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**Who Talks, What They Talk About, and
How Much They Say:**

**A Study of Bulletin Structure and Source Use in New Zealand
Free-to-Air Television News Programmes**

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Abstract

Free-to-air television news is an accessible and popular means through which audiences can gain knowledge and understanding about the world. Therefore, the nature of the news provided has important implications for the opportunities audiences have to become informed about events and issues, and to use this knowledge to participate in social decision-making. The structure and content of news bulletins reflect the decisions made by broadcasters about the topics that are considered to be important, and which sources should have the opportunity to be represented. Thus, the goal of this research was to compare the structure and content of the news provided by New Zealand's national free-to-air news programmes; *ONE News* (TVNZ), *3 News* (TV3), *Prime News* (Prime Television), and *Te Kāea* (Māori Television).

A content analysis of one constructed week of the four news programmes was undertaken, focusing on four general areas of interest. First, the profile of the news bulletins was examined (i.e., the proportion of the bulletin allocated to different segments of the news, the duration of main news stories, the origin of production of main news stories, the proportion of New Zealand and international news, and the topics included in the news). Second, the research investigated the identity of the types of sources selected by the broadcasters for inclusion in locally produced main news stories. Third, the frequency and duration of elite and non-élite source speech was examined. Finally, the extent to which journalists speak on camera in news stories was also investigated.

The study showed that the four programmes generally conformed to the 'standard profile' of modern television news bulletins; the programmes included considerable amounts of non-news content and the news topics often reflected entertainment values, rather than focusing on serious issues. A further significant characteristic of the bulletins was that elite sources were more likely to be included in news stories on all programmes and generally had greater opportunities to speak. However, in many respects it appears that *Te Kāea* provides an alternative news bulletin compared to the other three channels, by focusing on a wider range of news topics, including more non-élite sources in stories, and giving all sources considerably more time to share their views. *Te Kāea* seems to broadcast a news programme that makes a compromise between the entertainment values which are entrenched in contemporary television news, and the broader Māori Television mandate to inform and educate the public. This

contrasts with the more homogenous (in terms of the characteristics examined in this research) news programmes offered by the *ONE News*, *3 News*, and *Prime News*.

This study concludes that the nationally available free-to-air news programmes currently broadcast on New Zealand television fulfil the traditional news functions of informing and educating the public in only a very narrow sense. The deregulated news environment is poised to undergo further transformation with an anticipated increase in convergence among news media and the emergence of more television news providers. The challenge within this commercial environment is for *ONE News*, *3 News*, *Prime News*, and *Te Kāea* to deliver on their stated commitments to provide information and promote debate on the important issues of the day.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Overview and Aims

The role of the news media is to provide information and education to the public about the significant events and issues of the day (Morrison, 2002). In a democracy the news media has an important role to play in providing information and promoting discussion about public affairs (Atkinson, 1994b; McNair, 2003). It has long been contended that the news media not only reflects the world, but also plays a role in shaping the way people view and understand the world (Berkowitz, 1987; Soloski, 1989). Hall, Critcher, Jefferson, Clarke, and Roberts (1978) argue that the media “define for the majority of the population *what* significant events are taking place, but also, they offer powerful interpretations of *how* to understand these events” (p. 57). Therefore, mainstream news coverage is generally understood to be hegemonic, in that news is selected, framed and presented in ways that reinforce the position of dominant groups in society (Abel, 2004; Allan, 2004). Allan (2004) suggests that “news accounts appeal to apparently common-sense renderings of ‘reality’ ... as being self evidently true” (p. 78).

Television is the news medium which people consistently report depending on most for the majority of information about current events and issues (Errington & Miragliotta, 2007; Levy, 1992; Robinson & Levy, 1986). Television, therefore, “remains the chief supplier of news” (Graber, McQuail, & Norris, 2008, p. 2), dominating all other news providers (Crisell, 2006). It follows that the nature of the news being produced on television has important implications for the way it contributes to the audience’s knowledge and understanding of current events and issues. Four elements of the news which contribute to how its functions are fulfilled are of particular interest to this research. Firstly, the type and duration of each segment of the overall news bulletin is important because it indicates the emphasis the broadcaster places on main news items, and on more peripheral non-news items such as weather and sports (Cook, 2002; Langer, 1998). It also indicates the extent to which commercials contribute to the overall duration of the news programme (Comrie, 1996). Secondly, the selection of story topics covered by each programme tells us which topics are given most prominence and therefore are considered of most importance for audiences to find out about (Carter & Allan, 2000). Thirdly, the selection and representation of sources show which source-groups dominate the news coverage in terms of overall numbers

and duration of speech. This information indicates which types of sources have the opportunity to contribute their views to the news stories (Grant & Dimmick, 2000; Hallin, 1992a; Manning, 2001). Fourthly, the duration of journalists' speech on camera provides information about the extent to which journalists dominate the news stories they appear in. This is important because the on-screen contribution made by journalists may compromise the coverage of external sources (McGregor, 2002b).

Recent years have seen the concentration of world wide media ownership (Algers, 1998). In New Zealand, deregulation has led to news producers becoming subject to increasing commercial pressure (Atkinson, 1994b; Comrie & Fountaine, 2005/ 2006). Currently, free-to-air New Zealand television news programmes are offered in a broadcasting environment which allows a range of different media ownership models: The Crown Owned Company, TVNZ, is obligated to meet the terms of the TVNZ Charter in providing its evening news programme *ONE News*; *3 News* and *Prime News* are the respective evening news offerings of two privately owned broadcasters, TV3 and Prime Television; and the publicly funded Māori Television provides the evening news programme *Te Kāea*.

Most research examining the nature of television news in New Zealand has focused on tracking the effects of broadcasting deregulation on TVNZ (Atkinson, 2002; Comrie, 1996, 1999; Comrie & Fountaine, 2003; Cook, 2002). There has been no systematic examination of the nature of the range of free-to-air television news programmes that has emerged since the advent of Māori Television in 2004. The purpose of this thesis, therefore, is to discover whether the four main free-to-air news programmes (*ONE News*, *3 News*, *Prime News*, and *Te Kāea*), arising as they do from such different origins, are themselves different. Content analysis is the method that has been chosen to examine these questions.

The four programmes which are the focus of this thesis operate within the wider New Zealand broadcasting environment. The next section of this chapter provides a description of this environment, including detailed descriptions of the broadcasters and the programmes which are the subjects of this study; *ONE News*, *3 News*, *Prime News*, and *Te Kāea*. This chapter concludes with the specific research questions that will be addressed in the content analysis. The second chapter, Literature Review, provides an examination of the factors central to the empirical analysis of news programmes in this thesis. The third Method chapter describes the method used in carrying out the content analysis, and the

Results chapter which follows describes the findings of the research. The fifth chapter, Discussion, considers the findings in more detail, before going on to identify some possible limitations of the research and some potential future areas of research. The final Conclusion chapter considers the overall implications of the research within the broader context of news provision in New Zealand.

1.2 The Current New Zealand Broadcasting Environment

In the late 1980s New Zealand underwent a process of broadcasting deregulation, including the restructure of the Broadcasting Corporation of New Zealand (BCNZ) into two State Owned Enterprises (SOEs), Television New Zealand (TVNZ) and Radio New Zealand (RNZ) (Atkinson, 2004). Prior to deregulation, broadcasting in New Zealand was dominated by the BCNZ, which operated the only two television channels (Comrie, 1999). Unlike the BCNZ, the new TVNZ was required to be profitable and compete within a commercial environment for a share of public programme funding. Restrictions on foreign and cross-media ownership were reduced, although the new environment enabled by the Broadcasting Act 1989 did not initially result in much change in terms of foreign ownership (P. Smith, 1996). It was during the next year, 1990, that the failure of the fledgling new private television channel, TV3, resulted in the removal of restrictions on foreign ownership by the Government. This enabled the sale of TV3 to CanWest in 1991 (P. Smith, 1996). The commercial imperatives of this new environment meant that “the operation of TVNZ news and current affairs became purely commercial, indistinguishable in most respects from TV3 News” (Atkinson, 2004, p. 137).

The TVNZ Act 2003 transformed TVNZ from an SOE into a Crown Owned Company (CROC). The Act also set in place the TVNZ Charter in response to concerns that the functions of state-owned television were not being fulfilled (Comrie & Fountaine, 2003). The Charter sets out a variety of objectives to be achieved by TVNZ, including to “provide independent, comprehensive, impartial, and in-depth coverage and analysis of news and current affairs in New Zealand and throughout the world” (“Television New Zealand Charter”, 2003). These objectives, including the requirement that TVNZ return a substantial dividend to the Government (Thompson, 2004), are to be met within the commercial broadcasting environment.

TVNZ operates two free-to-air channels, TV ONE and TV2. According to the TVNZ website (TVNZ, 2008), TV ONE is aimed at a mature audience and

includes a focus on news, current affairs and sport as well as a “full entertainment schedule” of drama, comedy, and documentaries. Among other news and current affairs programming (such as *Breakfast*, *Close Up*, *Sunday*, *Te Karere*, *Agenda*, and *ONE News Tonight*) TV ONE broadcasts *ONE News*, a nightly hour-long news bulletin at 6pm which includes as a slogan the words “New Zealand’s news, anywhere, anytime”. This programme features two main newsreaders, as well as sports and weather presenters. TV2 does not feature news programming, instead focusing on entertainment for the “young and young at heart” (TVNZ, 2008).

New Zealand’s third free-to-air channel, TV3, is now owned by MediaWorks, which itself is owned by Ironbridge Capital (Rosenberg, 2008). A MediaWorks company called TVWorks operates TV3 and the youth-focused music channel C4. TV3’s intended audience is the 18-49 age group and nightly at 6pm it broadcasts a news bulletin called *3 News* (MediaWorks, 2008). TV3 also broadcasts a range of other news and current affairs programmes (such as *Sunrise*, *Campbell Live*, *60 Minutes*, and *Nightline*). Like *ONE News*, *3 News* has a two-newsreader format, and dedicated sports and weather presenters.

The fifth free-to-air channel is Prime Television, which began broadcasting in New Zealand in 1998. In 2005 Prime Television was purchased by Sky Television, which is itself owned by News Corporation (Skeffington, 2005). Despite the efforts of other operators, Sky Television remains the only provider of pay television in New Zealand (Rosenberg, 2008). Prime aims to provide sport, entertainment, drama, documentary, comedy and lifestyle programmes and “is committed to building its New Zealand content” (Prime Television, 2008). Sky Television’s ownership of Prime is evident in the extent to which it provides major sports coverage (Rosenberg, 2008). The channel’s half hour nightly news programme is billed as ‘*Prime News: First at 5:30*’, and has just one newsreader for all segments of the programme. *Prime News* is Prime Television’s only news programme other than brief updates between other programmes.

The sixth free-to-air channel is Māori Television, which was established under the Māori Television Service (Te Aratuku Whakaata Irirangi Māori) Act 2003. The preamble of the Act states that “[t]he establishment of the Māori Television Service in which te reo Māori me nga tikanga Māori have a secure place and are recognised and actively promoted, is intended to contribute to meeting the Crown’s commitment to the protection and promotion of te reo Māori me nga

tikanga Māori through broadcasting”¹. Māori Television was launched in 2004 and its goal is to provide high quality programming which aims to inform, educate and entertain, primarily in te reo (Māori Television, 2008a). Māori Television is publicly funded and is jointly accountable to the Crown and Te Putahi Paoho (the Māori Electoral College)² (Māori Television, 2008a). A half hour news programme called *Te Kāea* is broadcast daily at 7.30pm and then repeated with English subtitles at 11pm. *Te Kāea* is described as “[l]ocal, regional and national Māori and international news” (Māori Television, 2008c). Māori Television also broadcasts other news and current affairs programmes (such as *Native Affairs*, *Marae*, *Te Tēpu*, and *Eye to Eye*). *Te Kāea* is presented by a single (standing) newsreader, who also presents the sports and weather segments.

In addition to the six channels described above, the only other free-to-air television broadcasters in New Zealand are several regional television stations operating in the main centres; for example *Canterbury TV* in Christchurch, Mainland Television with five channels in the Nelson region, *Triangle Television* in Wellington, and *Alt TV* in Auckland (Rosenberg, 2008).

Thus, New Zealand has six free-to-air channels available nation-wide, of which four carry news programmes (*ONE News*, *3 News*, *Prime News*, and *Te Kāea* on Māori Television). However there are other news providers in the wider broadcast environment. Sky Television’s news channel (*Sky News NZ*) broadcasts *New Zealand Evening News* (a repackaging of *Prime News*) daily at 7pm, 8.30pm and 9pm. In September 2007 the Freeview consortium³ launched the digital broadcast of seven channels (and 16 as at May 2008), accessible through a digital receiver. These channels now include five TVNZ channels (*One*, *2*, *6*, *7*, and *Sport Extra*), *TV3*, *C4*, *Māori Television*, and its new *te reo* channel. A further major change forecast in the broadcasting environment is the complete transition from analogue to digital television. The Ministry for Culture and Heritage identifies that “a significant feature of the emerging media environment is the opportunity for convergence between broadcasting, telecommunications ... and the internet”

¹ Te reo Māori is the Māori language, an official language of New Zealand.

² Te Putahi Paoho comprises Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust, Te Ataarangi Inc, Te Rūnanga o Ngā Kura Kaupapa Māori, Te Tauihu o Ngā Wānanga, Ngā Kaiwhakapūmau i te Reo Māori, National Māori Council, Māori Women’s Welfare League, Māori Congress, Te Whakaruruhau o Ngā Reo Irirangi Māori, Kawea Te Rongo and Ngā Aho Whakaari.

³ The Freeview Consortium membership is Television New Zealand, TVWorks (a MediaWorks company), Māori Television, and Radio New Zealand.

(Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2008a), as the boundaries between the various forms of media delivery continue to blur. The Ministry notes, in a discussion paper released in 2008, that “the preferred scenario would be a market where there is substantial diversity of both content ... and services ... [and that] such content and services should be available to most or all New Zealanders on an affordable and accessible basis” (Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2008b, p. 10). The current study, therefore, offers an opportunity to examine the free-to-air broadcast news programmes at a time when significant changes have occurred, and, according to the Ministry for Culture and Heritage, others are planned (Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2008b).

1.3 Research Questions

The following Literature review (chapter two) establishes the framework for the questions that are the focus of this research. The purpose of the research is to compare the four nationally available free-to-air news programmes *ONE News*, *3 News*, *Prime News*, and *Te Kāea* to see if broadcasters guided by a variety of commercial and politically mandated forces produce different kinds of news programmes. This comparison is based on the format and structure of each bulletin, the topics of the stories covered in each programme’s bulletin, the selection and representation of sources in locally produced main news stories, and the extent to which journalists become a part of the story by speaking on camera. The six research questions are:

RQ1: Are there differences in the ‘profile’ of news coverage overall in *ONE News*, *3 News*, *Prime News* and *Te Kāea* (in terms of: proportion of the bulletin allocated to general news business, sports, and weather; duration of headlines, chat, music and teasers; duration of stories in the main news segment⁴; origin of story production; proportion of New Zealand and international news; and dominant story topics)?

RQ2: Are there differences in the types of sources used in locally produced news on *ONE News*, *3 News*, *Prime News* and *Te Kāea*? If so, what is the nature of these differences?

⁴ ‘Main news’ stories are those which do not occur within the sports, business, or weather segments of the bulletin. The main news segment is not necessarily presented within a bulletin in a continuous block of stories.

RQ3: Are there differences in the frequency of each source type (used in locally produced news) speaking directly (as opposed to being cited) on *ONE News*, *3 News*, *Prime News* and *Te Kāea*? If so, what is the nature of these differences?

RQ4: Are there differences in the length of time each source type (used in locally produced news) speaks directly in broadcasts by *ONE News*, *3 News*, *Prime News* and *Te Kāea*? If so, what is the nature of these differences?

RQ5: Are there differences in the duration of sound bites of each source type (used in locally produced news) on *ONE News*, *3 News*, *Prime News* and *Te Kāea*.

RQ6 Are there differences in the frequency and duration of journalists speaking on camera in locally produced news stories on *ONE News*, *3 News*, *Prime News* and *Te Kāea*? If so, what is the nature of these differences?

2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Television news potentially has an important role in informing the public about significant events and issues in order to contribute to the democratic process (Algers, 1998). McNair (2003) suggests that the news goes beyond the role of informant by helping shape public views about what is happening in the world. The current research aims to gather information that can be used to discover how New Zealand's four national free-to-air television news programmes select and present the information that the viewing public uses to construct their understanding of current events and issues. The following review of the literature will examine several background factors which are important to the research questions outlined in chapter one. It first addresses the purpose of news and the 'news values' (Galtung & Ruge, 1973) that play a major role in shaping the television news bulletin. The decision to create an individual news item is influenced by the consideration of implicit criteria that determine the extent to which something is newsworthy (Galtung & Ruge, 1973; McGregor, 2002b; Tiffin, 1989). Once this judgement has been made, other decisions influence the nature of the news item. These include decisions about how the item is presented, and even how it is juxtaposed with other news (Morrison, 2002). The ongoing relevance of the news values framework first put forward by Galtung and Ruge (1973) is demonstrated by the extent to which it is embedded in the literature on the news (Abel, 2004; Carter & Allan, 2000; Manning, 2001; Tiffin, 1989). The first section includes an examination of findings about news values in Māori news media, suggesting that Māori news may not fit the traditional model of 'news values' focusing instead on more positive interpretations of issues for Māori (TeAwa, 1996)

The second section turns to an examination of the profile of the television news bulletin, in terms of its structure and the nature of its content. The standard notion of a televised news bulletin presents a range of general news, sports stories, and information about the weather (C. Bell, 1996). McQuail (2000) suggests that newspapers are "the prototype of all modern mass media" (p. 337), in that regular radio and television news bulletins were initially modelled on the newspaper format. There are major differences between broadcast news and newspapers, with television and radio providing only a summary of the content to be found

elsewhere. According to Tiffin (1989) “[t]he text of a half-hour news service would not fill the front page of a broadsheet newspaper.” (p. 89) Technological advances have also made possible the constantly updated news on the internet, which itself influences other news genres. Weblogs (blogs), for example, have become part of the news environment and have sometimes even broken news stories or influenced how stories have been covered in the mainstream news media (Bruns, 2008; Smolkin, 2004). This, in turn, has led to newspapers and broadcasters hosting their own blogs, to provide further commentary on the more formally produced news of the day.

Any television or radio news programme, newspaper or web-based news source is “an end product of a very complex process of selection, filtering and editing” (Abel, 2004, p. 195). However, the stories which make up a television news bulletin form only one part of a news bulletin overall. In addition to individual stories about the important events and issues of day, there are a range of other items; commonly sports, business, weather, music, chat, and teasers. The advertisements which punctuate each segment of the news bulletin also make up part of the news hour or half-hour (Cook, 2002). It is this overall ‘package’ which constitutes a television news programme, and which is marketed as a single news product by networks. The other parts of the bulletin that, along with the general news, make up the total news programme will also be discussed because of the significant contribution they make to the nature of the television news overall.

Broadly speaking, the news format “favours resolution over doubt, the concrete over the abstract, the narrative recounting of recent, finite events over the analytical account of continuing condition” (Tiffin, 1989). Atkinson (2002) claims that the resulting news “builds up a picture of social and political reality which is normalised and personalised in ways that are both supportive of established authorities and reassuring to the masses” (p. 122). Therefore thirdly, the thesis will consider the literature which has examined the topics that feature strongly in news bulletins. The topics which dominate the television picture of reality tend to be those which reflect entertainment values, and thus comprise disproportionate amounts of news about celebrities, crime and sport (Allan, 2004; Comrie, 1996; McGregor, 2002b)

Central to the factors influencing the content of the news, and the fourth major topic of the review, are news sources. As Palmer (2000) points out, “[w]ithout news sources there is no news.” (p.4) This is because it is the journalist’s role to

describe events and interpret issues by referring to the people who are actually involved in them. Sigal (1973) suggests, therefore, that "most news is not what has happened, but what someone says has happened, thus making the choices of sources crucial." (p. 69) The sources chosen by journalists for news coverage determine "not only what information is presented to the public, but what image of society is presented." (Soloski, 1989, p. 864) The most detailed research on television news sources in New Zealand was carried out by Comrie (1996). This work examined the source patterns in Television New Zealand (TVNZ) news from 1985 to 1990, covering the period during which broadcasting was deregulated and the privately owned TV3 came into direct competition with the state broadcaster. When Comrie's (1996) research was undertaken there were only two free-to-air channels providing news programmes in New Zealand, and the transition away from analogue television was not even on the horizon. This section will discuss research that has analysed the status of dominant source groups, and examine the controversial notion that elite sources have tended to be the primary definers of the news; that is, the sources who dominate the news agenda (Hall et al., 1978; Welch, Weber, & Edwards, 2000).

The fifth subject of the review is the manner in which sources are represented in the news; whether they speak or are only cited. This is important because the type of representation influences how a source's views are communicated to the audience. For example, sources who contribute a sound bite may have more opportunity to have their views understood than might sources who are cited or whose views are otherwise packaged or mediated in some way (Grabe, Zhou, & Barnett, 1999; Hallin, 1992a; Rupa, 2006).

The review then addresses a sixth and final topic; the appearance of the journalist speaking on camera. The appearance of the journalist as an on-screen contributor to the story happens in two ways; either in a 'piece to camera' or as part of an interview with a newsreader. It is speculated that such appearances add to the credibility of the journalist and the news programme, and make the journalist an integral part of the news story (McGregor, 2002b; Taylor, 1993).

Together, these six areas of research help build a picture of the nature of broadcast news in response to the research questions posed in chapter one. The broader questions about the purpose of the news, the nature of the bulletin overall, and the topics of news examined, are connected to narrower concerns about the selection and representation of sources, and the role the journalist plays in visibly mediating the presentation of information.

2.2 News Values and the Purpose of the News

The decisions made during the news-making process are important because they influence the extent to which journalistic goals of fairness and balance are achieved (McGregor & Comrie, 1995; Morrison, 2002; Wood, 1996). A central tenet of news practice is to seek to report matters in a truthful manner (M. Bell, 1998; Ward, 1998), although there is ongoing debate about the extent to which journalists can remain neutral observers in a profession which relies on them to shape 'stories' from what they observe (Cunningham, 2003; Manning, 2001; Morrison, 2002). There are a myriad of decisions and influences which may affect the news which is finally produced for the reading and viewing public. The selection of individual news stories and the creation of an overall news bulletin is influenced both by 'news values', which determine what is 'newsworthy' (Galtung & Ruge, 1973), and by the medium in which the news is produced, which is itself subject to a range of technical and commercial constraints (Abel, 2004; Atkinson, 2002; Morrison, 2002; Tiffin, 1989). Galtung and Ruge's (1973) work, proposing that a range of core values underpin news selection, provides a now well-established foundation for understanding the news. This model is of central importance to scholarship about the news and will be briefly described here to provide a context for the subsequent examination of specific characteristics of news bulletins and stories covered in later sections.

Galtung and Ruge (1973) used the metaphor of radio transmission to outline a range of criteria which influence whether any given event or issue is likely to be selected as news. These criteria comprised of eight core values. Firstly, "the more similar the frequency of an event is to the frequency of the news medium, the more probable that it will be defined as news by that news medium" (Galtung & Ruge, 1973, p. 63). For example, gradually developing issues are less likely to be defined as news in a media with a daily news cycle. Secondly, there is a threshold or 'amplitude' an event must reach to be registered as newsworthy at all. Thirdly, an event is more likely to be defined as news if the event is clear and unambiguous; events which can easily be understood are favoured over those which are complex and difficult to explain. The fourth and fifth criteria suggest that the more 'meaningful' (in terms of relevance and cultural proximity) an event is, and how easily it fits into audience expectations, the more likely it will be interpreted as news. Conversely, the sixth criterion is that "it is not enough for an event to be culturally meaningful and consonant with what is expected ... the more unexpected have the highest chances of being included as news" (Galtung

& Ruge, 1973, p. 65). The seventh value simply suggests that once something has been defined as news, it will continue to be so, and the eighth and last core value describes the overall composition of the news bulletin as conforming to “a desire to present a ‘balanced’ whole” (Galtung & Ruge, 1973, p. 65). In addition to these core values, Galtung and Ruge (1973) proposed that the likelihood of events being defined as news is also influenced by the involvement of élite people and nations, the capacity for an event to be interpreted “in personal terms, as due to the action of specific individuals” (p. 66), and by how negative the outcome of an event might be.

The values proposed by Galtung and Ruge (1973) are interdependent and interact in complex ways (Manning, 2001; McGregor, 2002b). McGregor (2002b) offers a redefinition of Galtung and Ruge’s (1973) values which proposes that there are some élite news values which are weighted more heavily in their determination of news; these are visualness, emotion, conflict, and celebrification of the journalist. McGregor (2002b) states that “[w]hat is selected and presented as news is driven by pictures and their perceptual and iconic power” (p. 123). Bettag (2000) characterises this simply as “[n]ews is anything you can get a camera to do” (p. 106). Similarly, the emotive sub-text of news provides an additional dimension which may otherwise be merely descriptive. This reflects the changing boundaries between news and entertainment (Carter & Allan, 2000), as the news takes on elements of entertainment to appeal to audiences. Galtung and Ruge’s (1973) third value, conflict, has also become increasingly important in modern news selection. News organisations compete for stories, and for audiences, and one way to do this is by defining and presenting news in terms of conflicting views (Louw, 2005). Lastly, the ubiquity of television has led to the celebrification of the journalist. The role of the television journalist is increasingly to provide their own perspective on the events at hand. In doing so, they become as much a part of the news as the events they report (McGregor, 2002b).

2.3 Māori News Values

Although it is not the purpose of this thesis to examine the nature of Māori news, it is appropriate to make some brief comments about the nature of New Zealand news coverage in relation to Māori (the indigenous people of New Zealand). The history of New Zealand, including its colonisation, the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, the subsequent social, cultural, and economic outcomes for Māori, and the continuing legal process of claim settlement between Māori and the Crown,

all form the context within which news is defined and presented. In 1991, McGregor (1991) concluded that the news values which dominated the New Zealand mainstream media were often inappropriate, and were proving inadequate to the task of reflecting Māori experiences and Māori cultural values. For example, Abel (2004) suggests that the mainstream media may omit Māori perspectives, omit covering issues of importance to Māori if they are not considered to be of wider interest, and frame Māori interests as being in opposition to Pakeha⁵ ones, “creating a structure of ‘us’ and ‘them’ in news items” (p. 188). A recent content analysis of non-Māori broadcast news media (Media Research Team Te Kawa a Māui, 2005) found that the foreshore and seabed debate in 2003 was consistently framed as one of inherent conflict between Māori and non-Māori, characterising “Māori as unreasonable and aggressive” and non-Māori as “rational and law-abiding” (p. 127).

TVNZ’s Māori news programme *Te Karere* began in 1982. By the late 1980s and early 1990s there was an upsurge in the development of Māori media which had “as its kaupapa a Māori perspective of news” (McGregor, 1991, p. 16). This included iwi radio stations, National Radio’s *Mana News* programme, and TVNZ’s *Marae*. Walker (2002) suggests that the development of Māori media became necessary to “counter the monocultural depiction of their reality in mainstream media” (p. 231) and that such media focused on covering positive stories about Māori success. TeAwa’s (1996) study of these Māori media found “Māori media cover the news with a different agenda to the mainstream media” (p. 1). In particular, Māori media were shown to focus more on issues than events, and framed bad news stories as being about problems for Māori rather than as conflict between different groups.

There has, therefore, been some examination of the news values reflected in both mainstream and Māori media in New Zealand (McGregor, 1991; TeAwa, 1996). This exploration of news values provides a useful context within which to consider research on the structure of news which arises from decisions made on the basis of these values. It is to the nature of the television news bulletin, therefore, that we turn next.

⁵ Pakeha is a term generally used to refer to New Zealanders of European descent (Kupu Taea, 2004).

2.4 The Television News Bulletin

Levy (1992) suggests that television news audiences are subject to the quick delivery of unhelpfully-brief stories. Indeed, television relies on the added visual dimension to compensate for the brief time within which a news item must be presented. When compared with newspapers, for example, television offers only the briefest summary, both in terms of analysis and the actual number of words used to tell a story (Abel, 1997; Henningham, 1988; Tiffin, 1989). Comrie found that the average story length on TVNZ news declined overall from 1'20"⁶ to 1'07" between 1985 and 1990. Three years later in 1993, Atkinson (2002) also found that the mean news item length was 1'07". However, the more recent comparison of *ONE News* and *3 News* by Comrie and Fountaine (2005/ 2006) found that average story length overall had risen to 1'28".

The portion of the news bulletin actually devoted to what will be referred to here as the 'main news' is generally rather small (Langer, 1998). Calabrese (2005) suggests that "[m]arket forces have led to a speeded-up style of reporting. Stories are told with a faster visual pace" (p. 275). Research on New Zealand news since the 1980s bears out this claim. In the 1993 study of TVNZ news, Cook (2002) found that in 1984, the 40 minute bulletin comprised roughly 23 minutes of news and 15 minutes of non-news (including chat, teasers, weather, sport, and advertisements). In 1996, after the TVNZ news had changed to an hour-long format, there was 26 minutes of news and 32 minutes of non-news. As Cook (2002) notes "[r]ather than an extra 20 minutes of news, the hour long format gives us three more minutes of the information we need to vote, shop, or examine the world and our role in it" (p. 144). Similarly, Comrie (1996) found that the average TVNZ news bulletin had declined from 26'26" in 1986 to 19'16" in 1990, and that the main news itself correspondingly declined from 19'25" (80.0% of the bulletin) to 14'40" (63.4% of the bulletin) in the same period. In 1994 Atkinson (1994a) also found that the opportunity for serious news had "been whittled down to less than half of the bulletin time" (p. 100). In a more recent study, Comrie and Fountaine (2005/ 2006) found that the hour long *ONE News* and *3 News* programmes provided 37 minutes and 35 minutes of main news respectively, around 60% of the bulletin overall by 2003.

⁶ Throughout this thesis minutes and seconds will generally be denoted by ' (minutes) and " (seconds). e.g., Two minutes and three seconds will be shown as 2'03".

As was mentioned above, Cook (2002) included sports news in the analysis of non-news items. Sports stories, generally packaged as a separate segment from main news, made up just over a quarter of the time spent on news overall on TVNZ from 1985 to 1990 (Comrie, 1996). By 2003, this percentage had risen to 31% on *ONE News* and more than 37% on *3 News* (Comrie & Fountaine, 2005/2006). Comrie and Fountaine (2005/2006) also note that, in addition to the stories in the dedicated sports segment, sports stories also feature strongly in the main news topics.

Many authors (e.g., Allan, 2004; Calabrese, 2005; Tiffin, 1989) suggest that the commercial environment means that news bulletins have to be more entertaining and less concerned with presenting only the serious news which was the subject of earlier television broadcasts. One indication that this is the case is the proportion of the bulletin taken up with chat between presenters, or between presenter and journalist. Allan (2004) notes that the purpose of chat is to show how much the newsreaders like each other and their audience, and similarly, Cook (2002) suggests that such banter “forms an important part of the manufacture of a news ‘family’ of presenters” (p. 144). In Comrie’s (1996) analysis of TVNZ news from 1985 to 1990, there was an increase in the average duration of chat per bulletin from just 1.4” in 1985 to 13.2” in 1990. While this was a significant increase over this period, the actual amount of chat per bulletin was relatively small. There is no recent analysis of the extent to which chat contributes to the overall news bulletins on New Zealand television, but Edwards (2002) does make some informal comparisons between *One Network News* and the fledgling *3 News* in 1992, and both bulletins a decade later. The majority of Edwards’ (2002) discussion is about the nature of the news items themselves. However of note here is the observation that *3 News* soon followed the lead of *One News* to the two-newsreader format, and that “the infection of ‘inane babble’ was allowed to spread.” (Edwards, 2002, p. 17).

Headlines are also employed to ‘hook’ the audience into watching the upcoming stories (Comrie, 1996) and teasers “ensure the audience stays with the programme through the advertising break” (Cook, 2002, p. 142). Comrie (1996) also found a trend for increasing number and duration of headlines over the 1985-1990 study period, with a doubling of headline numbers in this time. Comrie’s analysis did not separately measure the duration of teasers, and other than the general note by Cook (2002) that non-news such as teasers increased in the decade to 1996, there is no recent local research on this subject.

Related to the changing profile of the bulletins themselves is the increase in advertising which has also been observed. Television news in the United States has illustrated the shift in news values where “[c]overing the news, once seen primarily as a public service that could also make a profit, became primarily a vehicle for attracting audiences and selling advertising, to make money” (Downie Jr & Kaiser, 2003, p. 243). In New Zealand, the deregulated environment gradually allowed more advertising during the news. This was reflected in Comrie’s (1996) finding that increased advertising was largely responsible for the significant decrease in the amount of the bulletin available for news coverage (from 80% in 1985 to 63.4% in 1990). Cook’s (2002) finding that in 1996 the *One Network News*’ commercial break was 23% of the news hour indicates that this trend to increased advertising became entrenched in the post-deregulation environment.

While some non-news segments of the news bulletin may comprise a relatively small proportion of its duration, their presence does contribute to what we know about the nature of the news overall. There seems to be a general trend towards the main news taking up a decreasing proportion of the bulletin, and for non-news items, such as sport, chat, teasers, and the weather, to increase. This suggests that the overall news package marketed by broadcasters is changing in nature and moving away from a focus on main news. Modern broadcast news converges with entertainment values to provide short summaries of main news items interspersed with additional material to encourage audience loyalty (Allan, 2004; Carter & Allan, 2000; Cook, 2002; Langer, 1998) It is to the remaining segment of the bulletin comprised of main news that we turn next.

2.5 Subjects of the News

As was briefly alluded to above, Carter and Allan (2000) suggest that there is a growing convergence of news and entertainment which is influencing the quality of the news. Evidence for this hypothesis is provided by an examination of the topics of main news bulletins, which includes the predominance of news about celebrities (Allan, 2004) and crime, topics that form a “disproportionate amount of television broadcast” (McGregor, 2002a, p. 82). In the study of TVNZ news from 1985 to 1990, where stories in the sports segment were analysed as part of the main news, Comrie (1996) found that sport was ranked first in terms of the duration of news items. Over the years studied, it received almost twice as much coverage as the second ranked topic, political news. The combined topics of

politics, diplomacy, foreign affairs and economics made up around 40% of the duration of news items. The middle ranked topics during this period were human interest, accident and disaster, crime, health, agriculture and the environment, and public moral problems, which, together, comprised roughly a third of the bulletin. The lowest ranked topics were culture, science and technology, Māori, and education, together making up only 6% of the bulletin. Comrie (1996) notes that over the duration of the study, there was a shift in emphasis from 'serious' to 'tabloid' news, with a rising proportion of the bulletin being devoted to crime, accidents and disasters, human interest and public moral problems. Similarly, in the study of *One Network News* in 1994, Atkinson (2002) found that the five main topics covered in the bulletin were sports (24%), crime (14%), war (9%), disaster (7%), and human interest (7%). Comrie and Fountaine's (2005/ 2006) study included stories from the sports segment in their analysis of the main news, and found that around a third of *ONE News* and *3 News* bulletins were devoted to sports news. They found that tabloid topics (crime, human interest, accidents and disasters, and public moral problems) were allocated more bulletin time than were a general grouping of political news categories (politics, diplomacy and foreign affairs, and economics).

The move away from politics to human interest stories appears to be an ongoing trend in television news (Carter & Allan, 2000), and is illustrated by the Australian study by Phillips and Tapsall (2007). In this 2005 study of general news (excluding the sports news) crime was the greatest news category (at 19%) and was followed by courts and justice, politics, emergencies and disasters. In contrast to coverage of 'serious' political news, which made up nearly 10% of the bulletin, news about personalities and entertainment was more than 5% of the news content. An international study of news content (Shoemaker & Cohen, 2006) confirmed these trends; where sport was included, on average it was the biggest single news category across ten countries and three combined media genres. Furthermore, seven news stories topics (sports, internal politics, cultural events, international politics, business, internal order, and human interest) made up two thirds of the news overall. New Zealand was not one of the countries studied, but its near-neighbour Australia was, where 21.3% (again, the single largest category) of news was about sports.

Consistent with this trend away from 'serious' news, some research has found that news now focuses more on domestic concerns, at the expense of foreign issues (Carter & Allan, 2000). In the study of *One Network News* in 1994,

Atkinson (2002) found that slightly over half the bulletin was domestic rather than international news. The news that did cover other countries focused predominantly on western countries. Atkinson (2002) notes that "[b]esides demonstrating a consistently narrow view of world politics, foreign news is predominantly concerned with disaster, crime, celebrities and sports." (p. 127). It appears that this trend applies to the news media more broadly too. Zuckerman (2004) suggests that newspaper coverage of foreign news is directly correlated with a nation's wealth, echoing Galtung and Ruge's (1973) contention that élite nations are generally considered more newsworthy than non-élite nations. The exception to this was the United Kingdom, which tended to also give disproportionate coverage to former colonies, suggesting that 'cultural proximity' is also an important factor in news selection (Galtung & Ruge, 1973). Similarly, in the analysis of Australian television news, Phillips and Tapsall (2007) found that in 2005 international news tended to be dominated by Indonesia, a neighbouring country of intense interest to Australia due to its own domestic security concerns. A general survey of United States news media in 2006 also found that the war in Iraq was by far the most dominant story topic (Centre for Media and Public Affairs, 2007). It may be that the United States' involvement in Iraq means that this is an international news topic with a primarily domestic focus.

Related to the comparison of domestic and international news, is the finding by Comrie (1996) that stories which originated overseas made up nearly 40% of all news stories on TVNZ news in 1990. There is no other New Zealand literature which appears to measure this feature of television news stories. However, the origin of news stories is a potentially important aspect of New Zealand news bulletins, because it provides an insight into the extent to which broadcasters depend on overseas producers of news (such as the BBC or CCN). Such stories may contribute to the international news content of news bulletins, but are unlikely to contribute to a locally focused interpretation of international events.

There has been no content analysis undertaken which compares the story topics of news in Māori and non-Māori news media. TeAwa's analysis of *Mana News* (1996) is the only systematic study to date of any Māori news programme. It revealed that health was the largest story topic category (12.7%), followed by land issues (11.1%) and Treaty issues (policy) (9.5%). Popular culture and personalities were each less than 2% of stories, and crime news did not feature at all. *Mana News* does not have a specific sports segment, but setting that aside, these findings suggest that news programmes which intend to address

Māori issues and news stories may focus on different topics than those routinely found in mainstream news. This is consistent with the finding discussed earlier, that Māori news values may themselves differ from those in mainstream media (TeAwa, 1996).

In conclusion, research to date suggests that both internationally and locally, the nature of the nightly news bulletin has gradually changed to incorporate more sensational and 'tabloid' news, and less 'serious' news (Atkinson, 2002; Carter & Allan, 2000; Comrie, 1996; Phillips & Tapsall, 2007), but that there is little information about the nature of Māori news programmes and topics. As was discussed earlier, the composition of the current free-to-air New Zealand news environment that is the subject of this thesis has not been long established. The relatively recent introduction of the TVNZ Charter, the advent of Māori Television and *Te Kāea*, and the establishment of Prime Television's early evening news programme, all mean that there has yet to be any research which systematically examines the nature of the bulletins. We have seen some general local and international trends towards highly commercialised national news bulletins with a strong emphasis on entertainment values and a small number of short stories, often focused on 'tabloid' rather than 'serious' news topics (Atkinson, 2002; Comrie, 1996; Crisell, 2006; Edwards, 2002; Langer, 1998; Levy, 1992; Phillips & Tapsall, 2007). This thesis seeks to examine whether these general findings hold true for the current free-to-air news programmes examined here. It should be noted that this analysis will focus on the locally-produced news stories broadcast on the four programmes, in order to best capture the outcomes of news-making decisions made by the programmes themselves. One of the news-making decisions to be examined is the selection and representation of sources. The literature about sources in the news will be examined in the next section.

2.6 News Sources

Central to the decisions that shape a news item are the selection and presentation of sources. Journalists "rely on sources for the simple reason that they cannot possibly be present all the time and in all the places where news is happening" (Tidey, 2003, p. 72). The role of sources is to provide support for assertions made in the news, and to convey their views and recommendations on the issue under discussion (Ericson, Baranak, & Chan, 1989). This section examines the findings about the nature of news media sources, including the

characteristics of the sources most likely to be accessed by the news media, and the notion of sources as 'primary definers' (Hall et al., 1978; Welch et al., 2000).

A substantial literature examines the patterns of source-type use in news coverage in newspapers (e.g. J. D. Brown, Bybee, Wearden, & Straughan, 1987; Gans, 1979; Lacy & Coulson, 2000; Powell & Self, 2003; Sigal, 1973; Welch et al., 2000) and television (Berkowitz, 1987; Comrie, 1999; Comrie & Fountaine, 2005; Grant & Dimmick, 2000; Hallin, 1992a, 1992b; Poindexter, Smith, & Heider, 2003; Tanner, 2004). Grabe et al. (1999) analysed the types of sources used in television news magazine programmes, and radio news sources were included in research by McGregor and Comrie (1995) which also examined television news. More recently, research attention has been focused on source patterns in internet news coverage (Hyde, 2006; Jha, 2007).

It is journalistic convention to choose authoritative sources over other potential sources (Sigal, 1986). According to McGregor (1990), authoritative sources are those who are "reliable', accredited and legitimate" (p.37). Dunwoody and Ryan (1987) suggest that sources must be accessible, able to communicate and, "perhaps, most importantly, they must be credible" (p. 21). Research has focused variously on source characteristics such as age, sex, ethnicity (Grabe et al., 1999), geographic region (Whitney, Fritzler, & Jones, 1985), and of primary concern here, status. Since the 1970s a body of research has emerged that suggests that the authoritative sources that meet this standard of credibility and inform the news tend to disproportionately reflect the views of a powerful élite, comprising largely of official (mainly government) representatives who have the opportunity to reinforce and legitimise the status quo (Atkinson, 1994b; J. D. Brown et al., 1987; Ericson et al., 1989; Gans, 1979; Grabe et al., 1999; Grant & Dimmick, 2000; Wood, 1996).

Somewhat confusingly, researchers have used a variety of approaches to categorise élite sources, focusing variously on organisational affiliation (Ericson et al., 1989), professional status (Grabe et al., 1999), and whether sources are official or 'ordinary' (Lacy & Coulson, 2000). Despite this lack of uniform categories, the findings reveal a consistent theme; élite sources dominate the news. For example, in the study of major television network news in the United States in the 1970s (and the research which provided the foundation for this field of inquiry) Gans (1979) distinguished between 'knowns' and 'unknowns'. He found that 71% of the news used 'known' sources such as government office holders and social, political and economic public figures. Conversely, 21% were

'unknown' sources, including individual voters, victims of crime, and protesters. In an examination of page one stories in *The New York Times* and the *Washington Post* from 1949-1969, Sigal (1973) found that nearly half of all sources could be categorised as United States government officials. A further quarter of the sources were foreign official sources. In a replication of Sigal's (1973) work, Brown et al. (1987) found that more than 50% of *The New York Times* and *Washington Post* stories (sampled during 1979 and 1980) used sources categorised as being affiliated to some government body – a figure they considered to be disproportionately large, noting that the “[c]ontinued reliance on governmental and other élite sources necessarily limit[s] the diversity of information available to the public” (J. D. Brown et al., 1987, p. 54).

Recent research has examined particular topics of news coverage in order to provide a detailed examination of source patterns in the news. For example, Welch et al. (2000) carried out a content analysis of newspaper articles on criminal justice in the *New York Times* in 1992 and 1995. This research concluded that, not only did government officials, corrections officials and corrections managers collectively account for 57% of the sources, but also that 62% of sources supported the government's correctional strategies. Similarly, Lacy and Coulson (2000) carried out a comparative analysis of the reporting by six United States metropolitan daily newspapers on motor vehicle emissions standards. It was hypothesised that government and business sources would be used more extensively than consumer and environmental sources. This hypothesis was supported; the dominant categories of sources were government (43%) and business (39%). Lacy and Coulson (2000) concluded that, while it is difficult to determine an appropriate objective standard for source diversity, it is clear that these groups were over-represented when compared with consumers (5% of sources), environmentalists (4%), or scientists (2%).

Environmental news has received a significant amount of research attention. Miller and Riechert (2000) note that in researching environmental topics, journalists are much more likely to seek the views of official sources than unofficial ones, such as interest groups. They suggest that “[b]ecause environmental risk often enters the news via disaster or protest, journalists' preferences for official sources have particularly strong impact” and that the position of official sources “contrasts sharply with that of environmental sources, who are likely to be unorganised residents, ad-hoc citizen groups or ... based in distant locations” (Miller & Riechert, 2000, p. 51). These sources are unlikely to

be seen as either accessible or particularly credible in these circumstances. In a related example, Smith (1993) found that the majority of sources named in a survey of major United States newspaper coverage of the Exxon Valdez oil spill represented institutional élites, and that 51% of these sources were governmental. The sources chosen by the media obviously influence the type of story which is told (Berkowitz, 1987), and Corbett (1998) hypothesised that a dominance of government sources would result in environmental stories (in a regular local television package of environmental stories) that were “centred in the government arena than in any other arena” (p. 227). This hypothesis was supported, with government sources making up 40% of total sources, and 54% of stories involved a government context, rather than business, environment, or science.

As a last example of research which focused on a particular news topic, Ayeni (2004) examined the United States mainstream news media’s coverage of the second Iraq war. The war dominated the news media even before hostilities began, and remained a major focus of news coverage. Ayeni (2004) found that (non-military) official sources accounted for a third of all news sources and military sources were a further 26%, either representing the military or providing analysis of the situation.

Much of the attention given to the status of sources has focused on the implications of the predominance of élite sources (e.g., Gans, 1979; Sigal, 1973). However there has also been some investigation into the likelihood that the views of non-élite people, or “folks like us” (Wood, 1996), will be included in the news. In particular, researchers have proposed that in an increasingly commercial environment, more non-élite sources will be used to promote an emotional connection with the audience (Atkinson, 1994b) and to allow a diverse range of voices to be heard (Grabe et al., 1999). Sigal (1986) speculated that news coverage which included ordinary people is news “in which the individual stands for a social aggregate” (p. 13). In an analysis of television news coverage of the TWA plane hijacking in 1985, Atwater and Green (1988) found that non-official sources (including the hostages and their relatives or friends) greatly outnumbered official sources, perhaps indicating that the type of news story will play a part in determining source choices. Atkinson (1994b) similarly identified a shift towards more “emotionally coloured, victim-oriented” (p. 162) stories in an analysis of *One Network News* (1985 to 1992) that may well also reflect the use of a wider range of sources. To test this hypothesis Comrie (1999) examined the

trends in sources used by *One Network News* in 1985, 1989, 1990, and 1996. An increasing use of non-élite sources was found over this period, with Comrie (1999) concluding that there was a greater diversity of sources in the latter years. Comrie (1999) also found that there was a decreased emphasis on official sources, although these still dominated sources overall. Comrie and Fontaine (2005) found that non-élite sources were 38% and 40% on *ONE News* in 2000 and 2003 respectively. They concluded, in relation to Comrie's (1999) earlier work, that the "increased emphasis on non-élite sources associated with a commercial news format in 1990 has been maintained" (p. 8).

Grabe et al. (1999) also sought to investigate whether there is a trend towards the inclusion of non-élite sources in the news by examining the sources used by two non-traditional tabloid news programmes (*60 Minutes* and *Hardcopy*) in the United States. They proposed that such programmes pursue the mass audience by including greater representation of non-élite sources. This research showed partial support for this thesis; both programmes relied on élite sources (41.3% of sources overall), although *Hard Copy*, in particular, also used a wide variety of non-élite sources. Grabe et al. (1999) note that while non-élite voices are more likely to be heard in non-traditional news programmes such as *60 Minutes* and *Hardcopy*, more attention needs to be paid to the way such sources are used. This is because "tabloid news often makes a spectacle of those who appear in their stories" (Grabe et al., 1999, p. 306) and it cannot therefore be concluded that their inclusion reflects the same kind of representation traditionally accorded to élite sources. Further to this, Lee (2001) suggests that in stories where élite sources form the core of a story, non-élite sources may supplement rather than replace them. Again, this suggests that the non-élite sources may be used in different ways to their élite counterparts.

We have seen that, by and large, there has been a tendency for élite sources (variously defined) to dominate news coverage, although there is some speculation that this trend may change as news coverage becomes more 'tabloid' in nature (Comrie, 1999; Grabe et al., 1999). Over the past three decades it has generally been concluded that the status of sources is important because it is the sources of news stories who become the 'primary definers' of social events by taking the opportunity to impart their own interpretations of events and issues (Hall et al., 1978; Welch, Weber, & Edwards, 2000). That is, if one status group dominates the news then the news will primarily be presented and understood in terms of the views held by this group (Ericson et al., 1989; Gans, 1979; Sigal,

1986). Primary definers have the opportunity to impart their own interpretations of events and issues (Hall et al., 1978; Welch et al., 2000). It is argued that these sources have greater access to journalists and therefore potentially a greater role than other sources in determining what becomes news (Lacy & Coulson, 2000). Ericson et al. (1989) suggest that source selection tells the audience who has information, and who is excluded from sharing their opinions.

Hall et al. (1978) suggest that the journalistic practice of seeking the views of accredited and credible sources, discussed earlier, results in:

a systematically structured over-accessing to the media of those in powerful and privileged institutional positions. The media thus tend, faithfully and impartially, to reproduce symbolically the existing structure of power in society's institutional order (p. 58)

If a narrow range of élite sources have greater access to the media, then it is this group which has the opportunity to determine both the news agenda, and the way news stories are framed and interpreted (Lacy & Coulson, 2000; Reese, Grant, & Danielian, 1994). For example, if government sources dominate coverage of crime, then they will also provide the frame for the dominant interpretation of criminal issues (Welch, Fenwick, & Roberts, 1997). Or, as Hyde (2006) found, the domination of corporate and research interests in coverage of genetic cloning resulted in primarily positive, future-oriented news stories about this topic.

To add to this discussion, there are also some researchers who suggest that the relationship between élite sources and primary definition may need to take into account some of the characteristics of source groups themselves, and the processes which contribute to news production. Firstly, just as it appears that there are some inconsistencies with the finding that élite sources dominate news coverage (Atwater, 1984), there may also be circumstances where the views of élite sources do not reflect a single dominant, or defining, view. Berkowitz and Beach (1993) ask; “[t]o what degree does a lack of diversity in news sources actually correspond to a lack of diversity in information?” (p. 12) For example, Cottle (1993) found that even trying to determine a category of élite sources was problematic, as the range of institutional and interest-group sources was “characterised by internal as well as cross-organisational divisions of interest and opinions” (p. 120). Schlesinger (1990) suggests therefore, that the identity of primary definition may be contested and shifting ground.

Related to this, it is argued that the power of sources to be primary definers lies not only in getting access to the media, but also in managing the nature of the coverage they achieve. In the analysis of the news about the poll tax (a universal tax proposed in England), Deacon and Golding (1994) suggest that, although the Government should have had all the characteristics of a primary definer in terms of authority and access to the media, ultimately on this topic it became a discredited source “consistently on the defensive and increasingly unable to control the direction of public and media debate” (pp. 201-202). Although to a lesser extent, Williams (1993) also found that in news coverage of the Vietnam war “[é]lite sources were not always successful in their attempts to dictate the agenda” (p. 326).

The degree to which groups may or may not succeed in becoming primary definers may also depend on the strategies they use to gain access to the news. Manning (2001) notes, for example, that while groups such as Greenpeace and the World Wildlife Fund may have traditionally been considered marginalised and non-élite sources, they may now be considered (by newsmakers) more legitimate organisations who have gained at least some opportunity to shape debate. Thus, the willingness and ability of sources to fit into the news-making process (for example, by being accessible, and having information) may also play a major role first, in determining source choices, but second, in defining the nature of the subsequent coverage (Deacon, 1996; Deacon & Golding, 1994; Yoon, 2005).

In conclusion then, it seems clear that élite sources are more likely to be selected as sources, and therefore also more likely to have the opportunity to shape audiences’ understanding of issues. A significant body of research has found official (often government) and institutional accredited sources dominate news stories (J. D. Brown et al., 1987; Lacy & Coulson, 2000; Manning, 2001; Powell & Self, 2003; Salwen, 1995; Sigal, 1986; C. Smith, 1993; Steele, 1995; Welch et al., 2000). However, it is also important to note that the nature of primary definers may evolve according to context;

Primary definition undoubtedly occurs. The media are not the sole sources of vocabularies and rhetorics about policy. Neither are they, however, passive conduits to a torrent of ideology from centres of power. Primary definition is a process, not a characteristic of those who exercise its privilege (Deacon & Golding, 1994, p. 9).

2.7 Source Speech

Related to the issue of source status is the extent to which sources have the opportunity to be directly represented in the news. This includes being quoted (in print, radio, or television) or appearing as a speaker (on radio or television). How sources are represented is important because it reflects whether sources have the opportunity to “tell their story” (McGregor & Comrie, 1995, p. 45). Several researchers have commented on the increasing tendency for sources’ views to be mediated by a reporter (e.g., Hallin, 1992a; Hartley, 1982). Hallin (1992b) suggests that the words of sources are “treated as raw material to be taken apart, combined with other sounds and images, and reintegrated into a new narrative” (pp. 9-10). It has also been noted that the increasing ‘morselisation’ of the news, the “reduction of everything to a short component of itself” (Atkinson, 1994b, p. 152), means that sources now have less opportunity to be directly heard than they did in the past. One study of the relationship between sources and journalists concluded that the news process required simple answers to simple questions, thus contributing to the simplified nature of source speech (Fenton, Bryman, Deacon, & Birmingham, 1997).

Previous research has compared the extent to which sources are directly represented or are cited. For example, McGregor and Comrie (1995) found that on TVNZ news 24% of sources were only cited, whereas on TV3 the figure was 52%. Furthermore, Comrie (1996) found that declining numbers of sources were only cited in TVNZ news from 1985 to 1990. However, no previous research has been identified which compares the frequency of different source types speaking directly (as opposed to being cited). And, in particular, there has been no comparison made of the relative frequencies of élite and non-élite sources speaking directly in the news.

There is some evidence that sources are likely to be directly represented on television news for shorter periods of time than they once were. Some of this research has focused on the duration of the average sound bite, which is the length of time a source has to speak without this speech being interrupted or mediated in some way (Grabe et al., 1999; Hallin, 1992a; Rupa, 2006). For example, Atkinson’s (1994a) examination of *One Network News* sound bites from 1985 to 1992 concluded that, not only did the average length of sound bites decrease (from 16.4” to 7.4”), but also that the large majority of sound bites were bunched at the shorter end of the scale, with longer sound bites tending to occur in lighter news items. This finding is also supported by Hallin (1992b) who found

that television news has become decreasingly likely to present long segments of presidential election speeches (from elections over the years 1968 to 1988 in the United States) without packaging and editing them into short sound bites. Hallin (1992b) concluded that this had a corresponding effect on politicians who began to change their speeches to cater to this kind of treatment by the news. Some disconfirming evidence comes from Lowry and Shidler (1999) who found that, while the length of sound bites in presidential campaigns in the United States decreased throughout the 1970s and 1980s, this slide was halted by the 1992 election. McGregor and Comrie (1995) also found that while sound bite length decreased from 1985 to 1995 on *One Network News*, it remained about the same on *3 News*, and increased on National Radio's *Morning Report* news. However, in an update of Hallin's (1992b) work, Bucy and Grabe (2007) again found that sound bite duration for presidential candidates decreased from 1992 to 2004, and that 'image bites' increased.

While most research about source speech focuses on the duration of actual sound bites (e.g. Hallin, 1992b), there is also some evidence to suggest that the total length of source speech is also decreasing. McGregor and Comrie (1995) note that findings about sound bites should be considered in the context of the total amount of time sources are given in news stories. They found that the average time *TV One* gave to sources speaking directly reduced from 21.0" in 1985 to 10.4" in 1994. Similarly, the average time *TV3* gave to sources speaking directly was 13.4" in 1990 (its first year of broadcast), 17.6" in 1992 (when the programme increased to an hour in length), and then reduced to 10.5" in 1994. More recently, Comrie and Fountaine (2005) found that the average (total) source speaking time on *ONE News* was 10.87" in 2000 and 11.26" in 2003. This tends to suggest that average speaking time has not declined any further since the 1995 study, and perhaps may even be increasing slightly (McGregor & Comrie, 1995).⁷

There is little research examining the use of source speech, or of sound bites, in news which is not focused on election campaigns. In one such example, an

⁷ Average source speaking time can be measured in one of two ways; either by averaging source speech across all stories, or by averaging only for those stories where the target source group speaks. The former tells us how much speech there is for each source category for all stories in the bulletin, and the latter tells us the average length of time an individual source speaks for. It is the second measure that is the focus of the current research. However, there is some ambiguity in the literature as to which of these two measures are used when reporting average source speech.

examination of sources used in news coverage about the Oklahoma City bombing trial, Esposito (1998) found that one group of élite sources, legal experts, were a quarter of the sources but had half the sound bite time. And in a local example of non-election coverage, Comrie's (1999) study of *One Network News*, there was a clear decrease in the length of sound bites in the years sampled. For example, the average sound bite length was 18.5" in 1985 but only 8.6" in 1996. Interestingly, while non-affiliated citizens (generally people in the street asked to comment on an issue) had short sound bites, by 1996 they comprised 11% of source speech time overall (an increase from 2.4% in 1985). Politicians spoke longer on air than any other source category throughout the research period, and government sources and officials were the two source groups who dominated total source speech time. Comrie and Fountaine (2005) found that elected government sources had the greatest average speaking time in 2003 on TV One News (13.4") and unaffiliated citizens the least (at just 5.9"). This latter finding was despite the fact that unaffiliated citizens outnumbered non-governmental organisations, observers/ unofficial commentators, and celebrities (all of whom had greater average speaking times than unaffiliated citizens) (Comrie & Fountaine, 2005). This indicates that even when such non-élite sources are accessed, their opportunity to speak remains relatively small.

2.8 Journalists Speaking on Camera

The focus of this review so far has been on sources used by each news programme, and on the content of the bulletins overall. However, a further factor has become an increasingly important contributor to the nature of the news; the role of the journalist in telling these stories (McGregor, 2002b). As noted earlier, the prominence of journalists in the mediation of the presentation of news stories to audiences is described by McGregor (2002b) as the 'celebrification' of the journalist. McGregor (2002b) notes that the 'piece to camera', where the journalist is pictured on camera delivering some of the story "sees journalists become sources of news, instant experts marshalling facts, delivering judgements, advancing opinions, talking with authority, and often having both the only word and the last word in news stories" (p. 121). According to Taylor (1993), such appearances are intended to reinforce the authority and presence of the journalist, and promote their credibility. McGregor and Comrie (1995) found that pieces to camera were associated with stories which were less balanced and made less distinction between fact and opinion than did other news stories.

The extent to which journalists speak on camera is a focus of this research because of its relationship to the overall content of news stories. According to Grabe et al. (1999), sources do not compete with journalists for airtime, but rather the role of the journalist is expanding. We have also seen that stories and source speech are getting shorter, so the trend towards the inclusion of journalists' speech suggests that it may now be an increasingly dominant part of the stories; their on-camera appearances take up a significant proportion of the story overall, and over-shadow the contributions of sources.

2.9 Conclusion

The review of the literature has examined the research findings relating to the aspects of television news which are the subject of this research. These include the finding that television has become more reflective of entertainment values over time, and that this is reflected in the choices of news topics covered, and the selection and treatment of news sources. A further emerging trend in the news appears to be the increased likelihood that non-élite sources are beginning to be included in the news more often, although the dominance of élite sources is still apparent overall. A further illustration of the values exhibited by television news is the increasingly prominent contribution on-camera journalists in news stories.

The elements of television news examined above form the basis for the content analysis research undertaken. The next chapter will now set out the rationale and method of the study of *ONE News*, *3 News*, *Prime News*, and *Te Kāea*. Following that, the results chapter will describe the findings in relation to the recent research questions, and the Discussion chapter will examine the findings in the light of the literature. The final chapter will draw some Conclusions about the research overall, and consider some possible limitations of the study. It will also set out some possibly fruitful areas of further study raised by the current research findings.

3 Method

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the content analysis method used to answer the research questions posed in chapter one. Firstly, quantitative content analysis is described and evaluated as an appropriate method to use to address the research questions. Secondly, the steps of the content analysis are described; these are, the selection of media, sampling, content categories, coding schedules, and procedures. Lastly, some issues relating to the coding decisions are raised, and the consequences of these for the results are discussed.

3.2 Content Analysis as a Method

Content analysis is a systematic examination of the content of communications texts (Frey, Botan, & Kreps, 2000; Hansen, Cottle, Negrine, & Newbold, 1998). It is a long-established, and primarily quantitative, method of analysing various aspects of texts to enable conclusions to be drawn about the nature of the messages within them (Frey et al., 2000). The robustness of content analysis methods depends on how a number of important steps are carried out; the selection of texts, determining the unit of analysis, developing content categories, and coding and analysing the data (Frey et al., 2000; Riffe, Lacy, & Fico, 1998).

The current study lends itself to content analysis because it offers a quantitative method with which to answer the research questions. The main focus of the current research is to describe the nature of the news bulletins of four news programmes overall, and to investigate some particular characteristics of the stories within those bulletins; source types and sound bites. Thus, content analysis provides a systematic, and potentially replicable, means by which to do undertake this research (Hansen et al., 1998).

3.3 Content Analysis

3.3.1 Media Selection

The evening news bulletins on *ONE News*, *3 News*, *Prime News* and *Te Kāea* were chosen as the topic of the content analysis. These four programmes represent the main evening news broadcasts of four of the six free-to-air channels in New Zealand. The fifth and sixth free-to-air channels, *TV 2* and *C4*, do not broadcast news programmes. Television One (*ONE News*) and Māori

Television (*Te Kāea*) are publicly owned (by the Crown, and, in the case of Māori Television, jointly by Te Pūtahi Paoho, the Māori Electoral College), and TV3 (*3 News*) and Prime Television (*Prime News*) are owned and operated by private companies (Mediaworks New Zealand Ltd and SKY respectively). *Prime News* airs at 5.30pm and is half an hour long. *ONE News* and *3 News* are hour long bulletins at 6pm. The half hour Māori Television news programme, *Te Kāea*, airs daily at 7.30pm in te reo Māori, and then is repeated with English subtitles at 11pm. The latter programme was chosen for the sample as the researcher is not fluent in te reo Māori, but the data analysis and conclusions drawn relate equally to the original bulletin.

3.3.2 Sample

One of the aims of content analysis research is to ensure a representative sample of data (Frey et al., 2000) which is not biased in any way (Hansen et al., 1998). The sampling method for television news data should, therefore, take into account any known characteristics of news coverage, such as different weekday and weekend news patterns, or changed coverage during holiday periods. In selecting a “reasonably representative” (Hansen et al., 1998, p. 102) sample for this research the two different populations of data required by the research questions need to be considered. The first research question, which seeks to provide a profile of the overall news topics of the four programmes, required a representative sample of *programmes*. The remaining research questions, which focus on how each story is told (in terms of sources and direct speech), required a representative sample of *stories* from the four programmes. For this reason, it was important to select a large enough sample of stories to make analysis possible, but also to select a sample that took into account the possible variances in news coverage across the week.

Consideration was given to the reliability of random, consecutive day, and constructed week samples. In an examination of sampling in newspaper content analysis, Riffe, Aust, and Lacy (1993) found that constructed week sampling is a more reliable method than either random or consecutive day sampling in estimating the average number of local news stories per day. This is because this method avoids the possibility of over-sampling individual weekdays (as random sampling may) and can be used to reliably estimate content for longer than a six month period (unlike consecutive day sampling). Riffe et al. (1993) concluded

that two constructed weeks were most efficient method for estimating a year's worth of local newspaper stories.

These findings were considered relevant to this study because, as with newspaper coverage, television news also has some differences between weekend and weekday news programmes. For example, in weekend bulletins there may be more extensive coverage of sport to reflect weekend sports activity, and news which relies on business week activities will be unavailable for reporting. Similarly, news coverage patterns may vary from week to week to reflect significant or unusual news events (Fountaine & McGregor, 1999).

Further research by Riffe, Lacy, Nagovan, and Burkum (1996) examined the applicability of the earlier findings relating to newspaper stories (Riffe et al., 1993) to broadcast media. They found that larger samples may be required to achieve the same level of reliability in content analysis of broadcast news, as time constraints mean it has greater variability and is "more sensitive to the news environment than is news selection at papers" (Riffe et al., 1996, p. 164). For example, Riffe et al. (1996) suggest that the most efficient form of sampling to adequately predict a year's content is a random selection of two days from each month for a total of 24 days; a much more resource intensive method than that found appropriate in print media. The limited literature on broadcast media content analysis methods means that there are few valid and established guidelines for sampling for a study of this nature (Comrie, 1996; Riffe et al., 1996). Whereas previous studies (Riffe et al., 1993; Riffe et al., 1996) have focused on the 'blunt' elements of news content such as story topic and duration of stories, the present study also examines the number and nature of sources within each story, and the duration of source speech. It is difficult, therefore, to determine what would comprise adequate sampling to reliably represent such 'finer' elements of broadcast news stories.

With these considerations in mind, the sample in the present study was one constructed week. A constructed week sample was chosen to allow for changing patterns of coverage over the days of the week (Riffe et al., 1993) and to overcome the possibility that any one consecutive day news week would be atypical in some way (Fountaine & McGregor, 1999; Hansen et al., 1998), as is discussed above. Use of the same constructed week for all programmes means the comparison made between the programmes was a direct one; that is, analysis reflected each network's coverage of the same 'news days'. The decision to analyse only one constructed week (rather than two or more) was

primarily determined by resource constraints. It seems reasonable, however, to conclude, based on Riffe et al. (1993) and Riffe et al. (1996) that this method will ensure a sufficiently representative sample to enable appropriate analysis and conclusions to be drawn.

To select the main study data, the six weeks beginning on Monday 22 October 2007 were numbered one to six and a die was rolled to randomly select in which of those weeks each day (Monday to Sunday) would be recorded. This period of data collection was selected for two reasons; to fit within the time available to the researcher for data collection, and to avoid the Rugby World Cup coverage and the pre-Christmas Parliamentary recess. While both the Rugby World Cup and the Parliamentary recess would contribute to the year's news coverage overall, it was considered that they would be unhelpful in trying to ascertain typical coverage for analysis.

The days initially selected were:

Monday 19 November 2007	(week 5)
Tuesday 13 November 2007	(week 4)
Wednesday 31 October 2007	(week 2)
Thursday 25 October 2007	(week 1)
Friday 30 November 2007	(week 6)
Saturday 17 November 2007	(week 4)
Sunday 11 November 2007	(week 3)

On Saturday 17 November the 11pm *Te Kāea* bulletin was broadcast late (it appears Māori Television moves this late bulletin around on Saturday nights to accommodate other scheduling) and so was not completely recorded. All programmes were therefore rerecorded on Saturday 8 December (the Saturday in the 7th week) as a replacement. The final sample was therefore 28 new programmes made up of: *ONE News* (6-7pm), *3 News* (6-7pm), *Prime News* (5.30-6pm) and *Te Kāea* (11-11.30pm) on:

Monday 19 November 2007	(week 5)
Tuesday 13 November 2007	(week 4)
Wednesday 31 October 2007	(week 2)
Thursday 25 October 2007	(week 1)
Friday 30 November 2007	(week 6)
Saturday 8 December 2007	(week 7)
Sunday 11 November 2007	(week 3)

Each programme in the sample was recorded in the School of Communication and Journalism, Massey University, and then transferred to DVD for coding. The data were viewed on a computer using *DVD Player* (version 4.6.5, Apple Inc., 2005).

3.3.3 Development of Content Categories

A test sample was recorded which comprised the stories from all four bulletins (*ONE News*, *3 News*, *Prime News* and *Te Kāea*) on 1 October 2007. Preliminary content categories were tested and refined using this data, and were finalised as follows:

3.3.3.1 News bulletin segments

In order to analyse the overall profile (in terms of the duration of each part) of the news bulletins in the sample (Research Question 1) categories were developed to reflect the main segments. Some segments are generally self-identified by the news programmes themselves; for example, where they were present, each programme explicitly announced its *business*, *sport* and *weather* segments. Similarly, *headlines* were either announced as such, or preceded by a statement such as “tonight ...” or “ahead on [programme]”, and *teasers* were easily identified as any reference to future content (in either this programme, or another one) excluding headlines. Introductory and concluding *music* segments were obviously delineated from other content. The definition for *chat* drew on the examination of New Zealand news by Comrie (1996) and, to some extent, the analysis of ‘cootchie coo’ news by Edwards (2002). While Edwards’ (2002) discussion also focused on broader attitudes and language within the news, for the purposes of this research only discrete, identifiable statements which did not contribute information were categorised as *chat*. This was because the research questions required a quantifiable definition of content, rather than a qualitative technique for making a judgement about tone or attitude. The definitions of the news bulletin segments are described in Table 1.

Table 1

News bulletin segment definitions used in the study

News segment	Description
Main news	Any story not in the Business, Sport, or Weather segments of the bulletin is included in the Main news.
Sport	This includes any sports story identified as being part of the Sport segment of the bulletin. This excludes any sports story that was part of the main bulletin.
Weather	This is the weather forecast and reporting of the day's weather identified as a separate segment by the news reader. It excludes any weather-related stories in the main bulletin.
Headlines	This is a summary of the day's top stories prior to the Main bulletin or at the beginning of a segment.
Teasers/ promos	Any reference to stories coming up in the same bulletin or to be covered in another programme or on a website is coded as Teaser/ promo. For example, <i>ONE News</i> ' promotion of <i>Close Up</i> or <i>3 News</i> ' promotion of <i>Campbell Live</i> .
Chat/ salutations	Any exchange of banter or pleasantries between news readers, or between news reader and reporter, that is of more than one second in duration. One second is the smallest unit of measurement possible, and so 'chat' that runs into news items is necessarily excluded. Straightforward introduction of the reporter's name and location is included in the relevant story.
Business	This comprises the reporting of currency markets and stock exchange movement during the day. It also includes the once a week 'interview' on <i>3 News</i> with a representative of ASB, who gives both this information and other related news. Other business stories are included in the Main bulletin.
Music/ announcement of programme	This includes music played at the beginning or end of the bulletin or segment, and includes any announcement of the date, name of the programme, or name of the news reader. It also includes music played while scenes from the stories of the day are displayed at the end of the bulletin.
Advertisements	This is a record of the duration of the advertisements during the bulletin.
Total length of bulletin	This is the total duration of the news programme excluding the advertisements but including all other segments above.

3.3.3.2 *News story topics*

The analysis of overall bulletin content also required the development of story topic categories (Research Question 1). Twenty initial story topic categories were developed drawing on those used by Atwater (1984), Davie and Lee (1995), and Comrie (1996). These were: accident/ disaster; arts; crime/ courts/ police/ justice; culture; economic activity; education; environment/ ecology; health/ medicine; human interest; labour relations/ unions; politics/ government; public moral issues; race relations; science/ inventions; sport; transport/ road safety; war/ defence; weather; welfare/ social policy. Following analysis of the test sample, described above, the news story topics were finalised and defined as described in Table 2.

Table 2
News story topics used in the study

Story topic	Description
Accident/ disaster	Includes natural disasters, and traffic and other accidents.
Arts	Performing and visual arts.
Consumer issues	Product recalls, consumer activities and complaints.
Crime/ courts/ police/ justice	Includes wider justice issues (except where covered by Politics/ government topic), court proceedings, and police investigations.
Culture	Includes religious festivals and events where ethnic or cultural identity was the primary feature of the story. Includes popular culture and lifestyle topics (e.g. garden show).
Defence	Domestic armed forces and commemoration of war.
Economic activity	General economic activity, including stories about trade and production where the primary focus was economic.
Energy	Alternative energies, fuel supply, and energy companies.
Education	All aspects of pre-school, primary, secondary and tertiary education.
Environment/ ecology	Includes conservation and the natural world.
Health/ medicine	Health service delivery, health protection, and public health.
Human interest	Includes stories where the primary focus is generally an individual or group and cannot be classified as belonging to another story topic. Excludes celebrity profiles.
Immigration	New Zealand or international immigration trends, policies or events (except where covered by politics/ government).
Labour relations/ unions	Union activity, industrial relations.
Māori/ Pakeha relations	Treaty settlements, issues concerning interaction between Māori and Pakeha.
Personality profile/ celebrity	Celebrity profile including obituaries.
Politics/ government	Political activity at local, national, and international levels.
Public moral issues	Includes public debate on issues such as discipline of children, same sex marriage, smoking age.
Race relations (not Māori/ Pakeha)	Race Relations Office, initiatives to promote race relations, racism, interactions between ethnic groups (other than between Māori/ Pakeha).
Science/ inventions	Includes science, discoveries, technology.
Sport	Organised sporting activity, including profiles of players (except where player is a celebrity).
Transport	All forms of public and private transport and road safety.
War/ terrorism	The war in Iraq, measures to combat terrorism, and reports of troops engaged in conflict or peacekeeping.
Weather	Includes report of weather trends or extreme weather.
Welfare/ social policy	Child protection, Work and Income, and social welfare.

There are several main differences between the story topics used by the previous studies (and adapted for the test sample) and the final one adopted for this study. The first of these was the decision to add the story topics *Māori/ Pakeha relations* and *Race relations (not Māori/ Pakeha)*. It has been argued that uniquely New Zealand news stories relating to the Treaty of Waitangi and the nature of the relationship between Māori and Pakeha are potentially a major theme of New Zealand current affairs (Archie, 2007). The new *Māori/ Pakeha relations* story topic was a recognition that such news topics did not fit neatly into any other story topic used in the literature. Further to this, one of the programmes examined in this research, *Te Kāea*, aims to provide 'Māori news' (Māori Television, 2008b). While Comrie's (1996) research used the story category *Māori*, in the present context this story topic seemed inadequate to ensure a meaningful analysis of *Te Kāea* stories alongside the three other programmes. That is, given its stated objective, potentially all *Te Kāea* stories could be categorised as having a *Māori* story topic. Similarly, stories about the Treaty or Māori/ Pakeha relations would not properly fit a *Māori* story topic as this would be too narrow to include the Pakeha dimension of any such story. Such stories may not therefore, be adequately reflected in analysis if such a *Māori* topic was used.

The addition of the *Race relations (not Māori/ Pakeha)* story category provided a parallel category (*Māori/ Pakeha relations*) to enable categorisation of stories about other race relations issues in New Zealand; for example, activities of the Race Relations Office, or an education initiative being promoted by an ethnic community. The addition of these two story topics acknowledges the difference between the relationship between Māori and Pakeha New Zealanders, and the various relationships among the wide range of ethnic and cultural groups represented in New Zealand. The distinction between *Race relations (not Māori/ Pakeha)* and *Māori/ Pakeha relations* acknowledges the identity of the two Treaty partners (Archie, 2007) and categorises the news topics accordingly.

Three further additions to the story categories were *Immigration*, *Consumer issues* and *Energy*. These were added to the story categories during the pilot study when it was found that no other news topic reflected some news stories in the pilot sample. A further addition was *Personality profile/ celebrity*, as distinct from human interest stories. Traditionally human interest stories cover such topics as children and animals (Comrie, 1996). The pilot sample revealed that coverage of celebrities or other well known figures could usefully be defined as a significant topic category in its own right.

The decision was made to separate the story topic *Defence* from *War* to ensure that stories about domestic armed forces developments or commemorations, for example, were distinguished from the current war in Iraq. *Terrorism* was added to the *War* story category to acknowledge that in the contemporary international climate, acts of terrorism are not necessarily related to declared wars.

3.3.3.3 New Zealand and international stories

Stories involving the activities of New Zealanders or with a New Zealand 'connection' were defined as New Zealand stories. These included, for example, stories about Māori living in Australia, New Zealanders performing overseas, or an official New Zealand delegation to another country.

3.3.3.4 Locally produced stories

The focus of this research is on the sources used in locally, rather than foreign, produced news stories. That is, Research Questions 2-6 seek to describe the stories which result from decisions made by the producers of *ONE News*, *3 News*, *Prime News*, and *Te Kāea*. Locally produced stories are categorised as all stories where there is no attribution to another news source (such as *SKY*, *ITV* or the *BBC*). Stories where the origin was not specified were categorised as such.

3.3.3.5 Source types

The development of source-type categories was required to analyse the sources present in the locally produced news stories (Research Question 2). The definition of the source types was informed by previous studies (Comrie, 1999; Ericson et al., 1989; Gans, 1979; Grabe et al., 1999; Hall et al., 1978; Manning, 2001; McGregor & Comrie, 1995). After the pilot sample study data was examined, the source types were confirmed, and are described in Table 3.

Table 3
Source types used in the study

Source type	Description
Élite source types	
GP	Politician who is part of the Government (central or local). For central government: Labour, and Progressive Parties, and Ministers from the New Zealand First and United Future Parties when speaking in that capacity, or the Green Party when representing the Government.
GO	Government official (or spokesperson for any government agency, SOE, including local government). Includes educational institutions, hospitals, and other state funded institutions.
GS	Politician from a party not in government but with a supply agreement (Green, United Future, and New Zealand First Parties).
OP	Opposition politician (Māori, National and ACT Parties).
Int	Politician from a country other than New Zealand.
B	Private sector organisation representative. Includes coalitions of businesses such as Chambers of Commerce.
Ex	Non-government expert (e.g., scientist, economist, academic). Such sources are usually affiliated to organisations such as universities, but are generally sought as sources for their individual expertise.
C	Celebrity.
Sp	Élite sportsperson.
NGO	Non-government organisation representative (non-profit sector).
Iwi	Iwi representative.
Non-élite source types	
Pr	Individual source spoken to in a professional capacity but not speaking on behalf of an organisation (e.g., teacher, nurse, dock worker, sports coach).
MP	Member of the public associated with the story (e.g., family of crime victim).
PS	Person in the street (individuals who had no more reason than any other to be asked for their views).

As discussed in the chapter two, there are a variety of approaches in the literature to making distinctions between news source types. The approach in this study is to distinguish between *élite* and non-*élite* sources. Non-*élite* sources are generally speaking on their own behalf. Non-*élite* source categories are: *Person in the street* (PS), with no special association with a story; *Member of the public* associated with a story (MP); and *Professional* (Pr), who are asked for their individual views because of some professional association with the story. *Élite* sources are either speaking on behalf of an organisation or group, or have been sought as sources because they have some expertise, or other high status. So, for example, in a story about hospital wage talks, a nurse speaking about work conditions at the hospital would be *Professional*, because s/he has a professional involvement with the story, but no role as a spokesperson. However, a hospital administrator asked about the wage talks would be categorised as the *élite* source category *Government official* (GO) because s/he is speaking on behalf of the hospital.

A central consideration in developing the source types was to ensure that national political sources were coded appropriately according to their place in the MMP Parliament. For this reason there are three source types (GP, GS, and OP) describing the degree to which a politician is either part of, or in opposition to, the Government. A fourth political source type (Int) was created to distinguish New Zealand politicians from international politicians.

Another important decision made about source types was the distinction drawn between different types of non-governmental organisations. Manning (2001) notes the important differences between, for example, environmental lobbyists and major corporations. In order to distinguish between the non-profit sector and the private sector therefore, such non-governmental organisational sources were coded as (NGO) and (B) respectively.

During the pilot study it became apparent that sources on *Te Kāea* were identified differently to those on the other programmes, as iwi affiliations were provided along with the name and (where appropriate) organisation. It appeared that where a source was speaking as a representative of an iwi, this was stated. In other cases, iwi information did not signify a representative role and so the source was not coded as *Iwi*. This interpretation of the identification of sources was confirmed by *Te Kāea* (W. Harawira, personal communication, 30 April, 2008).

The last major departure from previous studies was to create an *Élite sportsperson* source type (Sp) to reflect the dominance of sport in the New Zealand news (Comrie, 1996), and to distinguish them from *Celebrity* (C) sources.

3.3.3.6 Duration of source speech

The purpose of Research Question 3 was to analyse any differences between the four programmes in the frequency of each source type speaking directly. The focus of Research Question 4 was to determine whether there were significant differences in the duration of this source speech; that is, the length of time each source spoke within a story. Source speech was defined as direct speech by sources, quotations from sources printed on screen and read out by a journalist, and translated direct speech. Source speech was only defined as such when it was clearly intended to be an attributed statement. For example, general noise from protesters, or a teacher speaking in front of a class, were judged to add to the 'flavour' or context of a story, but not to its source speech.

3.3.3.7 Sound bites

The purpose of Research Question 5 was to analyse the differences in the duration of sound bites. A sound bite is the length of source speech that is uninterrupted or mediated in any way (Hallin, 1992a).

3.3.3.8 Journalist speech on camera

The purpose of Research Question 6 is to compare the extent to which journalists speak on camera in each of the four programmes. Journalist speech is categorised as any speech where the journalist is interviewed by the newsreader or does a 'piece to camera'. Instances where the journalist is filmed while asking a question of a source were not included in this category, as Research Question 6 is primarily concerned with the extent to which journalists become a part of their stories (Comrie, 1999; McGregor & Comrie, 1995).

3.3.4 Development of Coding Schedules

Three resources were developed to undertake the content analysis; a Bulletin Coding Sheet; a Story Coding Sheet; and a list of Source Types.

3.3.4.1 Bulletin Coding Sheet

A *Bulletin Coding Sheet* was developed to record the duration of each segment of each news bulletin in the sample. It reflects the segments definitions described in 3.3.3.1 and is attached as Appendix A.

3.3.4.2 Story Coding Sheet

A *Story Coding Sheet* was developed to categorise each story in the following ways: whether it was part of the *main* bulletin, *sport*, or *business* news; whether it was on a New Zealand or foreign topic; and whether the story was locally produced. It was also designed to record the sources and duration of source speech, and the duration of any journalist speech on camera. The *Story Coding Sheet* is attached as Appendix B, and the explanation of how it was used is found under 3.3.5 Coding procedure.

3.3.4.3 Source Types

A list of *Source Types* was developed (as discussed in 3.3.3.5 Development of content categories) and is attached in Appendix C. The application of this list is discussed below under 3.3.5 Coding procedure.

3.3.5 Coding Procedure

3.3.5.1 Story coding

The primary researcher coded all 28 programmes in the data sample using the *Bulletin* and *Story Coding Sheets* and list of *Source Types* (see Appendices A, B and C). Two aspects of each story were coded; the duration of the story (using *DVD player* (version 4.6.5, Apple Inc., 2005)) and which segment of the bulletin the story came from. *Main* bulletin stories were also coded for story topic, whether the story was on a New Zealand or foreign topic, and whether the story was locally produced. The extent of any journalist speech was measured for locally produced stories in the *Main* bulletin.

3.3.5.2 Source coding

Each source in *Main* bulletin stories was counted and categorised using the *Story Coding Sheet*. Whether or not each source spoke was recorded, along with their name (where given), and organisational affiliation (if relevant). The number of times a source was referred to or spoke directly was also recorded.

3.3.5.3 *Measurement of direct speech*

The duration of source speech and journalist speech was measured using the counter built into *DVD player* (version 4.6.5, Apple Inc., 2005). The unit of measurement was seconds. This information was recorded on the Story Coding Sheet.

3.3.5.4 *Reliability of coding procedure*

A second coder coded a sub-sample of bulletins; one example of each programme (*ONE News* on Monday 19 November, *3 News* on Tuesday 13 November, *Prime News* on Wednesday 31 October and *Te Kāea* on Thursday 25 October). This sub-sample was drawn from four of the data collection days to maximise the variety of stories and sources which would occur in a limited sample. Inter-coder reliability was calculated for the Story Coding Sheet using Cohen's Kappa and was .83 for story topic, .89 for New Zealand or international topic, 1.00 for local, foreign, or unspecified production, and .89 for source type (Riffe et al., 1998).

3.3.6 **Coding Decisions**

3.3.6.1 *Coding locally produced stories*

The study's focus is on locally produced stories, as these demonstrate the choices made by the networks relating to story topics, sources, and length of source speech. However, in coding the data, it was generally difficult to tell when stories were locally produced, as some programmes (particularly *Prime News*) appeared to present overseas news stories without attribution (simply introducing the reporter by name, either verbally or on screen). As this issue seems to involve only a small number of international stories a decision was made to exclude from analysis of locally produced stories any story where the local/foreign origin was unclear. Furthermore, where the programmes 'packaged' overseas content (for example, with the newsreader providing a voice-over to international footage) such stories were coded as locally produced because the editing of such stories involved decision-making by the programmes concerned.

3.3.6.2 *Coding sources*

Sources were frequently alluded to by the newsreader and then more specifically named by a journalist within the story itself. In these instances the decision was made to code this as one source, as it was concluded the newsreader was essentially summarising the story to come, rather than adding attributed

information. For example, the newsreader may introduce a story with the comment “Police are worried” and then a specific Police spokesperson is either cited or speaks directly within the story.

Similarly, where there were multiple references to a source, but no direct speech, this was only recorded as one source. It is the number of sources rather than how many times they are mentioned that is of primary interest in Research Question 3.

3.4 Summary

The method described in this chapter was designed to provide a quantitative content analysis of the four free-to-air programmes on New Zealand television in 2007; *ONE News*, *3 News*, *Prime News*, and *Te Kāea*. While there are some limitations in the scope of the sample, the data selected provide a sample which is sufficiently representative to enable valid conclusions to be drawn about news coverage by the four programmes. The next chapter describes the results of the content analysis.

4 Results

This section presents the results of the data analysis and is undertaken in four parts which each relate to specific research questions. The first part is the overall profile of the news programmes, including the time allocated by each programme to each bulletin segment, the duration of the main news segment of the programmes, the origin of production of the main news stories, whether main news stories were domestic (about New Zealand) or international in topic, and which story topics featured in the main news segment of each programme. The second part is the analysis of the types of sources used by the programmes in main news stories. The third part examines the frequency of the source groups speaking in each programme, the duration of source speech per story, and the duration of sound bites. The fourth and last part presents the findings about the frequency and duration of journalists speaking on camera.

The first section of the Results chapter examines the characteristics of the news bulletins overall, and so analysis has been undertaken at a bulletin level. The analysis in the subsequent sections focuses on the story data from the constructed week and is also narrowly focused on the stories produced by the broadcasters being studied, rather than on content which has originated elsewhere. It therefore excludes both internationally produced stories and stories where the origin of production was unspecified.

As described in the Method chapter, the sample consisted of *ONE News* (6-7pm), *3 News* (6-7pm), *Prime News* (5.30-6pm) and *Te Kāea* (11-11.30pm) news programmes recorded over a constructed week beginning with Thursday 25 October and ending Saturday 8 December.

4.1 Profile of the News Programmes

The first section describes the findings relating to the overall profile of the *ONE News*, *3 News*, *Prime News*, and *Te Kāea* news bulletins (excluding advertisements) and news programmes (including advertisements). It includes the duration of each segment of the news bulletin, the amount of each news programme allocated to advertising, the percentage of each bulletin which is locally produced, the percentage of the main news which is on New Zealand and international topics, and the topics which make up the main news segment. The mean duration of the news programmes in the sample was: *ONE News* (60'22"), *3 News* (60'03"), *Prime News* (29'59"), and *Te Kāea* (27'09").

4.1.1 Segments of the News Bulletins

The main news segment⁸ is the longest segment of the bulletins of *ONE News*, *3 News*, *Prime News*, and *Te Kāea*. (see Table 4), comprising over half of the bulletin time for all programmes. Table 4 describes the news bulletin (i.e. excluding advertisements) rather than the entire news programme, and lists the segments in combined order of duration, as there is some variance among programmes. For example, *Te Kāea* does not have a business segment, and so the ranking does not apply in that case.

⁸ As noted earlier, while stories categorised as ‘main news’ stories are referred to in the results as belonging to the ‘main news segment’, this ‘segment’ is not necessarily presented within the bulletins in a continuous block of stories. For example, a programme may end with a main news story.

Table 4
Mean duration (minutes and seconds) of news bulletin segments

News segment	ONE News		3 News		Prime News		Te Kāea	
	M (SD)	M %	M (SD)	M %	M (SD)	M %	M (SD)	M %
Main news	24'43" (1'18")	55.6	24'42" (1'04")	57.0	11'47" (56")	52.5	14'10" (3'39")	59.1
Sport	6'41" (1'19")	24.0	11'03" (1'48")	25.5	7'04" (56")	31.4	5'56" (30")	25.8
Weather	4'29" (27")	10.1	3'34" (11")	8.2	51" (15")	3.8	1'19" (11")	5.6
Headlines	1'47" (10")	2.5	1'13" (8")	2.8	45" (5")	3.4	45" (8")	3.2
Teasers	1'41" (22")	3.8	55" (11")	2.1	39" (8")	2.9	27" (13")	1.9
Chat	54" (32")	2.0	31" (13")	1.2	23" (7")	1.7	20" (7")	1.4
Business	29" (13")	1.1	55" (38")	2.1	19" (13")	1.4	-	0
Music	23" (4")	.9	27" (15")	1.0	39" (8")	2.9	41" (12")	2.9
Total duration of bulletin	44'28" (56")	100.0	43'20" (51")	99.9	22'27" (1")	100.0	23'38" (3'56")	99.9

Note: Mean (M) is followed by Standard Deviation (SD).

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100.0% due to rounding.

When the non-news segments (sport, weather, headlines, teasers, chat, business, and music) were combined, they were of shorter mean duration than the news segment (main news) for all four programmes (see Table 5).

Table 5
Mean duration (minutes and seconds) of news and non-news bulletin segments

News segments	ONE News M (SD)	3 News M (SD)	Prime News M (SD)	Te Kāea M (SD)
News (main news)	24'43" (1'18")	24'42" (1'04")	11'47" (57")	14'10" (3'39")
Non-news (sport, weather, headlines, teasers, chat, business, music)	19'45" (2'06")	18'38" (1'15")	10'40" (56")	9'28" (46")
Total duration of bulletin	44'28" (56")	43'20" (51")	22'27" (1")	23'38" (3'56")

Note: Mean (M) is followed by Standard Deviation (SD).

The mean news segment (main news) comprises over half of all bulletin time on all programmes (see Figure 1). A one-way between-groups ANOVA examining whether the proportion of bulletin devoted to the news differed across the four programmes approached significance ($F(3,24) = 2.50, p = .084$). Post-hoc Bonferroni tests indicated that the only difference (a marginal one) was between *Prime News* and *Te Kāea* ($p = .082$). Just over half the *Prime News* bulletin was made up of news, compared to almost 60% on *Te Kāea*.

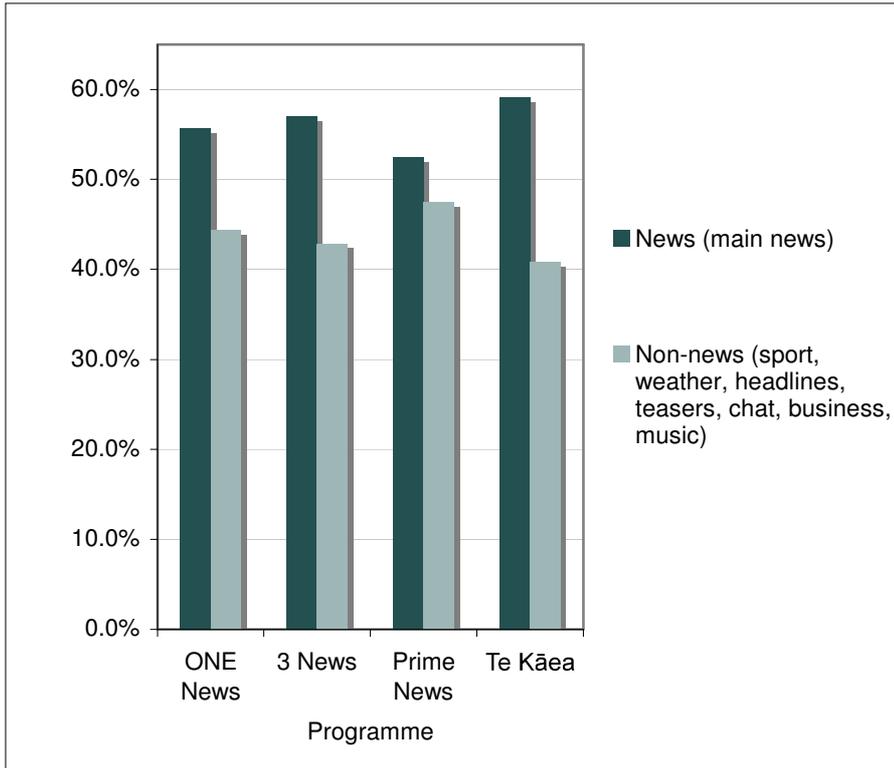


Figure 1. News and non-news segments as percentages of each bulletin

Roughly a quarter of *ONE News*, *3 News*, and *Prime News* programmes are taken up with advertisements (see Figures 2-4), with advertisements taking up only 13% on *Te Kāea* (see Figure 4). When advertising is incorporated into the analysis of the programmes, the news segment (main news) reduces to around 40% of *ONE News*, *3 News*, and *Te Kāea*, but still constitutes just over half of the *Te Kāea* programme. Advertising and sport are the second and third largest segments, respectively, of all programmes except *Te Kāea*, where these positions are reversed. No other news segment comprised more than 7% of any programme.

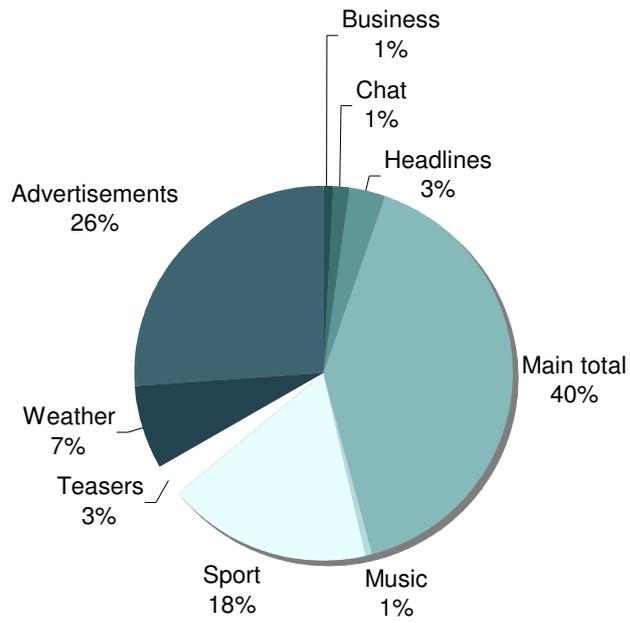


Figure 2. News segments and advertising as percentages of ONE News programme

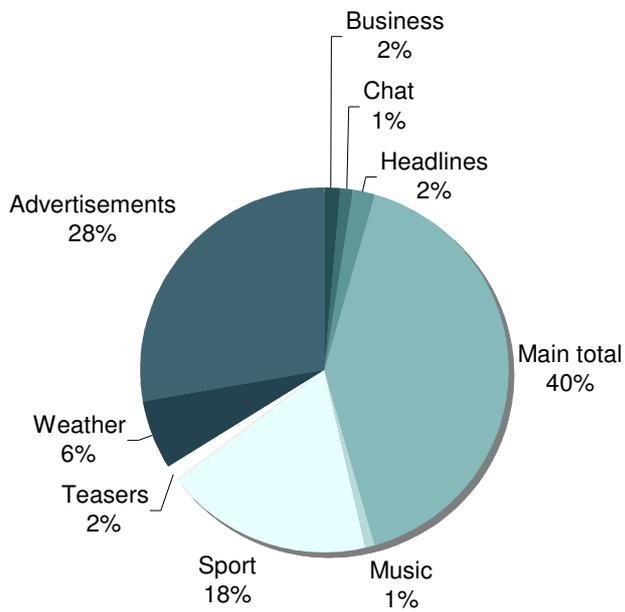


Figure 3. News segments and advertising as percentages of 3 News programme

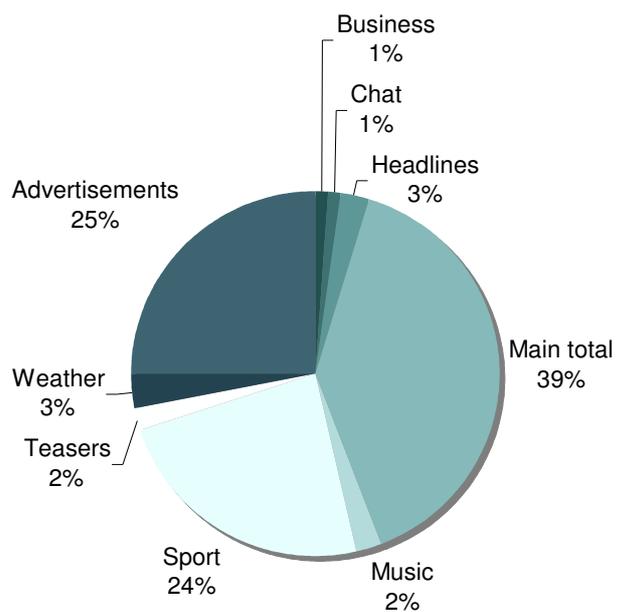


Figure 4. News segments and advertising as percentages of Prime News programme

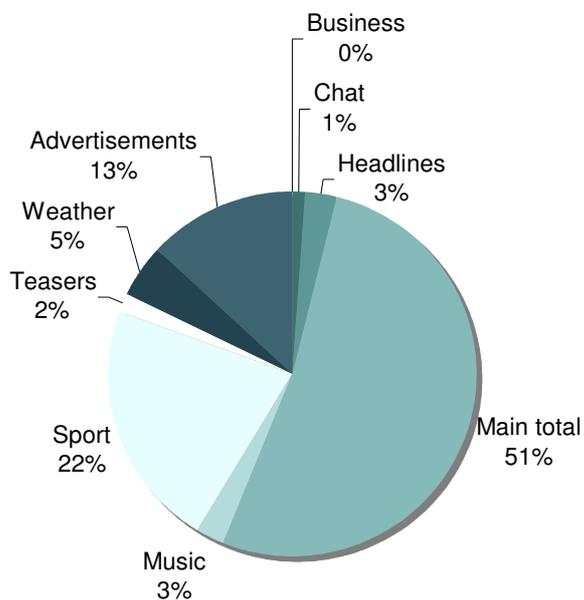


Figure 5. News segments and advertising as percentages Te Kāea programme

4.1.2 Duration of Main News Stories

The total number of main news stories in the sample for each programme was; *One News* (103), *3 News* (123), *Prime News* (70), and *Te Kāea* (62). The mean duration of main news stories differed across the programmes, with *ONE News* having the longest, and *Prime News* the shortest (see Table 6). Programme differences in the mean duration of main news stories were significant (one-way between-groups ANOVA, $F(3, 354) = 3.46, p = .017$). Post-hoc Bonferroni tests indicated that the only difference was between *ONE News* and *Prime News*.

Table 6
Mean duration (minutes and seconds) per bulletin of main news stories

	ONE News	3 News	Prime News	Te Kāea
	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)
Story duration	1'41" ^a (1'13")	1'24" ^{ab} (1'09")	1'11" ^b (50")	1'36" ^{ab} (55")

Note: Mean (M) is followed by Standard Deviation (SD).

Note: Means that share any superscript figure do not differ from one another.

4.1.3 New Zealand and International Main News Stories

All the *Te Kāea* main news stories were on New Zealand topics, which included stories based overseas but which primarily involved New Zealanders or New Zealand interests (see Table 7). Just over half of the main news stories per *Prime News* bulletin were on New Zealand topics, whereas around two thirds of the main news stories on *ONE News* and *3 News* bulletins were on New Zealand topics.

Table 7
Mean number of New Zealand and international topic main news stories per bulletin

Topic	ONE News		3 News		Prime News		Te Kāea	
	Mean (SD)	%	Mean (SD)	%	Mean (SD)	%	Mean (SD)	%
Domestic stories	10.1 (1.6)	68.7	11.0 (1.7)	62.5	5.3 (2.4)	53.0	8.9 (2.7)	100.0
International stories	4.6 (1.3)	31.3	6.6 (1.5)	37.5	4.7 (1.8)	47.0	-	0
Total	14.7 (1.3)	100.0	17.6 (2.4)	100.0	10.0 (1.3)	100.0	8.9 (2.7)	100.0

Note: Mean (M) is followed by Standard Deviation (SD).

For *ONE News* and *3 News*, the number of New Zealand main news stories (shown in Table 7) under-represented the amount of time actually spent on New

Zealand news (see Table 8). That is, more time was spent covering each New Zealand news story than each international news story. However, this was not the case for *Prime News*, where 53.0% of the stories were on New Zealand topics, and they constituted 53.9% of the bulletin. Obviously no comparison can be made for *Te Kāea*, as it had no international main news stories.

Table 8
Mean duration (minutes and seconds) of New Zealand and international topic main news stories per bulletin

Topic	ONE News		3 News		Prime News		Te Kāea	
	M (SD)	% time	M (SD)	% time	M (SD)	% time	M (SD)	% time
New Zealand stories	18'37" (2'38")	75.3	16'54" (2'42")	68.4	6'21" (2'11")	53.9	14'10" (3'39")	100.0
International stories	6'6" (2'22")	24.7	7'48" (2'56")	31.6	5'26" (1'48")	46.1	-	0
Total	24'43"	100.0	24'42"	100.0	11'47"	100.0	14'10"	100.0

Note: Mean (M) is followed by Standard Deviation (SD).

4.1.4 Locally and Internationally Produced Main News Stories

Main news stories were categorised as being either locally produced (by the broadcasting network), internationally produced (by another broadcaster, such as CNN or the BBC), or as having an unspecified origin. The total number of locally produced main stories in the sample was; *One News* (93), *3 News* (108), *Prime News* (58), and *Te Kāea* (62). All of the stories on *Te Kāea* were locally produced, and *Prime News* had the lowest percentage of locally produced stories per bulletin (see Table 9). Most (11 of 12) of the unspecified stories were broadcast by *Prime News*, which, in all these cases, introduced the journalist without specifying whether they were affiliated to *Prime News* or to another broadcaster. All of the unspecified stories were on international news topics.

Table 9

Mean number of stories per bulletin which were locally produced, internationally produced, or where production was not specified

Production	ONE News		3 News		Prime News		Te Kāea	
	M (SD)	%	M (SD)	%	M (SD)	%	M (SD)	%
Locally produced	13.3 (1.5)	90.5	15.4 (3.1)	87.5	8.3 (1.5)	83.0	8.9 (2.7)	100.0
Internationally produced	1.3 (1.3)	8.8	2.1 (1.3)	12.0	.1 (.4)	1.0	0	0
Production not specified	.1 (.4)	.7	0	0	1.6 (.5)	16.0	0	0
Total	14.7 (1.3)	100.0	17.6 (2.4)	99.5	10.0 (1.3)	100.0	8.9 (2.7)	100.0

Note: Mean (M) is followed by Standard Deviation (SD).

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

For *ONE News* the amount of time spent on each locally produced story was roughly the same as that spent on internationally produced stories and stories where production was not specified (e.g., 90.5% of stories were locally produced and 90.0% of the main news segment was devoted to them) (see Table 10). However, for *3 News*, slightly less time was spent on each locally produced story than each internationally produced story. This pattern was even more marked for *Prime News*, where only 73% of the main news segment was spent on locally produced stories, even though they made up 83% of the stories. The 16% of stories on *Prime News* where production was unspecified took up a quarter of the duration of the main news. All main news stories on *Te Kāea* were locally produced.

Table 10

Mean duration (minutes and seconds) of stories per bulletin which were locally produced, internationally produced, or where production was not specified

Production	ONE News		3 News		Prime News		Te Kāea	
	M (SD)	% time	M (SD)	% time	M (SD)	% time	M (SD)	% time
Locally produced	22'15" (3'02")	90.0	20'11" (3'44")	81.7	8'36" (1'48")	73.0	14'10" (3'39")	100.0
Internationally produced	2'11" (1'37")	8.8	4'31" (3'11")	18.3	14" (38")	2.0	-	0
Production not specified	17" (46")	1.1	-	0	2'56" (1'03")	24.9	-	0
Total	24'43" (1'18")	99.9	24'42" (1'04")	100.0	11'47" (56")	99.9	14'10" (3'39")	100.0

Note: Mean (M) is followed by Standard Deviation (SD).

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

4.1.5 Topic Categories of the Programmes

This section describes the frequency with which topic categories occur in the main news stories for each programme. *Crime*⁹ stories made up the largest mean number of stories for all programmes except *Te Kāea*, where *Politics* stories made up the largest number and *Crime* the second largest (see Table 11). *Politics* stories comprised the second largest mean number of stories for *ONE News* and *Prime News*, and the third largest for *3 News*. *Accident* made up the second largest mean number of stories for *3 News* and the third largest for *ONE News* and *Prime News*, but less than 2% of *Te Kāea*'s stories (and were ranked tenth equal). *Culture* and *Education* stories ranked third equal on *Te Kāea*. Thus, there is general consistency across the programmes on which topics are considered most newsworthy.

⁹ News topics and source types are referred to by simplified titles (where appropriate) and shown in italics, e.g., *Crime* refers to the topic *Crime/courts/police/justice*.

Table 11

Mean number and percentage of stories for each topic category in all main news per bulletin

News topic	ONE News		3 News		Prime News		Te Kāea	
	M (SD)	M %						
Crime/courts/police/justice	3.9 (1.6) ¹	26.2	3.6 (1.9) ¹	20.3	2.7 (2) ¹	27.1	1.4 (1.1) ²	16.1
Politics/government	3.3 (1.4) ²	22.3	2 (1.2) ³	11.4	2 (0.8) ²	20.0	1.9 (2) ¹	21.0
Accident/disaster	1.7 (1.5) ³	11.7	3.1 (2.1) ²	17.9	1.4 (1) ³	14.3	0.1 (0.4) ¹¹	1.6
Culture	0.7 (0.8) ⁵	4.9	0.6 (0.8) ⁷	3.3	0.9 (0.7) ⁴	8.6	1 (1.2) ³	11.3
Human interest	1.1 (0.9) ⁴	7.8	1.4 (1.4) ⁴	8.1	0.4 (0.5) ⁶	4.3	0.3 (0.5) ⁹	3.2
Environment/ecology	0.3 (0.5) ¹⁰	1.9	0.6 (0.8) ⁷	3.3	0.4 (0.5) ⁶	4.3	0.9 (0.9) ⁵	9.7
Economic activity	0.7 (0.8) ⁵	4.9	0.6 (0.8) ⁷	3.3	0.1 (0.4) ¹⁰	1.4	0.7 (0.8) ⁶	8.1
Education	0.4 (0.8) ⁷	2.9	0.4 (0.5) ¹³	2.4	0	0.0	1 (1.3) ⁴	11.3
Personality profile/celebrity	0.4 (0.5) ⁷	2.9	0.6 (0.8) ⁷	3.3	0.6 (1.1) ⁵	5.7	0	0.0
Sport	0.4 (0.5) ⁷	2.9	0.7 (0.5) ⁵	4.1	0.3 (0.5) ⁹	2.9	0	0.0
Māori-Pakeha relations	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0%	0.4 (0.8) ⁷	4.8
Science/inventions	0.3 (0.5) ¹⁰	1.9	0.3 (0.5) ¹⁵	1.6	0.4 (0.8) ⁶	4.3	0	0.0
Defence	0.3 (0.5) ¹⁰	1.9	0.3 (0.5) ¹⁵	1.6	0.1 (0.4) ¹⁰	1.4	0.1 (0.4) ¹¹	1.6
Health/medicine	0.3 (0.5) ¹⁰	1.9	0.6 (0.5) ⁷	3.3	0.1 (0.4) ¹⁰	1.4	0.1 (0.4) ¹¹	1.6
War/terrorism	0.1 (0.4) ¹⁵	1.0	0.7 (1.1) ⁵	4.1	0.1 (0.4) ¹⁰	1.4	0	0.0
Transport/road safety	0.1 (0.4) ¹⁵	1.0	0.6 (0.8) ⁷	3.3	0.1 (0.4) ¹⁰	1.4	0	0.0
Arts	0.1 (0.4) ¹⁵	1.0	0.3 (0.5) ¹⁵	1.6	0	0.0	0.4 (0.8) ⁷	4.8
Welfare/social policy	0	0.0	0.1 (0.4) ¹⁹	0.8	0.1 (0.4) ¹⁰	1.4	0.3 (0.5) ⁹	3.2
Labour relations/unions	0.3 (0.5) ¹⁰	1.9	0.1 (0.4) ¹⁹	0.8	0	0.0	0.1 (0.4) ¹¹	1.6
Consumer issues	0	0.0	0.4 (0.5) ¹³	2.4	0	0.0	0	0.0
Weather	0	0.0	0.3 (0.8) ¹⁵	1.6	0	0.0	0	0.0

continued over ...

ONE News

3 News

Prime News

Te Kāea

News topic	M (SD)	M %	M (SD)	M %	News topic	M (SD)	M %	M (SD)
Public moral issues	0.1 (0.4) ¹⁵	1.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Energy	0	0.0	0.1 (0.4) ¹⁹	0.8	0	0.0	0	0.0
Immigration	0	0.0	0.1 (0.4) ¹⁹	0.8	0	0.0	0	0.0
Race relations (other)	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total No. of Stories	14.7 (1.3)	100.0	17.6 (2.4)	100.0	10 (1.3)	100.0	8.9 (2.7)	100.0

Note: Mean (M) is followed by Standard Deviation (SD).

Note: Table 8 shows the topic categories ordered from largest to smallest in order of average ranking across the four programmes.

While Table 11 shows that *Crime* stories made up the greatest percentage of stories across all four programmes combined, the greatest amount of time (mean percentage duration) was devoted to *Politics* stories (see Table 12). *Politics* stories also took up the largest amount of bulletin time for all four individual programmes, followed by *Crime* stories (ranked second for all four programmes). The third ranked story topics varied across the programmes. *Culture* stories ranked third on *ONE News*, *Prime News*, and *Te Kāea*, although the percentages varied considerably (7.5% on *ONE News*, 10.0% on *Prime News*, and 14.2% on *Te Kāea*). On *3 News* the third ranked topic was *Accident*. On *ONE News*, *3 News*, and *Prime News*, only *Politics* and *Crime* stories made up more than 10% of the mean percentage duration of news bulletins. The bulletin time was more evenly allocated to the story topics on *Te Kāea*, with *Politics*, *Crime*, *Culture*, and *Education* stories each exceeding 10% (of bulletin time).

Table 12

Mean duration (minutes and seconds) of stories for each topic category in all main news per bulletin

News topic	ONE News		3 News		Prime News		Te Kāea	
	M (SD)	M % time						
Politics/government	8'11" (4'01") ¹	33.1	5'20" (3'37") ¹	21.6	3'37" (1'36") ¹	30.7	3'09" (4'03") ¹	22.2
Crime/courts/police/justice	4'47" (2'53") ²	19.4	4'09" (2'05") ²	16.8	2'38" (2'09") ²	22.3	2'13" (2'08") ²	15.6
Culture	1'52" (2'05") ³	7.5	1'10" (1'36") ⁶	4.8	1'11" (1'27") ³	10.0	2'01" (3'03") ³	14.2
Accident/disaster	1'36" (1'31") ⁵	6.5	2'20" (2'16") ³	9.4	1'01" (50") ⁴	8.6	5" (13") ¹³	.6
Human interest	1'43" (1'32") ⁴	7.0	2'13" (2'24") ⁴	8.9	24" (33") ⁹	3.4	27" (52") ¹⁰	3.2
Māori-Pakeha relations	0	0	-	0	-	0	40" (1'09") ⁷	4.7
Sport	52" (1'07") ⁷	3.5	1'18" (54") ⁵	5.3	19" (39") ¹⁰	2.7	-	0
Personality profile/celebrity	31" (43") ¹¹	2.1	58" (1'36") ⁸	3.9	35" (1'06") ⁶	5	-	0
Environment/ecology	30" (52") ¹¹	2.1	39" (1'24") ¹³	2.6	36" (57") ⁵	5.1	1'25" (1'27") ⁵	10
Economic activity	1'01" (1'32") ⁶	4.1	51" (1'04") ¹⁰	3.4	8" (22") ¹²	1.2	55" (1'14") ⁶	6.5
Education	45" (1'25") ⁸	3	25" (49") ¹⁶	1.7	-	0	1'30" (1'54") ⁴	10.6
War/terrorism	16" (42") ¹⁵	1.1	1'04" (1'51") ⁷	4.3	14" (38") ¹¹	2	-	0
Science/inventions	29" (50") ¹³	2	33" (57") ¹⁴	2.2	26" (49") ⁷	3.6	-	0
Defence	30" (51") ¹³	2	19" (42") ¹⁷	1.3	26" (1'08") ⁷	3.6	20" (53") ¹¹	2.4
Consumer issues	-	0	41" (1'06") ¹²	2.8	-	0	-	0
Health/ medicine	32" (55") ¹⁰	2.2	43" (58") ¹¹	2.9	3" (7") ¹⁵	.4	5" (13") ¹³	.6
Labour relations/ unions	33" (57") ⁹	2.3	16" (42") ¹⁸	1.1	-	0	18" (49") ¹²	2.2
Transport/ road safety	15" (39") ¹⁶	1	53" (1'43") ⁹	3.6	4" (11") ¹⁴	.6	-	0
Arts	14" (38") ¹⁶	1	28" (1'06") ¹⁵	1.9	-	0	30" (57") ⁹	3.5
Welfare/ social policy	-	0	4" (10") ²⁰	.3	6" (15") ¹³	.8	32" (55") ⁸	3.8
Public moral issues	4" (11") ¹⁸	.3	-	0	-	0	-	0
weather	-	0	11" (29") ¹⁹	.7	-	0	-	0

continued over ...

News topic	ONE News		3 News		Prime News		Te Kāea	
	M (SD)	M % time	M (SD)	M % time	News topic	M (SD)	M % time	M (SD)
Immigration	-	0	5" (12") ²⁰	.3	-	0	-	0
Energy	-	0	4" (10") ²⁰	.3	-	0	-	0
Race relations (other)	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0
Total Duration	24'43" (1'18")	100.0	24'42" (1'04")	100.0	11'47 (56")	100.0	14'10" (3'39")	100.0

Note: Mean (M) is followed by Standard Deviation (SD).

Note: The topic categories in Table 8 are ordered from largest to smallest in order of average ranking across the four programmes.

4.2 Source Types

The remaining sections of the results focus on findings relating only to the locally produced stories; stories which originated with the broadcasters being studied, rather than elsewhere (see Table 9). This section of the results presents the analysis of the sources used in locally produced main news stories. This includes analysis of the 14 source types, as well as analysis of sources when combined into elite and non-élite categories.

The non-élite source type *Member of the public* was the most frequently used source type on each of the four programmes (see Table 13). *Government official* was the second most frequently used category for all programmes except *Te Kāea*, where *Government politician* sources were ranked second. The *Government politician* category was the third most frequently used source type for *ONE News*, *3 News*, and *Prime News*, whereas the third place was taken by *Professional* sources on *Te Kāea*. *Te Kāea* was therefore the only programme to feature two non-élite source types in the three most prevalent source groups.

Table 13
Number and percentage number of each source type used in locally produced news

Source types	ONE News		3 News		Prime News		Te Kāea	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<i>Member of public</i>	77 ¹	30.0	45 ¹	22.4	17 ¹	23.6	34 ¹	33.7
Government official	35 ²	13.6	38 ²	18.9	14 ²	19.4	9 ⁵	8.9
Government politician	31 ³	12.1	28 ³	13.9	13 ³	18.1	12 ²	11.9
<i>Professional</i>	23 ⁴	8.9	14 ⁶	7.0	4 ⁵	5.6	11 ³	10.9
NGO representative	15 ⁷	5.8	17 ⁴	8.5	3 ⁷	4.2	10 ⁴	9.9
Business	16 ⁶	6.2	16 ⁵	8.0	4 ⁵	5.6	8 ⁶	7.9
Expert non-government	14 ⁸	5.4	11 ⁷	5.5	3 ⁷	4.2	6 ⁸	5.9
Opposition politician	10 ⁹	3.9	10 ⁸	5.0	6 ⁴	8.3	4 ⁹	4.0
<i>Person in street</i>	19 ⁵	7.4	6 ¹⁰	3.0	2 ⁹	2.8	0	0
Élite								
Sportsperson	6 ¹⁰	2.3	7 ⁹	3.5	2 ⁹	2.8	0	0
Iwi representative	0	0	3 ¹²	1.5	0	0	7 ⁷	6.9
International politician	6 ¹⁰	2.3	1 ¹³	.5	1 ¹²	1.4	0	0
Celebrity	2 ¹³	.8	4 ¹¹	2.0	1 ¹²	1.4	0	0
Support politician	3 ¹²	1.2	1 ¹³	.5	2 ⁹	2.8	0	0

Note: Mean (M) is followed by Standard Deviation (SD).

Note: The source types are listed in order of average ranking across the four programmes. The number of sources is followed by the rank (in superscript) of the source type for that particular

programme. For example, on *ONE News* there were 77 sources who were *Member of the public sources*, and this source type was the largest overall for *ONE News*, as indicated by 77¹.

Note: The non-élite source types are italicised.

When clustered into élite and non-élite source categories, it is evident that élite sources dominate source selections on all programmes (see Table 14). The greatest disparity between the two was on *Prime News* and *3 News*, whereas on *ONE News* and *Te Kāea* the ratio is more balanced. Interestingly, while the number of élite sources is similar for programmes of equal length (that is, the hour long *ONE News* and *3 News*, and the half hour *Prime News* and *Te Kāea*), the relative number of non-élite sources is significantly greater for *ONE News* and *Te Kāea*.

Table 14
Number and percentage of élite and non-élite sources used in locally produced main news stories

Source categories	ONE News		3 News		Prime News		Te Kāea	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Élite source types	138	53.7%	136	67.7	49	68.1	56	55.4
Non-élite source types	119	46.3	65	32.3	23	31.9	45	44.6
Total	257	100.0	201	100.0	72	100.0	101	100.0

4.3 Source Speech

This section presents the findings about the frequency of source groups speaking in each news programme, the duration of source speech, and the duration of sound bites.

4.3.1 Frequency of Sources Speaking and being Cited

Of élite sources, *Politician* source groups (*Government*, *Opposition*, *Support* and *International*) *NGO*, *Business*, and *Celebrity* sources spoke (rather than were cited only) more than 80% of the time on nearly all programmes (see Table 15). *Government official* sources were amongst the least likely élite sources to speak, although they still spoke more than 50% of the time on all four programmes. Members of all non-élite source types were also rarely only cited (over 70% of each non-élite type spoke on all programmes). The lowest incidence of non-élite sources speaking was 72.7% for *Professional* sources on *Te Kāea*.

Table 15
 Number and percentage of each source type who spoke or who were cited

Source types	ONE News				3 News				Prime News				Te Kāea			
	Spoke		Cited only		Spoke		Cited only		Spoke		Cited only		Spoke		Cited only	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<i>Élite source groups</i>																
Government official	23	65.7	12	34.29	20	52.6	18	47.4	8	57.1	6	42.9	5	55.6	4	44.4
Government politician	28	90.3	3	9.68	24	85.7	4	14.3	12	92.3	1	7.7	7	58.3	5	41.7
NGO representative	14	93.3	1	6.67	16	94.1	1	5.9	2	66.7	1	33.3	8	80.0	2	20.0
Business	14	87.5	2	12.50	15	93.8	1	6.3	4	100.0	0	0	8	100.0	0	0
Expert non-government	13	92.9	1	7.14	11	100.0	0	0	3	100.0	0	0	4	66.7	2	33.3
Opposition politician	9	90.0	1	10.00	10	100.0	0	0	6	100.0	0	0	3	75.0	1	25.0
Élite sportsperson	6	100.0	0	0	5	71.4	2	28.6	2	22.2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Iwi representative	0	0	0	0	3	100.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	28.6	5	71.4
International politician	5	83.3	1	16.67	0	0	1	100.0	1	100.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Celebrity	2	100.0	0	0	4	100.0	0	0	1	100.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Support politician	3	100.0	0	0	1	100.0	0	0	2	100.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Non-élite source groups</i>	117		21		109		27		41		8		37		19	
Member of public	75	97.4	2	2.60	39	86.7	6	13.3	16	94.1	1	5.9	31	91.2	3	8.8
Professional	21	91.3	2	8.70	13	92.9	1	7.1	3	75.0	1	25.0	8	72.7	3	27.3
Person in street	19	100.0	0	0	6	100.0	0	0	2	100.0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Note: Source types are shown here in élite and non-élite groupings.

When combined into élite and non-élite source categories, it is clear that sources tend to be directly represented in bulletins rather than only cited in all programmes (see Table 16). For the combined élite source category the ratio of speaking to citation varied significantly across the four programmes, $\chi^2(3, N = 379) = 9.24, p = .026$. Post-hoc analysis indicated *ONE News* had a much larger incidence of speaking than *Te Kāhea*, $\chi^2(1, N = 194) = 8.52, p = .004$. There were no other differences between programmes. For non-élite source types, there were no differences in the ratios of speaking and cited sources, $\chi^2(3, N = 252) = 6.16, n.s.$ Thus, the patterns of speaking and citation were largely the same across the four programmes for both élite (~80% spoke) and non-élite (~90% spoke) sources.

Table 16
Number and percentage of elite and non-elite sources who spoke or who were cited

Source types	ONE News				3 News				Prime News				Te Kāea			
	Spoke		Cited only		Spoke		Cited only		Spoke		Cited only		Spoke		Cited only	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Élite sources	117	84.8	21	15.2	109	80.1	27	19.9	41	83.7	8	16.3	37	66.1	19	33.9
Non-élite sources	115	96.6	4	3.4	58	89.2	7	10.8	21	91.3	2	8.7	39	86.7	6	13.3
Total sources	232		25		167		34		62		10		76		25	

4.3.2 Duration of Source Speech

Source speech is the amount of time individual sources spoke for per story. There are two notable characteristics of the source speech duration data. The first is that there is little or no similarity in the time specific elite source types are given to speak across the four programmes (see Table 17). If one looks at the rankings (of which source types speak the longest) we find that many of the elite source types rank highly for one or two programmes and lower for the others. For example, the top ranked source speech category was *Celebrity* on *ONE News* (20.5”) and *3 News* (20.2”), but it was ranked seventh on *Prime News* (and there were no *Celebrity* sources on *Te Kāea*). On *Prime News*, *Government official* sources had the greatest duration of speech (24.5”) and on *Te Kāea*, *Expert* sources were ranked first (41.0”).

Non-elite source types typically ranked in the bottom half of source types overall. *Members of the public* were the non-elite source group with the longest mean duration of speech for *ONE News* (11.6”) and *3 News* (11.2”), but ranked only ninth and tenth overall, respectively. *Professional* was the non-elite source group with the longest duration of speech on *Prime News* (13.3”) and *Te Kāea* (35.1”), and were ranked sixth and third, respectively. Given the lack of a clear common pattern of rankings (particularly for the elite categories) across the four programmes, it is more useful to examine the speech duration for the combined elite and non-elite source categories (see below).

The second prominent characteristic of the data is the marked difference in time allocated to source speech by *Te Kāea* compared to the other three programmes. Almost all the source types who spoke on *Te Kāea* spoke for longer than 20” (and often considerably longer). By contrast, it was extremely uncommon for any source type to speak for longer than 20” on any other programme (only one type for *ONE News* and *3 News*, and two types for *Prime News*).

Table 17
Mean duration of source speech (seconds)

Source type	ONE News M (SD)	3 News M (SD)	Prime News M (SD)	Te Kāea M (SD)
<i>Élite source groups</i>				
Celebrity	20.5" (3.5") ¹	20.2" (4.1") ¹	13.0" (0) ⁷	-
Expert	17.8" (8.2") ²	16.8" (9.3") ⁴	11.3" (1.1") ⁹	41.0" (17.2") ¹
Support politician	15.5" (2.1") ⁵	19.0" (0) ²	17.5" (.7") ³	-
Government official	13.0" (7.6") ⁶	15.9" (11.3") ⁵	24.5" (13.4") ¹	23.2" (11.8") ⁷
Government politician	17.6" (13.5") ³	13.8" (7.7") ⁸	14.5" (6.7") ⁴	19.6" (8.6") ⁸
NGO representative	8.0" (2.5") ¹²	15.2" (9.0") ⁶	21.0" (2.8") ²	34.8" (16.1") ⁴
Business	12.8" (7.4") ⁷	13.3" (10.0") ⁹	13.8" (4.6") ⁵	24.7" (9.1") ⁵
Iwi representative	-	9.5" (4.9") ¹¹	-	38.0" (12.7") ²
International politician	17.0" (8.0") ⁴	-	6.0" (0) ¹¹	-
Élite sportsperson	12.7" (3.8") ⁸	18.8" (13.2") ³	4.5" (0) ¹²	-
Opposition politician	11.1" (2.8") ¹⁰	14.2" (10.1") ⁷	11.8" (7.0) ⁸	15.0" (15.6") ⁹
<i>Non-élite source groups</i>				
Professional	9.9" (4.6") ¹¹	8.5" (5.3") ¹²	13.3" (4.5") ⁶	35.1" (20.7") ³
Member of public	11.6" (10.1") ⁹	11.2" (9.3") ¹⁰	10.2" (4.4") ¹⁰	24.1" (13.8") ⁶
Person in street	4.8" (.5") ¹³	4.0" (1.9") ¹³	1.5" (0) ¹³	-

Note: Mean (M) is followed by Standard Deviation (SD).

Note: The source types are listed in order of average ranking (of speech duration) across the four programmes (within elite and non-élite groupings). The mean duration of source speech in the M (SD) column is followed by the rank of the source type for that particular programme. For example, at 20.5", *Celebrity* sources had the greatest amount of source speech on *ONE News*, indicated by 20.5" (3.5")¹.

When the elite and non-élite source types are combined for each programme, elite sources are shown to have spoken for longer than non-élite sources on *ONE News*, *3 News*, and *Prime News* (see Table 18). The elite and non-élite source groups spoke for exactly the same amount of time on *Te Kāea* (26'9"). The duration of speech of both elite and non-élite source categories was clearly longer on *Te Kāea* than on any other programme. Kruskal-Wallis tests supported this conclusion, indicating that there was a statistically significant difference for both elite sources ($H = 12.09$, $N = 149$, $df = 3$, $p = .007$) and non-élite sources ($H = 28.71$, $N = 108$, $df = 3$, $p < .001$) (Kruskal-Wallis tests were performed because of the heterogeneity of variance in the data, and thus a one-way ANOVA was not appropriate).

When we consider how long all sources spoke in the four programmes, we find that the mean duration of each individual's speech on *Te Kāea* was far greater than that on any other programme (27.9").

Table 18
Mean duration (seconds) of speech per source

Source type	ONE News M (SD)	3 News M (SD)	Prime News M (SD)	Te Kāea M (SD)
Élite sources	15.8" (9.4")	17.4" (11.3")	17.3" (10.0")	26.9" (16.7")
Non-élite sources	11.0" (9.2")	10.0" (7.9")	10.2" (5.1")	26.9" (16.2")
All sources	14.7" (9.9")	16.3" (10.1")	15.5" (8.1")	27.9" (16.1")

Note: Mean (M) is followed by Standard Deviation (SD).

4.3.3 Sound Bites

The previous section focused on the duration of source speech in locally produced stories. A sound bite is a chunk of source speech uninterrupted by other material such as a journalist's commentary or the speech of another source. When all locally produced main news stories were analysed we see that *Support politician* sources had the longest sound bites on *ONE News* and *Prime News*, *Sportsperson* sources had the longest sound bites on *3 News*, and *Professional* sources had the longest sound bites on *Te Kāea* (see Table 19). *Celebrity* sources had the second longest sound bites on *ONE News* and *3 News*, while *Government official* sources were in second place on *Prime News* and *Members of the public* were second on *Te Kāea*.

There are some similarities in the overall rankings for elite source groups when the duration of sound bites are compared with the source speech duration (see Table 17). For example, *Support politician* and *Celebrity* source groups are in the top three places for both measures. There are two notable differences in the rankings for source speech and sound bite duration amongst the elite source groups. The first is that while the *Expert* category was ranked second for source speech duration, this group only had the sixth longest sound bites. Thus, when *Expert* sources appeared in the news, they received a relatively significant opportunity to speak, but this speech was presented in shorter sound bites than those of several other source groups. This pattern was repeated in the last place ranking of the *Government politician* source type for sound bites compared with its fifth placing for source speech. Therefore, while *Government politician* sources receive a moderate opportunity to speak in the news, when they do so, their speech is presented in relatively short sound bites. There were no differences in the relative rankings of the non-élite source types, with *Professional* sources ranked more highly than *Member of public* and *Person in street* source types for measures of source speech and sound bites.

Table 19
Mean duration (seconds) of sound bite for source types

Source type	ONE News M (SD)	3 News M (SD)	Prime News M (SD)	Te Kāea M (SD)
<i>Élite source groups</i>				
Support politician	15.5 ⁿ¹ (2.1 ⁿ)	9.5 ⁿ⁸ (0)	17.5 ⁿ¹ (.7 ⁿ)	-
Celebrity	14.0 ⁿ² (8.5 ⁿ)	10.9 ⁿ² (.6 ⁿ)	13.0 ⁿ⁶ (0)	-
Government official	7.8 ⁿ⁹ (3.2 ⁿ)	10.0 ⁿ⁶ (4 ⁿ)	16.2 ⁿ² (3.5 ⁿ)	10.1 ⁿ⁸ (1.9 ⁿ)
NGO representative	7.8 ⁿ⁹ (2.7 ⁿ)	10.4 ⁿ⁴ (2.8 ⁿ)	15.3 ⁿ³ (5.3 ⁿ)	13.1 ⁿ⁵ (4.4 ⁿ)
Business	7.9 ⁿ⁸ (2.2 ⁿ)	10.3 ⁿ⁵ (4 ⁿ)	13.8 ⁿ⁴ (4.6 ⁿ)	13.5 ⁿ⁴ (4.6 ⁿ)
Expert non-government	11.2 ⁿ³ (8.1 ⁿ)	9.7 ⁿ⁷ (3.4 ⁿ)	12.8 ⁿ⁷ (2.8 ⁿ)	12.8 ⁿ⁶ (3.6 ⁿ)
International politician	10.1 ⁿ⁵ (2.9 ⁿ)	-	11.0 ⁿ⁸ (4.3 ⁿ)	-
Élite sportsperson	8.5 ⁿ⁷ (.4 ⁿ)	12.1 ⁿ¹ (5.2 ⁿ)	4.5 ⁿ¹² (0)	-
Iwi	-	6.3 ⁿ¹¹ (.4 ⁿ)	-	15.1 ⁿ³ (.8 ⁿ)
Opposition politician	11.1 ⁿ⁴ (2.8 ⁿ)	10.7 ⁿ³ (4.9 ⁿ)	8.9 ⁿ¹¹ (3.7 ⁿ)	8.5 ⁿ⁹ (6.4 ⁿ)
Government politician	9.6 ⁿ⁶ (4 ⁿ)	9.4 ⁿ⁹ (4.2 ⁿ)	10.6 ⁿ⁹ (3.1 ⁿ)	12.0 ⁿ⁷ (3.1 ⁿ)
<i>Non-élite source groups</i>				
Professional	7.6 ⁿ¹¹ (3.4 ⁿ)	6.2 ⁿ¹² (2.4 ⁿ)	13.3 ⁿ⁵ (4.5 ⁿ)	19.9 ⁿ¹ (8.1 ⁿ)
Member of public	6.4 ⁿ¹² (2.7 ⁿ)	7.6 ⁿ¹⁰ (3.6 ⁿ)	10.3 ⁿ¹⁰ (5.1 ⁿ)	18.3 ⁿ² (10.7 ⁿ)
Person in street	4.4 ⁿ¹³ (1 ⁿ)	3.3 ⁿ¹³ (.9 ⁿ)	1.5 ⁿ¹³ (0)	-

Note: Mean (M) is followed by Standard Deviation (SD).

Note: Source categories are listed in order of average ranking (of sound bite) across the four programmes (within élite and non-élite groupings). The mean duration of sound bite in the M (SD) column is followed by the rank of the source type for that particular programme. For example, at 15.1ⁿ¹, *Support politician* sources had the largest sound bite on *ONE News*, indicated by 15.1ⁿ¹.

When analysed as combined categories, élite sources have longer sound bites than non-élite sources on *ONE News*, *3 News*, and *Prime News*. (see Table 20). There were significant programme differences in the mean durations of élite source sound bites across the four programmes, $F(3, 156) = 7.24, p = .001$. Post-hoc Bonferroni tests revealed that the *ONE News* sound bite was shorter than the *Prime News* sound bite ($p = .004$) and the *Te Kāea* sound bite ($p = .002$). The *3 News* sound bite was also less than the *Prime News* sound bite ($p = .049$) and the *Te Kāea* sound bite ($p = .026$). There were also significant differences in the mean durations of non-élite sound bites, $F(3, 104) = 29.49, p = .001$. Post-hoc Bonferroni tests revealed that the *Te Kāea* sound bite was greater than *ONE News*, *3 News*, and *Prime News* (all $ps < .001$).

Table 20
Mean duration (seconds) of sound bite for elite and non-élite sources

	ONE News	3 News	Prime News	Te Kāea
Source type	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)
Élite sources	9.1 (4.8)	9.9 (3.4)	12.6 (4.2)	12.8 (3.6)
Non-élite sources	6.5 (2.7)	7 (3.3)	10 (5.2)	19.1 (10)

Note: Mean (M) is followed by Standard Deviation (SD).

The total mean duration of sound bites for all sources ranged from 8.2” for *ONE News* to almost 15.9” for *Te Kāea* (see Figure 6). *Te Kāea*’s longer total sound bite is largely attributable to the length of its non-élite sound bites.

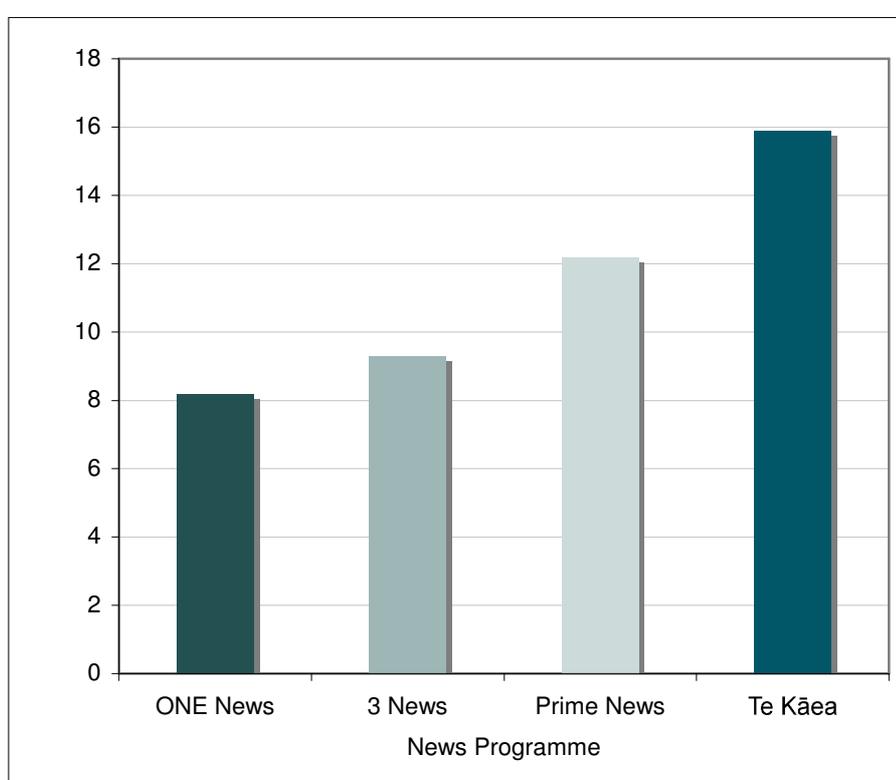


Figure 6. *Mean duration of sound bite for all sources*

4.4 Frequency and Duration of Journalists Speaking on Camera

The fourth and last section presents the findings about the frequency and duration of journalists speaking on camera in locally produced main news stories. Journalists spoke on camera in nearly half of all *ONE News* stories presented by journalists (as opposed to those only involving a newsreader). This figure is somewhat higher than for *3 News* (where 30.6% spoke on camera), and considerably higher than for *Prime News* (22.8%) and *Te Kāea* (18.0%) (see

Table 21). There were differences between the programmes in terms of the relative number of journalists who spoke, $\chi^2(3, N = 319) = 16.57, p = .001$. Post-hoc analyses show that *ONE News* had a larger proportion of stories where journalists spoke than either *Prime News* ($\chi^2(1, N = 150) = 8.29, p = .004$) and *Te Kāea* ($\chi^2(1, N = 154) = 12.87, p < .001$). There were no significant differences for any of the other combinations of programmes (at $p < .01$).

Table 21
Frequency of journalists speaking on camera

Journalist speech on camera	ONE News		3 News		Prime News		Te Kāea	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Spoke	43	46.2	33	30.6	13	22.8	11	18.0
Did not speak	50	53.8	75	69.4	44	77.2	50	82.0
Total stories by journalists	93	100.0	108	100.0	57	100.0	61	100.0

When journalists did speak on camera, they spoke for the longest mean duration on *ONE News* and the shortest on *3 News* (see Table 22). However, there was a considerably wider variation in the duration of journalists' speech on *ONE News* (SD = 29.5") compared to the other channels (where all SDs < 20"). A Kruskal-Wallis test indicated that there was not a statistically significant difference in the length of time journalists spoke on camera for the four programmes ($H = 2.37, N = 100, df = 3, n.s.$) (a Kruskal-Wallis test was performed because of the heterogeneity of variance in the data, and thus a one-way ANOVA was not appropriate).

Table 22
Mean duration (seconds) of journalists' speech where they appeared on camera.

	ONE News M (SD)	3 News M (SD)	Prime News M (SD)	Te Kāea M (SD)
Duration of speech	29.2" (29.5")	21.0" (16.1")	24.5" (19.8")	21.4" (6.1")

Note: Mean (M) is followed by Standard Deviation (SD).

In summary, although journalists spoke on screen more frequently on *ONE News* than on the other three programmes, they did not speak for significantly *longer* than journalists on *3 News*, *Prime News*, and *Te Kāea*.

5 Discussion

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this research is to compare the news bulletins being broadcast on New Zealand's four nationally available free-to-air early evening news programmes; *ONE News*, *3 News*, *Prime News*, and *Te Kāea*. The kind of news being broadcast on television is important because "most of the time, journalists are the main source of our information about the world beyond our own immediate environment" (McNair, 2003, p. 23). Furthermore, one of the roles of the news media is to promote discourse about public affairs, thereby supporting citizens' ability to participate in the democratic process (Atkinson, 1994b; McNair, 2003). The elements of the news which are the focus of this research all have some bearing on how *ONE News*, *3 News*, *Prime News*, and *Te Kāea* fulfil this function. Therefore, this discussion examines the results reported in the previous chapter and is similarly structured around the four main areas of investigation. The first part looks at the overall format and structure of the news programmes, including the findings relating to the story topics which feature in the main news segment. The second part considers the selection and representation of sources in the locally produced main news stories. The third part examines the results relating to the frequency of source groups speaking in each programme, the duration of source speech per story, and the duration of sound bites. The fourth and last part looks at the extent to which journalists become a part of the story by speaking on camera in the stories they present. Of central concern here is the news that the four broadcasters in the sample produce themselves. For this reason, apart from the overall comparison of the format and structure of the bulletin, discussion is focused on the locally produced stories in the main news segment of the news. This focus enables conclusions to be drawn about the decisions being made by New Zealand news producers (rather than by overseas broadcasters whose news items happen to be broadcast here) about news topics, source decisions, and the role of journalists. This chapter concludes with a consideration of the limitations of the present research, some possible future avenues of further research, and a summary of the main issues discussed in this chapter.

5.2 Profile of the News Programmes

We saw earlier that main news stories comprise only a part of the modern television news package (C. Bell, 1996; Cook, 2002). In addition to the news content, the profile of television news bulletins includes sport, business, and weather information, as well as teasers, music, and chat to provide transitions both between these items, and to the advertisement breaks. The incorporation of non-news items in news programmes reflects the increasing influence of entertainment values in the commercial news environment (Allan, 2004; Carter & Allan, 2000). The first research question posed in this research was whether there are differences in the profile of the news provided by *ONE News*, *3 News*, *Prime News*, and *Te Kāea*. This section will examine the various aspects of the programmes' profiles in turn.

5.2.1 Segments of the News Bulletins

Non-news items serve a variety of purposes, from providing information (in the case of business, sport, or weather), to promoting upcoming stories or programmes and encouraging viewer's loyalty (Allan, 2004; Cook, 2002). Together, they provide a total package of news, of which the main news¹⁰ is only one part. The results of the current study support previous research findings about the significant proportion of the news being taken up by non-news items. When the bulletins themselves were analysed (excluding advertisements), over 40% of all four programmes' bulletins comprised non-news items. The only significant difference was between *Prime News* and *Te Kāea*, where averages of 11'47" (52.5%) and 14'10" (59.1%) of the bulletin consisted of main news, respectively. Previously Comrie (1996) found that the duration of the main news had declined to 63.4% of the TVNZ news bulletin by 1990. This is a similar percentage to that found here on *Te Kāea*, the programme with the longest duration of main news, indicating that there has been some general decline in the percentage of the main bulletin allocated to main news in the last eighteen years.

As in earlier research (Comrie, 1996; Comrie & Fountaine, 2005/ 2006; Cook, 2002), sport is by far the largest segment of non-news in the current study. As expected, sport comprised roughly a quarter of the bulletin time on *ONE News*, *3 News*, and *Te Kāea*. However, on *Prime News*, sport comprised 31.4% (7'04') of

¹⁰ As defined in the Method chapter, the main news comprises any news story which is not in the Business, Sports, or Weather segments of the bulletin.

the news bulletin. The dominance of sport on the *Prime News* bulletin may be attributable to Sky Television's ownership of Prime Television. Prime News has access to Sky Television's extensive sports coverage, and it is possible that Sky Television also has an interest in the 'show casing' of this content on the free-to-air programme (Rosenberg, 2008). Comrie and Fountaine's (2005/ 2006) finding for 2000 and 2003 was that main news items (including sport) made up 60% of the news hour on both *ONE News* and *3 News*. All four programmes (rather than bulletins) in the present study exceed this amount for the combined main news and sport segments (and range from 65% on *Te Kāea* to 73% on *Prime News*). It appears that this change is due to an increase in the proportion of time allocated to main news rather than to an increase in sports coverage.

There is some variety in the proportion of the bulletins taken up by other non-news items. For example, *ONE News* spent 10.1% of the bulletin on weather, compared to just 3.8% on *Prime News*. Similarly, *Te Kāea* and *Prime News* both spent nearly 3% of their programmes on music, compared to around 1% for *ONE News* and *3 News*. Also of interest is the extent to which teasers and chat contribute to the bulletins. Earlier research found that while these may be some of the characteristics which help make the news more entertaining (Edwards, 2002), they appeared to do so at relatively little expense in terms of duration. For example, Comrie (1996) found that chat comprised an average of only 13.2" of the half-hour new programme on TVNZ news in 1990. It is worth noting then, that while chat comprises under a minute on all bulletins, that *ONE News*' average of 54" chat is a significant increase on the earlier finding (even taking into account the longer bulletin). All the other programmes also exceeded Comrie's (1996) finding. Teasers, which had not been previously analysed, were also a relatively minor part of each bulletin, with *ONE News* spending the greatest proportion of the bulletin (1'41" or 3.8%) promoting upcoming news items or programmes. This feature was less pronounced on the other programmes, with teaser duration ranging from 1.9% of the bulletin on *Te Kāea* to 2.9% on *Prime News*.

In general, it appears that, despite being half-hour news bulletins, *Prime* and *Te Kāea* conform to all the established conventions of how a news bulletin is structured. For example, they offer weather, headlines, teasers, chat and music in what appear to be similar proportions to their hour-long counterparts. The exception to this is that *Te Kāea* is the only programme to omit *Business* as a segment in the news bulletin. While *Business* takes up under a minute of the *ONE News*, *3 News* and *Prime News* bulletins, this decision shows *Te Kāea* has

departed, at least to some extent, from what has become the standard news bulletin. Later sections will examine whether this is the case only in terms of bulletin structure, or whether *Te Kāea*'s approach is different in other ways.

When we turn to the news programmes overall (including advertisements) we find further evidence that the profile of *Te Kāea* is slightly different from the other three programmes. In 1996, Cook (2002) found that *One Network News*' commercial break was 23% of the news hour. However, advertisements make up only 13% of the *Te Kāea* news programme, compared to around a quarter of each of the other programmes. The shorter advertisements segment means it is the only programme to spend over half the programme time on main news. However, this is at least partly accounted for by *Te Kāea*'s mean duration of 27'09", somewhat less than the expected half hour.¹¹ Given that the *Te Kāea* programmes analysed were those repeated at 11pm, it is unknown whether the programme length may have differed from that of the original broadcast. However, the schedule of programmes provided by Māori Television suggests that both screenings of *Te Kāea* are half an hour long (and not that the later screening is of shorter duration) (Māori Television, 2008c). It may be that in the 7pm timeslot *Te Kāea* has a similar percentage of advertisements per programme as *ONE News*, *3 News*, and *Prime News*, but it was not within the scope of this research to ascertain whether this is the case.

We can draw some general conclusions about the current findings about news segments in the light of previous research. The duration of main news as a percentage of the bulletin seems to be either roughly equivalent or shorter than that found by Comrie (1996) about TVNZ in 1990. However, the duration of main news on all programmes exceeds the low-point of less than half the bulletin identified by Atkinson (1994a). In fact, it appears that the bulletin structure has changed since 2003. In the current research all four programmes had longer main news and sports segments (combined) than *ONE News* and *3 News* did in both 2000 and 2003. This implies that the percentage of non-news on all four programmes studied may be less than the earlier study by Comrie and Fountaine

¹¹ It is difficult to know why there is less advertising during *Te Kāea* than in the other programmes. It may be the case that *Te Kāea* attracts fewer advertisers, or that, due to its public funding arrangements, Māori Television does not require the same level of advertising revenue as the other news providers. Alternatively, *Te Kāea* may have a deliberate policy of minimising advertising during the news programme. Further investigation is required to find out whether any of these explanations (or a combination of them) is the case.

(2005/ 2006). Furthermore, some of the findings suggest that *Te Kāea* is, in some ways, providing a news bulletin with a different 'profile' than that of the other programmes. However, in terms of news segments, overall the findings do tend to support the contention that non-news segments remain a dominant part of the television news, and that this is the case for all four programmes studied. While the news programmes may be marketed as half-hour or hour-long opportunities to hear about the news of the day, the reality is that the broadcast of main news stories takes up only half (or less) of this time. Therefore, the commercial imperatives which have driven the production of news in the post-deregulation environment appear to remain unabated for the production of *ONE News*, *3 News*, and *Prime News*. It is still unclear whether this is also the case for the publicly funded *Te Kāea*.

5.2.2 Duration of Main News Stories

We saw in chapter two that the brevity of main news stories is partly attributed to the contribution that entertainment values make to the news (Allan, 2004). Television news offers a summary of each story, providing only a brief opportunity to convey information or analysis (Abel, 1997; Calabrese, 2005; Tiffin, 1989). Items must be sufficiently brief to retain audience attention and fit within the predetermined programme structure (Atkinson, 1994b). Previous New Zealand research shows that the decline in average story length to just over a minute (1'07") by 1993 (Comrie, 1996; Cook, 2002) appears to have been halted, and it had increased to 1'28" on *ONE News* and *3 News* by 2003 (Comrie & Fountaine, 2005/ 2006). The present research found that story duration ranged from 1'11" on *Prime News* to 1'41" on *ONE News*, and that the only significant difference in duration was found between these two programmes. While *ONE News* and *Prime News* provide two extremes in story duration, neither is sufficiently distanced (in duration) from *3 News* or *Te Kāea* to provide evidence of further differences. The important finding here is that, with the possible exception of *Prime News*, all programmes in the current study appear to have stories of similar duration to those in the earlier research, and that story duration does not appear to have declined since then. This suggests that while stories have not become any shorter, nor has there been any increase in the opportunity for stories to deliver the detailed information and analysis which may be expected of any news programme (McNair, 2003).

5.2.3 Locally and Internationally Produced Main News Stories

This study examined the production of the main news stories in each bulletin. They were categorised as being locally produced (by the broadcaster), internationally produced (by another, overseas broadcaster such as CNN or the BBC) or as having an unspecified origin. There was quite a range in the percentages of stories which were locally produced on each programme. *Te Kāea* had no internationally produced stories or stories where production was not specified. *ONE News* and *3 News* had 8.8% and 12.0% of internationally produced stories respectively, and *ONE News* had only one story where production was not specified in the sample (.7% of stories). *Prime News* had only a small percentage of internationally produced stories, but there were 16.0% of stories where production was not specified. It seems to be the case that *Prime News* used a different convention for attributing stories than the other programmes. Given that locally produced stories were attributed to *Prime News* reporters, and that all the stories where production was not specified had international topics, it seems safe to assume that these unattributed stories were also international in origin. If this is the case, then it indicates that *Prime News* is the largest user of externally-sourced international content in its bulletins.

There is little research which has examined the origin of production of stories in news bulletins, although Comrie (1996) found that nearly 40% of TVNZ news stories were sourced overseas in 1990. Such a measure provides a useful indicator of how dependent broadcasters are on overseas content. This is important because locally produced stories are more likely to provide locally relevant content, and at least provide a New Zealand context for international events. The trend towards more sensational news (Carter & Allan, 2000; Phillips & Tapsall, 2007) means that international coverage of events such as plane crashes and Police chases (as examples of the *Accident* and *Crime* news topics) are screened directly on New Zealand television with no additional consideration of wider context or balance. It should be noted that for the purposes of this research, where the programmes 'packaged' overseas content (for example, with the newsreader providing a voice-over to international footage) such stories were coded as locally produced. This is because the purpose of examining the production of stories was to determine which stories were within the editorial control of the programmes, and thus reflected its own choices about sources. This difference in method means that the findings of the current research are not directly comparable with Comrie's (1996) earlier research.

5.2.4 New Zealand and International Main News Topics

All of *Te Kāea*'s stories were primarily focused on New Zealand topics and issues, although this included stories with reference to international events as they affected Māori. In contrast, the 53.0% of New Zealand stories on *Prime News* was almost exactly matched by the percentage duration of New Zealand coverage, mirroring Atkinson's (2004) 1994 research on *One Network News*. The number of New Zealand stories on *ONE News* and *3 News* under-represented the amount of time actually spent on New Zealand news on each programme (at 75.3% and 68.4% of the duration of the main news respectively). Thus on these two programmes, New Zealand stories tended to provide longer and more indepth coverage than did stories on international topics. Therefore, *Te Kāea*, *ONE News*, *3 News*, and, to a lesser extent, *Prime News* all seem to confirm the general finding in the literature that the news has become increasingly domestic (in this case, focused on New Zealand) (Carter & Allan, 2000). Three of the programmes (*ONE News*, *3 News*, and *Prime News*) attempt to provide a comprehensive coverage of both New Zealand and international news, and this is facilitated by their relationships with other international broadcasters (MediaWorks, 2008; Prime Television, 2008; TVNZ, 2008). These include CNN and BBC (*ONE News*), ITV and CBS (*3 News*), and Sky Television (*Prime News*). However, in the case of *Te Kāea*, there is clearly a focus on providing news about New Zealand topics. For example, it is evident there are no commercial relationships with other international broadcasters as there are on the other three programmes. Instead, *Te Kāea* appears to be providing an alternative news programme; one which complements rather than replaces the news offered by the other broadcasters. This is in keeping with its stated purpose, assuming that the intention to cover international news refers to news which is of particular relevance to Māori, and thus will result in primarily locally focused (New Zealand) stories (Māori Television, 2008c).

5.2.5 Subject Categories of the Programmes

Previous New Zealand research has found that the main news segment is still the largest segment (in terms of duration) of television news bulletins (Comrie, 1996; Cook, 2002) and the current research has also made this finding. The main news segment of the news bulletin offers a brief summary of the news of the day. As discussed in earlier chapters, decisions about what constitutes this news are driven by a complex interaction of news values which determine what is both

newsworthy and appropriate for television (Galtung & Ruge, 1973; McGregor, 2002b). The second question of this research was whether there are differences in the topic categories of main news stories on *ONE News*, *3 News*, *Te Kāea*, and *Prime News*.

Previous research found that there is a trend away from 'serious' news topics to more 'tabloid' news (Atkinson, 2002; Comrie, 1996; Comrie & Fountaine, 2005/2006). At first glance, the allocation of news time to less serious news topics does not appear to be supported by the current research. On all four programmes, *Politics* was ranked first in terms of duration of news story topics, ranging from a third of the main news on *ONE News* down to 21.6% on *3 News*. However, *Crime* was ranked second in duration on all programmes, ranging from 22.3% on *Prime News* down to 15.6% on *Te Kāea*. Furthermore, two other more tabloid topics, *Accident* and *Human interest*, were also ranked within the top five topics overall (for duration of stories).

When we look further at the programmes individually, we find that the patterns of news distribution across the topics vary considerably. The large weighting towards *Politics* on *ONE News* meant that (with the exception of *Crime*) no other news topics took up more than 7.5% of the story duration on average. The *ONE News* sample had no stories on any of the serious news topics *Welfare*, *Māori-Pakeha relations*, *Immigration*, *Energy* or *Race relations*. Similarly, other serious topics *Environment*, *Education*, *Defence*, *Science*, *War*, *Arts*, *Health*, *Labour Relations* and *Transport* each received, on average, well under one minute of time each per bulletin. These findings highlight how small the opportunity is for main news stories to be told on television news, and indicate that the emphasis on *ONE News* is significantly skewed towards its two major topics of *Politics* and *Crime*. The large amount of *Politics* coverage, as a percentage of the duration of the main news segment, must be considered alongside the lack of coverage of other serious news topics by *ONE News*. Therefore, these findings provide support for the earlier findings of a trend away from many serious news topics apart from *Politics* (Comrie & Fountaine, 2005/2006).

On *3 News*, the duration of the news seems to be spread much more evenly amongst the topics. Twenty two of the 25 topics appear in the sample, the largest number for any programme. As for *ONE News*, however, this wide distribution, and the relative emphasis on *Politics* and *Crime*, meant that the other topics covered received only small amounts of news time. For example, the serious topics of *Environment*, *Education*, *Economics*, *Defence*, *Science*, *Arts*, *Health*,

Labour Relations, Transport, Welfare, Consumer issues, Immigration, and Energy, each received under a minute, on average, per bulletin. These were each out-ranked (in terms of duration) by both *Accident* and *Human interest* stories. While there is more balanced coverage on *3 News* than on *ONE News*, these findings do provide support for earlier findings, with new topics which are generally considered to be more tabloid in nature taking up a large proportion of the main news segment (Atkinson, 2002; Comrie, 1996).

Prime News also allocated a significant amount of bulletin time to *Politics* (30.7%). News stories were only broadcast on 15 of the 25 story topics, and of these, the majority of time was spent on the tabloid topics of *Accident, Human interest, and Personality Profile*. *Prime News* also spent 10% of story duration on *Culture*, which is difficult to categorise as either a serious or tabloid topic, as it includes 'lifestyle' topics as well as those concerning culture and identity. Interestingly, despite sports news being recorded as a separate segment, *Prime News* also spent 5% of the main bulletin story duration on *Sport*, again perhaps reflecting the accessibility of Sky Television coverage (Rosenberg, 2008). Again, this finding supports the earlier research, with tabloid topics such as *Crime* taking up a large proportion of the main news time (McGregor, 2002a).

The focus of the news on *Te Kāea*, in terms of duration, was also on a relatively small number of topics; it broadcast stories on 15 of the 25 news topics. Of most note here is the contrast with the other programmes in the coverage of *Accident* news. This was the 13th ranked topic in terms of duration, receiving an average of just 5" per bulletin. Also significantly, *Te Kāea* was the only programme to rank the serious news topics *Education* and *Environment* within the top five topics in terms of duration, allocating them each around 10% of the news time. While *Te Kāea* also omitted to cover several serious news topics in the sample, such as *Science, Transport, and Immigration*, it does appear that its bulletin tends to focus more on serious rather than tabloid topics compared with the other three programmes. While this is contrary to general findings about the move away from serious topics (Atkinson, 2002; Comrie & Fountaine, 2005/ 2006), it is in keeping with previous findings about Māori news (Walker, 2002). For instance, the focus away from *Accident* and towards *Education* and the *Environment* is in keeping with TeAwa's (1996) finding that Māori news focuses more on issues than events.

It should be noted that the major political story during the sample period was a physical fight between two politicians. While this is a legitimate *Politics* story, as it

involved politicians and the activities of Parliament, it is interesting to note that the values which drove its selection might be more closely aligned to tabloid topics than to serious news issues (Comrie, 1996). This example serves as a reminder that while a story may fall clearly within a serious news topic, it is the treatment of that story (in terms of source selection and commentary) which determines whether it really fits the description of serious news (and the same may be true of traditionally 'tabloid' topics such as *Crime*).

The trend away from serious news coverage, illustrated here by *ONE News*, *3 News*, and *Prime News* is an important characteristic of contemporary television news in New Zealand. While there may well be significant events and issues to be covered on national news which would be classified as *Crime* (such as changes to courts procedures) or *Accident* (such as a major local industrial accident), of concern here is the extent to which tabloid stories, in general, appear to crowd out other important news stories. The relevance and significance of many of the stories that appear on *ONE News*, *3 News* or *Prime News* must be weighed in relation to topics such as *Welfare*, *Immigration*, *Energy* and *Race relations*, which barely received any coverage at all during the sample period. We must conclude that the functions of the news to educate, inform and promote public discourse, are seriously compromised by the abbreviated and narrow fare currently being offered (Atkinson, 1994b; Carter & Allan, 2000; McNair, 2003).

5.3 Source Types

The news media is dependent on sources to contribute information and opinions to news stories. It has long been understood that the news favours authoritative and credible sources, who frequently represent official, institutional perspectives (J. D. Brown et al., 1987; Ericson et al., 1989; Gans, 1979; Grant & Dimmick, 2000). Such élite sources have been found to dominate the choices of source use in a variety of media leading to an under-representation of non-élite sources (J. D. Brown et al., 1987; Lacy & Coulson, 2000; Sigal, 1973; Welch et al., 2000). However, there have also been research findings that suggest that the contribution of non-élite sources to the news may be increasing (Comrie, 1999; Comrie & Fountaine, 2005). The third research question in the present study, therefore, is whether there are differences in the types of sources used in locally produced news on *ONE News*, *3 News*, *Te Kāea*, and *Prime News*. This analysis focuses on locally produced news stories to reflect the source decisions made by these broadcasters, rather than international broadcasters.

On all four programmes, *élite* sources outnumbered non-*élite* sources, ranging from 68.1% of sources on *Prime News* down to 53.7% of sources on *ONE News*. However, the single largest category of sources, again for all programmes, was the non-elite source type *Member of public* (ranging from 33.7% on *Te Kāea* to 22.4% on *3 News*). *ONE News*, *3 News*, and *Prime News* share the rankings of the top three source groups; *Member of public*, *Government official*, and *Government politician*. This finding suggests that while two of the historically dominant source groups (*Government official* and *Government politician*) make a strong showing on these news programmes, the role played by the non-*élite* source groups is also a dominant one. This is particularly the case on *ONE News*, where *Member of the public* sources actually outnumber the combined *Government official* and *Government politician* categories. On *Te Kāea*, the place of individual *élite* source types is not nearly so dominant as on the other programmes, with a more even spread across categories. *Te Kāea* is the only programme to feature (*élite*) *Iwi* sources to any significant extent (at almost 6.9% of sources) and it also has the highest percentage of (*élite*) *NGO* sources. This finding is consistent with Te Awa's (1996) finding that *Mana News* used a wide range of sources and tended to access such diverse groups as Māori political leaders and interest groups.

The most even distributions of *élite* and non-*élite* sources are found on *ONE News* and *Te Kāea*. On *ONE News* this can be attributed to the large number of *Member of the public* sources, but also to the fourth ranking of the *Professional* source group (*Professional* sources are individuals spoken to in a professional capacity but who do not speak on behalf of an organisation). Similarly, *Te Kāea* not only has *Member of the public* as its biggest source group, but *Professional* as its third largest group (at almost 10.9%). The percentages of non-*élite* sources on *ONE News* and *Te Kāea* are higher than those found in previous research (Comrie & Fountaine, 2005). This suggests that there has been a continuation of the trend towards including more 'ordinary people' in the news on these programmes. Atkinson (1994b) suggests that television news may be shifting towards the inclusion of more emotional news which centres on individuals, such as victims. This could provide an explanation for the findings on *ONE News* and *Te Kāea*, although it should be noted that the non-*élite* source category in the current study include individuals who are connected to the story in a range of ways, and not only as victims or bystanders.

The trend towards more non-élite individual-focused news does not offer an explanation for the differences between these programmes (*ONE News* and *Te Kāea*) and *3 News* and *Prime News*, where the ratio of élite and non-élite sources is more in keeping with previous findings (Comrie, 1999; Comrie & Fountaine, 2005). A possible explanation for the differences in the elite/ non-élite ratios arises when we look at the actual numbers of sources. For instance, comparing the two one hour-long bulletins, *ONE News* and *3 News*, we see that the numbers of élite sources are almost identical (138 and 136 respectively) and that it is the number of non-élite sources on *ONE News* (119) which is far greater than that on *3 News* (65). Similarly, for the half-hour bulletins, there is not a great deal of difference between the actual numbers of élite sources on *Prime News* and *Te Kāea* (49 and 56 respectively) but the number of non-élite sources on *Te Kāea* (45) is almost twice that on *Prime News* (23). It seems then, that while élite sources may continue to make a core contribution to sources overall on *ONE News* and *Te Kāea*, non-élite sources may be being added to this core to provide news which is more reflective of a wider range of experience (Lee, 2001). It is interesting to note that it is the Crown Owned Company TVNZ and public broadcaster Māori Television which show a stronger representation of non-élite sources. It may be that the non-commercial elements of their broadcasting mandates have contributed to this outcome.

One final matter concerning non-élite sources which is of relevance here is the composition of the non-élite source category. We have discussed the relative strength of *Member of public* and *Professional* sources above, but it should also be noted that *Person in the street* (people who were randomly approached for their opinions) was a minor source type on all programmes except *ONE News*, where it ranked 5th (with 7.4% of sources). We have seen that *ONE News* has emphasised the role of non-élite sources overall, so this finding may not be surprising. However, for the other programmes it is interesting to note that the majority of non-élite sources who are selected are not randomly selected individuals, but are instead people who are somehow connected to the story. The nature of the non-élite sources who are being selected for inclusion in news stories, therefore, suggests that they are indeed being included to provide a personalised experience of events and issues based stories (Atkinson, 1994b; Atwater, 1984; Grabe et al., 1999), and perhaps also to provide experiences which can be interpreted as representative of a broader social group (Sigal, 1986).

As we saw earlier in chapter two, *élite* sources have historically been more likely to have the opportunity to be included in news stories (J. D. Brown et al., 1987; Manning, 2001; Powell & Self, 2003; Welch et al., 2000). However, the extent to which this means that these sources are automatically the primary definers of stories is contested (Deacon, 1996; Deacon & Golding, 1994; Schlesinger, 1990; Williams, 1993). It is difficult to draw conclusions about the nature of primary definers in the four programmes examined in the present research. This is partly because, while information has been gathered about the number of *élite* and non-*élite* sources, it is difficult to infer anything about the nature of the treatment given to these sources. We can conclude that *élite* sources do have the greatest opportunity to access the viewing public on all four programmes. However, the dominance of *Member of public* sources (a non-*élite* source type) as the greatest single group of sources overall, suggests that non-*élite* sources may also play a significant role in shaping the audience's understanding of the issues. The extent to which such sources become primary definers in stories depends, as noted earlier, on whether their role is central to the news story, or whether they merely add 'flavour' to the views of accredited and legitimate *élite* sources. However, it may be taken as a positive sign that the non-*élite* sources who are selected by all four programmes tend to be people who are involved in the stories (*Member of public*), rather than people in the street with no special connection to the issue at hand. This is potentially fruitful area of future research, and will be discussed further in the Conclusion chapter.

5.4 Source Speech

The literature suggests that, in several ways, sources have less opportunity to be directly represented in the news than they once did (Bucy & Grabe, 2007; Comrie, 1999; Fenton et al., 1997; Hallin, 1992a). This can be through sources being cited rather than speaking directly, by having less opportunity to speak overall, or through the decreased duration of sound bites. The amount of source speech in the news is important because it reflects the opportunity sources have to represent their views in their own words (McGregor & Comrie, 1995). All three of these factors contribute to the picture of source speech in television news. For example, information about sound bites does not provide information about how much speech there is in total. Therefore, there are three research questions relating to source speech which we seek to answer in this research. Research question three was whether there are differences in the frequency of each source type (used in locally produced news) speaking directly (as opposed to being

cited) on *ONE News*, *3 News*, *Prime News*, and *Te Kāea*. Research question four was whether there are differences in the length of time each source type (used in locally produced news) speaks directly in the broadcasts of the four programmes. Research question five was whether there are differences in the sound bites of each source type (used in locally produced news) on the four programmes.

It should be noted that as the *Te Kāea* bulletins are predominantly in Māori, there is the possibility that source speech characteristics differ from those on English speaking news programmes as a result. However, given that not all sources speak in Māori on *Te Kāea*, it is no simple matter to take this into account when considering the findings. Also, any differences may be a function of other features of the *Te Kāea* programme, and not of differences in the expression of language.

5.4.1 Frequency of Sources Speaking and being Cited

The current research found that all source groups were more likely to speak than be cited on *ONE News*, *3 News*, *Prime News*, and *Te Kāea*. This overall finding is in keeping with previous research findings (Comrie, 1996; Comrie & Fountaine, 2005). However, it was also found that non-élite sources were directly represented (that is, speaking on camera, rather than being cited) in a greater percentage of cases than were élite sources on all programmes. The greatest difference was on *Te Kāea*, where 86.7% of non-élite sources but only 66.1% of élite sources spoke. The only significant difference in the ratio of speaking and cited sources for élite sources was between *ONE News* and *Te Kāea*, where *ONE News* had a higher percentage of élite sources who spoke. There were no significant differences in the ratios of speaking and cited sources across the four programmes for non-élite sources.

As we saw earlier, most research on television news sources thus far has not explicitly compared the rates at which various individual source groups are cited or quoted directly, nor made any direct comparison of the frequency of élite and non-élite sources either speaking directly or being cited. This is unfortunate, as this aspect of source representation potentially provides us with a further insight into the similarities and differences between the treatment of different types of sources by news programmes. While there is little other research that comments on the differences between direct speech and citation of élite and non-élite sources, we can draw some tentative conclusions on the basis of these current findings. There is some speculation that non-élite sources may be selected by news programmes to augment the views provided by élite sources (Lee, 2001)

and that non-élite sources may fulfil a different function to that of élite sources by making a personal and more emotional contribution to stories (Atkinson, 1994b; Sigal, 1986). The current findings appear to lend weight to these proposals. For instance, if non-élite sources are primarily selected to add personalised content to stories, then they are far better able to do this speaking on camera than as abstractly cited sources. Therefore, people who are directly involved in stories in some way (such as *Member of the public* sources) are more likely to be given the opportunity to speak on camera precisely because what they have to contribute is personal and immediately connected to the news story (Atwater & Green, 1988).

5.4.2 Duration of Source Speech

Previous research tends to focus on the measure of the average amount of source speech per story. This provides an indication of the length of the opportunity sources have to speak overall. For example, Comrie and Fountaine (2005) found that the average duration of source speech per story on *ONE News* in 2004 was 11.3", up marginally on McGregor and Comrie's (1995) findings of 10.4" (on TV One) and 10.5" (on TV3) in 1994. These figures are not therefore comparable with the present research because they include both locally and internationally produced stories. The mean duration of individual source speech for *ONE News* (14.7"), *3 News* (16.3"), and *Prime News* (15.5") are all significantly smaller than that found on *Te Kāea* (27.9"). This tells us that when individual sources spoke on *Te Kāea*, they had the opportunity to speak for nearly twice as long as did sources on the other three programmes.

When we move from considering individual sources to categories of sources, we find that the source groups with the longest average duration of source speech are *Celebrity* sources on *ONE News* and *3 News*, *Government official* sources on *Prime News*, and *Expert* sources on *Te Kāea*. When considered alongside the findings on the largest source groups on each programme (see Table 10, above), we find that there is little correlation between the major source groups selected on *ONE News*, *3 News*, and *Prime News*, and the average duration of speech for that source type.

While *Member of public* was the largest single source group for all three of these programmes, *Member of public* had only the ninth longest mean duration of source speech on *ONE News*, and the tenth longest for both *3 News*, and *Prime News*. Non-élite source groups typically ranked in the bottom half for speech duration overall, and when we consider the combined mean duration of source

speech of élite and non-élite sources, we find that élite sources have longer mean duration of speech than non-élite sources on all three of these programmes. This seems to support the contention made earlier that non-élite sources are used to 'round out' news coverage by increasing the diversity of sources, but that they may not be given the same opportunity as élite sources to express their views (Lee, 2001).

The findings for *Te Kāea* are not consistent with those for the other three programmes. We have already seen that two of the three largest source groups represented on *Te Kāea* were non-élite source groups (*Member of public* and *Professional sources* were the largest and third largest source groups, respectively). We now see that the mean duration of speech for each of these categories was 24.1" and 35.1", the sixth and third longest amounts of source speech on *Te Kāea* respectively. Almost all source types on *Te Kāea* had the opportunity to speak for longer than 20", whereas this was a rarity on the other programmes. Interestingly, the source group with the longest duration of speech on *Te Kāea* was *Expert*, with *Iwi* and *NGO* source groups ranked second and fourth, respectively. While these are élite source groups, their prominence (for example, compared to that of *Government official*, *Government politician*, and *Business* source groups) on *Te Kāea* does seem consistent with TeAwa's (1996) finding that informal sources such as Māori interest groups were more dominant than were more formal institutional sources on *Mana News*. It is also in keeping with the finding in the current research that news topics on *Te Kāea* focused more on a range of serious news topics and that Māori news in general is more issues-focused (Walker, 2002). Also unlike the other three programmes, élite and non-élite sources had the same duration of source speech (26.9") on *Te Kāea*. Not only do all sources speak for much longer on *Te Kāea* than on the other programmes, but the opportunity to express their views is far more evenly distributed. It is difficult to speculate why this might be the case, given that there is little research which specifically addresses this issue. However, it could be speculated that a growing awareness that Māori issues have not generally been covered well or appropriately in the news (Abel, 2004; McGregor, 1991; Media Research Team Te Kawa a Māui, 2005; Walker, 2002) has resulted in a deliberate attempt to involve a wide range of sources and to give them ample opportunity to express their views. TeAwa (1996) found that *Mana News* used a wider range of sources than did other news media and that these sources had more opportunity to speak than in other media. It could be that *Te Kāea* has

implemented a similar process for selecting sources and enabling sources to be heard.

5.4.3 Sound Bites

The duration of sound bites is important because it represents the length of time a source has to communicate their view without it being packaged or mediated in some way (Grabe et al., 1999; Hallin, 1992a; Rupar, 2006). There has been a general finding that the duration of sound bites in the news is decreasing, with the most relevant finding being that by 1990 on TVNZ news, the average sound bite was under 10" long (Comrie, 1996) (although this was for internationally and locally produced stories combined). This finding was confirmed in the present research for *ONE News* (8.2") and *3 News* (9.3"), whereas sound bites on *Prime News* (12.2") and *Te Kāea* (15.9") exceeded this figure. It is interesting to note that while *Prime News* sound bites were longer than those on *ONE News* and *3 News*, *Prime News* had the smallest numbers of sources overall, even taking into account the half-hour programme.

The research also found that elite sources had significantly longer sound bites than did non-elite sources on *ONE News*, *3 News*, and *Prime News*. On *Te Kāea*, non-elite sources had longer sound bites (19.1") than elite sources (12.8"). Generally, for elite sources there is little difference between sound bite duration for *ONE News* and *3 News*, but both these programmes had significantly shorter sound bites than did *Prime News* and *Te Kāea*. *Prime News* also had significantly shorter elite sound bites than *Te Kāea*. For non-elite sound bites, *ONE News*, *3 News*, and *Prime News* all had significantly shorter sound bites than *Te Kāea*.

These findings suggest that for *ONE News*, *3 News*, and *Prime News*, there is consistently less representation of non-elite sources. They are selected less frequently, speak for shorter amounts of time overall, and as we see here, speak in shorter sound bites than do their elite counterparts. This finding lends support to the idea, discussed earlier, that non-elite sources are augmenting the coverage of the still-dominant elite source groups (Lee, 2001).

On *Te Kāea*, the sound bite findings are also consistent with findings relating to source selection and the opportunity to speak. Not only do non-elite sources have greater likelihood of being selected at all, they also have greater opportunity to speak on *Te Kāea* than on other news programmes. Here, we also find that when non-elite sources do speak, the duration of sound bites is equivalent to that of elite sources. As with the findings for *ONE News*, *3 News*, and *Prime News*, the

findings for *Te Kāea* also tell a consistent story. *Te Kāea* appears to be constructing the source-use in its stories in a different way to the other four programmes. Individual sources have longer to speak, and the range of sources who speak appears to be much more representative of a range of élite and non-élite sources. This is again consistent with the speculation put forward earlier, that Māori news, and here *Te Kāea* specifically, may be deliberately choosing to represent sources in different ways to other media (TeAwa, 1996). The effect of this could be to provide greater opportunity for all sources to be directly heard than is otherwise the case.

5.5 Frequency and Duration of Journalists Speaking on Camera

The role of the television news journalists makes an important contribution to the content of the news bulletin overall. Taylor (1993) notes that appearances by journalists on camera has the effect of reinforcing their presence and credibility. For example, a live cross to a reporter standing outside Wellington Hospital to report on a staffing shortage may add little to the information imparted, but gives the impression that the journalist is somehow more connected to the facts of the story than they would be sitting in the news studio (Taylor, 1993). The ‘celebrification of the journalist’, where the journalist becomes an significant actor in the story, signals an emphasis within news stories on the expertise and opinions of the journalist (McGregor, 2002b) at the expense of the sources (Grabe et al., 1999). Therefore, the sixth and last research question is the extent to which journalists speak on camera on *ONE News*, *3 News*, *Prime News*, and *Te Kāea*. There is no directly comparable research which examines the duration and prevalence of journalist speech.

The somewhat mixed results indicate that the role of the journalist as a visible presence in news stories is well established on all four news programmes. *ONE News* journalists were significantly more likely to speak on camera (46.2% of the time) than were journalists on either *Prime News* (22.8%) or *Te Kāea* (18.0%) (journalists on *3 News* spoke on camera 30.6% of time). When journalists did speak on camera they did so for over 20” on average, with *ONE News* journalists speaking for almost 30” per story.

Given the lack of directly comparable research, the most useful comparison here seems to be with the duration of source speech. The mean duration of all source speech is shorter than the mean duration of journalists’ speech on *ONE News*, *3 News*, and *Prime News*. Only on *Te Kāea* are individual sources likely to speak

for longer than the mean duration of journalist speech. This, considered alongside the low incidence of journalists speaking in stories, indicates that the role of the journalist as an authoritative commentator on stories is perhaps less entrenched on *Te Kāea* than on other programmes. However, the findings for *ONE News*, *3 News*, and *Prime News* suggest that the contributions of journalists have acquired a legitimacy which results in them taking up a significant part of the stories in which they speak. This is of concern, given McGregor and Comrie's (1995) finding that stories where journalists did pieces to camera the stories tended to be less balanced than other stories. The extent of journalist speech in news stories, particularly on *ONE News*, suggests that the appearance of journalists may be compromising the quality of the news being presented.

5.6 Limitations and Future Research

This section will outline some of the limitations of this research, which relate both to the study design, and to particular characteristics of studying television news. It will then identify some possible future areas of research which may shed further light on questions about the nature of contemporary New Zealand television news.

The vast amount of research examining various aspects of television news indicates not only the significant interest in the nature of news broadcasts, but also the myriad of aspects of the news which are able to be studied. The focus of the present research has been on some selected aspects of the news; the structure and format of the news bulletin, the story topics, the frequency and duration of source speech by source speech, and the frequency and duration of journalists speaking on camera. However, the present research did not focus on any visual elements of the news coverage, which "contain an enormous amount of information which cannot be presented verbally" (Henningham, 1988, p. 153). This is a possible limitation of the research because there may be elements relating to images used in the news programmes which contribute, particularly, to the treatment of sources. The setting within which sources are shown (for example, on the street, in an office, or in Parliament), and the context of their speech (for example, an interview, addressing a crowd of protesters, or crying at home) are further dimensions of source characteristics which were, due to methodological constraints, not included in this research. While such information would not directly contribute to the primary focus of this research on source status, it is important to recognise that television is a visual medium, and

decisions about source selection and treatment take this fundamental characteristic into account (Kupu Taea, 2004; McGregor, 2002b).

A second possible limitation of the research relates to the coding of story topics. The decision was made in the current research to primarily consider the news by topic, as is established convention in news research (e.g. Comrie, 1996; Phillips & Tapsall, 2007; Shoemaker & Cohen, 2006). Generally, this appears to have provided a useful and legitimate way of identifying similarities and differences among the four programmes covered. However, by focusing on news topics, there may be other underlying characteristics of the news stories which are not identified. The most obvious example which can be used to illustrate this point is one alluded to earlier. We have seen that *Politics* was a dominant news topic on all four programmes. The literature generally assumes that an emphasis on *Politics* stories reflects a bulletin's coverage of serious news topics (Carter & Allan, 2000; Comrie & Fountaine, 2005/ 2006). However, one of the main *Politics* stories in the current research sample was a physical fight between two politicians. While this coverage also focused on the consequences of the fight for the participants, and for the political landscape, this story probably does not reflect the values we generally assume to be present in a serious news story. It may be that values such as conflict were more instrumental in making this story such a significant part of news coverage, than its ostensibly *Politics* topic. Thus, the way in which a story is covered in the news may be just as important to any conclusion about trends away from serious news as are the selection of news topics themselves.

A final potential limitation of the current research concerns the sampling method. The rationale for the sample selected for this study was outlined in the earlier Method chapter. The study closely followed recommendations for the construction of a reliable content analysis by using a randomly selected constructed week sample (Riffe et al., 1993). A sample of just one constructed week was chosen, primarily because of resource constraints. While the adequacy of the one-week sample was supported by the literature, a sample of two constructed weeks would have added to the robustness of the research design. It would perhaps have enabled further more detailed analysis of some of the 'finer' elements of broadcast news stories, such as source selection and speech (Riffe et al., 1996).

As mentioned above, there are many aspects of broadcast news that provide a wide scope for worthwhile investigation. The current study has focused on just

some of the characteristics of selected news programmes in New Zealand, and consideration of these findings has led to the identification of more research questions worthy of further investigation. Three possible future areas of research will be briefly discussed.

Earlier in chapters one and two it was identified that the New Zealand broadcast environment is right at a point of change. Freeview television channels are quickly growing in number, and the complete transition from analogue to digital television is forecast in the near future. There is also increasing opportunity for convergence between broadcasting, telecommunications, and the internet (Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2008a). The main evening news programmes broadcast on TV ONE, TV3, Prime Television, and Māori Television were chosen as the subjects of this research because they constituted main national news programmes broadcast on free-to-air television in New Zealand. It seems inevitable that, as the broadcasting environment changes, these broadcasters will also need to change and adapt what news content they provide. For example, all four broadcasters already provide news content through their websites, and sometimes promote this content through their television news programmes. A fruitful area of future research, therefore, would be to examine how the changing broadcast environment, and, in particular, the trend towards the convergence of news media, impacts on *ONE News*, *3 News*, *Prime News*, and *Te Kāea*.

Another area for future research concerns further investigation of the intentions of the broadcasters. The current research has found some clear differences, primarily between *Te Kāea* and the other three programmes, in terms of story topics, and treatment of sources. The Māori Television Service (Te Aratuku Whakāta Irirangi Māori) Act 2003 established a mandate for Māori Television to promote and protect te reo Māori through broadcasting. However, *Te Kāea* goes beyond this to provide a news programme which provides an alternative source of news to that provided on the other programmes examined here. Future research could seek the views of those involved in the production of *Te Kāea* to find out, in more detail, what its intentions are in terms of providing this alternative news service. Similarly, enquiries could also be made of those involved in *ONE News*, *3 News*, and *Prime News*, to compare their stated aims and objectives with the findings made here. Further to this, it would be useful to investigate the objectives of each programme in terms of their source selections. For example, it is clear that *ONE News* emphasises the importance of non-élite sources in its programmes. Determining whether this pattern is a product of additional

resources, a deliberate intention to involve non-élite sources in the news, or of some other factor entirely, would be a useful avenue of inquiry.

A third area for future research which has arisen out of the current research findings is further investigation of the role played by élite and non-élite sources. Some tentative conclusions have been made here about the dominance of élite sources, and how non-élite sources often appear to augment rather than replace élite sources. Following on from investigations such as those by Grabe et al. (1999) and Lee (2001) it would be useful to further explore the nature of the coverage of élite and non-élite sources in more depth. For example, research could investigate whether non-élite sources generally appear alongside élite sources in stories, and whether non-élite sources are relied on for factual information as well as their reactions to events. Such research could shed more light on the complex issue of primary definition, to perhaps further explain the relationship between the selection and treatment of sources and which sources have the opportunity to define the news.

5.7 Summary

This chapter has discussed the findings presented in the Results chapter in the light of the relevant literature. We have seen that there are significant areas of difference among *ONE News*, *3 News*, *Prime News*, and *Te Kāea*, as well as some similarities. All four programmes appear to structure the news bulletins in a conventional way, with non-news segments comprising a large proportion of the news bulletins. The significant place of commercially driven non-news segments of the news seems to be entrenched on all programmes, although perhaps to a lesser extent on *Te Kāea* (Atkinson, 1994b). Of the main news stories that are broadcast, the large majority are on New Zealand topics and take up the majority of the available bulletin time. On *Te Kāea* all stories were on New Zealand topics, confirming its stated focus on issues of specific relevance to Māori (Māori Television, 2008c). When we consider the topics covered by the locally produced main news stories, we find that *ONE News*, *3 News*, and *Prime News* all conform to the trend identified in the literature (Comrie & Fountaine, 2005/ 2006) for more tabloid news topics at the expense of serious news topics. However, *Te Kāea* appears to provide a more balanced coverage of tabloid and serious news topics, perhaps indicating its intention to provide an alternative news bulletin, rather than one which mirrors the content of mainstream news. In terms of source selection and frequency of speech of speaking, all four programmes confirmed the

expected emphasis on élite sources (J. D. Brown et al., 1987; Ericson et al., 1989; Gans, 1979; Grant & Dimmick, 2000). However, the non-élite source type *Member of public* was the largest source group selected on all programmes. Again *Te Kāea* demonstrated its difference from the other programmes in the finding that sources were likely to have more opportunity to speak in its news stories. While non-élite sources on *ONE News*, *3 News*, and *Prime News* were likely to have less opportunity to speak than élite sources, the speech for élite and non-élite sources was much more balanced on *Te Kāea*. Finally, journalists were found most likely to speak on camera on *ONE News*, with the duration of their speech also higher than on any other programme. The findings indicate that, particularly on *ONE News*, the journalist plays a major role as a contributor to the news (McGregor, 2002b).

The last section of this chapter focused on the identification of some limitations of the present research, and on some potential areas of future research. These focused on further investigation of the news provided by the main television news provided in the changing broadcasting environment, more detailed investigation of the intentions of the broadcasters themselves, and exploration of the functions that élite and non-élite sources have within news stories. The final Conclusion chapter will consider the wider implications of the current research findings.

6 Conclusion

The current research begins with the assumption that the functioning of the news media is important. Specifically, following Morrison (2002), it assumes that the role of the news media is to inform and educate the public about the significant events and issues of the day. In doing so, it plays an important role in promoting discussion about public affairs, and facilitating the participation of the public in democratic processes (Abel, 2004; Atkinson, 1994b; Bennett, 2003; McNair, 2003). Despite the proliferation of technology and modes of news delivery, television remains a primary source of news (Crisell, 2006; Graber et al., 2008). Therefore, it follows that the kind of television news available to the public influences the nature of public discourse about current events. In seeking to provide a fair and balanced account of important issues, television news is the product of many decisions about what news is, and how it should be conveyed to the viewing public (Abel, 2004; Galtung & Ruge, 1973; Morrison, 2002; Tiffin, 1989). For example, Bennett (2003) observes that “each news story contains only some of the voices, viewpoints, facts, and organising ideas that could have been included in the story” (p. 2).

In New Zealand television news has an important role in promoting debate and providing vital information necessary for decision-making in our democratic system. The outcomes of decisions made during the construction of New Zealand television news, therefore, can provide important insights into how well this role is being fulfilled. Such decisions include the selection of one news topic over another, the choice of sources and the extent of their opportunity to speak in news stories, and the extent to which journalists mediate the views of sources and assert their own significance (Allan, 2004; Carter & Allan, 2000; Comrie & Fountaine, 2005, 2005/ 2006; Hallin, 1992b; McGregor, 2002b; Shoemaker & Cohen, 2006; Taylor, 1993). The current research sought to understand how successfully contemporary free-to-air broadcasters in New Zealand meet the challenges of informing and educating the public through the delivery of news programmes.

6.1 The Current New Zealand Television News Environment

There have been significant changes in the broadcasting environment in recent years. These include broadcasting deregulation and the advent of TV3 and Prime Television, the introduction of Māori Television, and the implementation of the

TVNZ Charter. The broadcasting environment in New Zealand is currently undergoing a further period of change with the planned transition from analogue to digital television, the recent advent of Freeview, and the increasing convergence of news delivery media (Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2008a). Furthermore, the outcome of the 2008 general election may well bring with it further change to the broadcasting environment, with the National Party proposing to make current TVNZ Charter funding contestable (Coleman, 2008), and remove the Charter requirements from TVNZ altogether should it form the new Government (R. Brown, 2008). Much of the research on the New Zealand television environment to date has focused on the effects on TVNZ of what is arguably the most significant of these developments to date; the deregulation of broadcasting (e.g., Atkinson, 1994a, 2002; Comrie, 1996; Cook, 2002). While there has been some research which has compared TVNZ and TV3 news programmes (e.g., Comrie & Fountaine, 2005, 2005/ 2006; McGregor & Comrie, 1995), thus far no study has examined the wider range of national free-to-air news programmes currently available. Therefore, at this point in time there is a unique opportunity to study what is essentially the complete range of national free-to-air main evening news programmes. This opportunity will likely cease to be available in the future, with a proliferation of television news options, and is already not viable in the broadcast media landscapes of many western nations due to the large range of news broadcasters (Barkin, 2003; Errington & Miragliotta, 2007; Harrison, 2006).

6.2 Implications of the Findings

The results of the investigation of the nature of the news programmes *ONE News*, *3 News*, *Prime News*, and *Te Kāea* reveal that there are some causes for concern in light of the generally accepted functions of the television news media and the stated intentions of the programmes concerned (Māori Television, 2008a, 2008c; MediaWorks, 2008; Prime Television, 2008; TVNZ, 2008). While each of these programmes purports to provide a news service which informs and educates the viewing public about the events and issues of the day, it is clear that this is being achieved in only a very narrow sense.

While *ONE News* is currently obligated to meet the objectives of the TVNZ Charter, it is clear that the requirement to also return a profit to the Government has a significant influence on the news it provides. Both *3 News* and *Prime News* operate within a fully commercial model, and yet they are indistinguishable from

ONE News on important factors such as bulletin structure and news topic choices. This similarity is made all the more evident when we see that the publicly funded *Te Kāea* appears to be providing more balanced news coverage. The entertainment values which are evident in worldwide television news trends also appear to be reflected in the news programmes overall (Carter & Allan, 2000; Phillips & Tapsall, 2007). The commercial imperatives for *ONE News*, *3 News*, and *Prime News*, at least, appear to have resulted in a continuation in the type of news which has been broadcast in New Zealand over the past twenty years in the post-deregulation environment (Atkinson, 1994a, 1994b; Comrie, 1996; Comrie & Fountaine, 2005/ 2006; McGregor & Comrie, 1995).

A central question of this thesis was whether the sources included in the news programmes reflected the finding in the literature that élite sources tend to dominate the news (J. D. Brown et al., 1987; Ericson et al., 1989; Gans, 1979; Grant & Dimmick, 2000). The current research shows that there seems to have been a positive change to this aspect of television news; that is, there appears to have been a move toward more balance in the use of élite and non-élite sources. While élite sources continue to dominate New Zealand news in all of the programmes studied, there is some evidence that this question of balance may be being addressed, particularly on *ONE News* and *Te Kāea*. However, as was noted in the Discussion chapter, further research is required to determine whether the functions of non-élite sources within news stories are qualitatively similar to those of élite sources, or whether the change is more superficial.

In conclusion, it seems that *ONE News*, *3 News*, and *Prime News*, are generally similar in terms of the factors considered in this thesis. They each conform to the expectations for commercial television bulletins, and demonstrate their adherence to established news values (Allan, 2004; Atkinson, 2002; Comrie, 1996; Tiffin, 1989). However, in many ways, *Te Kāea* appears to provide an alternative news programme which is more in keeping with its stated purpose of providing news of particular interest to Māori (Māori Television, 2008b, 2008c). The fact that Māori Television is publicly funded must be considered to be a major motivating and enabling factor of the difference between its news, offered on *Te Kāea*, and that found on *ONE News*, *3 News*, and *Prime News*. *Te Kāea* appears to offer a news programme that makes a compromise between the entertainment values which are entrenched in contemporary television news, and the broader Māori Television mandate to inform and educate the public. The findings of this thesis indicate that *Te Kāea* is the most obvious subject for further

research. It will be interesting to follow *Te Kāea*'s development over the next few years to see whether the its current distinctive profile is maintained in the changing news environment. It would also be useful to examine any impacts *Te Kāea*'s potentially alternative news model may have on its competitors in the wider news landscape.

One could argue that the emphasis on entertainment values in television news may make it more accessible to audiences. However, it has yet to be established whether news fashioned this way can achieve the important goal of facilitating participation in democratic processes by promoting understanding of important issues (Manning, 2001). If New Zealand television news programmes are to take seriously their role in informing and educating the public, then careful consideration must be given to each of the choices made during the news production process. This is because it is well established that these choices have an impact on how the audience's understanding of the world is shaped, and, ultimately, acted upon.

Appendix A: Bulletin Coding Sheet

a) News Programme (tick):

One News

3 News

Prime News

Te Kāea

b) Day and date: _____

c) Record of duration of each news segment (summarise from Bulletin Worksheet on next page):

Business: _____

Chat/ salutations: _____

Headlines: _____

Main bulletin: _____

Music/ announcement of programme: _____

Sport: _____

Teasers/ promos: _____

Weather: _____

Total bulletin length: _____

Advertisements: _____

Total programme: _____

Appendix B: Story Coding Sheet

1) News Programme (tick):

- One News*
3 News
Prime News
Te Kāea

2) Day and date:

3) Story number _____

4) Story topic _____

5) Duration of story _____ - _____ (total seconds _____)

6) In which part of the news bulletin did this story occur?

- Main bulletin
 Business
 Sports

Complete 7-13 for Main bulletin stories (i.e. excluding the sports, weather, and business news segments).

7) Main subject of the story (tick one):

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accident/ disaster | <input type="checkbox"/> Labour relations/ unions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arts | <input type="checkbox"/> Maori/ Pakeha relations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Consumer issues | <input type="checkbox"/> Personality profile/ celebrity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crime/ courts/ police/ justice | <input type="checkbox"/> Politics/ government |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Culture | <input type="checkbox"/> Public moral issues |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Defence | <input type="checkbox"/> Race relations (not Maori/ Pakeha) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economic activity | <input type="checkbox"/> Science/ inventions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy | <input type="checkbox"/> Sport |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Transport and road safety |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environment/ ecology | <input type="checkbox"/> War and terrorism |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health/ medicine | <input type="checkbox"/> Weather |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Human interest | <input type="checkbox"/> Welfare/ social policy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Immigration | |

8) Is the subject predominantly: New Zealand International

9) Is the story produced locally? Yes No Unclear

(if no, end here)

10) Does a journalist speak on camera?

Yes No (if no, go to 11)

11) For each **source** (referred to by a journalist or newsreader, or speaking for themselves) complete the table using the source codes on Appendix C:

Source	Tick and indicate number of source if source is repeated	Source code	Name of source	Organisation affiliation	Tick and indicate seconds of direct speech if the source spoke
1					<input type="checkbox"/>
2	<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>
3	<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>
4	<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>
5	<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>
6	<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>
7	<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>
8	<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>
9	<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>
10	<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix C: Source Types

Élite

- GP** Politician on behalf of the Government (central and local). Central: Labour and Progressive Parties, and Ministers from New Zealand First and United Future Parties when speaking in that capacity, or the Green Party when representing the Government.
- GO** Government official (spokesperson for any government agency, SOE, including local government).
- GS** Politician on behalf of party not in government but with supply agreement (Green, United Future, and New Zealand First Parties).
- OP** Opposition politician (Maori, National and ACT Parties).
- Int** International politician.
- B** Private sector organisation representative.
- Ex** Non-government expert (eg scientist, economist, academic).
- C** Celebrity.
- Sp** Elite sportsperson.
- NGO** Non-government organisation representative (non-profit sector).
- Iwi** Iwi representative.

Non-élite

- Pr** Individual source spoken to in professional capacity but not speaking on behalf of organisation (eg teacher, nurse, dock worker, sports coach).
- MP** Member of the public associated with the story (eg family of crime victim).
- PS** Person in the street

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