"	18.5"	13.7"	10.9"	9.0"

Note: Overall: cumulates figures for all study years. Abbreviations: as for Tables 21 and 22.

Officials also had longer to explain their viewpoint than some other categories. Government and local government officials generally had fewer sound bites and spoke for less time than the officials of non-government organisations. This is perhaps surprising as, during the 1987 to 1990 period of restructuring, government officials exercised extraordinary powers affecting every citizen. Celebrities had both a relatively large number and relatively long sound bites.

While sources classified as central participants spoke frequently on camera, they generally spoke for less time than celebrities (except in 1987). Ordinary citizens, both those affiliated to an organisation and those with no apparent affiliations, had the shortest sound bites. Non-affiliated citizens, in particular, always had the shortest average sound bite length by a clear margin. Victims were given considerably more time than ordinary citizens on camera.

The differences between those source types with longer sound bite averages and those with shorter sound bites became less marked each year, as the overall average sound bite shrank. For instance, in 1985, politicians' average sound bite was 23.15 seconds, compared with 7.3 seconds for non-affiliated citizens. Politicians on average spoke for three times as long and had far more sound bites. Non-affiliated citizens were given a slightly better deal in terms of sound bite length in 1987 and 1989. But in 1990 they were reduced to 4.73 seconds. By this stage the politicians' sound bite had been reduced to 10.65 seconds. So while both have been reduced, politicians in 1990 had just over twice as long as non-affiliated citizens to talk on camera. The difference between politicians and other sources (especially officials and celebrities and victims) was considerably reduced by 1990.

The shrinking newshole also affected the total time allotted to various source categories. For instance, in both 1985 and 1990, politicians took almost a quarter of the overall time spent on sound bites. But in 1990 they had only about half as much total air time, compared with 1985 (1597 sec in 1985 and 863 sec in 1990).

Government and local government officials were actually given a greater percentage of the time available to speak (from 11.9% in 1985 to 13.18% in 1990) but again the total amount of time they spent speaking dropped, from 765 sec to 457 seconds. Officials of non-government organisations became less important as on-camera sources in 1987 and 1990. In 1985, they were the dominant source, both in terms of number of sound bites and of percentage of time given to them.

7.9.3.1 On-Camera Speaking Time for Official Sources

The sub table on the following page shows the percentage of sound bite time taken up by government sources (both elected and official) and for all official sources. The average sound bite length is on the second line.

Year	1985	1987	1989	1990
Govt Sources	36.8% 19.9 sec	34.4% 13.8 sec	36.8% 12.4 sec	38.1% 10.1 sec
All Official Sources	63.1% 19.9 sec	55.9% 14.1 sec	60.6% 12.2 sec	55.2% 9.8 sec

It shows that Government sources increased, in terms of the relative amount of time given to on camera comment, as the study years go on. However, a decrease in comment from non-government officials meant a tail-off in official comment as a whole. So while there is a reduction in official comment, it was at the expense of non-government organisations. TVNZ had not proportionally reduced broadcast comment from political sources. There is a clear reduction in the average length of sound bites from all officials, reflecting the overall decrease.

7.9.3.2 On-Camera Speaking Time for Victims and Celebrities

While Section 7.9.2.2. shows there were more celebrities speaking on camera in 1987 than in 1985, the average length of their sound bites dropped more than that of official sources. This decrease from 20 seconds to 12 seconds was greater than for most other categories and meant that celebrities took up a smaller percentage of the overall on-camera speaking time that year. There was another dip in 1989, but celebrities regained their prominence in 1990 when they were again the third most important source in terms of the percentage of time spent on them.

Victims showed a sharp increase in the amount of time spent speaking on camera (in terms of the time available), from 4.17% in 1985 to 10.15% in 1990. The total time taken by victims increased, from 268 seconds to 352 seconds. This is a more dramatic finding

when we consider that in almost every other category, the amount of time available decreased markedly.

But if we combine both categories, we do not see an increase in percentage of time spent on victim and celebrity sound bites until 1990. In fact, there is a reduction in 1989. This runs counter to an expectation that these sources would become more important in 1989 as the news was positioned to become more appealing. The reduced sound bite length particularly reflects the shortening of sound bites for celebrities (mainly sports figures), who had particularly long sound bites in 1985 which dropped considerably in 1987.

Year	1985	1987	1989	1990
Celebrities + Victims	20.6%	20.3%	16.8%	24.4%
	18.5 sec	12.1 sec	11.0 sec	9.3 sec

7.9.3.3 On-Camera Speaking Time for Non-Elite Sources

Sources speaking in their role as central participant retained their importance (in terms of time spent speaking on camera). In 1987 there was an increase (from 12% to 16.5%), but this dropped in 1989, to rise to 13.8% in 1990. Generally, central participants were a more important source than government and local government officials.

The time spent by non-elite sources speaking on camera increases in 1987 and 1990. Cumulating the figures for affiliated citizen, non-affiliated citizen, victim and central participant gives us the following results in the sub-table below.

Year	1985	1987	1989	1990
Non-elite sources	20.3%	26.3%	22.3%	29.4%
	13.3 sec	11.7 sec	8.3 sec	7.2 sec

This increase is largely the result of the more time spent by victims in front of the camera, but also includes the increase for affiliated citizens. However, while there was an increase in the percentage of time taken by non-affiliated citizens, they still took only 4.5% of the available time by 1990. Also, they remained a very minor part of the mix

of on-camera sources, because of their particularly short sound bites. They generally only appeared on-camera in fleeting *vox pops* on matters of public interest. Note that the average sound bite for non-elite sources is shorter than that for officials.

7.9.4 News Sources: Summary

The study recorded sources at two levels, those cited by the journalist or newsreader and those who appeared speaking directly on camera. They were placed in nine broad categories which indicated, among other things, official or elite positioning (sometimes called accredited sources). For non-elite sources, the source categories also gave some indication of their connection with the key news event.

The research expectations were for a continued heavy reliance on officials and government sources, but an increase in interviews with victims and celebrities, aimed at increasing the popular appeal of the news. The official sourcing remained dominant and interviews with victims did increase, but expectations about celebrity sourcing were not borne out. This was probably linked with heavy importance placed on sports reporting in 1985.

The results showed a predominance of official sources. This official source weighting occurred more with sources cited by journalists (overall, 76.4%) than with sources who appeared on camera (overall, 53.8%). However, during the study period there was a definite move towards increasing the diversity of sources. Citation of non-elite sources almost doubled between 1985 and 1990, and percentage of non-elite sound bites increased from 27% to 34%. Not all of this can be accounted for by an increased use of victims. Political sources, though, retained their dominance, with the reduction in sound bites from official sources coming largely from a reduction in on-camera speaking by officials from non-government organisations.

There was a reduction in number of sources who were cited only, during the study years. The use of on-camera sources increased (although not to an extent to match the reduction of cited sources). Some sound bite sources were repeat sources, and the overall figures indicated a reduction in sourcing. On-camera sources spent far less time in each on-camera appearance, as the study period advanced.

7.10 Attribution

The report now turns to a closely related area of study, attribution or the clarity of sourcing in the news story. The study adapted Culbertson's (1978) categories to describe the different kinds of attribution used, coming up with nine categories. These contrasted full attribution (where the person speaking is fully identified by name) with eight different kinds of veiled attribution (where it was less clear exactly who the source was). (See Table Four in Chapter Six for full details.)

The study examined attribution for on-camera sources, as well as sources which were only quoted by broadcasters. Attribution of sources who were cited only differed noticeably from that of attribution of people on-camera (which was full attribution in almost all cases).

7.10.1 Attribution of Cited Sources

Table 24 on the following page shows the number of attributions in each category and, for easier comparison, percentage of attributions in each category across the study years. The measurement was designed to show how much broadcasters veiled their sources, whether this had increased across the study years and to explore which types of veiled attribution were commonly used.

Table 24 indicates the majority of the attributions by journalists and news readers were not full; in 72% of cases the audience could not fully identify the person being quoted.

The largest category of attribution by broadcasters of cited sources was attribution by organisation. This reflects a general practice in broadcast organisations to save words by identifying sources in such ways as: "Israel says", "the Police say", "the Labour Party says" and "the Cancer Society says". Across the study period more than a third of the attributions made by journalists and news readers were veiled in this way. The practice gives the citation an official or authoritative sound (and organisations cited are frequently important in public terms) but does not provide the name, the official position or any other attribute of the source of the comment. The following chapter

discusses some implications of broadcasters' attachment to attribution by organisation. There was no increase in this practice, in fact the results indicated a decrease, especially in 1989.

Table 24
Numbers and Percentages of Attribution Categories Used by
Broadcasters to Describe Cited Sources

Attribution	Overall	1985	1987	1989	1990
Full	243 28.0%	88 29.7%	75 34.1%	36 19.4%	44 26.7%
Organisation	310 35.8%	112 37.8%	77 35.0%	63 33.9%	58 35.2%
Neutral	89 10.3%	26 8.8%	12 5.5%	28 15.1%	23 13.9%
Status	88 10.1%	26 8.8%	28 12.7%	25 13.4%	9 5.5%
Expertise	56 6.5%	15 5.1%	10 4.5%	18 9.7%	13 7.9%
Pro-Con	29 3.3%	9 3.0%	8 3.6%	7 3.8%	5 3.0%
Associate	23 2.7%	11 3.7%	2 0.9%	4 2.2%	6 3.6%
Spokesperson	16 1.8%	5 1.7%	6 2.7%	2 1.1%	3 1.8%
Subordinate	13 1.5%	4 1.4%	2 0.9%	3 1.6%	4 2.4%
Total	867	296	220	186	165

Note Overall: cumulates frequencies for each study year. Category abbreviations: Full = full attribution by name; Organisation = identified only by name of organisation, country etc; Neutral = term that says little about the person being quoted; Status = term indicating power or prestige; Expertise = term indicating competency in an area; Pro-con term that shows a particular stance being taken by person being quoted; Associate = term indicating a connection with a group or person; Spokesperson = identified as a spokesperson for a particular organisation; Subordinate = term indicating low level assistants.

Full attribution, where the person being quoted was identified by name, was the next largest category. This varied more across the years, with a peak of 34% of all cited attributions being fully identifiable in 1987 and a low point of 19% in 1989. This showed a considerable dip in the tendency to give full attribution in 1989. The numbers reflect the reduction in the amount of attribution *per se* across the study years. There were 88 instances of full attribution in 1985, and while the percentage increased in 1987, the actual number of attributions dropped. It rose again by 1990, but not to the 1985 level, and, in terms of numbers, there were only 44, half the number of full attributions of cited sources given in 1985.

This can be usefully compared with the trends showing the use of terms denoting expertise or terms so vague as to make identification impossible (the neutral category). Both of these types of attribution showed an increase overall in the study period, but the pattern is not simple: their use dropped (from the 1985 baseline) in 1987; rose markedly in 1989; and then reduced a little in 1990. This movement was particularly clear cut with the figures for neutral attribution, which went from a starting point of 8.8%, dipped a little, and then peaked at 15.1%, to drop a little to 13.9 percent in 1990.

7.10.1.1 Attribution of Cited Sources: Summary

Looking at newsreader and reporter scripts, we find a reduction in the overall amount of citation and sourcing. 1987 stood out as the year with the highest percentage of full attributions and the lowest level of neutral (very vague) attributions. We find a drop in 1989 in the amount of full attribution given to the sources cited, and a definite increase in the use of extremely vague attribution (neutral attribution) and a less clear cut increase in reliance on terms denoting expertise to describe the source. Cited sources were more clearly attributed in 1990, but the amount of full attribution did not return to levels of previous years. This, taken with a different approach to telling the news story, meant an overall increase in the tendency to veiled or obscure sources of information in the news from 1989.

7.10.2 Attribution of Sound Bites

Table 25 below examines attribution of those speaking on camera.

Again, the fullest attribution of each source was counted, either from interview captions or, if they were absent, the script immediately leading up to or out of the sound bite itself was studied for reference to the source. The table's top line in each cell contains the number of sound bites in each attribution category (for instance the number of sound bites fully attributed). The bottom line expresses this as a percentage.

Table 25
Attribution of Sound Bites:
Numbers and Percentages in Each Attribution Category

Attribution	Overall	1985	1987	1989	1990
Full	1455 89.4%	309 89.3%	409 92.5%	400 87.7%	337 88.0%
Neutral	120 7.4%	22 6.4%	20 4.5%	39 8.6%	39 10.2%
Pro-Con	15 0.9%	4 1.2%	7 1.6%	3 0.7%	1 0.3%
Status	11 0.7%	7 2.0%	2 0.5%	2 0.4%	- -
Associate	9 0.6%	1 0.3%	1 0.2%	5 1.1%	2 0.5%
Expertise	7 0.4%	2 0.6%	2 0.5%	2 0.4%	1 0.3%
Organisation	6 0.4%	1 0.3%	- -	4 0.9%	1 0.3%
Spokesperson	3 0.2%	- -	1 0.2%	1 0.2%	1 0.3%
Subordinate	1 0.1%	- -	- -	- -	1 0.3%
Total Number of Sound Bites	1627	346	442	456	383

Note: Categories as for Table 24.

In contrast to the attribution of sources which were cited only, 89% of all sound bite sources were fully identified by name. The figures in **Table 25** show a consistently high amount of full attribution, with the greatest percentage of fully attributed sound bites occurring in 1987. Figures for the other kinds of attribution were generally so small as to make any comment tentative. However, the practice of giving on-camera speakers little or no identification (neutral) was the next largest category. This showed (again with the exception of 1987) an increase from 6.4% in 1985 to 10.2% in 1990. Much of this extremely vague attribution occurred when ordinary members of the public spoke on camera, frequently commenting briefly on issues of the day. This straw poll or "vox pop" technique has long been used by the media, and TVNZ news management, keen to have more "real people" in the news, increased the practice later in the study period. Another source is the increase in sound bites from victims, who are not always identified.

7.10.3 Attribution: Summary

The expectation of an increase in veiled attribution was partly fulfilled. Across the whole study period there was a high level of veiled attribution of sources which were cited only. Overall, only 28% of cited sources were fully identified. A third of cited sources were identified solely by the organisation to which they belonged; this remained relatively constant across the study years. For sources which were cited only, 1987 was the year with highest percentage of sources fully attributed and with the lowest number of percentage of extremely unclear attribution (neutral category). In 1989 there was an increase in all kinds of veiled attribution, particularly neutral attribution, and a reduction in full attribution. But in 1990 the levels of most types of veiled attribution had returned more or less to those of 1985, although the amount of neutral attribution still remained well above that at the beginning of the study period.

Only (11%) of sources appearing on-camera were veiled in any way. Overall, veiled on-camera attribution did not increase over the years, but in 1989 and 1990 there was an increase in neutral (extremely vague) attribution of on-camera sources.

7.11 Summary of Results

This chapter presents a series of clear findings about quantitative changes in the nature of the news bulletins sampled in the years 1985 to 1990. The 1985 bulletins were clearly different from the 1987 bulletins (which to some extent represent a period of experimentation). These were again different from the bulletins of 1989 and 1990, where a formula was found that appears, from informal observation, to have lasted through until the end of 1994.

The average bulletin length was significantly shorter in 1989 and 1990 than in the first two sample years. The very slight increase in the newshole in 1987, despite more adverts, reflected a commitment to fuller weekend bulletins. The average story length in 1990 was significantly shorter than in other years, and from 1985 through to 1990 there was a steady reduction in the number of stories over three minutes long. The average number of stories per bulletin decreased across the sample years. This was at its lowest in 1989, and the increase in stories per bulletin in 1990 reflected the shorter item length. Altogether less information was available in bulletins from 1989 onward; represented in less breadth of information (number of stories) and less depth of information (length of stories).

There was a steady (and statistically significant) reduction in the sound bite (the length of time sources spoke on air) across the study years. The average sound bite halved from 18.5 seconds in 1985 to 9 seconds in 1990. The maximum sound bite length more than halved, from 84 seconds in 1985 to 38 seconds in 1990. Politicians, non-government organisation officials and celebrities generally spent longer speaking on camera. By the end of the study period all sound bites were more uniform in length. This meant that the reduction of sound bite length for politicians was particularly noticeable.

Elite sources (politicians, government officials and non-government organisation officials) dominated news coverage. They made up 76% of sources who were cited only and 58% of sources speaking on-camera. Non-elite sources (affiliated citizens, non-affiliated citizens, victims and central participants) increased in 1989 and 1990. Non

elite cited sources almost doubled from 11% (1985) to 20% (1990), while the percentage of sound bites from non-elite sources rose from 27% to 34%. For cited sources, much of the increase came from non-affiliated citizens and central participants. For on-camera sources, it is from more victims speaking on-camera. There was a decrease in sourcing from government and non-government officials.

Cited sources decreased across the study years, from 296 in 1985 to 165 in 1990. Sound bites increased, but a proportion of these came from sources who were repeated in the same story.

A minority (28%) of sources cited by the journalist (and not appearing on-camera) were fully identified or attributed. Thirty-six percent of cited sources were identified only through the organisation or country they represented (such as "the Government", "the police" and so on). Just over 10% of source attribution was very unclear. Full attribution of cited sources was highest in 1987, but in 1989 only 19% of cited sources were fully attributed and 15% were coded as neutral (very unclear identification). By contrast, nearly all sound bites were fully sourced. There was a small but increasing number of on camera speakers with no sourcing. These were mainly "vox pops".

There were changes in subject matter in the news across the study years, with three different periods evident: 1985, 1987 and 1989 onward. Compared with other years, 1987 covered more politics and economics and ran the largest amount of crime coverage in the sample. In each sample year, sports was the biggest category. Politics and economics always featured in the top five subjects. Time spent on subjects in the political grouping (politics, diplomacy and economics) decreased as a proportion of the newshole in 1989 and 1990. The tabloid grouping (crime, accident and disaster, human interest and public moral problems) increased in importance from 1987 onward. In 1985, the political group (at 32.9%) took up twice as much of the newshole as the tabloid group. By 1990, the political group (26.5%) was slightly smaller than the tabloid group of subjects (27.3%).

Science, culture, education and Maori issues received little coverage throughout the study years. There is some evidence of an increase in emphasis on popular culture. Environmental coverage increased, while agricultural coverage decreased.

In terms of geographical sources, overseas coverage dominated the news, taking up about a third of the bulletin. There was a growth in numbers of overseas items, especially ones commissioned by TVNZ. Auckland was the next largest source of coverage, and contributions from Auckland increased in relation to those from Wellington, especially in 1989 and 1990. Contributions from smaller centres and the South Island were small throughout the study period.

The indicators of prominence measured in the study reflected findings for the shift in subject matter. The number of headlines increased across the study years, as did the variety of subjects featured in headlines. The tabloid group of subjects were more inclined to be given prominence with headlines from 1989 onward and, at the same time, there were fewer headlined stories from the political grouping.

The first three items in the bulletin were dominated by politics, war and defence. Crime stories made the top three more frequently in the 1897 and 1989 samples, but occurred only once in the top three items in the 1990 sample. Accident and disaster stories were more likely to make the top three items later in the study period. The last story of the bulletin was usually a lighter one. In 1985 and 1987 it was generally a sports item, while in 1989 and 1990 human interest stories were the most common way to end the bulletin.

In presenting these results, the researcher has linked some findings to the reports of newswriters in Chapter Five. In the following chapter, the results will be compared to those from other researchers, and major implications of the findings will be discussed.

CHAPTER EIGHT: CONTENT ANALYSIS DISCUSSION

8.1 Introduction

The content analysis of the sample news bulletins shows a series of quantitative changes between 1985 to 1990, which are related to a movement from public service or democratic approaches to journalism, to a more commercial, entertainment-focused approach. The changes have implications for the role of the news media in democracy, as envisaged by writers such as Gurevitch and Blumler (1990). This chapter discusses the major findings of Chapter Seven in relation to other findings and to some of the major concerns in current news media scholarship.

8.2 Newshole Size

The newshole in TVNZ's early evening national news shrank significantly in 1989, largely because of a new format developed for competition with TV3, when the weekday network news was trimmed from 40 to 30 minutes. The results also showed that, over the study years, the newshole took up progressively less of the bulletin time, mainly through increased advertising and, to a lesser extent, more headlines and chit chat.

This reflects two related commercial pressures on TVNZ. The first was to increase advertising revenue as licence fee funding met less and less of the cost of broadcasting. The second was to redesign the news hour in a way that would save money (by cutting back and eventually dropping the four regional news programmes), while attracting viewers and pre-empting the competition (The *Holmes* show's infotainment style was similar in approach to TV3's planned *A Current Affair* and was expected to garner large and younger audiences).

The findings make clear the implications of a "commercial half hour". With about a quarter of the newshole given over to sports, the time given to "real" news is, by 1990, less than half the apparent time available. As Edwards (1992), talking of a consecutive one week sample, says: "You've got 15 minutes to bring New Zealanders the day's news from home and abroad. It can't be done. At least, not well" (p.21).

As deregulation brought competition to public service broadcasters in Europe and Britain, writers documented a reduction in time given to serious informational programming (Browne, 1989; Sassoon, 1985; Sparks, 1995). In New Zealand's case, Cocker (1994a) finds a reduction in diversity of programmes and a concentration on entertainment since deregulation. This shift towards entertainment is clearly marked in the news hour, where the network news was trimmed by a quarter to make way for a half hour infotainment current affairs show. News is a vital element in information programming and therefore central to public service broadcasting. Further, television news is the prime source of information in modern democracies. The evidence from this study, that less time is given to news, must cause concern because New Zealanders, even those with higher incomes and educational attainments, have fewer sources of information on issues in their own country than citizens in a number of larger countries.

8.3 Reduction in Story Length

Another finding, that news stories became shorter, must also arouse concern, because each story provides less information. The findings on average story length generally echo those of Atkinson's (1994b) single consecutive week samples in 1985, 1988, 1990 and 1992. However, this study shows a greater drop between 1985 and 1990. Atkinson views shorter items as part of the morselisation (breaking up into short components) tendency evident in news that, he says, stems from "commercial pressure to divide up the television schedule into saleable components" (p.152). Shorter items also help give television news the pace and simplicity which Altheide and Snow (1991) believe is essential to the inherent entertainment focus of television.

Prince (1992) shows TVNZ items are on average shorter than those of major broadcasters overseas (such as BBC News at Six, ABC World News Tonight and CNN Prime News). TVNZ's head of news and current affairs, Norris (1992), defends the shorter story length, saying that complex stories are more effectively presented in separate layers, where each story has a particular focus. However, the practice of running several stories on one issue is not new and occurred when individual stories were longer (for instance with coverage of the ANZUS row and the Rainbow Warrior bombings) in 1985.

In defence of shorter stories, Norris (1992) reminds critics that the news is only one of a number of information sources on television. But Atkinson (1994b) points out that, at the same time, this "morselisation" was also occurring in current affairs programmes.

In addition, the study confirms Atkinson's (1994b) finding of a sharper distinction between short and long stories after the deregulation of broadcasting. His conclusion perhaps downplays results from earlier years and implies that concern with "style" is new. Because of restricted bulletin time, broadcasting journalists routinely produce items to overall length guidelines. Furthermore, television news customarily made a distinction between short spoken items and longer visual items. While many items were short because they were considered less important, the presence of film almost dictated a longer item (Glasgow University Media Group, 1976). However, as Chapter Five shows, improved technical capabilities potentially freed TVNZ from such restrictions. Chapter Nine charts the growing use of snippets of video in short items, while the organisation used graphics to make significant, but less visual subjects more interesting. Despite these opportunities, guidelines for longer items, in particular, became tighter from 1989. This growing concern with producing items to set lengths shows production values, like bulletin shape and development, having increased dominance over information values. Or, as Atkinson (1994b) puts it, style is winning out over substance.

8.4 Changes in News Content

A major finding of the content analysis is a reduction in serious political subject matter and a comparable increase in tabloid subjects, although sports coverage provides an exception.

McQuail (1977), analysing the content of British newspapers, found the key differences between quality and popular dailies was that popular papers gave greater coverage to sport, crime and entertainment. Throughout the study period, sports coverage was the major element in the newshole. If anything it showed an inclination to decrease in importance, although the drop in 1989 may be seen as temporary, until a section was developed for sports in the new format and former sports players were used as high-profile presenters. Edwards (1992) and Atkinson (1994b) stress the amount of sports coverage in the post-deregulation news, but in fact, the concentration on sports is not new. Sport is very much part of our national culture, with New Zealanders renowned for high levels of participation in, and interest in, a wide variety of sports. Consequently, it is not unexpected that sports formed such a major part of the bulletins in 1985. If we see news as having a dual entertainment-information focus, sports coverage in 1985 performed the bulk of the entertainment function of the news. It is the creeping increase of tabloid subject matter into the rest of the news which marks the change.

The content analysis results, showing an increase in tabloid subject matter and a decrease in political subjects, confirm overall findings from Atkinson (1994b). TVNZ news, he contends, has become depoliticised and "heavily laced with entertainment values" (p.151). The study's findings are less dramatic than Atkinson's, perhaps because of the difference in sampling techniques. The constructed week sample used in this research lessens the likelihood that a particular incident will dominate news and thus distort content categories. Overall, however, this research supports Atkinson's thesis that there has been a reduction in "serious discourse about public affairs" (p.152).

Writers from within and without the media (Bennett, 1992; Bernstein 1992; Bogart, 1991, 1995; Dennis, 1992; Ehrlich, 1996; Gordon, 1995; Postman, 1985; and others) have catalogued and condemned the growth in entertainment values in mainstream news since the mid 1980s. The trend is most closely linked to the marketing approach to news.

There has also been speculation that the increasing tabloid subject matter and consequent entertainment focus stems, not only from a desire to increase ratings and compete with tabloid news programmes like *Hard Copy*, but also from the cost-saving pressures. Finn (1993) says formats imitated from tabloid news are cheap. After the SOE was developed, TVNZ dropped specialist reporters (except political ones). Crime, accident and disaster stories, and human interest items rarely need specialist reporters. Such stories generally do not have to be "dug up" and facts are quickly picked by competent reporters on the day. Unlike the coverage of complex developing issues, these subjects are ideally suited to a centralised system where reporters can be easily assigned to stories of the day, and early decisions can be made on the "commitment" and duration of the story. In contrast, specialist reporters often chose what to do and how to cover it, and have strong ideas about the importance (and therefore placement) of their stories. Specialists may also spend considerable time investigating leads and cultivating sources without producing visible and regular outputs. The decision to drop specialist reporters is easier to take in a country which has no tradition of investigative reporting and where newspapers are devoting fewer and fewer resources to it (Booth, 1992).

While there is general agreement that TVNZ has become less politically timid in its news coverage, it is interesting to speculate that it may have less to worry about because of a generalised shift away from political stories. Ryu (1982) comments that sensational and human interest stories draw less political flak. But, as Gurevitch and Blumler (1990) argue, the surveillance of the socio-political climate and an ability to hold officials to account are among the key functions of the press. Political news coverage is indeed the core of the media's social responsibility role. As McGregor (1996) says: "The reporting of politics brings news of the workings of state institutions out into the public sphere" (p.8).

Graber (1979), in discussing the coverage of crime, pits the hierarchy of social significance which forms the norm of judgement, against the hierarchy of audience preferences. The audience, she says, wants news which is "timely, occurring comparatively close to home, conflictive or humanly touching and which has a readily discernible immediate impact on the reader's or viewer's life" (p.87). The tabloid news grouping in the study satisfies these criteria, and so, in Graber's terms, TVNZ could be seen as satisfying consumer demand. But audiences are more than consumers, and Chapter Three reviewed some of the weaknesses of the audience-as-consumer concept. Audiences are also citizens, what Price (1995) terms the "audience as public".

When we make this distinction (between consumer and citizen) we can cut through the rhetoric of democracy used by the right (Keane, 1991). We can also see that when newswriters speak of the new style as being more "democratic" (Winter, 1993), they are deluding themselves. During the study period, the audience was, in fact, getting less in terms of its citizenship needs (Golding, 1990). From 1985 to 1990, less time was given to news itself, story duration became shorter, meaning less information on each topic, and significant subjects were being replaced by tabloid subject matter.

8.5 Reduction in Sound Bite Length

An important result shows a reduction in the amount of time that news sources have to present their views. There was a significant decrease in sound bite lengths for each year of the study; they halved across the study period from 18.5 sec in 1985 to 9 sec in 1990. The findings largely confirm those of Atkinson (1994b) who comments, "fewer relatively unmediated communications are getting through the television filter" (p.157).

Hallin's (1992a) study of sound bite reduction in electoral coverage since 1976 shows that we lag a little behind the United States, where the average sound bite was down to 8.9 sec in 1987. He links the trend to increased competition, when broadcasting was being deregulated and news divisions were no longer protected from ratings criteria.

Shorter sound bites, combined with a reduction of cited sources (see 8.6), mean the source's voice is being replaced by that of the journalist, and news is becoming more mediated. It is possible to link, as Hallin does, shorter sound bites to journalists' desire to be more active in the face of manipulation. In New Zealand, MP Steve Maharey (1992) says politicians have become more sophisticated and better resourced while "journalists are stretching to do even a basic job" (p.96). In response, journalists send up or expose what they see as efforts of politicians to make themselves look good in the public eye (what Levy (1981) calls "disdaining the news"). Maharey terms the practice a two-edged sword where "Disdain replaces the journalists' effort to explain what is happening" (p.96). Hallin (1992a) contends the news process is now one where newsmakers' words "rather than being simply reproduced and transmitted to the audience, are treated as raw material to be taken apart, combined with other sounds and images, and reintegrated into a new narrative" (p.10). The qualitative analysis further explores both the greater interpretative role and increasingly ironic tone and the editorialising of journalists.

Researchers rightly pay attention to the length of the sound bite which, in electronic journalism is the most emphatic way of expressing the view of the source. Palmer (1992) points out that the shorter the sound bite, the greater chance it has of being taken out of context. Just as crucial is that, with such short snippets of reality, viewers have less chance to exercise their own judgement; they have to put more trust in the judgement of the journalist. This consequence is exacerbated when shorter sound bites are combined with reduced citation of news sources.

8.6 News Sources

However, while news sources had less on air speaking time, TVNZ reporters were demonstrating enterprise in seeking out a wider variety of sources. The findings show that TVNZ is in line with the majority of news organisations in its reliance on accredited or official sources, especially from government and government agencies (Sigal, 1973; Gans, 1979; Leitch, 1990; Tiffen, 1989; and others). These authors note that the narrow range of sources results from the institutional imperatives of journalism.

Chapter Five showed, and Norris (1992) and Winter (1993) confirm, that TVNZ's newsrooms placed increasing importance on reaching and talking to "ordinary people" and reducing institutional stories. The results show more sound bites and citations from non-official sources during the study period, with not all of the increase accounted for by more victim sources. But, perhaps surprisingly, government sources retained their dominance, with much of the reduction in official sources because fewer officials from non-government organisations were used as news sources. The results do show that TVNZ has attempted to widen its news net with some success, despite a move from specialist to generalist reporters which, as Tiffen (1989) says, generally forces the organisation to be more derivative in its news gathering techniques.

As noted above, the study did, however, find a reduction in numbers of cited sources per story. This goes along with a switch in narrative styles, as explained in Chapter Nine, which puts more emphasis on "story telling" than "reporting". This reduction of sources used in the news is of concern, because sources are at the centre of news and verifiable sources are essential to the credibility of journalism (Burriss, 1988; Wulfmeyer, 1985).

8.7 Attribution

Closely related to the amount of citation used in news is the clarity with which sources are identified. While attribution (or identification) of sound bite sources in the news was almost always full, the study found that the majority of sources which were cited only were veiled in some way. This result is comparable to that of McGregor & Comrie (1995) who used a different method to measure attribution.

This study found that, frequently, cited sources were only identified by the organisation or country from which the original comment came. TVNZ made less use of the high status and associate categories than major overseas news magazines (Culbertson, 1978; Wulfmeyer, 1985). These authors talk of the importance of protecting sources as a reason for such attribution practices. However, the routine use of the organisation

category of attribution may point more towards a stylistic device convenient in the short scripts of broadcasting news. Burriss (1988), in the United States, notes attribution by organisation is found more in radio than in the press. But McGregor & Comrie (1995) argue that the tight time constraints of broadcasting news often cited by broadcasters (Taylor, 1993) are not sufficient explanation for vague attribution, because radio news items on Morning Report (many of them shorter than the television items) identified cited sources far more fully.

There was also tendency for extremely vague attribution of cited sources to increase later in the study period. This stylistic veiling of cited sources, when combined with a tendency to reduce the number of sources cited in a story, gives rise to concern. As McGregor & Comrie (1995) say, transparency of sources, a basic premise of conventional journalism, is disappearing in current news practice. They find an accompanying rise in unsupported assertions by reporters (covering political, health, crime and Maori issue stories) occurring in 1990 and 1992.

8.8 Summary

Television news, as Norris (1992) points out, is only one of the news and information offerings of television, and in turn television is only one aspect of the media in New Zealand. But that is to underplay its importance. Television news (and current affairs) in New Zealand traditionally attracts higher ratings than similar overseas offerings and TVNZ's One Network News continued after deregulation to be the top-rating programme. Further, the majority of New Zealanders rely on television as their major source of news ("Television as a news medium," 1994). The nature of New Zealand, its physical isolation and small population, means citizens have comparatively few alternatives. There is no equivalent to the British quality dailies, only one metropolitan evening paper remains, and there has been increased aggregation of ownership in the press. Newspapers, moreover, are feeling the pinch of dwindling readership and growing competition from other media for advertising.

Although studies, such as that by Robinson and Levy (1996), bring into question the amount of information people get from television news, it remains true, as Price (1995) points out, that television is so pervasive and so linked to political institutions and to the machinery of debate and decision that it controls the quality of the public sphere. While the future of electronic broadcasting appears to be ever more closely tied into a user-pays future (Bell, 1996; Campbell, 1996), the democratic informative function of free-to-air television, and particularly publicly-owned television, must become more important.

For those who believe in the importance of the news media in building an effective democracy, changes to TVNZ's main evening news bulletins under deregulatory and competitive pressure are alarming. One of the essentials in a democratic society is an informed populace. With shorter news bulletins and shorter stories, the evening news in 1990 provided less information and in less depth to the audience as public (Price, 1995). An increasing amount of the restricted time left was given over to commercially appealing tabloid subjects, with comparably less time given to serious political subjects.

Further, the importance of news sources was diminished; they were allowed less time to speak and there was a reduction in cited sources. The importance of sources in the news process is acknowledged in the Television Codes of Broadcasting Practice (No.16), which state that the standards of integrity and reliability of news sources should be kept under constant review. The danger with a reduction in sourcing is that the gap is filled with the broadcaster's or journalist's voice. That voice is judged as increasingly negative (Hallin, 1992a; Maharey, 1992; Palmer, 1992; and others). Journalists, in "disdaining the news", harm both the process of democracy and their own credibility. The qualitative analysis investigates this change in approach further, when discussing both narrative style and editorialising within the news.

Inventories of the news media's social responsibility role, from the Hutchins Commission onward, contain the concept of the media acting as a forum for ideas. Central to the idea of public service broadcasting is that the broadcasters reflect opinions and act as a forum for diversity. The public sphere is essentially a zone for rational discourse which serves as a "locus for the exploration of ideas and the

crystallization of a public view" (Price, 1995, p.25). To promote the rational exchange of ideas and to be a true forum, as Price says, the speakers should be the citizenry and not the media. The news media must be objective, and increased reportorial voice increases the participation of the journalist in the story.

The discussion in this chapter makes it clear that the content analysis does not tell the whole story of change in the news. Presentation and language of TVNZ news has shifted perhaps even more markedly to give us, in Edwards' (1992) words, "a dramatic and frequently melodramatic presentation of the good, the bad and the ugly" (p.20). These changes and their effects will now be addressed in the next chapter, the qualitative news analysis.

CHAPTER 9:

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF NEWS SAMPLE

9.1 Introduction

The content analysis in Chapters Six to Eight revealed a series of measurable changes demonstrating a swing towards entertainment at the expense of information in TVNZ's main news bulletins during the study years. But the study of *what* is presented, through the analysis of subject matter, length of items, sources and attribution, is only one way of understanding content. *How* news is presented (depiction) is the second area of content research (Adams, 1978). This chapter examines principal changes in how the news is presented.

The chapter opens with a description of the methodology used. Then, the analysis begins by describing bulletin format and discussing change in pace across the study period. It moves on to two elements in the news important for conveying mood: chit chat between presenters and the news headlines. The chapter charts the appearance and growth of chit-chat, describes its nature and speculates on effects. It then analyses the language of headlines, with reference to rhetorical devices. An examination of the changing treatment of crime and public moral problem stories follows. The chapter concludes with a detailed description of four bulletins, one from each study year.

9.2 Methodology

The major objective of the analysis was to discover if deregulatory changes and management changes in the study period contributed to changes in the style of news bulletins. The major assumption, based on readings reviewed in Chapter Three, is that increasing commercial pressures on the organisation (explored in Chapter Five) resulted in qualitative changes, designed to increase the entertainment value of news and its ability to attract and keep audiences.

The study was concerned with the mood and effects created by pace, language and the presence of banter in the news. An analysis of individual news stories examines narrative tactics and the use of camera techniques. Analysis of bulletins adds to the breadth of news item analysis, but also provides information on shaping, structure, presentation and tone, describing the news programme a holistic way. As discussion is an integral part of qualitative analysis, this chapter contains appropriate discussion linked to theory.

Analysis will frequently concentrate on the words used in the news. Here, like Ericson, Baranek and Chan (1991), the researcher refers to Crisell (1986) who says "news is quintessentially a verbal genre" and that "words are the primary core in all the media" (p.104, p.143). However, in discussions of individual stories, the visual content is documented along with the words. The aim is to explore the visual elements, which generally receive little attention in television news content analyses (Paletz & Pearson, 1978).

9.2.1 Pace

The pace of television or film is linked to its entertainment value (Altheide & Snow, 1991). With this in mind, the researcher studied the pace of bulletins, by combining findings for story length and sound bite length with examination of speed of delivery, pause between stories, shot length, camera movement and static versus moving backgrounds.

9.2.2 Chit Chat

Chapter Seven recorded the occurrence and amount of chit chat, or "banter", between presenters on the news show. This analysis looks, year by year, at changing characteristics of banter, discussing its significance in forging links within the bulletin, creating atmosphere and establishing personality.

9.2.3 Headline Analysis

The prominence and importance of headlines in attracting attention to the news make them a central object of study. The quantitative analysis examined changes in the number and subject matter of headlines in the bulletins. The qualitative analysis concentrates upon the language of the headlines (with some reference to visual content). The analysis used, and elaborated on, van Dijk's (1991) distinction between the rhetorical devices typical in tabloid press and the factual sounding discourse of traditional news writing.

For each study year, all headlines were studied for the incidence of alliteration, puns, rhetorical questions, rhyme, repetition, parallels, links and contrast, metaphor, cliché, hyperbole and emotionally loaded words.

9.2.4 Analysis of Individual Stories

A qualitative analysis is important for describing any change in approach to the same overall subject matter. The researcher chose to make a qualitative study of two subject categories: crime and public moral problems.

The language, pace, emotional tone, filmic conventions and narrative style are discussed with reference to relevant theory. The analysis of individual stories makes use of a typology developed by Wyatt and Badger (1993). Their typology relates forms of journalism both to other writing forms and to a subjectivity-objectivity continuum. It also covers newer developments in journalism. Of interest to the study were two modes described by the authors. The first is "description" from the "straight news genre". Its structure is "point by point listing according to some hierarchy such as importance" (p.9). The function of the descriptive mode is to provide information, and knowledge is the primary variable affected. The second mode is "narration", characteristic of new journalism, where the usual structure is "chronological order, either simple or complex, including flashbacks" (p.9). The representative function of narration is to recreate experience, and the primary variables affected are: "participation;

vicarious experience; existential knowledge and involvement" (p.9). This part of the study aimed to see if the dominant mode of crucial story types changed from description to narration.

The crime category was chosen because crime coverage is central to news media and has been since the earliest days of journalism. It is closely linked to the commercial rationale of the news media (McGregor, 1993). Tabloid or popular papers give more time to crime news. McQuail (1977) shows that while law, police, accidents, personality and court stories took up 9% of news space in the "quality" paper, the *Times*, the figure was 14% in the "popular" daily, the *Mirror*. In describing New Zealand television news since deregulation, writers such as Allan (1990), Atkinson (1992), Campbell (1989), and Edwards (1992) describe increasing sensationalism, "tabloidisation" and concentration on crime.

The study, therefore, looked at the nature of crime coverage across the years, to see if there was any change in the emphasis on the violent or sensational aspects of crime coverage. The analysis focuses on the nature of visual coverage, the use of language and the concentration on the victim and on individual emotions. It uses these elements to study any changes in the dominant journalistic mode.

The category of public moral problems (which includes items about human relations and moral problems including alcohol, divorce, sex, race relations and civil court proceedings) is close to the heart of tabloid journalism. As Baistow (1985) says:

At the lower end of the tabloid market the news editors ... look primarily for stories with a sensational theme, preferably involving sexual scandal or crime, popular "celebrities" or public figures, either ready made from the courts or that can be "developed" by interviews obtained if necessary by constant door stepping (pp.45-46).

As the subject matter of public moral problem stories includes a range of emotionally sensitive topics, they were seen as likely to offer clear indications of any changes in style or tone in the news. The stories were analysed in a similar manner to crime stories, also with reference to Wyatt and Badger's modes of description and narration.

9.2.5 Analysis of Four Bulletins

To expand the qualitative analysis beyond individual stories and elements of news such as headlines and chat, the researcher analysed four complete bulletins. A date was selected at random from the first year, and this bulletin was compared with those of equivalent days in each study year. The dates selected were: August 9, 1985; August 7, 1987; August 11, 1989; and August 10, 1990.

First, comparisons were made on some quantitative features of the bulletin, such as newshole size, story length, and amount of time given to certain subject groupings. These measurements also included the average shot length of the first four locally produced items. Then, each bulletin was examined individually, beginning with a description of the opening elements of the programme and the visual elements of studio presentation. Each story, particularly if it were local, was described in detail, including the key elements of scripts and a description of camera shots.

An analysis of the visual elements and of camera shots and framing was conducted with reference to Tuchman's (1978) description of the norms of news film at that time. Tuchman says news camera operators concentrated on avoiding filmic "distortions" such as bird's eye view, the appearance of slow motion and so on, in order to maintain "the web of facticity" (p.115). One aim of the analysis was to record if stories became more complex with a greater variety of filming locations, shots and linkages. Another object was to discover if there were more close-up and extreme close-up shots of subjects (what Tuchman terms "close personal distance" and "intimate distance" p.117), with their propensity to heighten audience involvement. Scripts and visuals were also examined for drama, emotional content and for their related ability to create vicarious experience and emotional involvement.

An analysis was then made of the overall shape of the bulletin and its potential impact in the light of Edward's (1992) comments on the "superbly choreographed, roller-coaster ride of the emotions" (p.22) which he believes the news has become since deregulation. The concentration on the packaging and presentation of news is important in the debate

about "tabloidisation". Baistow (1985), talking of the press, says the roots of what he calls "junk journalism" lie in "shifting the editorial balance from news gathering to news processing" (p.44).

9.2.6 Limitations

While qualitative analysis is employed to overcome the restrictions of quantitative content analysis, it presents its own limitations. As Ericson *et al.* (1991) say qualitative analysis is in the realm of literary and textual criticism, with its "attendant debates about the proper procedures for reading texts and which readings seem preferable" (p.58). This internal and interpretative approach (Jensen, 1991) places an emphasis on the quality of the researcher. The level of understanding brought to the analysis was enhanced by both the researcher's journalistic experience, and knowledge gained of the television news production process through the interviews. This contributed what Ericson *et al.* view as an essential understanding of how content is made. To justify the interpretation, the researcher aimed to combine openness with rigour. The analysis provides clear evidence for readings given. Where possible, research has been clearly systematic; all headlines were analysed systematically, all local crime and public moral problem stories were considered and the sample selection of bulletins for analysis was designed to contribute to a methodical approach.

The scope of the thesis limited the amount of analysis which could be undertaken, and the study would have been enhanced by the exploration of more subject categories, particularly of politics. However, qualitative television news analysis has been limited in New Zealand and restricted to short sometimes impressionistic views or to brief time periods. This longitudinal study is unprecedented in depth and breadth.

9.3 Overall Format of the Bulletins

As explained in Chapter Five, TVNZ's main news bulletins on TV One started at 6.30pm throughout 1985 and 1987. On weekdays, they were 40 minutes long interrupted by two advertising breaks. The weekend bulletins were 30 minutes, with one commercial break on Saturdays and none on Sundays. During the week, the

national news was followed by a 20 minute regional news programme from one of the four main centres. After the regional news, the programme returned to the national studios for the weather and a brief news summary. There was a single news reader in 1985, but in 1987 a news presenting duo was introduced; studio furniture and graphics were also updated at this point.

The news shifted to 6 o'clock in July 1988, as part of the new season's television and of the positioning of TV One as the information channel. The 1988 changes also included changes to the weather presentation, which featured "new high-tech graphics, exciting new symbols and more satellite photos from outer space" (Crockett, 1988, p.11). Regional news continued to follow the national bulletin, but, at the beginning of 1989, was not run on Fridays. The new news hour was introduced on April, 3, 1989 when the network news was reduced to 30 minutes (with two commercial breaks and the now added weather forecast) and was followed by the *Holmes* infotainment interview show. At that stage, the regional news was shifted to Channel Two. Further information on bulletin format, including a description of the opening segment of the news (for each study year) along with the atmosphere it created, is given later in the chapter (Section 9.9).

9.4 The Pace of News Bulletins

The apparent pace of news bulletins picked up during the study years. The feeling of pace is provided in several ways. First, as revealed in the content analysis, stories became shorter. In 1989, the very long stories were cut out and in 1990, the average story length dropped significantly. The steadily reducing sound bite also made an important contribution to the feeling of pace. Further, speed of newsreader delivery also increased across the study years; the measured pace of Philip Sherry was replaced by the more colloquial delivery of Judy Bailey and Richard Long. The pause (generally enough for a breath) between the newsreader's introduction and the reporter's item (and vice versa) disappeared in 1987.

The appearance of greater pace is also given to the bulletin with the practice (first seen in the sample in early 1989) of stringing together two or more short overseas stories in

an informal summary section. There is no return to the studio between stories and the changeover is marked on the screen by a diagonal "wipe" as the different video footage comes up. Frequently a location caption is keyed in. This seems to save no "real" time as stories remain the same length, but the feeling of pace is enhanced, because we do not return to the static studio and the screen continues to be filled with moving images.

A further sensation of bulletin pace is given by the reduced shot length. In a small sub-sample (the first four local stories in the four bulletins selected for in-depth analysis), the average shot length more than halved across the study years:

Year	1985	1987	1989	1990
Av. Shot Length of 1st four local stories	11.0 sec	6.5 sec	6.4 sec	4.3 sec

This confirms Atkinson's (1992) findings from his larger sample. The reduction occurred despite the variations in subject matter of the stories, although the shot length in the political items remained longer than for more action-oriented subjects until 1989.

Decreased shot length gives us more apparent movement in a story, imparting a sense of drama or urgency. This sense of movement can be heightened by a stationary camera filming a moving object and by inducing more apparent movement in the camera by panning and zooming, or by actually moving it. Comparing two dramatic stories, one from 1987 and another from 1990, illustrates this. The lead story from Friday, August 11, 1987 about the kidnapping of a young Christchurch girl, has an average shot length of 5.3 seconds. Most of the time the camera is still. There are five static shots of stationary objects, seven static shots of moving subjects, and only two zoom shots, with no pans or tilts. It is left to moving subjects, police activity and so on, to carry the pace of the already dramatic story.

Three years later, film coverage (on August 10, 1990) of a firefighter rescuing a girl trapped beneath a burning petrol tanker shows the changes over the intervening period. The average shot is shorter (4.4 seconds, compared with 5.3 seconds). There are only two static shots of stationary subjects, compared to ten of moving subjects, and nine zooming or panning movements. Again, the pictures are highly dramatic, with scenes

of conflagration and emotion captured close up, but now the camera operator has heightened intensity by emphasising the sense of movement.

In later years, shots of relatively still objects are often shorter than those filming moving subjects, in order to keep the sense of pace going. So in 1989 (August 11), the story of problems created by an influx of Asian students in Auckland used a number of rapid-fire shots of fairly static classroom activities. In 1985 and 1987, political coverage frequently contained sustained shots of a politician talking. By 1989, not only is the politician's sound bite shorter, but camera operators vary the visuals by camera movement. Later in the study period, producers attempt to get a variety of movement and visuals into items not inherently visual. A 13 second voice-over item on August 10, 1990 of Mr Lange's collapse at a nightclub (of which TVNZ had no on-camera record) featured a variety of shots. There was film of Mr Lange walking off a plane (three shots including follow-through camera movement) and two shots of a building (presumably the nightclub at which he collapsed) which included a zoom-out. The result is a "busy" item (average shot length 2.6 seconds), which probably in earlier years would have been handled by using a still photograph and a voice-over.

As Altheide and Snow (1991) say in their discussion of "tempo" or pace:

Most television programs appear to move at a fairly rapid pace, and this is primarily due to the editing of visual material and the tempo of background music. Although the actual tempo of speech and body gestures by television performers is rather slow or deliberate (to avoid ambiguity), the pace of nearly all types of programs has increased over the past two decades (p.31).

The authors link pace to the entertainment values of television, saying Hollywood Academy judgements of shows are linked to tempo.

9.5 Chit Chat

Chit chat is brief, generally light-hearted, comment between presenters about the news and is also called banter. Its appearance on TVNZ news has been the subject of criticism (Allan, 1990; Campbell, 1992; and Edwards, 1992). The major objection to chit

chat (aside from the vital seconds it consumes) is that it spoils the objectivity of the news. To Edwards, for instance, it is vital that news retains its integrity:

News must remain a matter of record, untarnished by prejudice or sympathy. When newsreaders allow their personal feelings about events to show, when editors dramatise and decorate the news, as if the facts cannot stand alone, they assume a role as interpreters of events to which they are not entitled (p.23).

But it is precisely the emotional and the personal which TVNZ news executives, such as Paul Norris and Paul Cutler (cited in Allan, 1990; Campbell, 1999, 1992), and their advisors, such as Shook (1989), claim is the essence of good television news.

Conveying the "personality" of presenters can be achieved by selected clothing, hairstyles, lighting and camera work, and also by what they say. Television and radio news writers have long attempted to write for the ear, but the late eighties brought a renewed emphasis on a conversational, personal style. TVNZ news and current affairs director Paul Norris says:

Viewers overwhelmingly do not want to be read to or lectured to. They simply want to be talked to in the way that people have a conversation ... They want presenters who are warm, with whom they feel comfortable. These people, after all, inhabit their living rooms each night" (cited in Campbell, 1992, p.17).

Edwards calls this approach the "cootchie coo" news, where the newsreader team of Judy Bailey and Richard Long represents the family.

Chit chat may be spontaneous, but is more generally scripted. Providing links, or "tagging", between presenters, it is used by modern television news organisations to develop the perceived personality of presenters and help lighten the mood. A TVNZ source quoted by Campbell (1992) talks about the importance of the "one-shot" and "two-shot" framing of the presenters. The "one-shot" forges the links between the viewer and the sole (male or female) presenter, while the "two-shot", showing both presenters, widens the sense of community. "With a judicious balance of one- and two-shots, the bulletin may be balanced between a sense of intimacy and a wider feeling of

participation" (Campbell, 1992, p.19). He says producers also try to balance the amount of banter between presenters, to ensure all presenters have something to do and that the banter reinforces the authority of key presenters.

Chapter Five detailed the amount of banter across the study years. Its use gradually increased, and by 1989 it was fully established as part of each bulletin, generally at set points. The rest of this section will comment briefly on chit chat in each of the sample years.

In 1985, the limited chit chat is often more accurately termed comment, where only one presenter was on screen talking directly to the camera. For instance, Tom Bradley says after an item on a salmon fishing contest, "A lot of big ones there, not getting away". Such comment acted as a bridge to the weather or headlines. There was some true chit chat, performing the tagging function to and from sports. In the first example in the sample, on May 4, 1985, sports presenter Tony Cyprian finishes his segment by announcing coverage of the cricket test that night. News presenter Tom Bradley says, "I think it's our turn to win, isn't it?". Tony replies, "I don't know who you're putting your money on, Tom." (This five second interchange both provides an attitude to the news and gives personal information about the presenters.) Other examples followed the last sports item (quite often selected for its human interest potential), easing the formal transfer between sports and other sections of the news. However, most transfers occurred without comment. The newsreader would say, "And now sports with (*name*)". Similarly, the sports presenter would finish with a simple, "And that's sports", to be followed by the presenter replying, "Thank you (*name*) and now....".

In 1987, there was only a little more banter in the sample. While the dual news presentation increased chances for chit chat, they were not regularly taken up. The news team (usually Judy Bailey and Neil Billington) remained generally serious and formal, with opportunities for lighthearted and increasingly personal comment being restricted to transfers to and from sports. Neil Billington was generally the "straight man" of the duo (fitting with his perception of his role as news presenter outlined in Chapter Five), with Judy Bailey frequently exchanging banter with sports personnel.

The personal nature of the comments combined with the animated presentation of the attractive Ms Bailey gave a gently flirtatious overtone to the banter, while still maintaining the wholesome "family" tone.

Two typical examples from early 1987 reflect the tone and tempo of chit chat. On March 11, 1987, after an item on racing at end of the sports section, the then sports presenter, Richard Long, says, "I suppose that means you'll be putting your usual dollar on Master Mood?", Judy replies, "You know I don't gamble, Richard." On March 17: Judy to the sports presenter (after a human interest item on treatment for baldness), "There you are Michael, there's a ray of hope". He replies, "There's no answer to that one except to say, sports next..." During these exchanges, the camera shows the trio of presenters, with Neil Billington smiling as he looks on. The only lighthearted comment made by Neil in the sample follows an item on the wealth of entertainer Bill Cosby: "I don't know, maybe Lotto is the answer", while Judy smiles but does not comment.

In 1989, banter became firmly established as a regular part of the news bulletin, especially after the new format was introduced. In only five of the 21 sample bulletins was it absent, and on ten nights there were at least two instances per programme. As in other years, chit chat was mainly before and after sports and human interest items, but this year, more effort was made to integrate the weather presenter into the news team. Two typical examples from March 4 follow.

Tom: "We see cricket's had its image problems, but it seemed to come to life in Christchurch today." The sports presenter replies, "Not before time. The fans and the players have been waiting for some excitement" (length: 7 sec). This question, or comment, and answer leading into the first sports item occurred a few times in 1989 and became a regular feature in 1990, especially when ex-cricketer Jeremy Coney presented the sports segment. And, after the last sports item, the sports presenter sums up: "Bright colours, perfect conditions and perfect weather - a nice day in Auckland today." Tom replies, "It's been a beautiful day. Let's look at what the weather's been like in the rest of the country ...". This style of lead in to the weather occurs several times in the sample, both in 1989 and 1990.

Brief editorialising comments after human interest items became regular in 1989. For instance, following a story on Princess Diana wearing the same outfit all day in three different countries, "But did she change her socks?" Or, after an item on the death of a killer whale, "How sad!" Following an item on the Limbs Dance Company closing, Judy comments, "Dance will be the poorer for their going, won't it?" Richard replies, "Yes, indeed".

Comment was also used to link stories. In one example, following an item on a million dollar diamond-studded bridal dress, Judy says, "Not the sort of item you'd find in an op shop. The bride, of course, will need a church, and a Spanish priest may just have the answer". This leads into an item about a friar who built his own cathedral, which is capped by Richard's, "Now that's a real do-it-yourselfer!"

Humorous interaction played an important part, too. After an item on snooker-playing nuns, Judy finishes with "Interesting habit!" and Richard over-rides her with "Oh, oh, very good. I'll bet there's no cheating!" Comments which help establish the presenters as human are also frequent. One night, following the weather forecast and leading into *Holmes*, Judy says, "We'll be back - if my flu-ridden partner can last the distance - just before seven."

The first bulletin in the sample for 1989 illustrates the effect of banter on mood in the news. At the close of the bulletin we are left with an impression of smiling camaraderie, although the first two thirds of the programme were sombre. Economic and political stories dominated, with a story involving the "cold blooded" shooting of patrons in a Northern Ireland bar, news of the Lockerbie air disaster investigation and an item on drinking and driving. Both Judy Bailey and Tom Bradley are presenting, but each item is presented by a single presenter, their expressions are serious, the tone neutral. The only time the presenters are seen together (the "two-shot") is when they are reading the headlines.

However, all this changes in the last third of the programme, with a series of lighter items. The first (put together by the TVNZ reporter in Australia) ponders the words of an Australian magistrate, who, in sentencing a man for dangerous driving and

indecent exposure, blamed the "homosexual-type" behaviour of Australian cricketers. The item, which used clever editing and music, was followed by Tom's comment: "I can't see us doing it". A report on Shell Trophy cricket followed and then a piece on the race up "the steepest street in the world", in Dunedin. Afterwards, Judy comments, "Tired, just looking at them". The final item (on Department of Conservation worries about apple trees in National Parks growing from discarded apple cores) allows for a pun in the script and leads to an exchange where Judy teases Tom about his habit of eating apple cores. The total amount of banter in the bulletin was 9 seconds, but the camera focus on smiling faces and the personal nature of the comments have a strong impact in terms of our final impression.

This rounding off of the news, treating it more as dramatic production than a bulletin of events of the day, is especially pronounced in 1989 and 1990. News executives are no longer shrinking from the idea that they can help direct overall emotional response to the news. TVNZ's head of news and current affairs Paul Norris (cited in Campbell 1992) says viewers are often looking for guidance as to how they should feel about a story, "often in the tone or by an additional line you can round it off and make the viewer feel *comfortable* with the impact of that story" (p.18).

In 1990, the amount of comment and banter more than doubled, with much of the increase due to the now regular question and answer sessions leading into sports. These generally took 6-10 seconds and were obviously scripted. At times they provide useful information to sports fans, leading seamlessly into the sports segment, or are genuinely amusing, but at other times they appear laboured.

From March 15 we have: "Now Jeremy, are Richard Hadlee's test playing days really over?" "Well they were yesterday, but not so today." On March 20: "Jeremy, still no word about Richard Hadlee and John Wright going to England?" "Well not yet, but I'm sure Wrightie will go on the tour". On June 5, Richard says in the lead up to the sports segment, "Jeremy, the first test only a couple of days away; those New Zealand bowlers needed a good workout, didn't they?" "Well, like most bowlers in England, they haven't had a lot of success, but they had a great chance today." Following the last

item, Jeremy comments, "Well, Sabatini may have lost the nets but she definitely won the grunting". This is followed by laughter from all three presenters and Judy's comment, "Tough stuff, this international tennis".

The team interaction has grown, with the weather presenter now also generally involved. The March floods receive sympathetic treatment, and we learn where Jim the weather presenter comes from. More often, though, the comments about the weather express a general wish for sunshine, and frequently have an Auckland bias.

As in the previous years, other comments reflect the personality-building purpose. After an item on a boy who bought a valuable painting with his pocket money, Judy comments, "Now why don't I ever buy anything like that in second hand shops?" And there is one lone example of banter with the host of the following programme. After the final news item on an orchid show Judy says, "Another rare and precious thing now - *Holmes*." Richard makes an unintelligible sound to which Judy replies, "Don't you think he'll like that?" The camera switches to Paul Holmes who replies, "No, he won't."

There is also, for the first time in the sample, a slightly risqué element to some of the chit chat. After the last sports item on March 10, featuring an Italian "playboy adventurer", which concentrated on his association with models and closed with a picture of a woman in a bikini, the camera moves to Judy and Jeremy obviously discussing the item. The sound comes up on Judy saying, "No, you can't say that Jeremy!" followed by general laughter. Rather more daring was the comment after the last sports item on May 5, featuring the Duchess of Norfolk's cricket eleven. Presenter Angela D'Audney turns to sports presenter Jane Dent saying, "Her very own eleven. Lucky Duchess of Norfolk!" Jane replies, "Now, there's one for the statistician."

9.5.1 Chit Chat: Summary

Chit chat, or banter, increases markedly across the study years - particularly in 1989 and 1990. It is used mainly to perform the tagging function, which moves us from one presenter to the next. It is very important in helping maintain or develop a generally lighthearted mood, and in conveying the human warmth of the presenters. Banter has

a growing editorialising function as the study progresses. TVNZ's management is happy with this function. But while, as Edwards (1992) acknowledges, many in the audience enjoy the warmth of the new style news, this approach is ultimately directive and undermines a key function of the news media, which is to present factual unbiased information. Ultimately, this cosiness is dangerous for democracy (Edwards, 1992).

9.6 The Language of Headlines

The changing language used in the news is an important area of study. As the section on chit chat showed, it is a clear indicator of changes in approach. TVNZ managers describe script changes as helping TVNZ link with ordinary people (cited in Allan, 1990; Campbell, 1992), whereas critics such as Edwards (1992), McRae (cited in Allan, 1990) and Atkinson (1994a), see such colloquialism as helping obscure or bias the coverage of issues. The news headlines were selected to illustrate the language change for two reasons. First, this was a simple way of studying language from each bulletin in the sample and, as such, would give a better spread of data. Second, the headlines, designed to be prominent and attract interest, very clearly demonstrate changes in language. While reference is made to the language choice in discussing scripting of individual stories, this headline analysis provides the major discussion of change in news language in the study.

9.6.1 Overall Comments on Headlines

The practice of running a headline (or short summary of key points in the news) is not new. In 1985 it was usual (particularly during weekdays) to open the news with a series (generally three) of short video clips with the presenter's voice explaining the essence of the story. Before advertising breaks, there was an occasional spoken headline. These headlines served the same purpose as most newspaper headlines "expressing the most important information about a news event" (van Dijk, 1991, p.51). They mainly covered the big news items of the day and a sports item. However, because of its visual element, a good "picture story" might well make the opening headline set.

Between 1985 and 1990, headlines became increasingly sophisticated and a featured part of the news. Chapter Seven (at 7.6) catalogued the growth in headlines and the increased number devoted to tabloid subject matter. The shift reflects the overall change in the composition of the news but does not show that tabloid style subjects are more likely to be emphasised in the headlines. The real change is a shift to the language of tabloid news.

Teun van Dijk, in his 1988 examination of the rhetoric of news, says the prime persuasive purpose behind news discourse is that it be accepted as truth. To this end, the factual nature of events is emphasised by three methods: using direct description and eyewitness reports (or filming the event), using sources and quotations, and using numbers. He says:

We do not expect fancy sound patterns, complex syntactic patterning, or artificial metaphorizing in regular news items. They are reserved, at most, for special background pieces and for editorials (p.84).

However, as van Dijk (1991) points out, the popular, or tabloid, press provides an exception to this rhetorical style. The language of the popular press is one of its distinguishing characteristics, and TVNZ borrowed increasingly from the tabloid lexicon from 1985 to 1990. This is especially true of the news headlines.

Between 1985 and 1990, headline writers began to use a growing number of literary and rhetorical devices typical of the popular tabloid press (van Dijk, 1991). These added emphasis and excitement to the news stories of each night.

In 1985, the headlines were generally descriptive. For example, the opening headlines for April 23 are typical:

New Zealand's defence needs discussed at a top level meeting in Parliament.
A shock in store for people seeking to raise a mortgage.
And the international airline that has served New Zealand longer than any other is pulling out.

During 1987, accidents and disasters and crimes were headlined more than in any other year, but so too were politics and economics. While, as presenter Neil Billington (1993) said, news was "searching for the way ahead"; headlines became tighter, more interpretative and packed more emotional punch. Here are the opening headlines for March 17, 1987:

Tonight: Health services are the next target for Rogernomics.
 Coalminers are told whether or not there is work for them after today.
 And domestic users are likely to be hit most by power workers
 blackouts.

Headlines in 1989 showed the greatest number of tabloid-style rhetorical flourishes (such as metaphors, alliteration and emotional adjectives) in the sample. A couple of examples may provide the flavour. From February 26:

A tearful welcome home for survivors of flight 811.
 Stompie's buried, but scandal lives on for Winnie Mandela.
 And raging bull meets roguish charm at last.

And from April 18:

Labour loses a thorn in its side; Anderton calls it quits.
 The Air New Zealand row provokes another round of angry criticism.
 Tragic teenage deaths confirmed as suicide.

In 1990, there seemed to be a pullback from the extremes of the year before. The headlines were longer, more detailed with slightly fewer rhetorical devices. But they were still very different from those of 1985. For March 15:

The rain's over, but not the danger. Waitara awaits the next high tide.
 Soviet authority topples, as Lithuania declares independence.
 A damning report; the plight of immigrant workers is exposed.
 And the Games deficit disappears; Aucklanders are let off the hook.

And for September 26:

Another day of public squabbling by National's high profile politicians.
 The Soviets join the UN, to send tough messages to Saddam Hussein.
 The Gold Coast bus crash; investigators probe why.
 And the AIDs virus, a tragic new threat to millions of children.

We will now look closer at the major rhetorical features used by headline writers, and then move on to discuss the use of emotional and loaded language. We will transfer van Dijk's analytical method, devised for newspapers, to television, with the aim of clarifying the shift in the language of news.

While the study attempts to separate particular rhetorical figures and, often, to count them, they are blended together in headlines. This blending has additional effects and impacts. Further, the language of the spoken headlines can only be artificially separated from the pictures which they accompany. As a visual medium, television seeks a picture of maximum impact for the headline, and words are used as much to enhance as to explain the picture. This said, a detailed study of the language does provide insights into the television news process. Van Dijk (1991) describes rhetorical figures as "non-obligatory additional structures in texts that may draw attention, and may therefore indirectly emphasize specific meanings" (p.217). For instance, a "catchy" alliterative headline may heighten recall.

9.6.2 Alliteration

Van Dijk says alliteration (use of the same letter at the beginning of each word) is one of the most prominent rhetorical figures in the popular press in Britain. There was an increase in alliteration in headlines across the study years. The 1985 headlines in the sample revealed only four instances of alliteration, all in sports headlines. The most memorable was a description of New Zealand's Whitbread Race yacht: "a grand sight, as she sweeps into London."

The 1987 headlines mustered six alliterative phrases, three on political and economic subjects, three on sports. They included: "Brierley buys a big share", "danger of defaulting on debt", and "the might of Miandad".

There was a leap in alliterations in 1989, with 21 recorded. These included more adjectives, emotionally loaded words and phrases which implied judgement. Examples include: "staggering surplus", "tragic teenage deaths" and "equine emergency". The letter "p" was a favourite with "President's pick pledges publicly", "parliamentary prima donnas", "protest and pollution" and from "prison to protest to prison".

In 1990, alliterative phrases dropped to 14. Sports headlines were again prominent, with "war at the World Cup", "classic cut and thrust at Carisbrook", "shocks and surprises" and "goals galore". In election year, politics also featured, with gambles that "paid off in the polls" and politicians who "hit the hustings". In education there were "radical reversals", while off-shore "rabbits run riot".

9.6.3 Puns

Puns are another way to draw attention to a headline and make it memorable. In television, their double meaning can often be highlighted by the pictures on screen.

Analysis picked up four puns in the 1985 headlines. Two depended heavily on pictures for impact: fishermen "lining up" for a prize, and "fireworks" (of two kinds) at a baseball game. Two were largely verbal, though accompanied by appropriate visuals: billiard players being "sunk" by the Government, and an inventor whose world beating device to test fat levels in meat made his patriotism more than "skin deep".

There were also four puns in the 1987 headlines; two regular sporting puns and two in the human interest category, including "making headway" on cures for baldness.

However, puns were a feature of the 1989 headlines. There were 18 in the three week sample, with five in one evening. They still concentrated in the lighter items and sport news, with apple cores giving the Conservation Department "the pip", or billiard playing nuns having "unholy sporting habits" and getting up to "cue-rious goings on". But puns were now acceptable in serious headlines, with air safety having "taken a dive"; Chilean sailing vessel and former prison ship Esmeralda described as having a "stormy past"; and the drop in lamb export prices bringing "lean returns for a fat trade".

In 1990, puns took a back seat, dropping to seven and again restricted to sports and human interest stories.

9.6.4 Rhetorical Questions, Rhyme and Repetition

These rhetorical figures were not used frequently, but did add to headline impact. There were no rhetorical questions in the 1985 and 1987 sample, but three in each of 1989 and 1990. In 1989, questions appeared designed to appeal to populist sentiment and to stir reaction. The audience was asked: "Should scare tactics be used to deter drunken driving?"; "Do Australia's sporting heroes behave as real men should?"; and "Self defence or unlawful killing? How far can the public go?". The 1990 questions were less controversial: "National Australia ups its mortgage rates. Will others follow?"; "Labour's pre-election gamble. Has it paid off in the polls?"; and, in connection with a flower show, "Hobby or obsession? In search of the perfect bloom."

There were isolated instances of rhyme, near rhyme and repetition. It was hard to tell if some of these were deliberate. There were two in 1987, "royal flair in the air", "no play in the cricket today"; three in 1989, "record race for record stakes", "instant winners who are missing out on instant prizes" and "the last chance to dance"; and three in 1990; "the mighty bite of a little mite", "a change of heart about the world park", and "Wallabies dish out a walloping".

9.6.5 Headline Structure, Parallels, Links and Contrast

While some rhyme and assonance may have been accidental, there is no doubt that deliberate effort went into crafting the shape of headlines, especially later in the study period. The use of contrast draws attention to a sentence and gives each side of it a balance, as does a careful parallel structure. Both devices are much used for persuasive effect in public speaking.

In 1985 contrast and parallels were rare, with only one instance surfacing: "very different occupations which have one thing in common". In 1987 there were two examples: "a tiny insect could ruin a multi-million dollar export industry", and "the Lange style seems to change and Bolger turns on the media".

In 1989 there were over a dozen instances, such as, "today's budget; disaster for tomorrow's schools," "an ancient sport glides into the present day" or "dissidents swept up, while America caught up". These were combined with a move to create links between rather diverse headlines. For instance, "Addington prisons gets the thumbs down; while Boris Yeltsin gets the thumbs up" or "storms at home and abroad" (a row at a South Island school and a gale in Europe) and "chancing your luck" (dealing with an appeal to a cricket umpire and a Lotto story).

In 1990 there were far fewer instances of contrast and parallel. The most memorable were: "the greenhouse effect; a new theory, a new threat", "Natal black homeless find a friend on the white side of town", and "not Mount Everest, but Mount Eden". But in this year, headline writers regularly used a new structure. This consisted of a dramatic or catchy descriptive phrase followed by the news event. Some examples:

The rain's over, but not the danger: Waitara awaits the next high tide.
 The war on marijuana: the police are claiming a victory.
 Danger on the glacier: rescuers struggle to save an injured man.
 Getting tough with bad driving: a pledge to clean up the roads.
 A mid-air drama: a pilot almost sucked from his plane.
 Tragedy in the snow: an avalanche follows the storms.
 The fuss over the face: the Maori maiden is dubbed a foreign bimbo.

This style of headline, with its emphasis on dramatic, or "loaded", language suggests an "appropriate" emotional response for the viewer. TVNZ news and current affairs director Paul Norris has indicated that this direction is desirable in television news (Campbell, 1992).

The figures of speech looked at so far, such as alliteration, repetition, parallel and contrast, operate at the level of sound and sentence structure, without greatly affecting the meaning of the sentence. Emotionally loaded language, including that used in metaphor, cliché and hyperbole, shifts the analysis to figures of speech which influence meanings (van Dijk, 1991).

9.6.6 Metaphor, Cliche and Hyperbole

In the headlines sampled, there was a growing use of metaphor, cliché and hyperbole (or exaggeration). Van Dijk (1991) says dramatization and exaggeration are "the main rhetorical tricks of the popular Press used to make the news more exciting" (p.219). Van Dijk's concern is with the selective use of hyperbole to bias the coverage of black activities, in the reporting of race. This study is less concerned with the direction of bias through rhetoric, than with its actual occurrence.

The analysis found that metaphor, cliché and hyperbole were closely blended. Cliches certainly appeared in 1985. There was a "shock in store" for people taking out mortgages, "feelings ran high" in the British coalfields, and a horse had "a brush with death". In 1987 there were fewer clichés, but an attempt at more extended metaphor, such as: "drive to power takes some knocks" and "leaders move into line for final laps of the election race".

In 1989, the use of both cliché and metaphor jumped. In election year, these figures of speech were frequently used to describe political actions and policy decisions. The universities' "plea for cash falls on deaf ears", "Labour loses a thorn in its side", "crunch time looms" for National while there is a "sweet homecoming for the new hand at the Labour helm", and a politician "spills the beans". Overseas, "rebellion simmers on", while the rescue of a young woman is described as "Australia's mermaid snatched from the clutches of the sea". Dramatic pictures of a lone Chinese student defying a tank in Tiananmen Square are titled "staring the dragon in the eye".

In 1990 we had the police "victory" in "war" on marijuana, a high court judge "slamming the door" on a murder investigation. Overseas, "peace hopes are dashed" and the British Museum "reveals all". There was more exaggeration and hyperbole. A picture of a player falling over was headlined "rough and tumble in the big one day cricket clash". An item on a gymnast who takes a couple of falls in a practice session is billed as, "the darling of the Games discovers the hard way to the top". The regular winter closure of the Desert Road makes the lead story position with: "A warning for drivers as the cold snap makes roads treacherous". A new police tactic being used in a murder

investigation is termed a "weapon". As Britain's Prime Minister resists party attempts to dislodge her, it is "a nightmare for Tories as Maggie vows to fight on". The lead item on February 25 was the story of a custody battle billed as "pictures of the Christchurch schoolgirl; America awaits her fate".

Throughout the sample, headline writers also used cliches with a twist, or cliches which came to life with the pictures. These were used as "teasers", generally to emphasise lighter items throughout the study period, but were more popular in 1989 (with three occurrences each in 1985, 1987 and 1990 and six in 1989). Examples of these included headlines like: "hail the conquering heroines" from 1985; "sausages fit for a king, or at least a prime minister" from 1987; "a Rolling Stone who gathered a bride" and "East meets West, but the traffic's getting too heavy" in 1989; and "a wing, a prayer and a trusty sextant" in 1990.

9.6.7 The Ultimate Headline Set

Each headline set (group of headlines) frequently exhibited several rhetorical flourishes and, it would seem, some headline writers were more talented than others. The headline sets for March 28, 1989, shown below, presented the most spectacular example of the art of headline writing in the whole sample and demonstrate the cumulative effect of rhetorical flourishes.

The opening headlines:

On the rocks: the clean up after North America's biggest oil spill.
 On the mat: Winston Peters gets rapped by his boss.
 On the horns of a dilemma: Air New Zealand's Friday flights.
 And off colour: purple prose makes a true blue see red.

The headlines before the first ad break:

No holds barred: Addington prison gets the thumbs down from its chaplains,
 while Boris Yeltsin gets the thumbs up from the Soviet people.

Headlines before the second ad break:

Faults and fear: a new day dawns for Three Mile Island.
And when diamonds are a girl's best friend.

It is a virtuoso display of parallels, contrasts and repetition, teamed with puns, alliteration, metaphor and humour. These highly entertaining headlines also demonstrate the shift from headlining to teasing, when word play serves to titillate rather than inform.

9.6.8 Emotionally Loaded Words

As well as the presence of rhetorical devices, the examples above show that the new style headlines from 1989 onward are characterised by a greater frequency of emotionally loaded words. These words often signal the way the story should be interpreted by the viewer. In themselves, headlines are a subjective interpretation of an event, because they summarise what journalists consider to be its most important aspect (Van Dijk, 1991). In the interpretation of a story, specific word choice is vital, especially in headlines, which are recalled better than the news item:

Defining an event as a 'riot' may lead to a different interpretation of the news report, and hence to a different model of the situation, from when an event is defined as a 'disturbance' or 'protest' (van Dijk, 1991, p.51).

Edwards (1992), in a look at the language of One Network News, talks of "editorial comments, emotional sub-texts and dramatisation" of the news (p.21) since deregulation. He laments the loss of neutrality. The headlines are a particularly sensitive indicator of this shift from neutrality to editorialising.

In 1985, many of the words with descriptive power provided some quantitative element: "big", "crucial", "top-level", "empty", "world-beating", "major" and "serious". In 1990, there were far more emotional words and phrases: "pressure", "trapped", "silly", "dish out", "do it the hard way", "squabbling", "tragedy", "mercy mission", "tragic", "tough", "threat", "goes on the offensive", "plays a wild card", "bleak future", "happy" and "pleas".

There was more direction given to viewers in later bulletins, where headlines took on an editorialising function. 1985 provided only a couple of examples, both in lighter items and positive in tone. One was in sport: "Lion New Zealand makes a grand sight, as she sweeps into London". The other was a royalty item, where "a rather important cherub goes to kindergarten".

But in 1989 we had, for example, "a quiet Irish bar is stormed by cold-blooded gunmen", "more drama, as the Bell murder inquiry opens" and "tragic teenage deaths confirmed as suicide". In 1990 there was "outrage over a bomb that claimed an innocent", and two headlines covering the firefighter who stayed with a young girl trapped under a burning petrol tanker: "little girl plucked from an inferno by a brave firefighter" and "an inferno couldn't stop him - a firefighter re-lives the experience".

9.6.9 Headlines: Summary

The research shows a shift from relatively neutral descriptive headlines to ones packed with rhetorical flourishes; colourful, dramatic and emotional. In terms of Wyatt and Badger's (1993) typology of journalism, developed to explain modes of contemporary reporting, this demonstrates a two-way shift. In terms of genre, the move is from description, designed to provide information and affect knowledge, to narration, designed to recreate experience, affecting participation and vicarious experience. At the same time, there has been a shift along the objectivity-subjectivity continuum to greater subjectivity.

9.7 Some Changes in the Treatment of Crime Stories

The content analysis results in Chapter Seven showed that, on several measures, crime featured more in bulletins after 1985. There was also a change in the way crime, especially violent crime, was covered between 1985 and 1990. During the study period, there was a growing emphasis on the emotional aspects of these stories and an increasing exploitation of their dramatic potential.

9.7.1 Treatment of Crime Stories in 1985

In 1985, violent crime tended to be covered by brief spoken items. Examples include the story of a Christchurch woman stabbed to death in a Christchurch hotel, the stabbing of a 9-year-old and a "gang brawl" at a rugby league game in Christchurch. There were, however, two longer stories with video footage covering local violent crime. The first (50 seconds long) concerns a fatal stabbing at a Wellington party. The introduction says the party "ended in tragedy". Reporter Stephen Christiansen tells the story over, visual shots of police outside the house, the house itself and a detective looking through grass at the curb edge. Apart from the occurrence of "tragedy" in the introduction, the story is told using journalistic-style objective language. Interestingly, the reporter narrates the story chronologically, without citing sources. This narrative style is used more frequently in later years.

The second, a longer story, described a double shooting in Gore's main street and illustrates some of the shortcomings of coverage in 1985, described in Chapter Five by journalists. The introduction explains that an independent examiner has been appointed to inquire into the police handling of a case, where a man shot his wife and was then killed by a police marksman.

The opening reporter "voice-over" (script read while other visuals are run), with camera shots of police activity, fails to clarify what happened, and the audience is overwhelmed by unexplained and disjointed events:

After a survey of the spot for a scale map, police today were trying to clear Gore's main street of signs that yesterday 32-year-old Kevin Fox shot and killed his wife Teresa, as they sat in a car surrounded by police, who shot and then killed him. But because the double shooting, outside Gore's Westpac Bank, was watched by hundreds of people, getting their statements was the main task, in a caravan set up specially. Now the police know that the man, who lived in Clyde, Central Otago, had a firearm possession conviction, was facing cannabis and firearms charges and was on trial leave from Cherry Farm psychiatric hospital. What they don't know yet is what led up to yesterday's bizarre extortion attempt. But they're not charging the third party, a man who'd already withdrawn eight thousand dollars in Invercargill yesterday, before presenting a ten thousand dollar cheque in Gore.

The rest of the item does not help us much. A detective confirms that the third party was not criminally involved. We are told the police are investigating the lead-up to the shooting and the police actions, and the detective says the process may take about a week on the spot. Then the reporter shows us pictures of local newspaper coverage, talks of the locals' amazement and caps it off with a brief interview with the town mayor.

The item seems hastily cobbled together and muddled. Large chunks of sometimes irrelevant "wallpaper" film make it more difficult to understand. The reporter tries various approaches to the story, none of which are explored, and at no stage is the police role in the shooting questioned. These shortcomings reflect, no doubt, some difficulties of reaching Gore and getting the story out. Possibly too, the reporter received different instructions from her superiors at regional and at head office level.

Reporters employed outside the Auckland head office have commented on the difficulties of working in the field through two chains of command. In later years, greater resources would have been put into the story. The sample leads us to believe a similar story in later years would be better produced, and would have a clearer narrative line in which the police role would be closely questioned. However, as descriptions of later stories will show, such a story would have been slanted and perhaps muddled by the use of emotional language and camera techniques emphasising signs of violence.

9.7.2 Treatment of Crime Stories in 1987

In 1987, there was a 70 percent increase in the number of crime stories, but a smaller percentage of the time was taken up with local violent crime. A variety of crime stories were covered, from Police Association concerns to a judge's drink driving conviction, and from phone box vandalism to car smuggling. There were two cases of the kind which may have been greater prominence in later years: a Court of Appeal ruling on a former policeman convicted of rape and sodomy, and a rape murder sentencing in Hamilton. Both of these stories were short spoken items.

However, there is evidence of a greater emphasis being given to crime coverage and an increasing exploitation of its emotional impact. Later in the chapter, the treatment of two stories from August 7, 1987, is described. Additionally, the sample included treatment of one aspect of what was perhaps one of the most "celebrated" stories in media terms; Australia's "dingo murder case", or the Chamberlain murder trial. Lindy Chamberlain had been convicted of murdering her daughter Azaria, and her husband Michael convicted as accessory. The Chamberlains had always claimed a dingo had taken the baby from their tent at Ayers Rock. Then, on June 2, 1987, the Chamberlains were pardoned by the Northern Territory Government.

The pardon received top billing on the news that night. The story introduction (70 seconds long) quoted the Morling Report on the trial and conviction. Presenter Angela D'Audney read details over graphics of key sentences in the report. The item itself (over wallpaper footage of Justice Morling, forensic scientists, scenes of the murder site and so on) backgrounded the trial and talked about evidence which went into the inquiry. The reporter uses the objective reportorial style. The human interest side of the story was not to be ignored, however. As cameras returned to the studio, the presenter says "We hope to have an interview with Lindy and Michael Chamberlain before this bulletin ends".

The next story concerned the reaction of Michael Chamberlain's parents, farmers living south of Christchurch. The story is concerned entirely with the personal, concentrating on the emotional response of participants. In the introduction, the parents are quoted: "The faith they've always had in their daughter-in-law has been vindicated"; "very few women could have survived such an ordeal" and "the ordeal has put a dreadful strain on the whole family".

The item opens with close shots of a silver-framed photograph of Lindy Chamberlain and baby and mid-shots of Ivan Chamberlain on the phone, while the reporter tells us Chamberlain has been "besieged by calls, which he handles like a professional". Chamberlain then says he's never had any reservations, "I know my daughter-in-law Lindy, she's so beautiful". Over shots of family photographs and the Chamberlain's house and garden, the reporter and Chamberlain tell us of the family's relief at the

news. The camera moves into close-up with Chamberlain, as he talks about his grandchildren and about Lindy: "She may never be safe to walk the streets without having to disguise herself". We leave the item with visuals of the grandparents and their house, while the reporter says:

The pardon should mean a new start for Michael and Lindy. And for Ivan, there's to be a new start too. He and his wife are to leave the family homestead and retire to a house in town.

We move immediately to a story related obliquely to the Chamberlain case, which has provided TVNZ with a chance to revisit New Zealand's own famous murder trial and pardon. It is an interview with Arthur Alan Thomas, who served almost a decade in prison for the Crewe murders, before his pardon in 1979. Again, this is an emotional item, the reporter begins: with, "A justice system in error cost Arthur Allan Thomas almost a decade in jail." Thomas is filmed at the more usual "objective" medium close-up distance (Tuchman, 1978), but his words are powerful:

She had hard times. It's hard to be in the witness box, when you're trying to tell the truth and the crown prosecutor is trying to turn you into a liar. And then you're convicted, and the family suffers as well. So no doubt about it, I know how she feels today of having her name cleared - fantastic.

Coverage of the pardon is not yet completed, however. After the sports segment comes the announcement that the interview with Lindy and Michael Chamberlain is "just in by satellite". In the two minute item which follows, Lindy Chamberlain talks about "being pardoned for something you didn't do" and admits there is still "an element of anger". Michael Chamberlain talks about undergoing needless suffering and says they will pursue their rights, while Lindy Chamberlain says they will not give up.

The extent of the Chamberlain coverage (586 seconds or 31% of the newshole that night) shows that in 1987 the new, more tabloid approach to crime, with its concentration on emotion, suffering and human interest, is entering the news. TVNZ spent considerable resources to give the story local relevance. The Chamberlain conviction and trial was, however, media intensive and the TVNZ coverage remains relatively restrained in terms of emotionalism.

9.7.3 Treatment of Crime Stories in 1989

By 1989, there was change in the treatment of majority of crime stories in the sample. That year, there were several high profile murder cases in New Zealand, including the abduction and murder of Lower Hutt girl Karla Cardno, the deaths of two Swedish tourists and of British tourist Monica Cantwell. It is important to note these murders were given very full coverage by newspapers. Television is only one element of the media in New Zealand, and there is some evidence of an increase in crime coverage in newspapers between 1988 and 1992 (McGregor, 1993).

This year, the first as an SOE, when TVNZ was positioning for the advent of TV3, saw the largest number of crime news stories in the sample. There were more headlined crime stories than in previous years, and a greater concentration on New Zealand, rather than overseas, crime.

The Bell murder was one of several receiving detailed coverage over a series of nights in TVNZ news. This detailed follow-through of murder inquiries was a marked feature of this year. In the sample there were four Cardno stories, and two full stories and a detailed reference on the Swedish tourist murders. The Bell deposition trial item on June 6 was seventh in the bulletin, following an advertising break. However, it was the second of the opening headlines for the bulletin: "More drama, as the Bell murder inquiry opens":

Newsreader The widow of the Auckland motelier gunned down last Christmas was threatened, as she went to court today to give evidence in the case. A man was arrested, charged and convicted within two hours of the incident. Meanwhile, in the court, two men were charged with the murder of Rex Bell, plus eight other charges of causing grievous bodily harm and assault on Mrs Bell and her daughter.

Reporter Cathy Campbell [over shots of Mrs Bell and other family entering court] For the Bell family, today's depositions hearing turned into a bigger ordeal than anyone had expected. They had to share seats in the courtroom with the families and supporters of the two men accused of gunning down their husband and father.

Reporter [piece to camera] As Mrs Judith Bell waited in the public gallery for proceedings to begin, a man walked past her, looked her in the eye and said "bang". Tearful and distressed, she had to be assisted from the court room.

The item goes on to describe what happened to the man, and to cover court proceedings. Visuals included shots of a police sign through barred windows, mug shots of the two murder suspects and file footage of an earlier interview with Mrs Bell, showing her facial injuries.

The word "drama" in the headline is significant, as we are invited to be spectators and to share in the details of the distress of the victims. The report is part of a trend, continuing into the 1990s (McGregor & Comrie, 1995), of court coverage with footage centring around arrivals at court and pieces to camera. Emotional heightening is provided by language that emphasises the violence ("gunned down", "lay dying of a shotgun blast") and the personal ("a bigger ordeal than anyone had expected", "husband and father", "watching television"). The depositions and subsequent trial received close TVNZ coverage. While the 1989 sample contains no more coverage of the Bell murder, there is one story from the trial in the 1990 sample which will be referred to later.

The Bell inquiry story was followed the same day by an item on Karla Cardno, where a police spokesperson says that, while they haven't located her, they are making significant steps in finding an offender. This was followed by a brief (10 second) "no new developments" story on the missing Swedish tourists.

Two other case progress reports on the Cardno case occurred in June. The most detailed was three days later on June 9. It was headlined before the first ad break as: "A new police weapon in the search for the Taita teenager". The "weapon" twice referred to is a computer programme pronounced "nicked", the National Intelligence Crime Data Base. The system has been proved in the Bell murder case, we are told, and police are hoping it will give them the "edge" in the hunt for Karla Cardno.

The depositions hearing of the Cardno case falls in the sample, on September 27, 1989, and it is given the treatment viewers have come to expect in 1989. The story makes the lead headline: [over slow motion back shots of the accused entering a police van] "The man accused of killing Karla Cardno is committed for trial".

The introduction highlights the drama of the story and aims to make the audience experience a personal emotional impact:

A not guilty plea has been entered by the man accused of murdering Taita schoolgirl Karla Cardno. But before this morning's Lower Court hearing got underway, Paul Joseph Daley walked a gauntlet of threats and abuse. A visibly confused Daley at first pleaded guilty to the charge and then, after hurried consultation with his lawyer, he changed his mind.

The report features pictures of the Cardno family entering court (with the mother attempting to turn away from the cameras), the accused entering a police van to the sound of chanted taunts, and pictures of police operations. The reporter summarises the hearings and presents two pieces to camera. In the first, in front of the court, he describes the guilty plea made to a "hushed court" and the chants of "you're for it, Daley". In the second he stands in front of Daley's house. The item concludes with pictures of a woman thumping the side of the police van as it leaves the court, while the reporter sums up, "Daley, whisked from the back of the courtroom, now faces a trial for murder in the High Court".

Another well-publicised murder case in 1989 was that of Monica Cantwell, an English tourist killed on Mt Maunganui near Tauranga. The coverage of finding her body on November 22, 1989, shows resources put into crime coverage at this time. There is a reporter assigned to the story (presumably to produce a case progress report) when the body is found. Another delivers a "softer" item on dangers to backpackers, which both exploits and maintains public interest in the case.

The Cantwell item is headlined: "Police find the body of murdered English backpacker on the Mount".

Newsreader The search for missing English backpacker Monica Cantwell tonight became a full scale homicide inquiry. The body of the missing 24-year-old has been discovered in scrub near the summit of the Mount, in the Bay of Plenty. The police aren't saying how she died. Reporter Mark Boyd has just returned from the scene of the murder.

The report, which opens with shots on board a boat of police divers, and includes footage of searchers on the shore and on the Mount, is redolent with emotive language. The search is described as "desperate", the opinion of experienced search and rescue people is "proved tragically right", the discovery is "grisly". The footage includes a map of the area and an appeal from a police officer for people to come forward. After assertions that "locals are shocked that a murder should happen in such a peaceful locality", there is a brief interview with a woman from the local information office, who says, "It's unbelievable that that should happen here. It's an easy-going place".

The story finishes with a reporter's piece to camera on the Mount, standing beside a police car and describing the "inch by inch...painstaking search for any clue that will help catch her killer".

This piece is immediately followed by a story on the vulnerability of backpackers. We are told Ms Cantwell's murder, coming just seven months after the disappearance of a Swedish couple, has prompted the Youth Hostels Association to warn young backpackers about dangers of travelling in New Zealand.

The item opens with a shot of a backpacker hitchhiking in Auckland, while the reporter says New Zealand is no longer considered a good place to travel. Next, the chairman of the Youth Hostels Association, in a sound bite, says people should always let others know where they are going, and girls should team up with someone else. Then, in a litany of the dead and missing, the report returns to the disappearance 20 years ago of Australian Jennifer Beard, to 1975 and the disappearance of Mona Blades, to the 1989 disappearance of Swedes Heidi Paakkonen and Urban Hoglin and concludes with Monica Cantwell. Each reference is accompanied by photographs and names superimposed on the picture of a backpack and shots of the searches for them.

Reporter Maxine Clayton then says that the tragedies aren't scaring off young people. Then, two backpackers briefly state their faith in New Zealanders. Despite this calm response and the moderation of the comments of the Youth Hostels Association, the reporter concludes (over shots of the same hitchhiker that opened the sequence): "But despite their optimism, in future, they're likely to have a written warning about the dangers of travelling in New Zealand".

From a practical and commonsense action by the Youth Hostels Association, a dismissive response about danger from a couple of backpackers and a relative paucity of murders, the reporter and technical staff have constructed a story heavy with warning about the menace of travel in New Zealand.

Also seen this year was an emphasis on the solving of past crime. Positioned before the "new weapon" item on the Cardno case, was a story on the Whakatane police finding fresh evidence "which may help solve the mystery disappearance of a woman 20 years ago". This fragile piece about a twenty year old disappearance case was given 87 seconds, and a reporter was dispatched to three different locations to piece together the story. The suspect, the woman's husband, is now dead, but the policeman long-convinced of his guilt is still concerned with the case. The reporter, standing near the suspected burial site in "rugged country", calls the case a "mission impossible". He says that, while the police are not revealing what the evidence is, "They say it's enough to keep the McKay file open".

Darnton (1975), in his much cited article on writing news and telling stories, discusses the "archaic flavour" of some stories and the traditional pattern of story telling in the news. Murder, of course, is at the centre of crime where according to Hall, Christer, Jefferson, Clarke, and Roberts (1978) "a modern morality play takes place before us in which the 'devil' is both symbolically and physically cast out from the society by its guardians" (p.66). The general treatment of murders in 1989 emphasises this symbolic aspect. And this case, with its story of a cuckolded and revengeful husband and the patient, yet remorseless, guardian of the law, demonstrates TVNZ's move from the "routine and brief" (Hall *et al.*, p.67) to presenting certain crimes in a symbolic light using the "traditional repertory of genres" (Darnton, p.189).

This style can easily tip from the effective to the overblown, as on March 16. In the lead headlines the "tease" says, "A shallow grave finally solves a murder mystery" and the story fits Plunket's (1993) description of a "classic beat-up". The introduction reads, "Police have found the missing link to a murder mystery that has baffled them for more than a year". The item features extensive footage of "windswept coast", forest and

scrub, the grave site, and silhouettes of the "money tree" (which appears irrelevant to the case). The report opens this way:

Reporter The mystery involves a shallow grave on a wild Northland coast, the sacred money tree, the disappearance more than a year ago of known drug dealer Alan Lehndorf and the suicide of his suspected killer. The grave, just a few kilometres north of Te Hapua, is the final clue.

There follows a brief interview with a Kaitaia detective and then a return to the reporter:

Maoris at Te Hapua say they're relieved to see Lehndorf dead. They say he bullied his way onto their land to grow cannabis, threatening to shoot intruders.

One of two named local Maori sources says, "If you live by the gun, you die by it." Then the reporter launches into a claim that receives no backing from the rest of the story:

Locals say they'll never know when they'll blunder into the sights of an armed cannabis grower protecting his plot. Because of others like Lehndorf, they can't move freely on their own land.

For his final summing up, the reporter squats beside the grave site:

... police are refusing to reveal exactly how their informant knew where this grave was. They don't want to reveal that person's identity. Proof that, though Alan Lehndorf may be laid at rest, the tensions in this Northland community have not.

Not all crime stories in 1989 are patterned on those looked at in closer detail above. They were chosen to exemplify the new style of crime coverage, prevalent in 1989.

9.7.4 The Treatment of Crime Stories in 1990

In 1990, there were fewer crime stories, although a large percentage concerned local violent crime. The sample period does not include the Aramoana massacre, which occurred late in the year, and received massive media coverage. But it does include the story of the tangi for one of the children killed.

In 1990, while there was some evidence of briefer routine coverage of cases like armed offenders call outs, there were longer items on some minor crimes, especially those with a difference. There were some big fraud cases during the year, which may explain the emphasis given to one minor story. On March 14, there was a long (97 second) item on a police warning against a possible international swindle. The scam consisted of a letter purporting to be from a firm of solicitors saying the recipient was a beneficiary of a large estate, but asking for 25 pounds Sterling if they wanted more details. Footage included a reconstruction; pictures of the one known recipient going to the post box, opening the latter and later crumpling it up. There was also a brief interview with the woman and with a police officer.

In the same bulletin there was a strongly editorialising item, which is introduced:

Taking the initiative turned out to be a mistake for an Auckland dog owner this week. The man was beaten and robbed of several thousand dollars in a bizarre ambush, as he tried to receive six stolen puppies...

The item opened with a picture of a puppy having its ear stroked while a man's voice says, "I love my pups so much I'd have done anything". The man, "an unashamed animal lover", had bred a litter of Staffordshire bull terrier pups which were stolen. He advertised a reward for them and, when he went to find them, was forced to hand over the reward money without seeing or getting the pups back. The owner, who says he has learned his lesson, describes his love of "Staffies", saying they aren't fierce. The piece concludes with the reporter saying police are confident the puppies will be found.

As well as these "tales with a moral", there was also trial coverage in the sample. The Bell murder trial opened on March 15. This was not given top exposure, lying tenth in the bulletin following three other crime stories, two involving violent crime and the third a brief item on a "bizarre" case of body snatching. However, techniques used to tell the trial story were the same as in the previous year. The presenter's introduction reads:

A bloodied shoe print and a prison confession are the crown's key evidence in the trial of two men accused of murdering Auckland motelier Rex Bell a year ago.

The report showed Bell's widow and daughter arriving at court, followed by pictures of the accused, of the Bell family and of the murder scene. Cathy Campbell finishes with a piece to camera outside the court:

Shaking, and supported by her son Cary in the witness box, Mrs Bell, under cross examination, told of the night that two men, wearing balaclavas and armed with shotguns, beat her about the head and shot her husband dead. It was a robbery that netted them only a couple of personal items and 40 dollars in cash.

By this stage, TVNZ had a correspondent in Australia, and on March 20 there was a 93 second item on the success of Sydney's police in catching the "notorious granny killer". This item followed an advertising break, which had been preceded by the story of an unsuccessful attempt by the New Zealand father of two children, who had survived a "horrific" murder-suicide in Australia, to gain custody of his children. The man had convictions for violence. We were told he will face a "lonely" trip back to New Zealand. The item, though filmed in Australia, was voiced by a TVNZ reporter in Auckland.

An example of resources now being put into some crime coverage is found on June 11, in the story of property dealer De Stefano. The story was 111 seconds long and was headlined, "The De Stefanos head for home, but the party may be over." The introduction tells us the "would-be property dealer booted out of New Zealand" had "new problems".

From Honolulu, TVNZ reporter Mike Valentine writes strongly editorialising copy. It is partly in the tradition of "writing a story about trying to get a story" and is reminiscent of *Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous*. It is a "mark of the man" we are told, that "while he was escorted aboard by police, he still managed an upgrade from business to first class. Despite a written request for an interview, he left without a word, or the hundred thousand dollars he'd demanded for it". Valentine, in a piece to camera that contrives to look slightly furtive, describes De Stefano as "holed up" in the "flashiest part of this the Hilton hotel". Now, he says, De Stefano is "shunning publicity":

We did find his room, we saw his eye through the keyhole. But he called security. We were escorted out of the building.

Video footage then features De Stefano dancing with a glamorous blonde and viewers are instructed to "remember this" - a replayed interview where he talks about finger prints. Now, however, "the game is up". After video footage of the subject in expensive locations, the scene returns to the Hawaiian hotel swimming pool. As the camera pulls away Valentine concludes, "For the De Stefanos, the Hawaiian holiday is all but over". We have had a chance for a small vicarious experience in the De Stefano's glamorous but illicit lifestyle. But right, it seems, is about to triumph. In Altheide and Snow's (1991) terms it is a restatement of the "ideal-norm format" (rules and strategies of the best possible way to live) which dominates prime time television (p.35).

Turning to a different kind of crime, it was found that sexual offences received little coverage in the sample, and there was no real evidence of an increase. However, the 1990 coverage of a paedophile case can be contrasted with the brief 1987 spoken story of the failed appeal of a former policeman against a rape and sodomy conviction. Paedophile cases had begun to have a higher profile in the media, and this story is interesting not just for detail of coverage, which both implies the man did not have enough punishment and raises fears about his release, but also for the involvement of television in the case. The introduction reads:

In Christchurch a paedophile, who on television last year promised he would never offend again, was today jailed for 10 years. It was the sixth time Christopher Peter Z... has been imprisoned for sex offenses against young boys. In passing the sentence, the High Court judge said Z... should be kept away from society. But, as Cliff Joiner reports, he could be back in the community in just five.

The report referred to, and ran selections from, a *Holmes* programme in 1989 which had revealed the offender's past convictions and questioned his involvement in a drop-in centre helping youngsters in trouble. Joiner's piece to camera makes TVNZ's stand quite clear:

Because of his previous convictions and the seriousness of his latest crime Z... could have been sentenced to preventative detention, which would have meant a jail term of ten years before parole. But that was ruled out, on legal grounds.

9.7.5 The Treatment of Crime Stories: Summary

The findings of the qualitative analysis help explain why popular commentaries, such as Allan (1990) and Campbell (1989), imply the network bulletin consists mainly of crime coverage. The impact of crime coverage has been heightened by its treatment from 1987 onward.

Greater resources were put into crime coverage after 1985, and from 1989 we see a tendency to keep following up on high profile cases and to group crime stories, often near the beginning of the bulletin. To some extent in 1987, and more particularly in the last two study years, the impact of crime stories is heightened by emotional language, a concentration on the personal impact on victims and the use of close-ups. Coverage of the details of violent crime becomes more detailed, as do visuals of violence. Court coverage increases, as does the use of flashbacks to earlier situations. At this stage, cameras were not allowed in court, so reporters describe emotions and routinely tell us how the accused looked, in an attempt to bring court coverage alive. This contrasts with earlier court reporting, which generally consisted of a summary of what was said by lawyers or the judge.

As with the headlines, there has been a shift to increase the vicarious involvement of the viewer. Using Wyatt and Badger's (1993) terminology again, the shift is from the descriptive to the narrative genre and towards greater subjectivity. In 1989 and 1990 in particular, there are incidents of storytelling which, to use Roeh and Cohen's (1992) terminology, are "closed". That is, they are loaded and stylized, with poetic or mythological elements. Hall *et al.* (1978) say that murder lends itself to this symbolic treatment. If, as Roeh and Cohen believe, journalism is a battleground between the professional and the poetic, it seems as if the poetic is getting the upper hand in crime coverage. Such tendencies direct the response of the viewer (often along a pre-set populist path) and go against some fundamental tenets of traditional journalism.

9.8 Changes in the Treatment of Public Moral Problem Stories

The percentage of the bulletin given to public moral problems (defined as human relations and moral problems including alcohol, divorce, sex, race relations and family court proceedings) was small and fluctuated across the study period. However, these stories were chosen for analysis because they lend themselves to the more emotive journalistic treatment which becomes more frequent after 1985, and because every public moral problems story in the sample could be examined. The six stories from 1987 are not discussed in detail, since three were from overseas and the others showed little difference from the 1985 sample.

9.8.1 Treatment of Public Moral Problem Stories in 1985

In 1985, the thirteen moral problem stories included several with strong political slants. These were treated in the same way as political stories of the time; wallpaper footage of politicians at work or in press conferences, reporter voice-overs, neutral in tone, which cite key sources and relatively extensive sound bites.

For instance, on March 13, there was a 85 second item on MPs campaigning against homosexual law reform. The introduction reads:

A million signatures are being sought for a petition aimed at tossing out homosexual law reform. Four members of parliament launch their campaign against reform at a public meeting tonight, and they claim the backing of a majority of New Zealanders.

Footage shows two MPs at a desk, while the reporter fills in the background. Emotion on this hotly debated topic is left to the MPs. MP Geoff Braybrooke says:

I don't care if there's only one person, I'll go and talk to them. Whether it's a thousand or one, it makes no difference to me. But I'm going to try and rouse public opinion, because that's the only way I believe this bill will be stopped.

The reporter says a "handful" of letters of support is a long way from one million signatures, to which MP Graham Lee replies:

It would be quite unprecedented for New Zealand, but it's our target, and I think it's achievable.

The presenter rounds off the story by quoting the Bill's promoter, MP Fran Wilde, in rebuttal.

Coverage of the abortion debate was similarly given traditional impersonal, objectively-worded coverage. On August 22, 1985, a 91 second story featured a visiting American anti-abortionist critical of the New Zealand Government's "weak and hypocritical" attitude to abortion law enforcement. Over shots of a press conference, we are told that Joe Scheider has been arrested five times and "managed to shut down a chain of 26 abortion clinics in America". His 50 second sound bite covers his criticism of the Government and description of tactics used in the USA. The reporter then cites Mr Scheider's views on abortion following rape and tells us how long he will be in the country. Emotion is left entirely to Mr Scheider's quotations.

Several public moral problem stories also verged on crime coverage. Two received more emotive coverage than typical of the time. One story (140 seconds long) concerned an East Tamaki school in Auckland, where teachers were subject to verbal and physical abuse by groups of teenagers using the school grounds as a right of way. The presenter's introduction used a factual reportorial style, although the opening shots are designed to heighten the story. The item opened with footage of a plastic bag on grass; a young boy picks it up. The reporter's voice-over begins:

Picking up glue bags in the playground has become a matter of routine for the children of [shots of glue, lighter fluid containers, beer cans etc in rubbish tins] the East Tamaki Primary School. Glue bags, beer bottles and lighter fluid containers are at the root of a problem plaguing the school. [Shots of people walking through the school grounds] People use the primary as a short cut to the nearby hotel and shopping complex. In the past, some, who have been drinking or sniffing glue, have hung around the school abusing and threatening teachers. Recently, one teacher was physically assaulted.

The main emotional content is left for a teacher, who, in two sound bites, describes the aftermath of a firebombing at the school: "When I lost my classroom, if it hadn't been for the fact that I had to help my own class through the shock of it, I think I would

have walked out then." However, the reporter then goes to "another primary school plagued by violence". This appears to consist of "destruction of school property". The evidence we see of this is spray painting on school buildings. She talks to a teacher who criticises education authorities for doing nothing about the problem except fixing vandalised property. The reporter concludes "Education Board officials were unavailable for comment today".

While TVNZ can be accused of linking two schools with problems of a different order and giving the impression of a widespread serious problem, the item has maintained a generally objective-sounding tone.

Another story (April 23, 1985) concerned the strewing of glass on the Paeroa rugby pitch, apparently in protest against the renegade "Cavalier" rugby tour of South Africa:

Reporter [shots of bottle pieces being flung onto a sack] These jagged pieces of smashed beer bottles and an assortment of splintered glass were found scattered over a wide area in front of the goal posts. No-one knows who was responsible, but it's believed they might have been disturbed, as another cleansack full of shattered glass ready to be dumped was found close to the touchline.

The item includes an interview with the Town Clerk, who says smaller pieces of glass still in the mud will emerge later. The reporter concludes by telling us that the pitch is used for school athletics in the summer and "there's real concern that some buried glass could well work its way back to the surface and cause an ugly injury". The script is minimally sourced, something we find more often later in the study period, although longish sound bites from the town clerk generally confirm the reporter's conclusions.

9.8.2 Treatment of Public Moral Problem Stories in 1989

As explained above, in 1987 there was a small number of stories coded as dealing with public moral problems; half were from overseas. It is the 1989 sample which, while also small, shows the change in subject and style. The new style sees the personalisation of important events, and a sharp shift to increase vicariousness of experience for viewers (Wyatt & Badger, 1993).

Two of the five stories are worth closer examination. The first concerned an anti-abortion campaigner briefly released and then back in jail after a further protest. It exhibits all the values of the new style news: emotion, drama, vicarious experience and presence of television as part of the story. The item featured in the first set of headlines in the alliterative phrase: "From prison to protest to prison for a pro-life campaigner". The story opens:

Newsreader A determined anti-abortion campaigner is back in custody tonight, just hours after his release from Auckland's Mt Eden prison. He went straight from the jail to an Auckland abortion clinic, to resume a vigil he's maintained on and off for years. He now faces his fifth jail sentence for trespassing.

The item begins "at dawn" as we join "three-year-old Peter John Bolton and his mum" on their way to collect Ross Bolton from Mt Eden prison. The camera follows Mrs Bolton. As her child runs ahead on the road to the prison, her voice says, "I've come to accept what Ross is doing, and I'm right behind him". Next, the picture follows the newly-released Bolton hand-in-hand with his wife and child, while the reporter says, "But they knew the reunion would be short-lived. The pro-life campaigner had vowed to return to his protest vigil". Bolton, holding his child in his arms says, "My wife and I believe it's God's call. We made a promise to each other, that even if it takes the rest of..." [A pause while he kisses the child and apparently breaks down while the shot features the reporter and then returns to Bolton] "... my mortal life ..." [shot held of him visibly moved].

The shot changes to a close up of a toy, and pans to Mrs Bolton, with child on lap, reading to him as the reporter says, "Family life, though, is disrupted.." There is a sound bite of Mrs Bolton describing missing the "things that men do round the place". We then shift back to the family hugging tearfully, presumably preparatory to separation, while the reporter describes Bolton's previous convictions. The scene then shifts to the Epsom Day hospital where we see (from a distance) Bolton going up to the entrance and standing while a woman enters. We are told the protest is "a passive one", "but not welcome". In a piece to camera in the clinic carpark, the reporter says, "Earlier, a staff member complained that today's protest and the television presence was

intimidating the women". The next scene is of the protestor leaving the clinic with two police officers, as the reporter says "today, it was all over within an hour".

The item concludes with a shot of Mrs Bolton carrying the child, who says, "Where's Daddy", a further shot of the police car turning, with Bolton in the back waving, and a final shot of Mrs Bolton waving and walking away with the child in her arms.

The story is highly personalised and tries from the beginning, with use of close-ups of emotional scenes, to make us enter the feeling of the protagonists. The effect is heightened by emotional language. Considerable resources have been put into the filming. Items have been shot at different times and then pieced together afterwards to make the story (for instance the piece to camera in the carpark is presumably shot after Bolton was arrested, as he is not at his post at the clinic entrance). The whole required co-operation from the Boltons, and probably some element of staging (for instance the arrival at the prison). Further, the presence of the camera may well be closely tied in with Bolton's decision to go so soon to the clinic, and the prompt response of the police. Television is not only closely implicated in the event, it almost can be said to *be* the event. As Altheide and Snow (1991) say, sources of events and activities have adopted the television journalistic criteria and perspectives of the world: "sources, events makers and news mechanics now share an organisational product. It represents nothing other than itself" (p.52).

Another 1989 item (September 14) could best be described as an AIDs scare story. It offered very little support for the contention that "many athletes" are concerned about AIDs and, while running the comments of the AIDs Foundation Director about the low risk, chooses to ignore them and concentrate on the idea of sex and all-night parties. It was headlined as "Athletes concerned at the risk of AIDs at the Games" and the introduction reads as follows:

Commonwealth Games organisers are downplaying suggestions that not enough is being done to counter the threat of aids at the big event. No provision is being made for AIDs testing at the Games, despite fears that action on and off the field may spread the deadly disease.

Over shots of a boxing match, the reporter says that those in contact sports face the greatest risk because of exposure to open wounds. We are told that 700 competitors and more than a thousand officials are attending the Games. Then the emotional pace of the story picks up. As the scene shifts to shots of a woman and dying baby and AIDs clinic scenes, the reporter says "many [athletes and officials are] coming from places like Uganda, where almost seven thousand people have full-blown AIDs, or Tanzania, where 40 percent of young people are infected with HIV. And there's concern among New Zealand athletes that AIDs tests won't be required for the Games."

Then comes the first of three sound bites with swimmer Richard Lockhart:

You have tests for drink driving or for use of steroids, so why can't you test them? Brochures should be handed out to every team member and condoms, just to safeguard the sex part of things.

Reporter [Over shots of athletes] It's the high jinks off the field that worry many athletes. The goings-on after dark are the real AIDs risk.

Lockhart Sure, there are all night parties and people having sex with other team members and prostitutes, without taking any safeguards at all.

Reporter [Shot of condom packet among sporting equipment] America already hands out condoms to its athletes when they go abroad and [Shot of part of bed and two arms, one caressing the other] Russia does hourly checks with athletes, to make sure they are tucked up in bed alone. But AIDs workers say athletes' fears of catching the disease during the Games are unfounded and AIDs tests are unwarranted.

Warren Linberg AIDs Foundation Director I think it's hysterical over-reaction. It would be extremely expensive, and I can't think who would pay for it, and it's a very unreliable way of finding out whether people have HIV.

Reporter In fact, the only testing will be for steroids, but as for AIDs, athletes say it may not be the competitors who are the major risk after all.

Lockhart The officials...I can tell you stories ... but on the media ... you know ... all night parties..."

The item plays on prejudice and has an element of titillation. It is thinly sourced and merely serves to raise some alarm, without looking in any way at the issues involved.

9.8.3 Treatment of Public Moral Problem Stories in 1990

The sample for 1990 had 15 stories concerning public moral problems. Five of them concerned a celebrated American "custody battle" for Hilary Morgan, a young girl who turned out to be living in Christchurch with her mother's parents. It is the kind of story that once only concerned the tabloid press, but in 1990 was deemed big enough to dominate the top part of the national news bulletin. Heavy coverage was not restricted to TVNZ; the Morgan case was considered huge news in America and made the front pages in most newspapers in New Zealand. Inevitably, the media coverage itself was part of the story and became the focus of one item in the sample.

The first Morgan story in the sample was on February 25, 1990. The headline promises us: "Pictures of the Christchurch schoolgirl: America awaits her fate." This is the first of two stories in the bulletin, which, at a total of 237 seconds, not only lead the bulletin, but make up 20% of it. The item is a parody of investigative reporting. The introduction to the first story reads:

The father of a child at the centre of one of America's most bitter custody battles is tonight on a plane, bound for New Zealand. His arrival tomorrow renews fears for the safety of seven-year-old Christchurch school girl Hilary Morgan. For almost two years Hilary has been hidden from her father, whom the mother claims sexually abused the child. Bill Simpson has more details of Hilary's secret life.

Video footage opens with a church and the sound of bells. We are told the church has played a major part in Hilary's life. [Over shots of children in uniform entering church] "School friends trooped into church today, but Hilary was hidden from public sight." Following a brief sound bite with the girl's grandmother, the reporter resumes:

[Photos of Hilary] The girl's safe and comfortable life here has been shaken, with the news that her father is on the way from the United States. Her grandfather says it's up to him now to protect her from the father.

Grandfather [close-up with raised finger] Get these words. He is a psychopathic paedophile, pervert.

The reporter, over pictures of her school, says that, while upset when she first arrived, Hilary is now "a happy and contented girl". The footage then shows the motel where the trio have been living, lingering on a shot of the sign.

Then the grandfather is interviewed outside the motel. He says they haven't been hiding, but living openly. The reporter asks what would he say if the father, Eric Forditch, came to the motel and asked to see his daughter. The grandfather says the court order means he can't see the child, and he then points to the right, saying the father has "his spies out there". The next shot is of a man in a car, with the reporter asking if he is working for Hilary's father. The man (whom the caption describes as a private detective) says, "The only comment I can make is that we are acting for legal representatives to make sure a court order is abided by." Reporter: "Right, but on the husband's side rather than the wife's side". Detective: "I can't make any comment on that, sorry". The mother's lawyer then comments briefly on when a family court case might be expected. The reporter concludes (over shots of the grandparents talking to two men), "The grandparents are now desperate to become permanent residents, to give them more standing in the court."

The next story is about media coverage of the case. As typical in such stories (which have a long history in the tabloid press), the story repeats some of the media excesses, while purporting to distance itself from them. The presenter's introduction reads:

The Morgan case is one of the most notorious custody battles in the United States. The story has gripped the American media for several years. And that media's attention is now focused on events in Christchurch.

The item opens with a reporter telling us that "the Christchurch connection is hot news in the United States" and plays part of an American network item. Saying the case has consistently made "good copy", the reporter backgrounds events. She tells of Hilary's mother's jail sentence (complete with pictures of the woman in manacles) for refusing a court order to allow the father unsupervised access. Next is part of a video, where a younger Hilary screams as her father reaches for her. We are then told American interest is now at "fever pitch". Then the mother says, "My concern is for Hilary, that she get the protection, get the therapy, get the help, get the love that she needs". The

report concludes: "With the action now in New Zealand, American media attention will remain focused here for some time."

The sample included the following day's coverage of the story. The Morgan case again took the top two slots in the news bulletin, but the stories were slightly shorter (a total of 174 seconds). The headline tells us, "Hilary Morgan's father brings the custody battle to New Zealand." The introduction states that the father flew into Auckland "determined to see his daughter, but equally determined to keep his plans to himself".

The item opens with Forditch surrounded by reporters, giving little away. The reporter says he "arrived in a blaze of publicity", but that was "the last to be seen of him". He spent the afternoon "behind closed doors" talking to lawyers. Over file footage, the reporter backgrounds the case and then presents a piece to camera on the Auckland waterfront:

Eric Forditch has already fought another legal battle over one of his children. His second wife complained that he sexually molested *their* daughter after the divorce. The case wasn't proven, but the court ordered Forditch not to see that daughter again. Forditch claims his two ex-wives ganged up on him for the money.

The piece concludes with the reporter saying that this was not allowed as evidence in Hilary's custody case, and that the father would soon be heading to Christchurch.

The second story opens, "With the arrival of international news teams, Hilary's life is about to be shaken yet again". However, no news teams are in sight and the only disruption seems to be from our own media. The reporter, over footage of Hilary's school, says "as far as we could tell", Hilary was not amongst pupils there today, but that her grandfather "may want her to keep living a normal life while the drama unfolds". He then mentions the grandparents have, as yet, refused police protection, and there follows a comment from a police officer saying there is no police operation and it is a normal policing role. The item concludes with an explanation that the grandparents' visas are being temporarily extended.

This story of 70 seconds added very little to coverage, although the result was to keep the audience focused on the "drama" to come.

The same bulletin (February 26, 1990) holds a further story coded as public moral problem. It is fifth in the bulletin order, but features in the opening headline set as: "A widow will never forgive the drunk driver who killed her family".

Newsreader An Auckland widow says she can never forgive the drunken driver who wiped out her family. Pat Evans was in court today when the driver was jailed for almost three years. But, as Maxine Clayton reports, the sentence has been criticised as too light.

Reporter [shots of woman in wheelchair entering court] Doctors warned against it, but nothing could keep Pat Evans away from Papakura District Court. [Hands sorting through family snapshots]. She was in hospital having a leg amputated when husband Ronald and teenage sons David and Craig died in a head-on car smash last November. [Shots of man leaving court trying to cover face, and entering police van] X (accused's name) was the driver. He was so drunk he was almost three times over the limit, when he tried to overtake on a blind bend near Drury. [Police van departs] He was sentenced to almost three years in jail and disqualified from driving for five years.

Pat Evans [close-up, obviously extremely distressed] He has spoilt all the rest of my life. He may forget, but I never can.

Reporter [piece to camera outside courthouse] The judge said it was the worst case he had ever heard. X's driving was the most reprehensive behaviour imaginable. [shots of Mothers Against Drunk Driving Badge] but Mothers against Drunk Driving [two-shot: reporter and interviewee] say the sentence is too light.

Jenny Josephs of MADD Well, if you've got a gun, and you killed somebody with a gun, you get put away longer than three years.

Reporter [Shots of another man in a court-like setting, including clear profile shot] A man was charged with manslaughter in another drink drive case today. X [man's name] pleaded guilty to causing the death of a woman. [Ambulance scene] He was racing another car, after being breath-tested positive, when the accident occurred. [Shots of Mrs Evans looking through photos etc] As for Mrs Evans, her recovery's slow. Her incentive to get better is gone.

This item demonstrates the "personalisation" of news to an extreme. While the case itself is shocking, it is by no means unique and the item is tainted with exploitation of the woman at the centre of the case. At no stage did she say she would not forgive, only that she could not forget. There is no attempt to touch on the issues that lie beneath, and a spurious link is formed with another drink driving death.

These examples clearly demonstrate the new style of treating public moral problem stories. Another item (June 5), similar in tone to these, concerned a mother's allegations that her "AIDs-carrier son" was forced to undergo intensive counselling treatment at an isolated farm. Again, this was packed with emotional language, was thinly sourced and appeared exploitative.

By contrast, the two remaining local public moral problem items in the sample retained a calm and informative tone, even though they dealt with emotional and controversial issues. The first concerned a family feud about the burial of a sister, and the second covered cultural differences in treating animals and the accusation that the SPCA was unfair to certain groups. Both of these items were run on September 13, and show that specific, sensitive cases can be covered in an informative non-exploitative manner, and that issues underlying them can be effectively touched on within the news bulletin.

9.8.4 The Treatment of Public Moral Problem Stories: Summary

The nature of this category means the stories are close to the emotions of many audience members. As such, it is particularly suited to studying any changes in the emotive and sensational content of news. During the study period, the treatment clearly moved from the objective to the subjective approach. The 1985 stories were frequently told via institutional and official sources, with the emphasis being on information, despite the emotional potential of the subject. By contrast, many of the stories in 1989 and 1990 strove to heighten emotional impact by language and visual techniques. They concentrated on the personal and were frequently narrated in story telling mode. The result of this was to heighten the vicarious experience for the viewer (Wyatt & Badger, 1993).

Both crime and public moral problem stories achieve high salience in the new story-telling style of television, with its shift from a concentration on the public to the private; from policy to the personal. Further evidence of this shift to the individual is shown in the analysis of bulletins which follows.

9.9 Four News Bulletins Described

The discussion above, by examining chit chat, headlines, and trends in treatment of two different subjects, serves to compartmentalise changes in the news. However, the news bulletin is a sum of parts, each affecting each other. In order to tie elements together, a bulletin was selected (using a random number table) from year one and compared with its equivalent day in each of the study years. The bulletins were: Friday, August 9, 1985; Friday, August 7, 1987; Friday, August 11, 1989; and Friday, August 10, 1990.

9.9.1 Some Overall Features

This section summarises some comparative statistics describing each of the bulletins.

The length of the bulletins

Year	1985	1987	1989	1990
Newshole	29'22"	28'02"	19'16"	21'44"
News minus sport	21'27"	23'13"	15'25"	18'54"

1985 was the longest of the four bulletins, perhaps indicating advertisers might not yet have taken full advantage of the new chance to advertise on Friday evenings. While longer than the 1987 bulletin, the 1985 bulletin devoted more time to sport. The 1987 bulletin was dominated by the run-up to the election. There was also a five minute "Campaign Report" following the 1987 bulletin, which took a little time from both the network news and the regional programme. The 1989 bulletin showed the effect of reducing the news to 30 commercial minutes. The amount of sport showed a big drop in 1987 and a continuing decline in 1989, and again in 1990.

Year	1985	1987	1989	1990
No. of Presenters	2	3	3	3
Length of opening	27 sec	25 sec	36 sec	33 sec
Chit chat	--	2 sec	4 sec	20 sec
Average Story Length	76.6 sec	80.1 sec	96.3 sec	72.4 sec
Political Grouping	378 sec	789 sec	413 sec	333 sec
Tabloid Grouping	169 sec	344 sec	181 sec	307 sec

The chit chat increase is strongly marked in the figures above; also apparent is the extension of the opening credits, headlines and theme music. Because they reflect events of the day, the sample programmes did not always reflect the averages for subject content in their years. The 1987 bulletin was close to the election and, on the sample day in 1989, there was Cabinet reshuffle. This shows in the heavy weighting for the political grouping. The Cabinet reshuffle story also accounts for the average story length being so long in 1989.

All four programmes had two advertising breaks. Until mid-1985, advertisements were not permitted on Friday night, and the August 9 bulletin was first in the overall sample to have ads. The placement of the advertising breaks in the bulletin varied. As the table below shows, the first part was the longest in all four bulletins, and the second part smaller. But in 1985 and 1987, the last part of the bulletin was still relatively large and contained the sports segment. From 1989 onward, with the commercial half hour bulletins, sports was moved to the middle portion of the news, and only one story (generally a human interest item) filled the last part of the bulletin.

Newshole Size Between Advertising Breaks

Year	1985	1987	1989	1990
Before 1st Break	720 sec	773 sec	616 sec	770 sec
Before 2nd Break	567 sec	620 sec	423 sec	478 sec
Before Final Break	475 sec	289 sec	117 sec	56 sec

9.9.2 The 1985 Bulletin

The bulletin, with solo newsreader Tom Bradley, opens on a musical theme that has introduced the news for a number of years. The title graphics are simple; a flat world map that moves from a horizontal to vertical position, and a spinning globe which superimposes itself on the map. The words "Television New Zealand News" then appear. A news picture flashes up and the headlines are read over a mixture of still and moving photographs. Presenter Tom Bradley remains off-screen until he begins reading the news. He appears (medium close up) to the left of the screen, in front of a blank beige background. To the upper right is a pictorial reminder of the story he is

reading. In contrast to later openings, the camera does not swing in towards him, nor is there a "zoom" effect of any sort. In other introductions, where no story logo is used, the presenter is centrally placed, and in a slightly closer shot, takes nearly the whole screen.

Because the news has just one presenter, the only two-shots (two presenters on screen together) occur before the second advertising break, when Tom introduces the sports news. Both presenters face the camera, seated formally behind the news desk, and the transfers to and from the sports segments are unadorned. Tom says simply, "Next after the break, Tony has sports news." After the sports segment, Tom says, "Thank you Tony. And coming after the break, news from the regions."

The sports news is presented in the same way as the rest of the news, with Tony Cyprian photographed in a similar position and from a similar angle. Both men are seated behind a simple double desk with a green top and brown front, discreetly engraved with a small TVNZ logo. Tom Bradley maintains a serious demeanour throughout, even when reading a headline containing a pun for a "good news" item about an invention. Neither presenter smiles, although they are not "wooden". They watch each other perform but do not interact.

The impression gained from the studio part of the news is static, calm and authoritative. The tone in which the news is read is even, but not stilted. Clarity, not drama, is important. The position from which the news readers are filmed - sitting relatively still, facing the front fully and looking slightly down into the camera is seen as conveying a sense of authority and composure (McCain, Chilberg, & Wakshlag, 1977). There is a strong contrast between the studio presentation of the news and the demeanour of presenters, and the general tenor of advertisements surrounding the news.

The opening headlines are detailed and clear, devoid of rhetorical tricks and emotive, editorialising language:

Amid claims that a woman in an Auckland jail is a French secret agent, police start to worry about world press coverage of the Rainbow Warrior case.

An interview with former MP John Kirk in his Texas jail cell.
South Africa is shaken by the worst violence since the state of emergency
was declared.

The bulletin opens with three stories providing different perspectives on the Rainbow Warrior affair, the main story of 1985. Norris (1992), responding to criticism about short news items after 1989, explains how the news is now "layered", giving several perspectives on a major event. In fact, the practice was not new and occurred when individual stories were longer. In this bulletin, 4'22" is given to Rainbow Warrior coverage.

Techniques provide a contrast to later years. The introduction to the lead story says:

New Zealand police investigating the Rainbow Warrior bombing are attempting to play down overseas reports that a woman arrested in connection with the bombing is an agent of the French Secret Service. The woman, charged in court as Sophie Tourenge, is at present in Mount Eden jail awaiting trial.

Over pictures of workers on the sunken ship, reporter Daryll Hutchison says:

The sabotage of the Rainbow Warrior has attracted much overseas interest, but none stronger than that shown in France in recent days. Heightening it, have been reports in the French media; reports that have preceded the announcement of the special French Government inquiry.

The story moves immediately into a voice report from veteran Paris reporter John Starr, who in 54 seconds, summarises the two major theories about the bombing and backgrounds the inquiry. His voice is recorded over the phone and the tape played over still shots of Paris, President Mitterand and the politician chosen to lead the inquiry. The report fits into the objective exposition category outlined by Wyatt and Badger (1993) "news analyses where the tone is impersonal" (p.10). The neutral words aided by Starr's clipped voice ensure the report is well on the objective side of the objective-subjective continuum.

The local reporter takes over the story, repeating British press claims that Tourenge is an agent of the DGSE and police claims that they have no evidence to link her with the

organisation. This is spoken, over a still black and white picture of Tourenge and video footage of two people covered in blankets leaving a police van. These shots are clearly labelled as library film.

There follows an interview with Detective Superintendent Alan Galbraith, in charge of the police operation. In the 25 second sound bite he is questioned twice about how he would rank the speculation that the prisoner is a secret agent. The reporter's tone, low key but questioning, is persistent, and Galbraith says his personal view is that the organisation is more loosely grouped than a government organisation. The reporter then goes on to describe the next stage in the investigations planned by police (over a map depicting France and New Caledonia and further pictures of the Rainbow Warrior).

There is no studio link, as we switch to a report from Julie Cravino in Wellington. Over shots of police headquarters and reporters at a press conference, she introduces a 35 second sound bite from Police Commissioner Ken Thompson asking the press not to speculate, so as to ensure that the Tourenge couple receive a fair trial. After this (and over pictures of Stafford House), she speaks briefly about Foreign Affairs looking into possibilities of extradition.

A further report, from Ralph Brown in Christchurch, covers a press conference by acting Prime Minister Mike Moore at his home. Moore expresses his pleasure at hearing from Mitterand about the inquiry and the French pledge to help the inquiry. He speaks for 41 seconds.

The Rainbow Warrior story is dramatic and there have been major developments, but the whole tone of the coverage is measured. There is heavy reliance on officials, and sources for speculation (generally the overseas media) are supplied, even if in little detail. The report is heavy on information and, in Wyatt and Badger's typology, fits primarily into the descriptive mode (its purpose being to provide information and its effect to increase knowledge). There is little attempt to heighten the dramatic or emotional content of the story and only the words "attempting to play down reports" could be taken to indicate any stance by TVNZ reporters on the media speculation.

Throughout the package of stories, there is a clear distinction between factual reporting, and analysis, interpretation or speculation.

The next story concerns Moore's reaction to a report that a United States State Department official "scoffed" at the Pacific Forum's vote for a nuclear free zone. Moore's comments are cited, and there is a 54 second cut of the American official speaking at a press conference. Again, no attempt is made to highlight the story or to exploit its humorous possibilities. The story is careful to state that the official is only "reported to have scoffed", and then the piece is run, so that viewers can draw their own conclusions.

Four overseas stories then follow: a 150 second item on the South African government taking "sweeping powers" to combat interracial violence; a 24 second story on a car bomb explosion in Germany (newsreader voice over film); a spoken item on attempts to impeach Philippine's president Marcos; and a story from Australia (89 seconds) on the successful search for a New Zealand yacht, which includes an interview with the skipper.

Then the bulletin moves back to New Zealand, with a 19 second story on the increase in the price of milk and cream, followed by an item on the recent low rate of inflation on food prices. This report, from parliamentary reporter John Bishop, quotes the Government Statistician's monthly figures. He gives the basic figures, speaking over film of shops in Wellington. In a 16 second piece to camera, he sums up that the figures can be used to support both Government and Opposition claims on the rate of inflation. The demonstrably even-handed piece gives the major official figures, while simplifying the story more than a newspaper report would. No graphics are used and no attempt is made to cover the cost of food from the viewpoint of the "average householder", which would have been the approach advised by management in later years.

Tom Bradley then gives the headlines for the second part of the bulletin: "A world-beating device invented by a New Zealander whose patriotism is more than just skin deep". This punning headline, unusual in 1985, is read over pictures of a man and a meat carcass.

The first story up after the adverts is a phone interview with former MP Jonathan Kirk, in jail in Texas and fighting extradition to face bankruptcy charges. The interview, an acknowledged recording from Auckland's Radio Pacific, is played over a coloured still photograph, followed by black and white library footage of Kirk, speaking filmed during his days as an MP.

This second phone interview in the bulletin reflects both the limited resources given news at the time and a belief the audience would accept a static presentation and concentrated listening in order to receive information. There is an element of bare bones about the presentation.

The Kirk interview is followed by a piece on action taken by the Government to help farmers. The 70 second piece describes in some detail what farmers will be entitled to and gives Federated Farmers' reaction. It consists of file footage (of farms, government and lobby group leaders), with a short piece to camera in front of the Beehive. It is a straight government news story from the rural correspondent, with little attempt to make it different or exciting. The item is of the style and subject matter that almost disappeared in later days.

The story, compared with similar political stories in later bulletins, could have been swiftly assembled. It is merely a voice report with some file footage, and probably shots of the Minister announcing the package to Federated Farmers that day (although no identifying captions are given). As such, it reflects Greg Smith's claims that the Wellington office had to "churn out" a large number of stories. Even though we can assume by the footage that a camera crew attended the package announcement meeting, no actuality or interviews from key participants are included. It is, though, an able and detailed report of a fairly complex package of assistance. The reporter puts it into perspective, summarising details of the package and of the main response to it. What the story lacks in terms of those of later years is any emotional impact. It would be one that former editor John Spavin would "defy anyone to take in". However, it is difficult to judge in hindsight. The farming sector was still considered highly significant in those days and people were used to the style of presentation.

Next comes a longer feature (196 seconds), in which more time and resources have been invested. It covers a New Zealand invention for measuring the meat content of carcasses and takes the angle that the device is successful overseas but ignored in New Zealand. This "prophet without honour in his own land" theme is strong in New Zealand lore. Such themes are recognised by Darnton (1975), who provides the classic discussion of story patterns and the mythical and archaic flavour of stories.

The item features a number of interviews, combined with footage of Mr Hennessy demonstrating his meat probe, of the factory assembling the probes and of a meatworks. It aims to open in different style from the usual news story with actuality, but quickly moves to a reporter voice-over with a detailed background explanation. There are also several interviews: two sound bites from the inventor, two from the editor of a farming magazine (supporting his case for local use of the invention), and comments from representatives from the Meat Board and the multi-national organisation marketing the probe.

The story combines the appeal of "local man makes good" with that of "little person against bureaucracy". Although this approach shapes the story, strong comments and positioning come from participants in the story, rather than the presenter. The reporter takes a back seat (not appearing on camera) and is not afraid to end the story on what might be judged a "weak" note, if one were aiming to concentrate on the theme. Summing up, Carol Archie says the probe will be considered by the Meat Board in its review, and that the Board is hoping to "improve its communications" with Mr Hennessy.

The meat probe item is followed by two stories about Maori issues. The first is a Government story about moves to allow loans to be made for houses to be built on land with multiple ownership. This piece builds more emotional impact than the farming story. But it still features the long, "objective-style" scripts from specialist reporters and protracted sound bites from authoritative sources characteristic of political reportage in 1985. It opens with scenes of Maori rural poverty, linking this with the inability of Maori to get funds for building on communal land. A 29 second sound bite from the Housing Minister underlines the need for the action. The reporter uses official figures

to back up his case. However, he also reiterates the emotive words of "family" and "home" and ends with the concept of families "out in the cold":

Reporter Bill Ralston [script read over 9 shots of corrugated iron shanties, open air bathrooms, primitive heating, dilapidated interiors, plus some rural Maori] Scenes like this, of substandard housing in areas like Northland and the East Coast, highlight the problem faced by many rural Maori families trying to own their own home. It's hard, if not impossible, to raise finance to build anything decent because of the multiple ownership of Maori land. Most institutions won't give mortgage finance unless the property is on individual title. But now, the Housing Corporation will give housing finance to rural Maori families, using the new home as security. The scheme demands the new house must be removable, so it can be seized and resold if the family default on the loan. [close up shot of Goff talking] Housing Minister Mr Phil Goff stresses this isn't a [shot of Goff and others at press conference] handout, offering something special to Maoris.

Goff [close-up at press conference] What it does, to the contrary, is to remove a long-standing obstacle which has prevented many families in the rural area from being able to help themselves. And I think this has been a significant factor behind the problem that we have had in our community, that Maori families haven't been able to achieve the same level of home ownership that other families in the community have aspired to and achieved.

Reporter [shot of shabby house interior] In 1981, 73% of non-Maoris owned or were buying their own home, compared with just [shot of family group outside gradually zooming-in] 44% of Maoris; that left 16-and-a-half thousand Maori families out in the cold.

While the piece is restrained by later standards, it takes a definite stance and uses strong visual images to back up the story.

It is followed by an item on the tangi for Princess Te Puea's husband. This consists of a typical obituary piece; voiced over shots of the ceremony, with actuality of waiata and haka. These were two of only five Maori stories in the 1985 sample.

Next comes the story of a Korean fishing boat seized the second time for breaking regulations. The agricultural correspondent is filmed at the scene, where the ship is tied up in Wellington. There are also well composed shots of the boat and crew. The report is brief and factual.

These political items from Wellington reflect two contentions of reporters at the time. These were that stories from Wellington were inclined to be "worthy but dull" and generally lacking in creativity (Spavin, 1994) and that the Wellington news crew was hard-worked and had to put pieces together in a short time (Smith, 1994).

The fishing boat story is followed by Tom Bradley, introducing the sports presenter and his headline: "Tonight we hail the conquering heroines". This, again, is one of the few more tabloid-style headlines in the 1985 sample and refers to an item after the break, on the New Zealand netball team returning from a triumphant visit to Britain. There are seven sports stories, taking up 27% of the newshole. Locally, they consist of items from Auckland (netball), Dunedin (women's golf) and Wellington (basketball). The four overseas stories were either spoken or read over footage from overseas and make up only a fifth of the sports coverage.

9.9.2.1 The 1985 Bulletin: Summary

The 1985 sample bulletin moves relatively slowly. Movement through the bulletin is deliberate, changes in pace depending on the length of story rather than a lighter style or an upbeat tone. To some extent, the sporting section acts as the lighter side of the bulletin. The news is heavy on sport and politics and appeals to rural interests. The predominant story mode is "description", in Wyatt and Badger's (1993) typology. Its function is to provide information. There is at this stage little attempt to appeal to the emotions, and, generally, stories are tackled in terms of issues and institutions rather than individuals. There is little personalisation. Longer stories are detailed and, while simple in structure as far as production goes, are often quite complex in ideas and information conveyed. Story construction is predictable, almost formulaic, as if designed to focus attention on content.

Altheide and Snow (1991), in drawing the attention to changes that have occurred in television in the last decade, as entertainment values have become paramount, say that in news: "Delivery becomes content; the form of presentation *becomes* the significant content" (p.60). This does not describe the 1985 bulletin. Producers of the news *are*

conscious of the visual aspect of the bulletin, and the bulletin is patterned to ensure it has both light and shade (sport and politics, human interest and important issues). However, content still dominates over entertainment values.

9.9.3 The 1987 Bulletin

The sample bulletin for 1987 begins with a similar theme tune but with updated graphics and title. The overall colour is blue, including a blue outer frame surrounding headline footage. The theme music, continued more insistently under the headlines than in 1985, is matched by a strobing effect of the white inner frame around the headline pictures. After headlines are read, the theme music comes up fully again and the network news sign moves onto the screen. This dissolves into a picture of the two presenters at their desk in front of a world map. The background is largely blue and the desk is blue with a red stripe running across the front. As Judy says "Good evening, network news for Friday, August the seventh", the camera moves slowly in towards the presenters. As Neil Billington takes a breath to begin to read the first story, the camera focus shifts to him alone. The map disappears, to be replaced, on Billington's right, by a picture representing the first story. Compared with 1985, the opening is more upbeat and faster moving. The colours are less drab, but could still be described as "official" or authoritative. Bailey and Billington are younger than the presenters in 1985.

The opening headlines are more pacy and use more dramatic language than in 1985. They also reflect the special concerns of 1987; the seemingly contradictory interest in crime and politics.

Tonight: search for a man, after a girl is snatched in a Christchurch street.

The Lange style seems to change, and Bolger turns on the media.
And meningitis vaccine is cleared for further use.

Billington's introduction to the first item reads:

Christchurch police have been searching the city for a man believed to have abducted a 15 year old girl last night. They say she was dragged from a car in a suburban street and wasn't found until this morning. Police have blocked roads and searched a number of homes, but the 42-year-old man has eluded them so far. Meanwhile, the man, Kevin Jarden, has been phoning the media protesting his innocence.

The scene shifts to Christchurch, where (over pictures of police activity and a still picture of the suspect) reporter Shona Geary backgrounds the case. A recording of the suspect's phone call to the local TVNZ station, claiming the girl had gone with him willingly, is played over pictures of the reporter apparently taking the call. As Jarden says police have missed him, we see footage of the search. There is also an interview with the girl's mother, saying how frightened the girl was and describing her sobbing. The report finishes with information that Jarden had also been talking to a detective, and that the search was continuing.

The reporter narrates the events as a story and, while information presumably came from the police and from stories of an earlier incident, the only source given for the story is the one mention of the police in the introduction, the comments of the suspect and the interview with the girl's mother. This lack of a filter through official sourcing, combined with comments from participants in the drama, heightens the effect of immediacy and of a "story". In Wyatt and Badger's typology, this is narration rather than description. They say the primary purpose of narration is *involvement* of the viewer, offering a sense of participation.

The story has all the ingredients of tabloid drama; kidnapping, a terrified young girl, mystery, a hint of illicit sexual relations and baffled police. The story is given top prominence in the bulletin, but although dramatic verbs are used, and the story strives for the narrative, chronological style, it is still fairly firmly in the objective mode.

The second story is also a crime one, concerning an attack on St John's Ambulance workers. The logo, or picture defining the story (situated to the left of the screen beside Judy Bailey), consists of the St John's symbol and the single word "attack" in capital letters. The introduction says the man was "hurled through a plate glass window" while helping a woman. "Fellow ambulancemen say they'll have to be more cautious, before racing to help someone, and, sooner or later, an innocent person will suffer."

Cathy Campbell takes up the story from Auckland, where she details the man's injuries, describes the incident and explains it is the third "unprovoked attack" on an ambulanceman in three years. The pictures are of a close up of the man's injured eye

and shots of him and his wife sitting in their home. In the first sound bite, the victim talks of his feelings, and the scene then switches to drinkers at the hotel seen through a window. As the camera pulls back, the reporter says, "It was business as usual at the Star today; the smashed window replaced last night". We are left to assume this is the window in question. Then, over a shot of ambulance workers loading an injured person into a vehicle, the reporter continues, "But St John's say it's not so easy to replace their officers, and there's no question they are all more wary." In a 9 second sound bite, an ambulance official says that before going out, they will be taking time to satisfy that officers will be safe, and he adds that someone might suffer because of the delay. The picture switches to the victim and his wife: "Stefan will be back on the job. Philosophical, he says there's still no need for tougher measures". In a sound bite, Stefan says it is hopefully a "flash in the pan", and there is no need for back-up crews.

The item concludes: "While ambulance officers contemplate whether they need someone riding shotgun, police in Otahuhu are following strong leads in the hunt for Stefan Wareham's attacker".

This story, with its emphasis on the feelings of the victim and its tendency to promote this as part of a wave of attacks, contains strong elements of the new-style of crime coverage described earlier.

With the election only a week away, campaign coverage is to be expected. Five political stories follow. The first covers the campaigning style of incumbent Prime Minister David Lange. The introduction, read by Billington, runs like this:

The Prime Minister denies he's changed his campaigning style following his clash with locals in Geraldine earlier this week. Yet in the last 24 hours, Mr Lange's begun making formal speeches again, assuring audiences he's not rude and arrogant, and he's been extremely polite to anyone who has criticised him.

The item opens directly with a clip of Lange at a political meeting, saying it is important a heckler should be heard. He is shot from well below the podium, and appears confident and relaxed, the shot changes to the laughing, clapping audience and focuses (presumably) on the heckler laughing and embarrassed, as parliamentary

reporter Bill Ralston says, "Meet the new Mr Nice Guy. Since Geraldine, no more insults for hecklers or critics, because, as he says...", and here the shot changes to Lange himself saying, "... rude and arrogant". Lange laughs and there is a burst of clapping. There is an abrupt scene change to a shot of two demonstrators holding placards. One shouts about redundancies, and the camera shifts to Lange entering a building, while Ralston says:

Confronted by demonstrators today at Hastings, Mr Lange was tempted [shot of him looking at demonstrators and then turning back again] ... but he turned the other cheek [shot of demonstrators] and said nothing. [Shot change to an airport with Lange walking in] At the airport yesterday, he tactfully ignored a handful of anti-government protestors [camera pans to show protestors and rest of people entering plane], by simply looking the other way and saying nothing to them.

[Shot change to press conference shot from behind Lange and officials] But being a nice guy is nothing new, David Lange claimed today to a news conference."

Lange No, I have been Mr Nice guy for some time. Uh, the fact is you can't agree with everyone, and if you disagree with someone making a demand, then you're described as rude. Now, that is the hapless lot of someone in Government.

Ralston [Factory visit with Lange in overalls and hard hat] Mr Lange's advisors admit Geraldine was the low point of the campaign and admit he's changing tactics. The news photo opportunities will be backed up now with media speeches boosting his nice image. So long as he can avoid conflict.

[To Lange at news conference] How long do you think you can bite your tongue and just take it?

Lange Till at least 10.30pm on August the 15th" (*election day*).

Ralston [Piece to camera outside campaign venue] Next week is the last week of the campaign. Traditionally, that's when all the hard hitting political infighting [Ralston makes fists] takes place. And whether the Prime Minister's new Mr Nice Guy, non-confrontational style can survive that week remains to be seen.

This story shows a marked change from the 1985 political coverage. It is tightly constructed, highly interpretative and insists on a light touch. Ralston as political reporter is being allowed to be more than an authority on politics; he is becoming a media personality in his own right. Altheide and Snow (1991) point out the vital tie of the television personality to television entertainment, and the growing importance of personalities in news presentation. Taylor (1993) says pieces to camera (or standups)

are frequently used to promote the reporter's point of view, often with little support in the story. While there is still support for much of what Ralston says, the piece to camera is being used in the way criticised by Taylor.

The second political story matches Prime Minister Lange's campaign performance with Opposition leader Jim Bolger's. As the item is introduced, there is a picture of Jim Bolger with the word "Criticism" superimposed. The story covers a press conference where Bolger criticises the bias of TV coverage on Lange and mistakenly describes a political commentator as the editor of the *National Business Review*.

Reporter Mark Sainsbury's commentary is interspersed with shots of the press conference. The tone is light and ironic. He refers to Bolger's "first salvo" and then his next item on the agenda. Bolger's critical comments are tightly edited, and we are invited to share a moment of one-upmanship when the Opposition Leader has to acknowledge his slip in a less than graceful manner:

Bolger [Shot of Bolger at conference holding and looking at press cuttings booklet]
Haven't seen him for a long time either. Well, that just proves I haven't read it. I haven't seen him either. So, to some extent, the argument still stands.

Both political stories are notable for their irreverent tone. In addition, they are both entertaining and memorable. In Chapter Five, reporters like Spavin discuss the lamentable tendency at the beginning of the study period to kow-tow to politicians. We see them now relishing the new independence beginning to make itself felt. TVNZ reporters acknowledge the importance of retaining a critical stance to governance, as a vital part of the fourth estate's role. However, it is perhaps indicative of the new, more personalised news style that the strength of critical analysis is not targeted at the substantive economic issues of the election, but at the personal failings of both leaders. So it should be noted that while journalists may no longer be "reaching for a politician" as Spavin says, they yet remain focused on politicians and trapped into personality campaign trail coverage to such an extent as to exclude the real election, which was occurring elsewhere. Margaret Wilson (1989), Labour Party president at the time, while describing the campaign, observes, "I sometimes wondered if the media was more captivated by the form than the content" (p.128). The media, she says, misunderstood

the strategy behind the campaign, because they concentrated on the leaders, a choice she puts down to limited resources.

The third story does refer to economic issues. On the tax rate debate within the National Party, it is covered by a brief spoken item. The next two stories cover the campaign fortunes of third parties. The first item about the Democrats covers leader Neil Morrison's release of the party's economic policy and continues the trend that night of poking fun at political leaders.

Reporter [Shots of Morrison in sewing factory with a couple of seconds of actuality] He was in yet another factory today, a huge textile and clothing plant. The workers here are the sort of people his party is aimed at; people Neil Morrison sees as losers in the free market.

He goes on to outline the policy in three sentences. Then there is a brief cut from Morrison's speech in the company cafeteria, where sound quality less than optimum and the visuals show obviously bored factory workers eating and smoking at tables. The lingering impression is of the "hardly enthusiastic" audience, and of a brief conversation the reporter has with a group of workers one of whom says, "I don't take much notice of it anyway".

The Values Party has more sympathetic treatment, although the story still focuses on personalities. Their story opens with an expressed understanding of the difficulties facing all small parties, as campaigning becomes more professional and costly. The would-be Values politician is interviewed on his own patch, which reflects all the nostalgic, "natural" and "green" elements his party stands for. The angle taken in the introduction is:

The presidential style of this year's campaign is making it tough for the small parties. They can't compete with the big budget ballyhoo, which critics say does nothing to enhance the democratic process or explain the issues.

The item opens with a close-up shot of fire, sparks, sounds of metal on metal, and then pulls away to show a man at a forge, with a dog at his feet. The reporter's opening words:

The only sparks Kaipara candidate Bernard Merwood can raise are from the old forge he's salvaged on his farm. He's been a Values member since the party started in 1972 - the world's first "greenies."

The item gives a good hearing to Merwood's case, including a substantial sound bite. It contrasts him to local MP Lockwood Smith: "National's front man in mass rallies for his party's leader". There's an abrupt visual contrast between the streamers, balloons and noisy applause at National's rally and a black and white three-word sign for Merwood set apparently in a paddock ("the only exposure he can afford"). Merwood, shot in close-up, has the final word: "But I still cling to the view that sanity will prevail, and sooner or later the Green message will get through loud and clear. It's got to if we wish to survive."

These political stories are followed by two short spoken economic stories, both read by Judy Bailey. The first reported that inflation and pre-election nerves were to blame for the rise in interest rates, according to "financial sources". This was a straight "spoken" item, with no pictures and no identifying logo shot. The second was the daily sharemarket summary. This was a fairly new innovation, making its first appearance in the sample on June 2. Summaries were generally 15-25 seconds long and frequently before an ad break or next to another economics story. The format was a logo signifying the sharemarket board, with an arrow and graphics summarising the main movements.

These reports survived the October 1987 sharemarket crash, and continued to appear each weekday throughout the rest of the study period and on into the 1990s, although they were generally shorter in 1989 and 1990. While the reports are promoted as keeping the audience "up with the play", they are unlikely to fulfil a service function. By the time they go to air they are out of date by several hours, and those who need to follow the stock exchange have access through computer modems.

After the sharemarket news comes the pre-advertising break headlines, opening with a second headline on the meningitis vaccine story:

Coming up, expert says vaccine can be used but needs careful study.
And the ceasefire settlement in Sri Lanka is running into problems.

The headlines were read alternately by Neil and Judy. As Judy finished reading the second headline, the video footage, showing children behind a barbed wire fence, focused on one child in close-up. This shot was then surrounded by a white frame and shrunk to the upper third of the screen above the words, "Coming up, Tamils accuse government." These graphic devices add to the pace and impact of the headlines. While the spoken words are formal and objective-sounding, we are left with a strong visual image as the adverts come on.

The break is followed by the meningitis story. The vaccine, which had been blamed for side-effects in hundreds of Auckland children, had been cleared for further use by a Health Department investigator, who advised care and further study. This 107 second item is simply constructed, using file footage (unlabelled as such) of a vaccination clinic and an interview with the specialist, a 32-second sound bite. Despite its simple structure, the item has greater pace than the 1985 items of a similar structure, because each shot during the voice over by the reporter is shorter. For instance, in the first 22 seconds of the background report, the clinic video footage has eight shot changes. There is plenty of movement on camera, and it shows several closeups of injections.

Next up is a series of 5 overseas stories, followed by a local nostalgic item. At this stage, bulletin producers appear to be taking more care to put "talking point" stories before the advertising break. This is designed to carry the audience across the subsequent advertising break.

The overseas component of the bulletin consists of three longer stories and two spoken items. The first covers the tense situation in the Persian Gulf, and the second deals with the disarmament talks in Geneva. Both reports are from Britain and structured with a lengthy voice report over shots of the day's events and other suitable material and finished off by a piece to camera in a recognisable part of a diplomatic capital, where the reporter attempts to point towards the future. Both voice-overs contain evaluative language. The next item covers problems in the Sri Lankan ceasefire and features the shots of refugee camps used in the headlines. Two stories on party political fortunes in Britain and Australia follow.

Then it is "back home", for a leisurely item on the retirement of a school bus in Woodlands in Southland at 42 years of service: "after covering nearly 700,000 kilometres, it's reached the end of the road." The item opens with shots of the bus while the reporter says, "Nicknamed 'Smiley' by Woodlands children, the 1945 Bedford's been making its daily runs for the past three decades, driven by the same man, Allan Calder". The item contains a brief comment from an early passenger (who recalls its charms compared with even older buses) and a longer interview with the driver, who is filmed sitting on the front bumper. The tone is warm and nostalgic, with shots from inside the bus and a comment from a young schoolgirl. The story concludes with reporter Peter Cruickshank, saying over shots of the bus moving off and heading into the distance:

Smiley's now going into well-earned retirement and will probably only be seen around Woodlands again if the new bus Allan's bought breaks down. He doubts he will ever let it go to a museum.

This is an ideal opportunity for chit chat. As the scene shifts to the trio of presenters in the studio, Judy turns with a smile to the long-serving sports reporter, Tony Cyprian, saying, "After the break, another old trouper, Tony Cyprian has tonight's sports news". The banter both refers back to the item and forward to the next part of the show and implies a warm, jocular relationship between the presenters. Cyprian does not attempt to carry the banter further but merely puts slight emphasis on his thanks to Judy. His headline provides a rhetorical flourish: "The might of Miandad at the Oval".

Following the commercial break, there are three items in the sports segment; two overseas items and a local one. First up is a story from south Africa about the possibilities of an Australian rebel rugby tour there. A local item from Ashburton about the first day of a national tour of Rugby Union trophies follows. The bulletins ends with the first day of the final cricket test between Pakistan and England.

The news is followed by a campaign report (293 seconds). The items, not coded as part of the news, consists of a lighthearted piece on the McGillicuddy Serious Party and a story about Lange and Bolger providing recordings about the campaign, for the Oral History Archives.

9.9.3.1 The 1987 Bulletin: Summary

Chapter Seven showed 1987 as an aberrant year in some respects. Average bulletin length and story times are long. Coverage of politics is up, but so is coverage and prominence given to crime. The qualitative analysis shows a definite change in style. Items are generally more tightly produced and more complex in terms of presentation. They usually have greater apparent pace, with shorter shot length. But sound bites are still relatively lengthy. In crime coverage in this bulletin we see more emotional and personal coverage. Political coverage shows a greater concentration on personality, and TVNZ taking a stance (expressed in by a certain cynicism). The example also shows producers taking the opportunity for banter. While Neil Billington remains generally serious, Judy Bailey provides a warm contrast, in interactions with the sports presenter. Some of these changes will survive through to 1989 and, indeed, be enhanced. Others, like the strong emphasis on the political, will fade out.

9.9.4 The 1989 Bulletin

The 1989 bulletin opens with the silhouetted figures of Long and Bailey. Judy swings around in her chair, handing something to Richard. The voice-over announces, "The network news at six, with Richard Long and Judy Bailey", while fast-moving theme music runs underneath. As the theme sound is brought up, a silver square flips up, and elements of the world map (starting with New Zealand) appear on screen, along with the words "Network News". Immediately, a framed video clip of the first headline story comes on above the Network News sign. The headlines are read alternately by Richard and Judy:

Palmer rewards youth and retains experience in new cabinet
And crunch time looms for National's leaders
Former patients unite to save a special hospital
And some unholy sporting habits in a London convent.

Each new headline begins just after a strong beat in the music. The map flips back and is dissolved, in a reversal of its creation. The silhouettes of the two presenters emerge and, as the lighting changes and the music reaches an emphatic conclusion, they are seen clearly. Judy leans forward to introduce the first item. The pacey, urgent-seeming opening has taken 36 seconds.

The style has moved to a true dual presentation, with each presenter alternately reading a sentence in the first introduction.

Judy Good evening. There are few surprises in Geoffrey Palmer's new cabinet.

Richard As expected, Roger Douglas is Minister of Police but with Immigration; and David Lange is Attorney General outside Cabinet. [shot change to Judy alone]

Judy Promoted to the front bench are Michael Cullen and Phil Goff and two women have been left to deal with the biggest social problem, unemployment.

This introduction with its "few surprises", "as expected", "biggest social problem" demonstrates that the role of political correspondent, where interpretation can be expected, has now been blurred. The newsreaders now read interpretative and evaluative comments that were before voiced generally only by correspondents.

The report demonstrates new graphics technologies used to give visual appeal and to help audiences follow a longish list of changes and movements in the Cabinet. As each name comes up, a photograph emerges and flips forward, and appropriate graphics appear around the photo to underline key points in the script. The reporter uses sporting metaphor with words like "line-up", rankings, "loses", "the baby of the cabinet". The snappy summary is followed by a brief defensive comment from the Prime Minister about his selection of Roger Douglas, an abortive attempt to talk to Douglas, while he pulls away in a car, and a few words from the new Social Welfare Minister.

This fast-paced report, which provides plenty of interpretative comment, is then followed by a 130 second interview (using studio links between Auckland and Wellington) between Richard Long and Alistair Carthew, in his role as political correspondent. The format consists of simple prompting style questions and short answers from Carthew. TVNZ's political correspondent makes strong interpretative comments, though the tone is generally formal and restrained. He describes the new lineup as "safe and predictable" giving "continuity and stability to the government". He comments that Phil Goff's appointment to the front bench is to give a stronger Auckland presence on the front bench. An even stronger editorial stance can be detected in comments that Mr Douglas may have been "given a serve" and that the appointment of two women to deal with employment and health welfare was "quite inspired".

This story is immediately followed by an item covering events in the National Party, as delegates prepare for "what may be a showdown conference". The story concerns the challenge for the party presidency and the performance of party leader Jim Bolger. There are shots of the conference, a 12 second clip of an opening speech and two short sound bites (six seconds and three seconds), but the bulk of the story consists of reporter voice-over and two pieces to camera. The first one gives the flavour of the report:

The challenge against Mr Young not only reflects an unhappiness with his performance but a more general concern about the leadership of the party. That concern is now so great in some quarters that a couple of MPs are considering throwing in the towel before the election, if Mr Collinge doesn't win on Sunday. They say it's a test of whether National is prepared to make the changes they believe are necessary to win the election.

Altogether, political reporting has moved into a more interpretative mode. Reporters feature prominently, making stronger statements about what is going on in the background and using few sources, which are often heavily veiled.

The political stories are followed by a sharemarket report and then an item on former drug addicts and alcoholics marching "to try and save one of their oldest allies", Queen Mary Hospital, a likely "victim" of hospital spending cuts. While the introduction demonstrates the stronger emotional language being used by television, the report itself, although emphasising the fact that the protestors were former patients, is quiet in tone and relatively slow in pace. Chapter Five explained how the new style was driven from Auckland where the introduction would have been crafted. It may not have reached all reporters, particularly in Christchurch, where the body of the report originated.

Brief footage of the marches in several centres is shown and then a 6 second bite from a "bloody angry alcoholic", addressing the Christchurch crowd. The reporter summarises savings the board needs to make and the costs of the hospital, talks about submissions from around the country and says the future of the hospital will be known in a month. Throughout the report the reporter avoids emotive words. For instance, he talks about the "future" of the hospital rather than the "fate", a favourite word in the later part of the study period. The report is backed by video footage of the hospital in Hanmer, the marches, especially in Christchurch, and of the delivery of a petition.

The next story deals with Auckland schools faced by a surge in Asian immigrants whose children cannot speak English. Because this is by no means an extreme example of the new style, it provides a good platform to look at the positives and negatives.

The item shows the flair of the newer style. Opening with actuality from a teacher and a group of secondary school pupils, it swiftly underlines the point by a brief interview with a student. In 102 seconds the report covers a lot of ground, both visually and in the script. It ably summarises changes in immigration policy and provides facts and figures. However, the reporter makes bold statements that would have been clearly attributed before. For instance, she says teachers "simply can't cope" although the teacher interviewed provides only moderate backing for the statement. While stopping short of describing the situation as a "crisis" the reporter does use the word in her summing up: "teachers hope education authorities will come up with an answer before there's a real crisis."

The two presenters return to the screen (there is no sports presenter). The headlines follow:

A salvage job on the Admiral's cup
And air safety - has it taken a dive?

The second headline is accompanied by a picture of a plane on its back and marks a new departure, puns used in headlines about serious subjects. Both headlines also demonstrate that headlines are now more often "teasers" than a summary of the key news event.

The item on air safety concerns a leaked Ministry of Transport memo, which says that staff shortages are so bad that safety is being compromised. It is a strong story, as there have been several air crashes recently; "a recent bad run". The language is, however, moderate and the reporter's points are backed by the spokesperson of the Aviation Industries Association. The Minister also gets a substantial sound bite in reply.

The bulletin moves easily to a spoken item (37 seconds) covering two landing incidents in the United States. There is then a further spoken item (27 seconds) about a train crash in Northern Mexico, in which over a hundred people were killed and more than

600 injured. These items reveal two characteristics of news coverage. First, is the tendency of the media to dwell on certain associated subjects over short time periods. The landing problems, in which no-one was injured, would not normally make the

American networks, let alone TVNZ, had it not been for recent fatal crashes in both countries. Second, the train crash (a far larger disaster) actually gets less time, illustrating the tendency of news to cover countries and cultures which are proximate and similar. (Galtung & Ruge, 1973, present the classic analysis of news values.)

The accidents are followed by sports. At this stage TVNZ was not using separate sports presenters. During weekdays there was also a smaller amount of sports news. Tonight there are two items. The first covers the poor British performance in the 5th test, and the introduction is written in hyperbolic style.

The bad dream for Britain's cricketers is turning to a full-on nightmare. After losing the Ashes to Australia in the fourth test, they are now facing record humiliation in the fifth.

The report is off the satellite feed from Britain. The second item, looking at possible rule changes in the Admirals Cup which might benefit New Zealand, is contributed by TVNZ's correspondent in Britain, Liam Jeory.

The new bulletin has been structured to flow into the *Holmes* programme. The final item, frequently a human interest story, follows the second ad break. This, in turn, is followed by the high rating weather forecast, which moves into *Holmes* with no ad break. In this case, the headline, read by Richard, promises us the weather and news about "some cue-rious goings-on in cloisters"; he stresses the pun, and the visual shows a close-up of a nun chalking a billiard cue.

After the break, the snooker-playing nuns item is introduced by both presenters. Referring to New Zealand's "Snooker O'Cain" currently winning in Hongkong, Judy says that while snooker players are "religiously devoted to their sport" they have "tough competition from the cloisters". The item is an American one, originating from London.

Its opening emphasises the Benedictine nuns' life of prayer and then shows them at their snooker hour. The nuns are raising funds for the repair of the convent, with a snooker tournament.

The item, is of course, ideal for banter. As it finishes, Judy says "interesting habit". Richard replies, "Ooh, very good. I bet there's no cheating". Even compared with the banter in 1987 this has livened up. Both Judy and Richard move, laugh and smile more, during this exchange. Judy is especially mobile, turning and leaning towards Richard, then leaning back, swivelling in her chair and stretching out one arm as Richard in a smaller, but parallel movement, turns towards the weather forecaster as he introduces him. The whole exchange, giving a marked impression of friendliness and informality, contrasts especially with the deliberately formal and controlled 1985 presentation.

9.9.4.1 The 1989 Bulletin: Summary

In some ways, for instance the lack of crime coverage, this 1989 bulletin is atypical. The bulletin is heavy on political coverage, but this coverage has shown a qualitative change from earlier years. The presentation's increasing use of graphics, shorter shot length, the punchy headlines, up-beat music and warm presenters is typical of the 1989 style, with its accent on the commercial, entertainment approach.

9.9.5 The 1990 Bulletin

The opening of the 1990 bulletin is very similar to 1989's. The voiced introduction, "the network news with Richard Long and Judy Bailey", is left until after the headlines, creating a more urgent opening. The theme starts on a heavy chord. A slightly different and more colourful world map (in warmer tones) is assembled. The video footage with each headline uses a similar frame to the previous year, and theme music chords are used in the same way to emphasise each headline.

The headline language is tight. The first three are in two parts and delivered staccato-fashion, emphasizing their parallel construction. The final headline (a major human

interest story) with its editorialising (though hardly arguable) "brave" is delivered in a warmer, slower tone, with an upbeat at the end.

Iraq closes its borders: Thousands of foreigners are trapped.
The Arabs arrive in Cairo, but delay their crucial summit.
Australian ships head for the Gulf: New Zealand considers its options.
And the little girl plucked from an inferno by a brave firefighter.

The headlines are followed by, "One network news with Richard Long and Judy Bailey", which serves to establish the two presenters at their desk, while the camera moves into mid shot. The set has changed, with a new wooden desk echoing the warmer colours in the world map and contrasting with the predominant blue and silver tones of 1987.

The sample bulletin occurred at the height of tensions leading to the Gulf War and shows the importance TVNZ placed on war coverage. (There was some public reaction against the intensity of coverage, expressed in letters to the editor in major papers and cartoons referring to the war as a TVNZ ratings booster.) Fifty three percent of the newshole and six of the first seven stories cover various aspects of the crisis, now in its 9th day. Even the 7th story keeps to the theme. It is about an Auckland school going ahead, against official advice, with a visit to the Middle East.

The opening sentence of the first item reveals TVNZ now making clearly evaluative statements:

Newsreaders [two-shot; alternate presentation] Every day, in this Gulf crisis, it seems that Saddam Hussein makes one more move to increase the tension and the stakes. Today he acted again, closing the borders of Iraq and Kuwait. In the process, he trapped thousands of foreigners, including New Zealanders, on the wrong side of President Bush's "line in the sand ..."

The introduction continues to background international reaction, and then we move to the TVNZ correspondent in Jordan. His script, delivered over street scenes which support his point, outlines the local view: "Jordanians, along with many in the Gulf, don't want Western troops. They want an Arab solution". He also includes a brief interview with two Australians, who "hitchhiked to the border just as it closed", and a longer piece with the honorary consul in Amman, talking about New Zealanders in the area.

Jeory's report provides a valuable perspective, reminding New Zealanders that Arabs regard the invasion of Iraq and subsequent American reaction differently than Western powers. He can also bring the potential plight of New Zealanders in the Gulf closer to home.

The second story takes a local angle on the effects of Iraq creating virtual hostages by closing its borders. The first part of the story is given verbatim:

Reporter [Pictures of cricket-playing, swimming, etc] They are now prisoners in paradise. Life may never be like this again, for the million or so foreigners drawn to Kuwait's tax-free desert splendour. Forty New Zealanders live in Kuwait. Almost half left to escape the summer heat, just ahead of the Iraqi invaders. [Shot of new complex being built] Twenty one Kiwis workers remain in the annexed desert state. They're believed to be holed up in their homes as [shots of tanks distant and close-up] 120,000 Iraqi troops dig in around them. [still photos with graphic superimposed on flag] Fiona and David McKenzie settled there 18 months ago, in search of high salaries and a taste of the Middle East. But now they face an uncertain future. [Shot of Fiona's parents] Fiona's family back in Auckland are feeling the pressure.

McLean [Close up of Ian McLean, father] Well, my wife's just had to take sick leave. She's been to the doctor today ... (Pause) ... I don't know how long she can go on. [Pause and turn slightly away from camera] I'm not too good myself.

The reporter's opening language frames the way we regard the plight of the McKenzies and others. In words perhaps more usual in the confines of a romantic novel, some women's magazines, or of *Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous*, the hostages are described as "prisoners in paradise", "drawn to Kuwait's tax-free desert splendour" the McKenzies themselves were "in search of high salaries and a taste of the Middle East". This pigeonholing and tired language serves somehow to trivialise the individual human emotion demonstrated by the father, despite the (near-intrusive) close-up and the selection of a strongly emotional part of the interview.

Two overseas perspectives follow. The first is on the Cairo summit. Over pictures of the arrival of the main parties, the American reporter describes the key participants at the conference, outlining diplomatic options. It is a straight report summed up by: "Arab leaders are considering how the solution of one problem might solve another.

If they could get Saddam out of Kuwait, they could get the American military out of their backyard." Note that this reporter is using the term "Saddam", while TVNZ is still using the fuller version of his name.

The second item sums up other diplomatic pressure on the Iraqi leader. This 127 second piece is put together in New Zealand from various satellite feed items. It shows TVNZ using resources to tighten no doubt lengthy reports on each aspect of the situation. The item covers responses from the United Nations, Britain, Israel, France, Italy, the Soviet Union, and latest comments from the Pentagon. Reporter Simon Mercep mentions Iraq's threat to use chemical weapons and Britain's response. He concludes over pictures, presumably from Iraqi television:

The aim of it all: first to make the sanctions and the blockade as watertight as possible. And, perhaps more importantly, to isolate Saddam Hussein and make it difficult for him to convince his fellow Arabs that the military build-up is only an example of the United States ganging up on the Arab world.

The report shows both the advantages and disadvantages of using TVNZ reporters to summarise the situation. It brings us a lot of ably summed information, important if the whole bulletin is not to be swamped by the individual reports. But by the time it reaches the viewer, it is so condensed and homogenised, so divorced from original sources that we have no real knowledge of sources or timing of any of the interviews, press conferences and pictures. In short, we have to take the package on trust.

This item is followed by a report, originating from TVNZ's correspondent in Australia, about plans to send two frigates and a supply ship to the Middle East. The report mixes file footage of the ships with selections from a press conference, at which Prime Minister Hawke reads prepared statements. Reporter Craig McMurtry, in a piece to camera in front of the naval base, sums up more of Hawke's comments. He adds that the size and swiftness of Australia's response had surprised "some observers". This report is in the earlier tradition of the "straight" political story.

The scene is now set to cover New Zealand's response. Newsreader Judy Bailey's wry, slightly tongue-in-cheek introduction reflects the popular attitude to our armed forces and our place in the world:

New Zealand may have written itself out of playing any military role in the crisis. Our Nuclear Free laws may prohibit New Zealand armed forces having anything to do with nuclear capable armies. And, as political correspondent Richard Harmon reports, we may not be wanted anyway.

And Harmon takes up the theme:

Reporter Even the Prime Minister concedes our aging Leander class frigates would be out of their class in any naval blockage of Iraq's ports in the Persian Gulf. [Shot of MP Richard Prebble rising to speak in Parliament] But there's plainly some enthusiasm within the Government for New Zealand to play some role in the Middle Eastern crisis.

Prebble [Voice in Parliament, over shot of Beehive by night] This is a matter of enormous importance to our future as a country, and the New Zealand Government's attitude will be that the Iraqi aggression must be turned back.

Reporter [medium close-up, piece to camera outside parliament] Our 1987 legislation appears to outlaw New Zealand forces operating alongside nuclear forces anywhere. Both the British and American forces so far committed to Saudi Arabia are nuclear capable.

Palmer [close up] The Government has not ruled out any option. I am quite determined that this matter, which is a very serious threat to world peace indeed, will be approached by the New Zealand Government on the basis of a solid, careful, prudent process of decision-making, which will take in to account everything.

Reporter [shot of ship] Mr Palmer says "everything" will include the nuclear free act. So the reality is, that despite Mr Prebble's enthusiasm, any New Zealand troops will be able to participate in the Middle East only in a non-nuclear force.

Harmon's slightly ironic tone clearly distances the report from Richard Prebble and also slightly from the Prime Minister. This is in contrast to the way the Australian response was covered. However, the Prime Minister is given the longest sound bite in the bulletin.

We now move to the decision of an Auckland school to go ahead with a Middle East trip despite the crisis, although in "one concession to official advice", it has cancelled plans to visit Jordan. The item includes a cut of Mike Moore describing the crisis as a "potently explosive international situation". There is file footage of Moore, pictures of students and a brief cut from the Board of Trustees. That so much time and resource was given to this piece, which cannot really sustain the emphasis given it, reflects TVNZ's desire for the "local" angle on the Gulf crisis. This view is confirmed with the announcement that there will be increased late evening and weekend coverage of the crisis.

Then, with a shot change to three presenters, Jeremy Coney announces the sports news will include news of the cricket team to Pakistan. And Richard announces the other headline:

An inferno couldn't stop him: A firefighter re-lives the experience.

This item, which follows the break, was a truly dramatic news story, full of human interest. Along with the excellent photographs, TVNZ uses the newer tactics of the television storytelling craft to wring everything from the story. The introduction reads:

A young girl, who miraculously survived last night's petrol tanker fire in South Auckland, owes her life to a courageous firefighter. Royd Kennedy braved burning wreckage and waves of fiery petrol to rescue the trapped 11-year-old. Pauline Hudson has the story.

Reporter [Shot of man driving up on motor bike] On his Harley, he may look like a hoon, but last night Royd Kennedy was a hero. [Shot of flames from a distance, sound of explosion] He was one of the first firefighters at the scene of the horrific petrol tanker fire at Manukau city. Just when he thought that everyone was safe, he heard a whimper from under the blazing tanker .

Kennedy [Shots of firefighters at work] I heard a little cry, saw a little arm waving out from under the truck, and [shot of Kennedy medium close-up] she was pinned down good and proper by the truck.

The rest of the item moves between scenes of the fire and Kennedy's interview. It concludes with a shot from the night before of Kennedy collapsed in the arms of a fellow firefighter: "On a night that called for heroic action - Royd Kennedy had given his all."

This was perhaps the major human interest story of the year. It was also a story ideal for the modern modes of reporting, personal and emotional, with a strong, naturally vicarious element. For a good week it had detailed coverage and follow-up by all the media. The film coverage is powerful. The channel's camera operators have got close to the scene, capturing essential moments. TVNZ's problem is the extensive play the story has already received from radio and newspapers. The reporter responds by weaving together a story that, while starting from today, captures the events of yesterday in flashback technique. She does, however, use adjectives heavily, in an aim to strengthen the emotional impact, and at times, in such phrases as the "hoon" versus "hero" and "given his all", goes overboard. Cliches, though, are perhaps difficult to avoid in such situations.

Here, TVNZ enters into the celebration of heroism. The news, through the voice of the reporter, asserts the values of the ideal norm (Altheide & Snow, 1991). Edwards (1992), lamenting the loss of neutrality in TV One news, speaks of tactics which reinforce the "populist, commonsensical, obvious - the majority view", a move which he sees as "a dangerous trend in a democracy" (p.24).

After this emotional uplift, the next step is a brief spoken item (with appropriate video, discussed in the section on pace) about the collapse and brief spell in hospital for Attorney General David Lange.

This gives the audience a breather, before an story which would not have been found in a bulletin from the beginning of the study period. It contains the only re-enactment in the sample. The item is about a Lower Hutt woman who was sexually assaulted close to passing traffic. No-one helped her, despite her screams. If the subject had been tackled early in the study period, TVNZ's typical approach would have been to use a police spokesperson to remind people of their duty to help each other. But TVNZ invested considerable resources to create a vicarious experience (Funkhouser and Shaw, 1990) for the watchers. The introduction reads:

A Lower Hutt woman screamed and cried for help as she fought off an attacker last night, but no-one came to her aid. The 19-year old says she's shocked that passing cars just drove on. Elizabeth Raizis reports.

Reporter [Shot of station building, evidently at night. Caption "reenactment" Lower Hutt]. Lower Hutt's Wingate is like any [train approaching] suburban station anywhere. [Shot over shoulder of blond woman looking out as train travels] Polytech student Cheree was heading home [shot of woman's legs as she exits train] at 8.20 Wednesday night. [Rear shot of woman walking, upper part of body] While crossing the rail bridge, she noticed a man behind her. [Car approaches, indistinct figure in trousers approaching, woman's legs in close-up running] She made a run for it, and then he attacked. [Shot of woman's head and shoulders being pressed to ground, sound of frightened heavy breathing, shots of cars passing at night] Traffic was passing by as she fought him off, screaming, kicking and biting him.

Cheree [extreme close up, showing mouth and nose only] I saw cars going past so I carried on screaming. That, I thought, that was what was going to save me, because I didn't think my strength was going to get me through it.

Reporter [shot from behind victim, who has blond hair, talking to reporter] At one stage a man in a white car slowed down to look and then drove off.

Cheree [extreme close-up shot] What annoys me is that he tried it in a very open place and that no-one helped me.

Reporter [Shots from moving train] Elizabeth Raizis, One Network news.

As well as the re-enactment to place us right in the centre of the story, the script uses no sourcing, even where it is reporting the victim's words. It provides an almost pure "storytelling" technique, using a variety of camera techniques to involve us emotionally with the victim's experience. Such a story, with its element of titillation, edges on exploitation.

The next item may well have been given a higher place in bulletins from 1985 or 1987. This is election year, and the story concerns the opposition National Party's social welfare policy. This is described as a "10 million dollar promise" and the platform selected by the reporter for the introduction is the aim to "axe" the domestic purposes benefit for unmarried mothers under 18. This piece, although basically "straight" in approach, again demonstrates some of the new style: brief sound bites, helpful use of graphics and a blending of fact and opinion. For instance, while giving details of the policy, the reporter tells us it is "gentler than expected" and "at times deliberately vague".

The sharemarket report comes next, preceded by two headline length items of economic news, with the total package coming to 20 seconds. Then the shot switches from Judy alone to Richard Long and sports presenter Jeremy. The segment opens with the question and answer format that has become standard in 1990.

Richard Well, let's have a look at sport now. And *Jeremy*, seven changes in the New Zealand cricket team.

Jeremy (over-riding *Richard*) I don't think a real surprise, a real surprise. The selectors were forced, with all those withdrawals.

The shot then concentrates on *Jeremy*, as he turns to look at the camera and moves into the introduction to the first item. The sports section is much smaller than in 1985 and 1987. It opens with a local item on the cricket selection, which follows a standard approach, with spoken information over file footage and a 19 second sound bite from captain Martin Crowe. A graphic gives the full list at the end. This story is followed by two overseas items and a spoken report on the New Zealand league team in Papua New Guinea. This is rounded off by 11 seconds of animated sporting chit chat, a chance for presenters to star, particularly *Jeremy* Coney, a former top-class cricket player.

Richard Well, *Jeremy*, your thoughts on the team for Pakistan.

Jeremy Well, I think the selectors have opted for experience from the ones they had available. Batting; yes, potential. Bowling; a little bit thin. Bad luck, Shane Thompson.

Judy Thanks *Jeremy*. Well *Jim* joins us after the break with the weather. And looking silly, but all in a good cause.

We've travelled a long way emotionally from the bulletin's opening Gulf war crisis and the petrol tanker fire. The scene is now set for the human interest item at the end of the news. Tonight it is Red Nose Day; a report on the phenomenally successful campaign to raise money for cot death research ends the bulletin. The item becomes a celebration and a chance to show the human face of TVNZ and its news team.

However, it is the weather, now fully integrated into the bulletin, which follows the ad break. While today there is no chit chat leading into the weather, *Jim*'s opening words demonstrate the chummy style of the weather format, with its star presenters:

Well, it's been a dull, cloudy old Friday, more like a Monday, really. We had a few showers, some fog and the odd frost, but your favourite town stayed nice and warm.

The weather is one of the main ways of demonstrating broadcasters care and are on your side. It carries an assumption that we all want the same sort of weather, although the needs of the farming community are often alluded to. With a trend towards mentioning events in small towns, the weather is used to project that sense of community spoken of by Campbell's (1992) sources. TV One's promotion had stressed its link with the whole country (in a popular series of promotions which featured a dog travelling the length of New Zealand). In Chapter Five, Graeme Wilson and John Spavin acknowledged the gap in representing smaller communities, once the regional news was dropped. The weather was used to help fill the gap for those smaller towns, who no longer saw themselves on television.

The forecaster is present on screen for much of the forecast. But towards the end, the screen is filled with graphics, representing main centre forecasts. When Jim reappears to present the long range forecast he wears a plastic red nose:

Jim On Sunday we'll have some showers and some sunshine, so you can stick your nose outside.

Judy [shot change to smiling Judy and Richard] I thought you sounded a bit nasal there, Jim. [turns to camera] Well, everyone's wearing them.

Richard It doesn't matter where, just as long as you did.

Judy Here's April Greenlaw.

Reporter [extreme close-up shot of red blinker lights on traffic officer's bike, pull back to shot of Red nosed officer driving off] Red's already a significant colour to the MOT. This is the only day of the year [shots of two officers putting on noses and in MOT car] rosy noses won't automatically lead to breath tests.

Traffic officer [close up with red nose] Normally, we prosecute people who have got red noses.

The report continues, with visuals of a variety of adults, children, animals, vehicles, manikins and so on, wearing red noses in a number of ways. The shots are labelled as coming from Auckland, Hamilton and Wellington, heightening the sense of a national

event. The item is pacey, amusing, and well constructed and demonstrates a caring television station. It's worth remembering that during this part of the study period, the biennial New Zealand Telethon in New Zealand was a extraordinary national television event. It was hugely popular in the ratings, making unprecedented amounts of money in international terms. The on-screen atmosphere is strongly reminiscent of the Telethon "reports" from round the country and its carnival style studio links, which often featured news presenters. TVNZ has been closely associated with Red Nose Day since it started.

The screen returns to a laughing Judy and Richard.

Richard In case you're wondering, we're wearing ours on our ankles

Judy That's true. It's time ..

Richard Her best feature, by the way

Judy Thank you! It's time for Holmes now.

This slight touch of flirtatiousness gives a final lift to the programme, while still ensuring that it remains "family friendly". Judy is established as an attractive, but still modest, role model. Paul Cutler (then executive director of the evening news bulletins describes a masculine/feminine "chemistry" between the two, in both presence and voice (Campbell, 1992). The chemistry is definitely working this evening.

9.9.5.1 The 1990 Bulletin: Summary

The news has come a long way from the sombre, information-heavy and relatively static bulletin of 1985. Individual items have made a distinct shift from a dominant mode of "description" (straight news, constructed in order of importance with the purpose of providing knowledge), to that of "narration" (new journalism, constructed chronologically including the use of flashback techniques with the prime purpose of recreating experience) (Wyatt and Badger, 1993, p.3). Moreover, the bulletin has become more than the sum of its stories. News bulletins throughout the sample have always clearly been constructed to give a width of coverage not actually representative of the

ebb and flow of real events. However, by 1990, the sense of construction, of being led through events that have varying, calculated effects on our emotions, is palpable. Altheide and Snow (1991) describe the American nightly network news this way:

According to news logic, the brevity of reports takes the viewer from one story to the next at a fast pace. The reports are then interspersed with witty comments by anchorpersons, banter back and forth between reporters, some exciting music, colourful sets, and of course, the ubiquitous ads, that may take up as much as one third of a half-hour newscast. This standardisation suggests that a kind of template or format is being followed (p.61).

By 1990, the TVNZ main news bulletin is mimicking this format closely. Edwards (1992) calls One Network News "that nightly soap, that superbly choreographed, roller coaster ride of the emotions" (p.22). The sample bulletin of 1990 has provided a clear example of the "nightly soap".

9.10 Qualitative Analysis: Summary

From 1985 to 1990, there were some fundamental qualitative changes in the news bulletins. While the content analysis in Chapter Seven shows 1987 as markedly different on a number of measures, this qualitative analysis places 1987 as part of a continuum of change which was more or less fully fledged by 1989. The changes can be summed up as an increase in pace, an increase in emotional content and greater crafting of stories and bulletins, all of which add to the entertainment value of the news bulletin.

Bulletins after 1985 were better crafted. New graphics feature and sets were updated. Video footage was closely linked to script and stories, and scripts were "tighter". Chit chat was used to help carry the bulletins through, linking and conveying change of tone. Greater emphasis appears to have been put on story placement. Bulletins in 1985 seem constructed fairly strictly along "inverted pyramid" lines. All important stories were up at the front of the bulletin, which then appeared to wind down, until it reached the sports items or perhaps a late light item. From 1989 onward, while important and dramatic subjects continue to lead the news, care is taken that each segment should have its highlights, carefully promoted by the headlines before the advertising breaks.

The increase in pace was conveyed by more upbeat music at the beginning, the style of the opening graphics and credits, and a greater urgency given to headline reading. There was also a tighter switch from studio to video footage and back. Presenters developed a less deliberate reading style, using more colloquial rhythms (matched by more colloquial language). Shot length decreased in the sample measured, and there was more camera movement and an increase in pictures of moving (rather than still) subjects. Stories and sound bites also became shorter.

The increase in emotional content was achieved in three main ways. Presenters were shown as "real people" through more chit chat and interaction, greater physical movement and appropriate body language cues (such as smiling, leaning towards each other and so on). Second, there was an increase in tabloid news language elements in the headlines and emotional language in the stories. Third, there was an increase in the emotional impact of the stories. This was achieved both in the subjects of stories and in techniques which heighten emotional impact: for instance, concentrating on the personal element, backed by film techniques such as close-up and other techniques which induce vicarious experience.

The qualitative analysis, then, confirms findings in the rest of the thesis, which demonstrate that TVNZ's main news bulletin shifted sharply towards an entertainment format between 1985 and 1990. Chapter Five showed how deregulatory and competitive pressures at the top of the organisation came through to journalists in pressures to change content (explored in the content analysis) and style (explored in this chapter). The following and final chapter pulls the findings together in asking the final research question: How do the philosophies of broadcasting contribute to the changing form of news? This takes us back to the central concerns of the literature review about the role of public service broadcasting and news in society.

CHAPTER TEN: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

10.1 Introduction

The focus of the research has been the influence of deregulation and competitive pressures on the nature of news. Television New Zealand and its main evening news bulletin provided an exceptional case study. Between 1985 and 1990, the organisation changed from a monopoly broadcaster with public service obligations to a State Owned Enterprise charged with commercial objectives in a deregulated market. During that time, the news bulletins made a quantitative and qualitative shift towards a more commercial, entertainment-oriented style, with a clear experimental or transition year in 1987.

As explained in Chapter One, five research questions guided the study:

1. Did the TVNZ early evening news bulletins change significantly during the period 1985-1990?
2. If change has occurred, what is the extent and nature of that change?
3. What is the extent of the changing nature of newsroom practices and philosophies towards news from 1985-1990?
4. How, if at all, deregulatory changes and major management decisions from 1985 to 1990 contributed to changes in the news bulletins?
5. How do the philosophies of broadcasting contribute to the changing form of news?

Chapters Five to Nine explored the nature and extent of the change in the news, and studied alterations in newsroom philosophies and practices, relating these to the political and financial climate, and management decision-making of the time. In doing so, the thesis addressed the first four research questions. The task in this chapter is to consider the significance of the findings and, in doing so, to tackle the final question: How do the philosophies of broadcasting contribute to the changing form of news?

Beginning with a summary of findings, the chapter moves on to explore the major implications of those findings. Advantages and shortcomings of the market-oriented transition are discussed, from the perspective of enhancing the public sphere. This is seen as crucial, in view of a series of commercially-driven changes predicated on *laissez faire* economic policies in both print media and broadcasting over the last decade. The climate of opinion which has accompanied these changes has tended to dampen alternative perspectives, while the changes themselves have encouraged increasing homogeneity and superficiality of media content. A brief survey of the intervening years and a look at the current situation for TVNZ follows. Finally, in the light of theories of public service broadcasting and the role of news, some suggestions are made for the future in New Zealand.

10.2 Limitations

Specific limitations are dealt with as they arise (most particularly in Chapters Five at 5.2.2.1 and 5.2.3.1; Six at 6.12; and Nine at 9.2.6), but some overall points should be made. When using more than one methodology, a researcher has to ensure that breadth and depth are kept in balance. In this study, each methodology posed its own questions of sufficiency.

This was perhaps most difficult with the historical analysis. As Startt and Sloan (1989) say, there is no simple answer to the question: "how much research is enough?" Along with many histories in the communication area, this would have been enhanced by greater use of primary sources (Rubin, Rubin & Piele, 1990). Facts reported in the press articles were checked whenever possible, but this could not always be the case. Interviewees were by their nature partisan, and for most of them the study period was one which still aroused considerable emotion. This made the restricted access to newswriters a deeper concern. The researcher worked to overcome this in a variety of ways (Chapter Five at 5.2.3.1) and during the construction of the narrative was conscious of relying on perspectives from senior white male newswriters from Wellington. However, the wider evidence points to Wellington as the key areas of opposition to the changes in news style and the resulting newsroom story gains clarity

and power from the balancing of their perspective against that of contemporary news executives in Auckland. The recent history of broadcasting remains an area which warrants much further exploration, and such publications as Smith's (1996b) analysis of deregulation are shedding further light on policy development and its results.

All researchers employing content analysis would prefer a bigger sample size, and this is especially true in the study of television news, where there is a shortage of evidence on optimum sample size. While the 21 day constructed week sample across the study years has been the most comprehensive undertaken in New Zealand, a larger sample may have solved problems engendered by the small size of some subject categories. With hindsight, the researcher would have employed a method to count the number of separate sources used in each story. Another gain would be to note the terms used for attribution, to develop a category system for New Zealand television in addition to using those adapted from Burriss. The content analysis was, however, extensive, rigorous and clear, allowing for replication and improvement.

The qualitative analysis, designed to cover areas not suitable for content analysis, presented its own challenges. A huge number of techniques may be employed in qualitative analysis, and the researcher, again faced with pitting breadth against depth, used analysis to clearly pinpoint major changes. The analysis combined rigour and clarity and was extremely comprehensive in the New Zealand context. However, a case can be made for more systematic analysis of the visual aspects of television news. McGregor & Comrie (1995) studied some visual elements in their content analysis and say a typology of visual categories is needed. Developing a content analysis to include a more visual aspect and making some qualitative decisions on such aspects as the presence of the reportorial voice would have immeasurably strengthened the analysis.

Of particular concern in a study of this nature is the personal bias of the researcher. This applies to both the history (in which Startt and Sloan (1989) point out there must of necessity be a personal element) and to the qualitative analysis, which is essentially a personal judgement (Jensen, 1991). As well as bringing to the research the usual biases gained from social and ethnic background, the researcher also brought a background in broadcasting and journalism, a personal knowledge of some interviewees

and events, and a belief in the potential of public service broadcasting. This was a source of deeper understanding of the news process, as required by Ericson *et al.*, but it was also a source of potential bias. McGregor (1996), confronting a similar dilemma, talks of the powerful influence of journalistic socialisation saying, "it may be unrealistic, even impossible, to negate every aspect of journalistic socialisation during research which examines the news" (p.417). Throughout the process, the researcher looked to alternative explanations and, where possible, compared findings with those of other researchers. Ultimately, the coherence of findings from the different methodologies and their harmony with that of a range of writers affords its own endorsement.

10.3 Summary of Findings

Findings of the three aspects of the study have been covered in separate chapters. As each corroborates the other, they are pulled together here in a brief summary, to set the scene for the following discussion.

10.3.1 Findings from the Historical Study

The research charted the shift within TVNZ to an increasingly commercial business outlook. The narrative outlined growing political, financial and competitive pressures, which resulted in TVNZ restructuring along commercial lines, ahead of the development of deregulatory policies for broadcasting. When, in the government's broadcasting restructuring, PSB obligations were lifted from TVNZ, the ground had already been laid for the new commercial imperatives. New management, led by Julian Mounter, was enthusiastic about deregulatory opportunities such as overseas links and commercial expansion. The corporate approach was characterised by aggressive competitive language and a disdain for "public service" approaches, which were depicted as limited and bureaucratic. Mounter was persuasive with the BCNZ board and used the management restructuring to appoint those of like mind. TVNZ won significant battles in the lead-up to the division of the BCNZ, placing it in a strong competitive position. Successful development strategies, programming and sales tactics, combined with the financial weakness of its private competitor, enabled TVNZ to gain and retain the majority of the ratings and return excellent profits into the 1990s.

In news, uncertainty about the top management position meant a two-year hiatus in decision-making, while three main philosophies of news co-existed uneasily. By late 1987, news management was in the hands of those geared to a more populist, televisual view of news, whose power base was in head office in Auckland. Those who supported a change to a BBC style of public service news, with an emphasis on both professional presentation values and studio news analysis, seemed to lose heart early. The major group opposed to the changes were more entrenched. Largely older males recruited from radio and based in Wellington or, in some cases, provincial stations, they wanted an indigenous approach and emphasised political coverage. They fought battles over content, but were eventually marginalised as old fashioned and incompetent.

As control of news became more centralised in Auckland, directives on the content of the national news became clearer, and journalists had less autonomy. The new format was heavily influenced by experts in American local television and training was provided in the new style. An emphasis on Auckland coverage, the dismantling of regional news and consequent layoffs allowed TVNZ to lose many of those who could not, or would not, make the change. By late 1990, a reduced number of journalists was working on the new shorter bulletin format, which remained largely unchanged for the next five years.

10.3.2 Findings from the Content Analysis

The stories of newswriters about pressures from executives to produce tighter, livelier stories with a "people focus" were reflected in the results of the content analysis. A series of findings represented a move towards a commercial approach to news, with reduced serious informational content and greater pace. The size of newshole decreased significantly in 1989 and, to a lesser extent, in 1990. This was due chiefly to the format change in April 1989, but also was a consequence of increased advertising. There was a steady reduction in longer stories over the study years, and average story length decreased in 1990. Sound bites halved in length between 1985 and 1990.

The shift to entertainment was also apparent in subject matter. Political subjects became less important from 1989, and subjects in a tabloid grouping increased. There was a transition year in 1987 where there was not only an increase in stories about politics

and economics, but also the largest amount of crime coverage of the four sample years. However, sports, a key component of New Zealand culture, was always the biggest subject category, if anything showing (despite public perceptions to the contrary) a tendency to decrease between 1985 and 1990. In all years, there was little coverage of science, education, Maori issues and cultural subjects.

The number of headlines in the news bulletin increased across the study years, and this reflected the shift towards tabloid subject matter.

Overseas news stories made up about a third of the news bulletin, a figure which remained steady across the years. Locally, stories from Auckland and Wellington dominated the bulletin (totalling about 45%), with the percentage of stories from Auckland increasing later in the study period. The South Island and North Island provincial areas received little coverage. This absence of coverage from much of New Zealand was exacerbated when regional news programmes were dropped.

Reflecting findings overseas, most news sources were official or elite. However, there was an increase in diversity of sources during the study period, mainly due to an increase in victim sources, but also to a greater use of ordinary citizens as news sources. This was in line with newswriters' reports of the drive in the newsroom to make news more relevant to ordinary people. There was also tendency to reduce the number of cited sources, which, combined with the shorter sound bites, indicated a reduction in the voice of news sources in the later part of the study period. This reflected a change in the way journalists told news stories, as demonstrated in the qualitative analysis.

10.3.3 Findings from the Qualitative Analysis of News

The qualitative analysis strongly reinforced the quantitative findings of the content analysis, confirming a growing emphasis on entertainment aspects of the news bulletin between 1985 and 1990. The qualitative study also found, as did the content analysis, that 1987 stood out as a year where a number of different approaches were being tried. This corroborates findings in the historical narrative that a direction for news had not been firmly set and that commercial approaches were being mingled with a serious

British-style, in-depth approach. But, by 1989, the shift towards infotainment was firmly established and showing up in a number of ways.

A series of techniques were adopted, giving the bulletins greater pace; according to Altheide and Snow (1991), a key ingredient of entertainment. This was achieved by such means as shorter shot lengths, new theme music, greater camera movement, an increase in movement on film, a faster switch from studio to video footage and a more varied reading pace.

Earlier bulletins used language, film and presentation techniques which underlined the facticity of the news (Tuchman, 1978). From 1987 there were some changes in style, but a major shift had occurred by 1989, especially when the news hour was revamped. There was more emotional content in news subject matter, presenter chit chat, tabloid language elements in headlines and more emotive language in stories. This was underscored by a growing use of narrative and camera techniques designed to induce vicarious experience in the audience, rather than to simply impart information.

Along with this went a concentration on presentation and production values. Bulletins were crafted with greater care, with growing uniformity of story lengths. Chit chat and story placement were used to unify the bulletin, and direct emotional tone. An emphasis on more professional presentation began in 1987, in response to chief executive Julian Mounter's concerns. But it was the appointment of news executives Shaun Brown and Paul Cutler, who practised a strong centralised control, combined with the advice of American regional news experts, which gave us the highly polished, frequently uniform bulletins from 1989 onward, where style seems increasingly to win out over content.

10.4 Major Implications of the Findings

The shift of television in New Zealand from full state ownership to open market competition has been remarkable in both its extent and speed (Farnsworth, 1992). The change brought the tensions between the two major models of broadcasting and of

journalism into sharp relief. It also enables us to see clearly some of the losses and gains in this latest restructuring of broadcasting. The experiences of 1985 to 1990 and the repercussions which have gradually become more apparent may guide us towards making decisions on how to achieve a better public service television system and related news service in this country.

The structure set up by Government legislation has resulted, as its supporters claim, in a greater variety of television and radio outlets (Ministry of Commerce, 1993). Yeabsley, Duncan and James (1994) speak of the "vast expansion" in the availability of programmes, of "flexibility in response to change" and of public effort now being "focused on identified social ends" (p.15). While there has been an apparent increase in local production, a closer analysis reveals this is open to question. Leaving aside questions of what is local and of quality (see Chapter Three at 3.6.8), New Zealand on Air points out that, over the last eight years, the increase in hours of transmission means that the proportion of New Zealand to overseas programming has begun to diminish. Moreover, prime time figures reveal a decrease across all three channels for 1995. For TVNZ the drop has been for the last two years, and while prime time local content is considerably up from 1988, the last year of BCNZ (14.6% for TV One and 5.5% for Channel 2), the 1995 figures are very little above the 1989 figures (NZOA, 1996).

What has been achieved since deregulation is what Entman & Wildman (1992) identify as "product diversity". They say market oriented analysts believe product diversity will accomplish idea diversity. However, the evidence leads to the conclusion that an increase in commercial or commercially driven broadcasting does not produce this type of diversity. Blumler, Brynin and Nossiter (1986) found private broadcasters had a narrower range of programmes than public service broadcasters, and Cocker's (1994a) findings point to a decrease in idea diversity since deregulation. Bell (1995) is concerned about local programming which merely reinforces the "centre" of the culture. The likelihood of this type of programming resulting from current funding provisions is increased by requirements in Section 39 of the Broadcasting Act, which effectively give preference to licence funding applicants who have additional sources of funding and which require NZOA to have regard to the potential size of the audience.

The conclusion is that current structures do not provide the conditions for production or broadcast of "quality" programmes (including, most centrally, the news) which reflect diversity, or which provide information to empower us as citizens (Tracey, 1992).

At the root of the problem is the funding method. Yeabsley, Duncan and James (1994), in their analysis of New Zealand Broadcasting, mentioned the linkage that critics make between commercialism and lack of quality. They say:

Commercialism is an inevitable consequence of a funding model which depends basically on advertising. Criticism must be couched in terms of comparison to the preferred funding model (p.15).

Public service obligations have been left to the province of New Zealand on Air. As we have seen, Broadcasting Act provisions encourage funding of a more commercial product. Furthermore, as Farnsworth (1990) argues, NZOA is dependent on commercial companies to screen programmes where "all new materials are subject to the programmes and scheduling criteria - the commercial logic - of commercial television" (p.22).

Mulgan (1991) says the NZOA funding system, aimed at particular programmes, is not designed for news. The Commission did fund a Maori news service (as part of its function to promote Maori culture), before this task was taken over by Te Mangai Paho. But it refused funding to North Island regional news in 1990 and stopped supporting South Island programmes after a year. It seems remote, under current circumstances, that any support would be forthcoming for national news. This leaves the service at the core of PSB (Gregory, 1985) with no funding buffer which would free it to put aside commercial considerations.

To a large extent, TVNZ is trapped by its legislative requirement for profit-making. The network news, with its history of large (generally more affluent) audiences and its position as opening drawcard for prime time on Television One, provides TVNZ with high costs and big benefits. Any tampering which will increase costs and perhaps reduce audiences would be a foolish move for a commercial organisation. So the commercial forces propelling television towards high-rating programmes (Collins, Garnham & Locksley, 1988) apply perhaps most strongly in news.

10.4.1 Gains and Losses in the Newer News Style

A whole raft of New Zealand writers (Allan 1990; Atkinson 1994a, 1994b, 1994c; Campbell, 1989, 1992; Edwards, 1992 and others) have condemned trends in television news. On the other hand, those close to and within television (cited in Campbell, 1989; Norris 1992; Spavin 1994; Wilson, 1993; and cited in Winter, 1994) defend the new style, saying it provides information that is at once appealing and clear; that it both reaches out to "ordinary people" and covers the important issues.

Hallin (1992a), from the US perspective, says no-one would want to go back to the late sixties and early seventies in terms of many news presentation techniques. Watching the 1985 news from today's perspective confirms that turning back the clock even ten years is not really a choice. The deliberate reading pace, the slow transfer from studio to video, the static presentation, the long, sometimes confusing, summaries of issues and developments with no graphic or visual support are hard to digest. Almost all interviewees believed the earlier news programmes had a tendency to drabness and were uneven in terms of presentation. They approved the smarter look, the increase in visuals and the use of graphics described in Chapter Nine.

An even more vital gain during the study period is the strong feeling conveyed by reporters that TVNZ news and current affairs became less frightened politically and more confident in commenting and questioning. Some of the stories analysed in the previous chapter confirm Atkinson's (1994b) judgement that TVNZ has become "markedly less subservient" (p.157). Chapter Seven also demonstrates that TVNZ successfully cast its news net wider in 1989 and 1990, using a wider variety of sources.

But, almost as the flip side of the coin, each of these gains is matched by a shortcoming. Tightness becomes a dedication to pace, where there is no room to explore an issue. The greater understanding of technique and ability to exploit the visual aspects of television results in placing filmic values before substance. The desire to improve presentation and increase professionalism can lead to over-standardised formats and to bulletin structure gaining the upper hand. We move away from preoccupation with government sources to the titillation of victim and eyewitness sound bites, with the

occasional vox pop. Commentary and questioning, when combined with the commercial propensity for star performers, can lead to what Taylor (1993) calls the standup syndrome, a form of reportorial grandstanding.

The result is that while viewers as consumers may be served, viewers as citizens are short changed. For the viewer-citizen, the 1990 news offered less: a reduction in quantity, a decrease in coverage of substantive issues, shorter sound bites, and less citation of news sources. The presentation and production values result in a product that is simplistic and heavily mediated.

Most alarming has been the consequence of changes in writing the news. The language, tone and narrative and film techniques which increase vicarious experience guide our response. In Roeh & Cohen's (1992) terms, news stories have moved from the "open" factual and neutral approach called for in objective journalism to the "closed" (timeless, poetic, mythological, loaded and stylised). This increasing "closure" directs the viewer in interpretation and thus effectively stifles debate. If we use Wyatt & Badger's (1993) typology, we can see more stories are moving from the descriptive to the narrative mode, and their functions are changing from providing information to recreating experience. The result of this is that news has less explanatory power.

As a corollary to this shift in news to narration, emotion and drama, comes a concentration on the personal. This is clearly shown in the changing style and subject matter in political, crime and public moral problem stories. But the focus on individual citizens as victims creates a danger for democracy, according to Hart (1996). In the world of "cameo politics" (p.116) he says:

The viewer is rarely asked to think large thoughts - case transcendent thoughts - but is focused instead on real people situated in real time. Because television is an entertainment medium, it assumes that dramatic force comes from identification, from the ability to see in others what we half-see in ourselves" (p.114).

In this world, he says, political parties become something of an afterthought, and "television's rugged individualism obscures the inevitable continuities that guide political decision making" (p.116), distracting viewers from common problems and

public possibilities. Basing his argument on a number of studies, he says that dramatised stories, rather than drawing people into the public sphere, reassure them that another sentry is on duty. The tumult on the screen, he believes, creates a sense of activity, rather than genuine civic involvement.

There is a temptation to accept a certain inevitability to the shift in the news and news values. However, that such dramatic changes in our structures of, and commitment, to public service broadcasting and its related journalistic function occurred in New Zealand with so little debate is an indictment of the limited scrutiny and questioning of our media. Just as key political and management figures came under the sway of a deterministic technological model, so it appears that those who directed the change in news were equally sure it was the only possible alternative in the newly competitive open market.

Alexander (1992) notes the exposure local journalists had to the commercial style in the satellite feed, particularly from the United States. The transition to infotainment on network news in America was preceded by the more extreme example of local news programmes in their competition for audience (Hallin, 1992a). The network news shift followed, as competition heated up and audience levels dropped in the 1980s, and now the commercial success of tabloid news shows (like *A Current Affair* and *Hard Copy*) aping the genre are pushing networks further into the entertainment mould (Finn, 1993).

There has, of course, long been tension between the dual roles of journalism; between, as Williams (1957) puts it, news as "a weapon of freedom" (p.5) and as "a medium for satisfying the common human appetite for gossip" (p.6). The pull towards the entertainment function is perhaps strongest in television news with, its visual imperatives and vast undifferentiated audience. Altheide and Snow (1991) claim television's nature means it aims for simplicity and an entertainment perspective. Journalism, they say has given way to information mechanics.

With some exceptions it is no longer the individual creative work of journalists who give us "news of the world," but rather, standard templates, routines and typical courses of action *dedicated to on the air performance and dominant visuals and thematic emphases* that prevails (p.52).

Atkinson (1994b) and Prince (1992) believe TVNZ news has gone further along the entertainment route than national broadcasters in the USA and Britain. This research is a start, and further systematic comparative studies should be undertaken.

However, television is only one of the news media, all of which have felt increasing competition. Newspapers are fighting a battle to retain advertising and readers. There is some evidence (McGregor, 1993) that the New Zealand press has become increasingly tabloid in its coverage of crime. Women's magazines, in the hands of international conglomerates, are dominated by coverage of the sexual scandals and lifestyles of celebrities and characterised by increasing homogeneity of content.

Writers such as Gordon (1995) and Bernstein (1992) note that the shift to entertainment values and sensationalism, while strongest in television, also covers the press in the United States. Gordon says journalists are being pressured to behave in "anti-professional" ways:

they are expected to produce stories that, because of insufficient time or resources, fail to meet the norms of the profession, including such basics as double-sourcing key facts. They are pushed to personalize and sensationalize. They say they resent being expected to insert "edge" or "attitude" into stories, especially when it seems to be nothing more than a cheap shot. They don't like having to hype violence or dumb down their discussions of important policy issues such as health care reform. And they tire of the formulaic approaches to topics they feel deserve innovative, creative treatment (pp.152-153).

New Zealand newspapers, by comparison, fulfil a more sober journalistic function, although, as Morrison (1996) concludes, "the bottom line is that private sector news media organisations are captive to their shareholders' requirements" (p.41). Such commentary carries greater weight, when we note that one of New Zealand's two major newspaper chains has for some time been in the hands of Robert Murdoch's NewsCorp, and Irish tycoon Tony O'Reilly has in the last 18 months made increasing inroads into the other newspaper chain as well as buying into the newly-privatised Radio New Zealand stations.

So, the concern about news has centred on TVNZ and its early evening bulletin for several reasons. As TVNZ's publicity machine constantly tells us, the majority of people turn to television for their news, and One Network News garners a high percentage of the audience. There is no daily national paper and only one metropolitan evening paper. The news broadcast on private rival TV3 is perceived as less distorted by infotainment, although some findings (McGregor & Comrie, 1995) bring this view into question. But perhaps most importantly, TVNZ is publicly owned. While the government has charged it with commercial objectives, the expectation remains that public service broadcasting is the province of publicly owned broadcasters.

While a few are speaking up, no brake has been applied in the commercialism process linked to the dominant and prevailing *laissez faire* economic tide, because none has been consistently called for. Criticism has been sporadic. Academics are dismissed as ignorant about professional constraints and televisual values (Norris, 1992) and ad hoc criticism by MPs can be rejected as politically motivated. But broadcasters may not be immune from the rising tide of self doubt in literature from America and the turn towards re-regulation in Europe.

Chapter Five of this study shows that while there were pressures, New Zealand broadcasting was not swept along by irresistible forces. The changes which took place were the result of a number of choices. Farnsworth (1992) calls the legislative changes of 1988 to 1991 just the latest in a long series of adjustments to solve continuing problems of the high cost of production, limited local capital, and a small, scattered population in a mountainous country with strong regional interests. He concludes:

The prevailing options, various as they may be, merely rework the same sets of problems into different shapes (p. 206).

After eight years of opportunity to assess results of the policies, it is time to look at new options for TVNZ. But first, the following section briefly reviews significant developments since the end of the study period.

10.5 From 1990 to the Present

The 1985-1990 period has been the most significant in terms of change, with most events from that time until the present being in the nature of consolidation. Since the amendment to the Broadcasting Act in early 1991, lifting all restrictions on foreign ownership and allowing the subsequent purchase of TV3 by CanWest, there has been little development on the political policy front for television. From time to time, the Broadcasting Minister has reiterated the Government's intention to sell off Channel Two when the financial conditions are right. This threat, combined with the Government's commitment to ensure the survival of TV3, probably contributed to TVNZ's decision to tone down the war with its private competitor in 1992. The National Government has, however, shown little political will to conduct the sell-off.

In the meantime, the number of television channels has grown and now consists of: TV One, Channel 2, TV3, Sky pay TV, a TAB sports channel, TVNZ owned regional channels in the four main centres and Hamilton, some local outlets in tourist destinations, a growing number of music video stations, and a growth in cable television. CanWest has recently announced it will soon set up a TV4 network. Cable is set to expand markedly in the next two years and the expansion of alternative channels is likely to gradually eat into the networks' audience figures.

An ever-increasing proportion of TVNZ's profits have been paid to the Government in the form of a dividend. In 1991, it returned a \$11.3 million dividend, 35 percent of net profit; in 1995, it was \$30.2 million, 70 percent of profits (TVNZ, 1992, 1996). Furthermore, in June 1996 the company handed over an extra \$20 million to government coffers, following a specific request from the Minister of Finance and the SOE Minister (Smith, 1996a). Hill (1996) describes TVNZ's 1995 annual results as "somewhat lethargic" (p.27), a fair judgement if seen in the light of TV3's 10 percent increase in revenue. TVNZ's audience figures also softened last year (TV One down 48,000 and TV2 down 28,000), with much of the two percent loss going to Sky TV. However, TVNZ retains a 78% market share.

TVNZ restructured in 1995, moving from the strategic business unit design developed in 1989 to three divisions: television, production and distribution/services. The change was accompanied by staff cuts and a more recent controversial shedding of top programme and production staff (Smith, 1996a). Smith describes the network as "intent on pursuing the bottom line as never before" (p.31). TV3 is part of a large buying conglomerate and has outbid TVNZ for key programmes. As part of its general belt tightening, TVNZ is cutting back on the amount spent on overseas programming. The rhetoric of an Asia-Pacific telecommunications company in the early 1990s has been replaced by a promise to concentrate on core business in New Zealand and Australia. Adding to the pressure on TVNZ is the cost of some its operations. Smith reports a reputed \$6 to \$7 million dollar loss from Horizon Pacific's regional stations last year and an estimated \$4 million loss for 1996.

Meanwhile, the organisation's major programme, the network news, retained its 1989 programme format (including the same newsreading duo) until 1995. Other research (Atkinson, 1994b; McGregor & Comrie, 1995) indicates the entertainment focus in subject matter and story treatment remained dominant throughout this time.

In early 1995, the news programme was extended to a commercial hour, resulting in a newshole of about 44 minutes, and the *Holmes* show shifted to 7 pm. Until then, TVNZ had identified the show as part of the news hour, at one stage calling Holmes's approach "Reithian" (Norris, 1992). Research is needed on the restructured bulletin, but informal observations indicate that while opportunity has been made for light regional items, there are few substantive changes in content balance and narrative forms, and that the infotainment thrust is still strong. However, the decision to run an hour-long bulletin, once deemed to be impractical and not appropriate for audiences, shows that TVNZ can adapt to a variety of pressures. Indeed, Smith (1996b) says that the shift to the one-hour bulletin, was prompted by the perceived competition from TV3's hour-long bulletin, which was gaining in popularity and in some key demographics in Auckland actually level pegging. The new, longer bulletin has continued to pull in audiences and could provide a good platform for moving forward and improving television journalism.

10.6 Some Suggestions for Reform

Numerous proposals have emerged over the last few years, as a variety of discontents have been voiced from among television professionals, public interest groups, television critics, academic analysts and just plain "Fed-up of Fendalton". In the run-up to the 1996 general election, the serious contenders among the political parties have canvassed opinion among key influentials and essayed a few responses to their and to wider audience concerns.

Any proposal directed towards the reconstruction of the public sphere in the national television service must address two issues: the sources of funding, on the one hand, and the philosophies and practices that drive the broadcaster and the newsworker, on the other. Plainly, and as this thesis has demonstrated, the two are intertwined.

In the wholly commercialised enterprise created by the translation of TVNZ into an SOE, the National News at the gateway to prime time is necessarily constructed to increase and retain audience in order to maximise revenue. This news formula privileges the audience as consumer over the audience as citizenry at a time, when, with the introduction of the MMP electoral system, we need a truly informative news service. However, changes to format and news philosophy will be seen as potentially undermining the commercial goals of the organisation. Any proposal which seeks to reform news must therefore address its "delivery system", the structure within which it operates. The recommendations for broadcasting reform should also acknowledge that whilst news is crucial, it contributes only part of the discourse necessary in a service oriented to the audience-as-citizen. Adopting this philosophy would therefore also entail re-thinking notions of current affairs and cultural programming.

It has been seen that TVNZ can adapt to a variety of pressures. Financial arrangements specifically tailored to serve a citizen audience are not impossible to develop. Such a dual approach underscores that of Palmer (1992). He says that because of the media's important constitutional function, media degradation will have an adverse effect on the political system, with poor performance by journalists reinforcing poor performance by politicians. Palmer sees reform starting through education and the imposition of clear

standards, for instance, the separation of separating fact and opinion. But he acknowledges such changes would be insufficient without an appropriate system of public broadcasting in New Zealand:

The capacity must exist for in-depth analysis on subjects which may be obscure and lack ratings appeal. The gathering of news itself may require encouragement and subsidies, certainly public affairs analysis will (p.226).

The argument for reform, then, begins with the premise that democracy needs an informed and engaged citizenry. Television, as the major source of news and information for the bulk of citizens, has a key role to play in democracies. This information role, however, runs counter to the commercial restraints faced by TVNZ, with its government-imposed role of profit maximisation. Its content and structure cannot be left to market forces alone to determine, not only because television will move entirely to the role of entertainer and marketplace, but because the expansion of commercial corporations into the previously regulated broadcasting sphere is actually damaging to the public interest. Campbell (1994) argues that these corporations are using their position to manufacture a public sphere where any view which is contrary to economic imperatives within the market is not publicised. This is not to argue a conspiracy, but rather to point out that audience-maximising strategies, of necessity, exclude alternative value-sets, cluster around the safe and, mostly, preclude the unfamiliar.

In New Zealand, the state has created a property right in the spectrum. In this sense, in leasing the spectrum, the state is acting as landlord and the broadcaster as tenant. Just as landlords require bonds for good behaviour and can regulate what tenants use the property for, so too can the state, as landlord or trustee of the spectrum, regulate or monitor broadcasters' performance.

If this is so, a number of alternatives present themselves. First, with the limited funds available in New Zealand, it is important to concentrate key aspects of PSB spending. A logical solution gaining increasing support is to make one of TVNZ's channels a public service channel, with the clear choice being TV One, already positioned as the "information channel".

Currently, the audience demographics enable TVNZ to sustain One on the basis of the ageing affluent and a corporate responsibility rationale. In truth, however, and in the context of a near future with multiple channel cable access, this audience represents a declining asset. TVNZ is likely to find itself in head-on competition with pay channels in the affluent section of its market. Any proposed mix of financial supports and performance criteria must, accordingly, pay attention to the threats and opportunities facing the public broadcaster. Such a "mix" needs to be future oriented, and to provide both flexibility and a guarantee of continuing supports.

Concentrating the public service approach, or public sphere, on one channel will, in Cameron's words, "provide a continuity of transmission" of PSB material, which in turn should build public loyalty and support. A major disadvantage of such a move is that it may place public service commitments in a ghetto channel with a gradually diminishing audience. The channel should not be allowed to degenerate to the condition Tracey (1992) ascribes to public broadcasting in the United States and would need to assure a universality of appeal. British PSB and the example of Channel Four in its heyday provide a more useful model. It is one, however, which must involve a brave and consistent approach to commissioning and courage in programming.

The public service channel route implies decommercialising TV One as much as possible; reducing its dependence on advertising and providing alternative methods of financing.

One solution, promoted by Edwards (1992) and Morrison (1996), is to sell off Channel 2 to finance Television One. It is an idea which has reducing support from political parties, with National, once in favour of such a move, saying it currently has no plans to sell any part of TVNZ. Selling Channel 2 would endanger a diverse and strong indigenous television system in New Zealand and would increase the likelihood of a public service programming ghetto. Not only would the channel, once sold, be lost for ever, the recent example of the sell-off of Radio New Zealand's commercial stations leads to very realistic fears it will go straight into overseas hands. Two channel state owned television gives an opportunity for complementary programming which could

fulfil a wider variety of public service needs. Retaining Channel 2 would also give TVNZ an inbuilt commercial funding source, relatively secure from political whim in the form of legislative tinkering.

But the current income of TVNZ is insufficient to decommercialise TV One and fund programming required to fulfil public service commitments. Returning the dividend currently paid to the Government (\$50.2 million dollars in 1995) to TVNZ would be a substantial start.

However, with income probably falling and costs of making true public service television rising, further measures need to be taken. While governments have shown themselves historically reluctant to raise the licence fee, a higher and inflation-indexed fee makes clear sense and could well not precipitate the backlash so feared by politicians, if it means a channel with minimal advertising. However, it may be even harder to secure a sufficient fee increase under MMP.

The Labour Party favours some funding out of general taxation, as is done in Australia. However, the experience of the ABC shows how vulnerable public service broadcasting is when funded so directly by Government. It is very easy for a broadcaster to lose both perceived and real independence in these circumstances. This remains, though, a good option for setting up community and ethnic broadcasters, perhaps within the cable system.

Labour's other suggestion, of a levy on private broadcasters, is worth exploring. The levy on advertising by independent broadcasters to support Channel Four worked well in Britain. Labour (1996) points out that companies are taking advantage of New Zealand's deregulated market: "In return, for almost unrestricted access, Labour believes they should make a small contribution towards maintaining our public broadcasting system" (p.4).

Returning TVNZ's dividend and combining an inflation-indexed broadcasting fee with a levy on private broadcasters should provide sufficient money both to give us public service television and to strengthen faltering public radio. Specific government grants

could cover increasing geographical coverage and the development of community and ethnic broadcasting. Thus public service broadcasting would cover the whole spectrum.

Restructuring TVNZ as a public service broadcaster would require an act of parliament, along similar lines to the Radio New Zealand Act (1995). This would set out basic philosophies and guidelines for each of the channels, including a Charter for PSB functions comparable to that in Section 7 of the Radio New Zealand Act.

In this model, Television One would be tasked with providing comprehensive, independent and impartial news and current affairs programmes. The channel would need to promote Maori language and culture. Programmes for children, key minorities and a number of innovative dramas, documentaries and educational programmes in prime time or appropriate viewing spots would also be expected. Because of its public sphere function, Television One should not be allowed to become a ghetto for the elite (Tracey, 1992). The Radio New Zealand Act acknowledges this need, saying that public radio should "provide a balance between programmes of wide appeal and programmes of interest to minority audiences" (S.7(2)(b)). However, a broadly appealing public service channel should not be impossible in New Zealand, where there is a strong appetite for news, current affairs and programmes which reflect aspects of indigenous culture.

The question of the appropriate vehicle for allocating broadcasting funds also needs to be considered. Is NZOA the right choice? A major aim behind the commissioning model chosen in New Zealand was to support independent producers, with the hoped for result of developing and strengthening a creative local television industry. However, NZOA's role has been largely reactive, and programming and funding has been piecemeal. A case could be made for TVNZ to handle the funds directly, within parameters that would ensure it develops a symbiotic relationship with a range of independent production houses. However, it seems unlikely this would occur in the present ideological climate.

While the political reality may mean licence fee and levy money would continue to be disbursed by New Zealand on Air, revamping the PSB system would require revamping

the commission, to give it a more focused and coherent philosophy. While the bulk of money for PSB television would be directed to TV One, Channel 2 and TV3 (or their private independent providers) could still compete for some licence funding for highly popular local shows, such as comedies or soap operas. However, there would be an important additional role for New Zealand on Air in the funding of PSB television news.

Considerably more money and staff would be needed to increase regional coverage, for instance, or to provide research back up for a service capable of dealing with the complexities of MMP policy making. This could well be done by a "top-up" provision from New Zealand on Air. An amendment to the Broadcasting Act would add to Section 36(a) a third clause, following on from promoting programmes about New Zealand and Maori language and culture. Section 36(a)iii would cover promoting a news service to provide comprehensive, accurate, objective and impartial news and analysis of issues which affect the wider population of New Zealand. Section 37 would also be amended, to add in funding to promote news programmes.

Assumptions about funding PSB news on a semi-commercial channel need to take in the probability of reduced ratings and therefore advertising potential. However, the network news could well undergo change without taking a dive in the ratings. Former NZOA executive director Ruth Harley (1994) believes the gradual softening of audience figures over several years indicates a dissatisfaction with the tabloid subject matter of the current bulletins. If this is true, currently dissatisfied viewers may return to TVNZ news. As well, there is a strong loyalty factor to TV One news, which has seen it carry the majority of its audience through a variety of changes, including a return to a commercial hour of national news. Much of the audience may remain loyal through the change to a more sober, reflective news programme.

In terms of content, TVNZ news executives need to both return to some of the traditional credos of journalism and also to explore some new ways of fulfilling their democratic function. Smith (1996b) says the best news gathering happens not because of big budgets but because of a strongly held belief in traditional reporting values:

These include legwork - reporters covering rounds and becoming as expert in them as possible; a determination to break stories, not to follow them; an attitude of informed scepticism and challenge, not world-weary cynicism (p.149).

McGregor & Comrie (1995), in drawing attention to increasingly vague sourcing and the blending of fact and opinion in TVNZ news find the trend alarming for the credibility of news. A re-emphasis on the distinction between fact and opinion, could, they suggest, be helped by amendments to the codes of broadcasting practice.

There is also a case for re-thinking current news formats. Suggestions by Bennett (1993), Davies (1989) and Patterson (1993) are worth debate. How do we go about providing context for the isolated incidents of reportage? What visual and other techniques can be brought to enliven the presentation of concepts, policy debates, issues and information, without trivialising them? How much more time do we need to give to serious issues, key newsmakers' views and significant events right around the country? Should news accept a mandate to make politics go well (Rosen, 1992), balance the negative with a positive frame of reference (McGregor, 1996), or use techniques to sustain coverage and stimulate debate in important stories (Bennett, 1993)?

Reforming the news would be only one step. News needs to be backed by informative and stimulating current affairs programmes, produced within the context of a financially viable and broadly appealing public service channel. These current affairs programmes may, perhaps, be the venue for the more experimental approach to news, sometimes called "public" journalism, espoused by Rosen (1992) and others. Rosen's public journalism is a far cry from the sterility of traditional explanatory current affairs, with its formulaic balances. It recognises that journalism's integral role in public life imposes an obligation on journalists to actively help citizen's arrive at *their* answers (Merritt, 1996). The techniques of public journalism (still at the experimental stage and largely restricted to print media) are designed to help citizens re-engage in public life. Merritt says they also force journalists to question their reflexes that overvalue conflict, frame issues at the extremes, imagine the readers or viewers as audience rather than participants, and insist that journalistic credibility arises from detachment. Such journalism could rejuvenate the traditional model of current affairs and is the proper answer to the pseudo investigative and voyeuristic excesses of tabloid current affairs like *Hard Copy*.

10.7 Conclusion

The suggestions above are only a platform for a discussion of the possibilities. The researcher concedes Entman and Wildman's (1992) point, that many public service supporters have an unrealistic expectation of the audience. However, the intention is not to produce an unrelieved menu of items of high seriousness, as this would defeat the very purpose of PSB today. Furthermore, in our haste to adopt what Graber (1979) called the hierarchy of audience preferences, we may in fact have under-estimated viewers. TVNZ management (Wilson, 1993) are aware of the audience's appetite for news and current affairs, and further confirmation of the nation's ability to cope with serious dialogue is provided by figures for public radio audiences, which are high by international standards.

People continue to confound the pundits. While it was argued that the audience could not absorb more than short snippets on television, CNN and other cable channels have shown that people tune in to long speeches and congressional hearings. In the meantime, American network news audiences continue to drop, showing that they may not have got the formula right.

Theorists who champion the concept of the public sphere believe democratic societies need mechanisms which provide all citizens not only with information but the chance to debate and explore ideas in order to crystallise a public view (Price, 1995). This zone for rational discourse to which all media contribute, is termed the public sphere. This concept is only the latest articulation of ideas which go back to Milton and through Mills and Dewey (Altschull, 1990) and underpin the current anxieties about what is happening in the media. Events and changes which restrict the free flow of ideas and information or reduce its quality arouse the concern of those who desire a healthy democracy.

The need for reform is urgent in New Zealand. Morrison (1996) says market reforms have forced a greater degree of commercialism on all the media, as growing numbers of media outlets increase competition for the limited advertising dollar. The last decade has seen a series of closures, greater concentration of ownership and a strengthening of overseas control in the print media. Newspapers have trimmed staff by about a third

and exploited new labour laws to cut wages. He comments that these cuts are running hand in hand with rising profits: "Where once newspaper owners made a profit in order to do journalism, the trend is towards doing journalism in order to make a profit" (p.40). All these trends undermine the quality of output.

On top of this, the country is on the threshold of a new electoral system. As Palmer (1996) argues:

The MMP system of Government will move New Zealand towards a more participatory system of democracy. If citizens are going to be able to participate effectively, they need an alert, competent and analytic media to assist (p.28).

Both Palmer (1996) and Morrison (1996) make it clear that current news practices will be inadequate to cover New Zealand politics under MMP. To remain relevant, journalists need to think more closely about their role and have a greater understanding of what they are producing. Both writers promote an effective public broadcasting system with television news as a core. As Morrison says, there is no mechanism to ensure private sector news media realise their potential role in the MMP process:

That is a strong argument for retaining a specialised public sector news media, state-funded but free from political control and accountable for delivering public good journalism" (p.44).

The study has shown how the philosophies that drive broadcasting and the way it is funded have a crucial effect on output. Two publicly owned television channels are too important a resource in a democratic country to be left to market forces. While the advent of the MMP electoral system, with its challenges and opportunities for the media, provides a local impetus to action, there are wider changes too. As the global economy grows, national identity (in all its complexity) has become more, rather than less, important. Huge commercial interests are taking control of the fruits of technological advances, and information has become a commercial commodity. In this climate, those who are socio-economically disadvantaged risk being starved of the information and resources needed for full participation in the social and cultural process (Golding, 1990). So, in the last decade, publicly-owned media aimed at providing free and universal access to information are becoming more crucial in Western democracies.

Price (1995) says the architecture of the media is of the utmost importance:

For any society that seeks to achieve a substantial degree of democratic participation, the structure of the communications systems is integrated with the functioning of the political system. That is why it is particularly vital to have meaningful public debate about any law that alters the relationship among principal elements of communications systems and between government and private systems of communication, or even the balance of power between the makers and distributors of information (p.23).

New Zealand did not have that debate in the lead up to 1988, nor has it had so since. The Royal Commission on Broadcasting, which presented an opportunity, was for a number of reasons, including timing, politics and some inherent weaknesses, marginalised. Instead, in broadcasting and journalism, we had a series of adjustments that were largely reactive and pragmatic. Reflecting on the approach to change, news presenter and journalist Neil Billington concluded:

This has been perhaps the crisis of broadcasting in this country, and it has been the nature of many things, many institutions in the New Zealand social and political system; the absence of a clear philosophy or a driving view of what it is we are trying to do. We make things up as we go along. Sometimes it works; sometimes it doesn't.

This rather sombre coda to the deregulatory period must not be the final word. A number of signals should be giving legislators the message that it did not work. It is time to reconsider where we are going in broadcasting and what we really want. It is a task in which communications scholars should add their contribution to those of politicians and journalists, to encourage a wider public debate.

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- N.B.** Access to most press articles from the 1985 to 1990 period was through Radio New Zealand's reference library in Wellington. Like most libraries serving media organisations, it did not record page numbers. In the majority of cases the researcher was able to trace the page numbers. But missing records in the National Library in Wellington meant the page numbers of five newspaper reports are missing. These are marked (*) in the reference list.

APPENDIX A: GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED IN THE THESIS

<i>Anchor:</i>	presenter or newsreader
<i>Banter:</i>	generally scripted talk between two anchors often consisting of comment on the news item just past, or a lead in to items to come. Usually designed to smooth the passage from one segment of the programme with a specialist reporter to another (e.g. news to sports, news to weather). It can also be used to set atmosphere or defuse tension after an emotional item. (Also called chit chat in the thesis.)
<i>Close-up:</i>	camera shot concentrating on interviewee's face from collar upward. Can be intimate, intrusive or confrontational depending on context.
<i>Extreme close-up:</i>	sometimes called big close-up. Camera shot of face from just below mouth to just above eyebrows. Intensifies feelings of intimacy, intrusion, or confrontation depending on context.
<i>Headline:</i>	short (about 5 second) encapsulation of key news item to come, often accompanied by video film clips. There are usually 3 or 4 of these at the beginning of the bulletin, and a smaller number before each commercial.
<i>Long Shot:</i>	camera shot which covers whole height of person and also reveals something of background.
<i>Medium Long Shot:</i>	camera shot which covers body from knee level up.
<i>Mid-Shot:</i>	camera shot where body is cut just below armpits (standard "comfortable" shot for interviews).
<i>Newshole:</i>	amount of time devoted to actual news; not including advertisements, promotions, weather, headlines, teasers and banter.

<i>Piece to cam:</i>	(or piece to camera) a short script delivered by the reporter facing the camera. Usually shot in an identifiable location (in front of the Beehive, near the scene of the crime, or accident etc) to establish the reporter is on the spot. These are frequently used to summarise situations and to give the reporters opinion or analysis. (Also called a Standup).
<i>Prime time:</i>	peak viewing hours between 6pm and 10pm.
<i>Standup:</i>	see piece to cam.
<i>Tagging:</i>	comment to another anchor to bring him/her into the action.
<i>Teaser:</i>	sometimes used alternatively for headline. A tease is generally more cryptic than a headline.
<i>Stringer:</i>	casually employed journalist, camera operator, or sound operator. often situated in smaller centres and paid usually for piecework.
<i>Voice-over</i>	reporter's script being read over appropriate visuals
<i>Vox-pop</i>	very short cuts from interviews with "people in the street" about current issues. These are usually joined together and participants are not named.
<i>Wallpaper film</i>	video footage designed to add visual interest to a script. Often it is from file footage and only thematically linked to the subject of the story. In the worst cases it can distract the audience.

APPENDIX B: TIMELINE OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

1984

14 July Fourth Labour Government elected. Hunt as Minister of Broadcasting. 3rd channel already on cards. Controls on foreign investment relaxed.

July "sixth advertising day" approved for TV.

2 Oct Hugh Rennie begins as new chairman of BCNZ.

Oct/Nov management structure review begins.

Dec amendment to Broadcasting Act to allow management restructure.

1985

4 Feb brief and make-up of Royal Commission announced.

Feb Deal with CBS giving access to news and current affairs, share satellite link Channel 9.

1 Aug Royal Commission hearings begin.

14 Aug Broadcasting Tribunal third channel hearings begin.

Sept BCNZ backs Maori bid for third channel (Aotearoa Broadcasting Service).

Oct TVNZ accepts tender from BASYS electronic News service.

Nov announcement: Australian Nigel Dick Chief Executive BCNZ; Briton Julian Mounter as Director General TVNZ.

Nov BCNZ seeks fee review. Cabinet postpones decision till 1986.

1986

Jan Ian Cross retires as chief executive.

28 Jan TVNZ head of current affairs Bruce Wallace resigns.

Feb Nigel Dick arrives and announces opposition to third channel. Julian Mounter arrives. Work begins on TVNZ management restructuring based on commercial model.

4 March Royal Commission Hearings end.

March plans announced for TVNZ Auckland HQ. Plans for Pacific expansion.

April BCNZ begins equipment and building update.

6 April New Snr Management structure announced.

May BCNZ withdraws support for Aotearoa Broadcasting Service.

May Des Monaghan appointed Dir. of Programming and Production.

June announcement that TVNZ competing for Pacific market.

2 June Head of News and Current Affairs Bruce Crossan shifted to Controller of Special Projects (Ric Carlyon to hold job temporarily).

30 June Royal Commission Report first due (time extended).

June 6.30 News, new weather style.

Aug cost cuts discussed.

28 Aug (announcement) Minister Jonathan Hunt eases way for NZ companies with overseas shareholdings to invest in private TV.

Sept new controllers appointed. Indicate network repositioning (TV One sports and information, TV2 as entertainment channel).

18 Sept Court of Appeal rules BCNZ allowed further submissions to Tribunal hearings.

Sept falloff in revenue and ratings reported.

Sept work begins on Auckland TVNZ HQ.

30 Sept Royal Commission Report.

16 Oct Licence Fee increase announced (first since 1 Jan 1975).

1 Nov Fee increased from \$45 to \$65 (plus \$6.50 GST).

Nov announcement 150 jobs to go BCNZ (fee increase inadequate).

Nov Dick puts BCNZ case to Tribunal.

Nov top management to move to Auckland (Mounter moved there in Oct).

Nov First BCNZ advertisements, defended as providing corporate image.

Dec Third channel contenders threaten claim of \$500,000 against BCNZ for delays in hearings.

1987

Jan TVNZ announces bid to enter South Pacific broadcasting market.

Feb announcement of separate programming policy for two channels.

13 Feb Third channel hearings end.

March Agreement on fully leased satellite signal announced (part of regional/Pacific expansion).

May claim audience increased 3% since channel differentiation introduced.

10 June Paul Norris Timaru born Editor BBC political programmes announced as TVNZ controller of news and current affairs.

22 June Mounter to meet Auckland staff to discuss changes (budgets cut, programmes axed, topline people gone including head of sports, head of news and current affairs).

July Mounter announces experimental regional programme and ad breakouts on TV2 in Christchurch. Part of response to third-channel. Never went ahead.

27 July Lange announces broadcasting policy (press opinion that Hunt won softer PSB style policy battle).

Aug TVNZ Sales and Marketing restructured for competition.

15 Aug Labour re-elected. Monetarist Richard Prebble becomes Minister of Broadcasting and of State Owned Enterprises.

25 Aug Tribunal announcement. Television Three wins rights to four privately owned regional channels and a news service.

Sept appeals lodged against TV3's warrant grant (later withdrawn).

7 Oct Prebble declares firm intention to re-examine broadcasting.

Oct last of 7 directors announced, with Graeme Wilson becoming director of planning and public affairs.

27 Oct Broadcasting Tribunal report recommends ownership and control of private radio stations to remain firmly in NZ hands.

Nov Dick, Gray (TVNZ dir of finance), Lane (ass DG RNZ), Beatson (Listener editor) produce proposal for options for reform.

Nov Press reports BCNZ deliberate overspending to keep up local production and keep pressure on government to raise licence fee.

Nov news team reported as troubled (top people going to TV3 etc).

Nov Des Monaghan resigns as director of programmes and production. Reputed disagreements with Mounter over diversification and co-production plans.

1988

Feb TVNZ to get first options on programmes from Grenada.

Feb Shaun Brown appointed editor TVNZ News. Paul Cutler appointed editor 6.30 news.

Feb Treasury-Commerce report on broadcasting reform sparks intensive lobbying.

April Ad rates up.

26 April Prebble announcement of restructuring (Cabinet Approval 18 April).

7 May Members of Rennie restructuring committee announced.

June John Fountain Chch economist report *The Economics of Radio Spectrum Management, a Review of the Literature* (commissioned by Dept Trade and Ind).

18 June Nigel Dick leaves (early retirement).

29 June TVNZ good financial performance announced.

June/July new Auckland newsroom operating.

July Rennie Committee on restructuring BCNZ reports (supporting the development of two SOEs).

23 July News moved to 6 o'clock. New weather and graphics.

Aug Officials Report on Implementation of Broadcasting Policy Reform: Broadcasting and telecoms to have same regulatory structure; raise limits on foreign ownership; Broadcasting Commission and Broadcasting Stds Authority.

10 Aug Mounter (in letter to staff) says up to 250 jobs to go; cut \$20-\$40 million.

22 Aug Cabinet approves new shape of broadcasting; cuts back overseas TV stake permissible.

30 Aug Prebble announces new Broadcasting structure.

12 Sept Announcement TV3 start-up delayed a year.

Sept Tribunal officially confirms TV3's warrant.

Sept TVNZ takes ceiling off prime time advertising rates.

Sept Rennie to quit. New SOE chairman chosen (Brian Corban).

Oct Sydney and London news correspondents appointed.

Oct Des Monaghan (last major oponent of Mounter's plans) leaves for Australia.

Oct Nuie Government accepts TVNZ service dumping US cable.

Oct dividend payments row over how much is to go to the Government.

23 Oct TVNZ planner Wilson says no financial crisis after report of \$13 million drop in ad revenue early part of year.

4 Nov Prebble dumped from Cabinet. Hunt becomes Minister of Broadcasting and Communication.

Nov TVNZ staffing battles reported.

Dec 1 SOE established. TVNZ Ltd comes into existence.

Dec existing licence holders told will have priority in frequency sales.

Dec 150 of 1739 jobs to go. (90 Chch, 40 Avalon, 20 Auck) religious and children's programmes move to Auckland, science to Dunedin.

1989

Feb TVNZ targets sponsorship in revenue drive.

17 Feb Hunt says not in favour of complete deregulation in broadcasting.

Feb satellite link to islands announced.

Feb TVNZ signals interest in pay television.

March announced broadcasting fee rise to \$110.

March regions will miss out in TV3 start-up.

March new news hour announced.

March Avalon staff told 140-160 to be laid off by end of year (40 laid off last year).

March Merwyn Norrish announced as chairman of Broadcasting Commission (responsible for disbursing licence fees).

April telecomms fully deregulated.

3 April The new news hour begins. National news cut back to 30 mins. *Holmes* begins at 6.30 regional news moves after to TV2 at 5.45.

April NBR says TVNZ into pre-emptive buying of programmes.

May closing date for expressing interest in spectrum.

May TVNZ teletext 100,000 sets sold.

May TVNZ pilot service soon to be in Cook Islands.

May Avalon subsidiary plan means 50 staff to go.

June TVNZ gets Barcelona Olympic coverage rights (\$8 million).

June TV3 scraps plans for Tauranga regional station.

1 July Broadcasting Act (1989) becomes effective. Broadcasting Commission and Standards Authority set up.

July licence fee increase from \$71.50 to \$110.

July Avalon set up as separate entity.

July signed last of 4 multimillion dollar contracts for improved current affairs and sports access around world. Already Telecom NZ, OTC Australian Bond Channel 9, now Teleglobe Canada.

July \$2500 bonus announced for journalists to stay to the end of year.

July TVNZ looking at buying into o/seas production companies; handing over part of local drama production to Gibson Group.

July channel branding and promotion stepped up for competition.

Aug static market interfering with growth trends in TV.

Sept people meters introduced to measure ratings (diary system is discontinued).

Sept conflict with Broadcasting Commission over funding (particularly over TV3 getting money for popular programmes).

29 Sept Graeme Wilson says in 1988 TVNZ spent \$35 million on public service programmes mainly funded by cross subsidy. As TVNZ is required to be a commercial operator this level of cross subsidy can't continue.

Oct TVNZ's first narrowcast TV launched for the hotel industry. A sports, racing & music channel, TVXTRA.

Oct huge TVNZ promotion.

Nov TVNZ introduces breakfast TV on Channel Two.

Nov announcement Broadcasting Commission to fund Chch and Dunedin regional news (\$653,000).

Nov funding cuts mean 9 service shows axed.

Nov ad price war.

27 Nov TV3 on air.

Nov/Dec TVNZ wins ratings war.

Dec NZOA will not fund Nth Island regional programmes (last programmes run this month).

Dec Radiocommunications Bill amended so existing broadcasters given 20 year licences.

Dec TVNZ's Cook Islands service begins.

1990

Jan TVNZ reported interested in buying into Channel 9 Australia.

4 Feb formal opening of Auck TV centre.

Feb TV3's *A Current Affair* (opposite *Holmes*) TV3 axed (low ratings blamed).
TV3 news trimmed back in length.

Feb Announcement North Island regional news programmes not to resume. South Island programmes continue for another year with NZOA support.

20 Feb details of tenders of UHF frequencies announced. TVNZ a share in 5 of 7 channels. TVNZ seen as likely to make money from non-cable newcomers anyway because of the dominance of Broadcast Communications Ltd.

22 Feb Commerce Commission approves Sky Network frequencies.

March TVNZ says will cut staff unless revenue picks up.

March TV3's share price drops heavily.

March Government hints on possible law change to allow temporary increase for foreign investment in TV3.

March TVNZ reaches agreement with new TV3 management over programme pricing and frequency allocation.

29 March TVNZ announces increase in local programme content .

April TVNZ buys 35% share in Sky.

April Digital backs up Basys ENP system in newsroom.

2 May move to buy into Channel 9 blocked by Australian Government limit on foreign ownership.

May Frontline current affairs programme under fire from Parliament (libel suits, producers suspended, journalists strike in sympathy etc).

May Westpac freezes TV3's accounts. Bankruptcy.

25 May TVNZ 154 redundancies (including numbers in news). 480 jobs lost in 18 months.

May Hunt supports higher licence fee.

May Government wants bigger dividend from TVNZ.

May Government accepts Alternate Telecommunications (later Clear) using TVNZ microwave transmission facilities.

30 May cost cuts bring \$26 million profit.

June 5 producers go at Avalon.

Oct National Party manifesto plans TV1 to become semi commercial service (no plan to sell TV2).

27 Oct National Government elected.

Nov 32 jobs go at Avalon.

Dec Communications Minister Maurice Williamson announces government is considering up to 49.9% foreign stake in NZ broadcasting companies .

1990 Annual report

Staff numbers almost half what were 3 years ago (from 2,200 to 1355).

1991

21 March Government announced intention to allow foreign investors to purchase 100% of NZ broadcasting organisations.

May legislation passed which lifts all foreign ownership restrictions.

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEWEES

Questions for Newswriters

Content

Has there been a change in content of TV news since 1985?

When did the major change occur?

What sorts of things are covered more frequently in your opinion?

What sorts of things are covered less frequently?

What subjects do we cover in more depth than we used to?

What subjects do we cover in less depth?

Reasons for Change

Why do you think there has been change?

To what extent does it reflect a change in society?

To what extent does it reflect changes in coverage by other NZ media?

To what extent does it reflect overseas trends and methods?

To what extent does it reflect viewer expectations?

Has viewer appeal been cited as a reason?

Do you see the news as leading or following public opinion (has this changed)?

How gradual or sudden were the changes?

What key events precipitated change?

How much consciousness has there been about the changes? Was there much discussion or dissent?

News Practices

Have there been any changes in the way you gather information and report stories?

Did you look for something different when you went out later in study period?

Did you use different ways of filming scenes or people?

Did you ask different questions of sources? In what way were they different?

Can you give an example of how you would have covered a typical story before and after the change?

To what extent have you learned the new techniques or emphases formally and to what extent have you picked them up by watching others and talking to them?

By the end of 1990 there were fewer people in the newsroom. How did this change your style of working?

What about pressure to produce a story - has this changed?

How frequently do reporters work in teams on stories? Has this changed? Are team stories different in approach or content than individual ones?

Has the relationship with the news editor changed, especially in the amount of direction given to reporters?

Who decides on the angle? At what stage is the story shaped? Has this changed?

Would you say a bulletin is more or is it less unified than in the past?

Why?

Does it reflect a greater unity of purpose or agreement about what you are trying to achieve?

Summing Up

What did news offer the viewer at the end of 1990 that it didn't in 1985?

Did news work become more challenging than before?

Did you personally feel you were doing a better job? Where? Why?

Do you think the purpose or function of television news has changed over the last few years?

Other Interviewees

The emphasis was on hearing personal stories from key actors about events during the study period. The aim was to throw light on the processes of choice and decision-making at the time.

Jonathan Hunt

What were and are your views on PSB?

What issues did you face about funding for broadcasting?

What was the situation when you became Minister? What were your priorities?

What happened to the Royal Commission on Broadcasting?

What did you weigh up in 1985-87 in your thinking on the future of broadcasting?

What were the different sets of interests you had to juggle?

What was the key thinking behind the reforms?

Did the Government and you do enough to protect PSB in television?

Why did Richard Prebble become Minister of Broadcasting?

What difference did his approach make?

Do you think the shape and output of TVNZ and RNZ have been distorted by the SOE Act?

Is there anything you would have done differently in hindsight?

What did you feel were the biggest gains in the change? What was your greatest achievement?

Hugh Rennie

What were your expectations when you took on the BCNZ chairmanship?

What was the nature of the relationship of the BCNZ board with both Dick and Mounter?

What were the key debates about the future of broadcasting and what role did the board play in relation to Excom's ideas?

What was the relationship of the board with Hunt and Prebble?

How much difference did Prebble make as Minister?

What were the agendas of Treasury and Commerce? Describe the power struggle.

Could you talk about the battles to retain strength and autonomy at BCNZ? How inevitable was the split? What were the forces for and against?

What were the decisive times?

Who were the winners and losers?

What are your opinions on the new broadcasting legislation - at the time and in hindsight?

How early were the new strategic directions of TVNZ set? Was Mounter the prime mover?

What was the role of the Board in the changeover?

What were the achievements and disappointments of the Rennie Committee in caretaking the change?

Could you have done things differently? Should you?

Nigel Dick, Bill Foster and David Beatson

What was the situation as at 1985?

What was the relationship between board and management and the relationship between the three divisions of broadcasting in the study years?

Where did the forces for change originate? What were the divisions and views within broadcasting about the future?

How much power or room for manoeuvre did broadcasting have in relation to the agendas of Treasury and Commerce?

How inevitable was the process?

Who were the key players?

What was the effect of personalities on the process? (Mounter and Dick? Dick and the Board? Prebble and Hunt?)

Did PSB broadcasting, as it was, have any friends in Parliament?

What were the decisive moments and crucial decisions?

Was there much dissent about the commercially-driven growth-oriented approach for TVNZ?

Who were the winners and losers?

What do you think should have happened to broadcasting?

How should PSB be accommodated?

What have been the gains and losses?

Laurie Cameron

How did you see your role on the Commission?

Why did you write the Addendum?

What was the main influence on your thinking?

Was it a drawback having the Third Channel Warrant Hearings and the Commission at the same time?

Did the rapid changes in broadcasting during the hearings affect the Commission?

What was the effect of the Addendum on Government thinking?

What are your views on how PSB should be funded and run?

Graeme Wilson

What part did the development of the Network Centre play in centralising news (in particular) in Auckland?

What was the resource and equipment situation for TVNZ news in 1985?

What were the key pressures for change? How did the prospect of competition effect TVNZ?

Why did the Royal Commission end up as a paper tiger?

What has been the overall effect of structural changes in the organisation? Are lines of accountability clearer? Is there a pull to the centre?

With staffing, what were the key areas that had to be trimmed and why?

TVNZ positioned itself early to tackle competition and to look beyond NZ. Who was responsible and why?

What was the role of Julian Mounter?

You had to make a trade off between expanding in terms of overseas opportunities and restricting development in the home pool. Was that a difficult choice?

What happened to the concept of regional programming within NZ?

What has been the good news and the bad news for TVNZ in terms of legislative change?

Did you push too far in commercial programming to beat the competition?

How important have ratings become?

Has the commitment to PSB changed; in what way?

What sorts of decisions have you had to make in terms of audience appeal?

Given an ideal situation, what would you like to have taken from the old organisation to weld onto the new?

What is the nature of forces acting on TVNZ and have they changed?

What has been the key cultural change within the organisation?