

THE JOURNAL

of the Wisconsin Communication Association



Volume XXVII
1996



The University of Wisconsin - Platteville

1 University Plaza Platteville, Wisconsin 53818-3099

10 May 1997

Professor Judy Sims
Department of Communication and Journalism
University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire
Eau Claire, WI 54702

Dear Judy,

Congratulations! I was so pleased to learn that the article "Wisconsin Parental Evaluations of Legislative and Non-Legislative Solutions to Violence on Television" authored by you and Joseph Giordano **won first place in the Central States Communication Association 1996 State Journal Manuscript Competition**. I had submitted your article to the competition because it had **been rated and ranked the highest in a blind review of all the manuscripts submitted for publication in last year's *Journal of the Wisconsin Communication Association***.

I know that the winner of the state journal competition is also chosen through a blind review process. Reviewers choose the manuscript which they see as holding importance to the respective state, holding importance for the field of communication, and concerning a timely and substantive topic. Clearly, your article met these criteria.

I am extremely pleased by this recognition because I believe it is a "feather in the cap" of the Wisconsin Communication Association and the *Journal of the Wisconsin Communication Association*. It reflects well on the organization and the journal to have its members and authors recognized by their colleagues in the Central States Region.

Thank you for participating in the *1996 Journal of the Wisconsin Communication Association*. I hope your support will continue. Congratulations are in order for writing such a well-received article!

Sincerely,

Mittie Nimocks, Editor
1996 Journal of the Wisconsin Communication Association

The Wisconsin Communication Association has a heterogeneous membership of communication scholars and educators. Members are high school, junior college, university undergraduate and graduate students, teachers, and administrators. They are persons who specialize or are interested in speech communication, theatre, forensics, language arts, education, mass media and business.

The Journal of the Wisconsin Communication Association reflects this diversity of interest by soliciting and accepting a broad range of articles in terms of type and topic. Opinion essays, instructive articles in pedagogy and extracurricular leadership, creative writing, and research on a variety of communication-related topics are published. Research articles are expected to be clearly linked to a recognizable theory.

Submitted works are ranked and rated through a blind review process. *The Journal* is published annually by the Wisconsin Communication Association. Requirements for submission to the 1997 volume are as follows:

1. Four copies (4) of the manuscript must be submitted on 8 1/2 x 11 inch white paper. An additional copy must be submitted on a Macintosh-formatted 3.5 inch diskette using either ClarisWorks, Microsoft Word or Straight Text Format.
2. Manuscripts, including all essays and notes, must not exceed 3,000 words or approximately 12 double-spaced pages.
3. Author's or authors' name(s), title(s), business(es) or institution(s), and address to which inquiries may be sent should appear on the title page ONLY.
4. Manuscripts should conform to the guidelines of the American Psychological Association *Manual of Style*, 4th edition.
5. Submissions should be sent after 1 September 1996, postmarked no later than 1 March 1996 and should be sent to:

Steve Shields
Editor, *WCA Journal*
453 Heide Hall, 800 W. Main St.
University of Wisconsin-Whitewater
Whitewater, Wisconsin 53190
Phone: (414) 472-5099, FAX: (414) 472-1419
EMAIL: SHIELDSS@UWWVAX.UWW.EDU

JOURNAL OF THE WISCONSIN COMMUNICATION
ASSOCIATION

Volume XXVII
1996

CONTRASTING PORTRAYALS OF THE MARRIED WOMAN
AS PRESENTED IN DOMINANT AND CUBAN CINEMA 1

Sherry Wesner
University of Wisconsin - Oshkosh
Winner 1996 Undergraduate Student Paper Contest

THE EFFECTS OF NEW MEDIA IN ADVERTISING AGENCIES 14

Christina Huang
Marquette University, Milwaukee
Winner 1996 Graduate Student Paper Contest

WISCONSIN PARENTAL EVALUATIONS OF LEGISLATIVE AND
NON-LEGISLATIVE SOLUTIONS TO VIOLENCE ON TELEVISION 38

Judy R. Sims
Joseph Giordano
University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire

THE MACGUFFIN BRIEFCASE 56

George E. Smith
University of Wisconsin at Platteville

PAGES CONCERNING DEATH, WORDS, AND LOVE 63

Gianfranco Pagnucci
University of Wisconsin at Platteville

WISCONSIN PARENTAL EVALUATIONS OF LEGISLATIVE AND NON-LEGISLATIVE SOLUTIONS TO VIOLENCE ON TELEVISION

*Judy R. Sims
Joseph Giordano
University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire*

ABSTRACT

*Results of a questionnaire administered to west-central Wisconsin parents or legal guardians of children ages 3-12 are reviewed. Reactions to both legislative and non-legislative solutions to television violence are examined. Parents ranked **parental control** as their first choice, **safe harbor** as their second choice, and **warnings/advisories** as their third choice.*

The first congressional hearings on television violence and its impact on children occurred in June 1952. It was not until 1990, however, that any legislation was enacted to address the problem (TV Violence Act of 1989, P.L. 101-650, 1990). This provision required broadcast networks to devise, within three years, voluntary steps to reduce television violence (Mills, 1993). In June 1993, the four major networks -- NBC, ABC, CBS and Fox announced their agreement to air parental advisories before shows they deemed as violent. The 15 major cable networks agreed with the advisories policy within the next month (Mills, 1993). It was not until February 1996 that a second piece of legislation, the "violence-chip" bill was enacted (Parental Choice and TV Amendment to H.R. 1555, 1996; Hontz, J., February 12, 1996). The "violence-chip," which will be installed in every new television set sold in the United States by 1998, is not the final panacea for television violence.

The debate concerning television violence has not ended. Parents and media literacy groups continue to voice concern regarding the amount and effects of television violence (Thoman, 1996; for examples of past concern see: Berry and Asamen, 1993; Brand, 1994; Comstock and Strasburger, 1990; Gerbner, 1993; Huston, Donnerstein, Fairchild, Fishbach, Katz, Murray, Rubinstein, Wilcox and Zuckerman, 1992; Kohut, 1993; Violence on TV Hearings, 1993; Violence on TV Hearings, 1992).

Such parental concern influenced White House officials, as was evidenced by President Clinton's decision to address the topic of media

violence and the "v-chip" in his 1995 and 1996 State of the Union speeches, respectively (New York Times, January 24, 1996, p. A9; New York Times, January 26, 1995, p. A11).

The purpose of this research is to examine Wisconsin parental evaluations of potential solutions, legislative and non-legislative, to the problem of television violence. Numerous pieces of congressional legislation related to television violence have been proposed recently, yet little information has been gathered concerning parental evaluations of such legislation.

This topic is explored by reviewing the legislation, resolutions, and endorsements pertaining to violent content on television proposed by Congress between 1989 and 1993, and then, positing three research questions.

VIOLENCE ON TELEVISION: LEGISLATION, RESOLUTIONS, AND ENDORSEMENTS

The following television violence legislation, resolutions, and endorsements were introduced in Congress between 1989 and 1993:¹

1. The Simon-Glickman Television Violence Act, proposed in 1989, called for broadcast networks and cable industries to self-limit the amount of violence that they broadcast/cablecast. President Bush signed this provision into law in 1990 (Mills, 1993; The TV Violence Act of 1989, P.L. 101-650, 1990).

¹ The following additional pieces of legislation and one resolution also were introduced between 1989 and 1993: a.) The Presidential Commission on TV Violence and Children Act, proposed in 1993, requested the formation of a panel of advertising and broadcast executives to explore ways to reduce violence in programming (Flint, 1993; LEGI-SLATE Gopher Service, Inc., 1995; Mills, 1993). b.) The TV Violence Report Card Act, proposed in 1993 would have required the FCC to file quarterly "violence report cards" to provide the public with information about the frequency of violence by each television program and its sponsor (Etzioni, 1993; Flint, 1993; LEGI-SLATE Gopher Service, Inc., 1995; Mills, 1993). c.) The Children's Television Violence Protection Act, proposed in 1993, would have required networks and cable to broadcast video and audio warnings about programs with violence. The bill also included the threat that the FCC could review compliance when it reviewed the licensee's broadcast license (Flint, 1993; LEGI-SLATE Gopher Service, Inc., 1995). d.) The Resolution Concerning the Broadcasting of Video Programming Containing Violence, introduced in 1993, would have required explicit viewer advisories before and during violent programs, and would have limited advertisements containing violence (LEGI-SLATE Gopher Service, Inc., 1995; Mundy, 1993.)

2. The Television Violence Reduction Through Parental Empowerment Act ("v-chip" bill) was proposed in 1993. This version of the "v-chip" bill would have required every new television set sold in the United States to be equipped with a computer chip that would allow parents to "block out" any show with a violent rating (Flint, 1993; LEGI-SLATE Gopher Service, Inc., 1995; Mills, 1993). Although the 1993 version of the bill did not pass, the House of Representatives passed a similar v-chip bill in August 1995 titled the Parental Choice and TV Amendment to H.R. 1555 (LEGI-SLATE Gopher Service, Inc., 1995; Moulton, 1995). This bill was enacted in February 1996 (Hontz, J., February 12, 1996).
3. The Children's Protection From Violent Programming Act, ("safe harbor") proposed in 1993, would have directed the FCC to limit violent programs to time slots when children would least likely be viewing (LEGI-SLATE Gopher Service, Inc., 1995; Mills, 1993).
4. The Television and Radio Program Violence Reduction Act, proposed in 1993, would have required the FCC to establish standards of acceptable levels of television violence (Flint, 1993; LEGI-SLATE Gopher Service, Inc., 1995; Mills, 1993).
5. The Parents TV Empowerment Act, proposed in 1993, would have required the FCC to establish a toll-free number for complaints concerning television violence. The FCC would have been required to publish quarterly summaries of complaints and forward them to the cable or broadcast stations airing the violent program (Flint, 1993; LEGI-SLATE Gopher Service, Inc., 1995).

In addition to the above proposed legislation, one senator suggested that sponsors of violent TV programs lose advertising tax deductibility on offending shows (Colford, June, 1993). Additionally, Attorney General Janet Reno endorsed advertiser boycotts as a legitimate consumer response to TV violence (Colford, 1993, p. 59).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

A review of the history of public concern about television violence, as well as a discussion of congressional legislation emerging from it, led to the following three research questions:

1. What attitude, if any, is expressed by parents of children ages 3-12 years regarding each of the following pieces of proposed congressional legislation and endorsements concerning violent content on television? (see Appendix A for a list featuring the legislation).

2. Which, if any, of the following pieces of proposed congressional legislation and/or non-legislative proposals concerning violent content on television, do parents of children ages 3-12 years rank as the most effective solution to violent content on television? (see Appendix B for a list featuring the legislation and/or non-legislative proposals).
3. How much, if at all, do warnings/advisories provided at the beginning of a television show--informing viewers of violent content -- influence parents' decision to allow their children to watch the program?

METHOD

Subjects

The survey questionnaire was completed by 351 parents or legal guardians (females and males) of children ages 3-12 years in the Eau Claire, Wisconsin area.² Only one parent or guardian per family was asked to complete the survey. The questionnaire was distributed in October and November 1994 to the principals of nine elementary schools (six parochial and three public). The principals arranged that the questionnaires be sent home with the students via a "folder system."³ The sample thus can be described as non-random, purposive, and convenient. Researchers distributed 877 surveys; 351 were returned, approximating a 40% response rate.

Procedure

The questionnaire featured both closed and open-ended questions in order to generate both quantitative and qualitative data. The survey questions explored parental evaluations of warnings/advisories and proposed congressional legislation, as well as other non-legislative solutions to violence on television. Descriptions of each piece of legislation were provided in the questionnaire. The final questionnaire was the result of a review by ten experts in survey design, television programming, and/or communication research, in order to enhance

-
- ² The survey was administered to parents in the following two cities in Eau Claire, Wisconsin metropolitan area: Eau Claire (population of approximately 55,000) and Altoona (population of approximately 6,400).
 - ³ The "folder system" requires the students to keep a folder in which one side is used to keep homework and the other side is used to deliver information and materials to the parents.

measurement (content) validity (Frey, L.; Botan, C.; Friedman, P.; and Kreps, G., 1991).

A pilot test was conducted to reduce measurement error and ensure measurement reliability (Frey, et al., 1991). Pilot questionnaires were administered to parents at a local Parent Teachers Association meeting. After the pilot study was completed and the questionnaire was modified to reduce measurement error, the actual research commenced. The questionnaires were distributed to the principals of the sample schools by students in a communication research methods course at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. Pre-addressed and postage-paid envelopes were attached to each questionnaire. A cover letter, stapled to each questionnaire, informed the parents of the nature of the research, provided guidelines and instructions, guaranteed anonymity, and specified a return date (activities in the course were approved by the university's Instructional Review Board). The principals arranged for the questionnaires to be delivered to the parents via a "folder system." This system was routine for the children and parents of all of the schools; thus, it was considered an established means.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data were computed with the software assistance of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Frequency counts were generated for the quantitative data. Data generated from the open-ended questions were coded by means of content analysis into categories by the two primary researchers.

RESULTS

Television Violence Act. When presented with the 1989 TV Violence Act, which called for broadcast network and cable industries to self-limit the amount of violence they broadcast or cablecast, a majority (66.7%) of the parents said that "the broadcast networks and cable industries should self-regulate the amount of violence they broadcast/cablecast." Parents who indicated they "did not know" totaled 13.1%, while 19.9% of the parents stated they did not believe the broadcast networks and cable

industries should self-regulate the amount of violence they broadcast/cablecast (see Figure 1.).

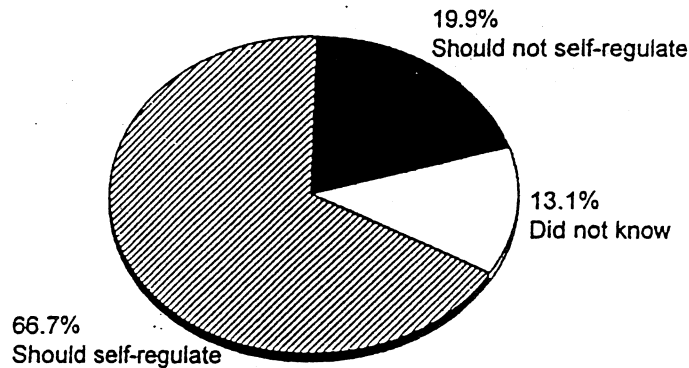


Figure 1. Parental evaluations of the Television Violence Act.

Five categories emerged from the open-ended responses of parents who did not believe in the "self-regulation" legislative plan: (1) Expression that individuals should be responsible for regulating the content of their own viewing, (2) Expression that broadcast networks and cable industries are not capable of self-regulation, as they are motivated by profit, (3) Expression that broadcast networks and cable industries would not do a good job of regulating themselves, (4) Questions concerning who would determine how much, if any, violence is acceptable/unacceptable, and (5) Miscellaneous responses.

The Parents TV Empowerment Act. This bill would have directed the FCC to establish a toll-free number to record complaints concerning televised violence. When parents were asked if they would "use such a number to express their opinion about television violence," a majority (70.1%) of parents indicated they would use the number; 14.8% of the parents said they "did not know," and 15.1% of the parents indicated they would not use the number (see Figure 2.).

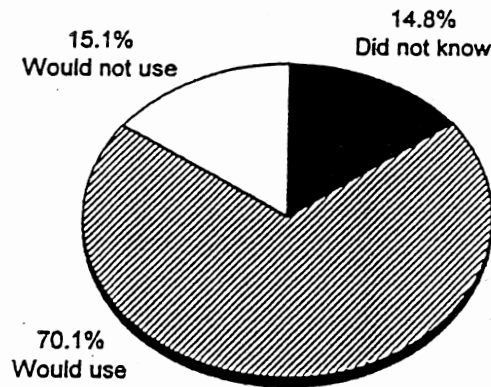


Figure 2. Parental Evaluations of the Parents TV Empowerment Act.

Three categories emerged from the qualitative responses of parents who indicated they would not use the number: (1) Expression that the effort would be a waste of time, (2) Expression that individuals should be responsible for regulating the content of their own viewing, and (3) Miscellaneous comments.

The Television Violence Reduction through Parental Empowerment Act.

Also known as the “v-chip” bill, this legislation required that every new television set in the United States be equipped with a computer chip. Parents were provided with a description of the “v-chip” and asked if they “would purchase and use one of these television sets.” A plurality of parents (43.3%) indicated they would purchase and use a v-chip television set. Fewer than one third (29.1%) of the parents said they “did not know,” and 27.4% of the parents stated they would not purchase and use the v-chip set (see Figure 3.).

Four categories emerged from the qualitative responses of parents who responded negatively to the “v-chip” bill: (1) Expression that individuals should be responsible for regulating the content of their own viewing, (2) Desire for parental control, (3) Concern for cost, and (4) Miscellaneous comments.

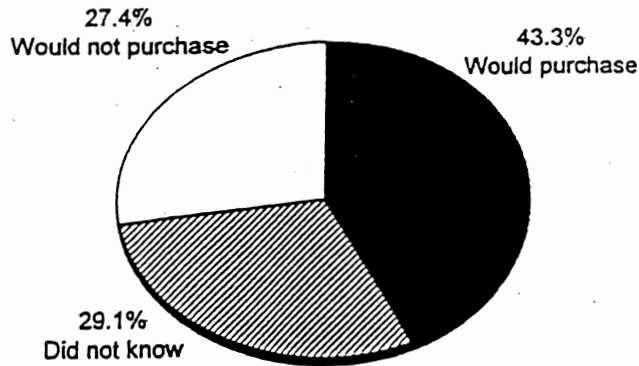


Figure 3. Parental Evaluations of the Violence-Chip Bill.

Children's Protection From Violent Programming Act ("safe harbor").

This bill would have directed the FCC to prohibit the broadcast of violent television programs during hours of high child viewership. A majority (83.8%) of the parents indicated they "wanted to see this bill passed into law." Fewer than one-tenth (7.4%) of the parents indicated they "did not know," and 8.5% of the parents stated they would not like to see the bill passed into law (see Figure 4.).

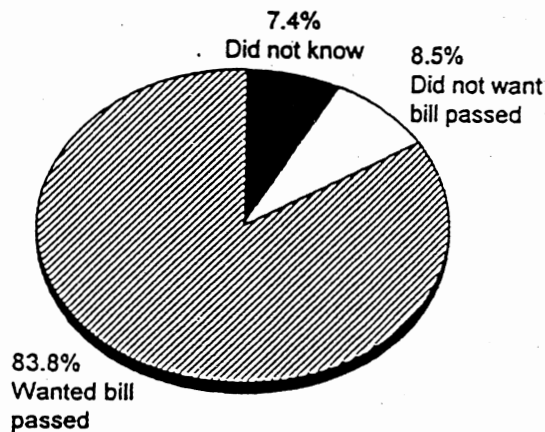


Figure 4. Parental Evaluations of "Safe Harbor."

Three categories emerged from the qualitative responses of parents who did not want to see the bill passed into law: (1) Feelings of anti-government intervention and/or feelings that parents are capable of regulating their own children's viewing, (2) Attitudes against censorship, and (3) Miscellaneous comments.

Television and Radio Program Violence Reduction Act. This bill would have required the FCC to create standards of acceptable violence for television programs. A majority (68.1%) of the parents indicated they "would like to see this bill passed into law," while 15.4% of the parents said they "did not know," and approximately 15.4% of the parents indicated they "would not like to see the bill passed" (see See Figure 5.).

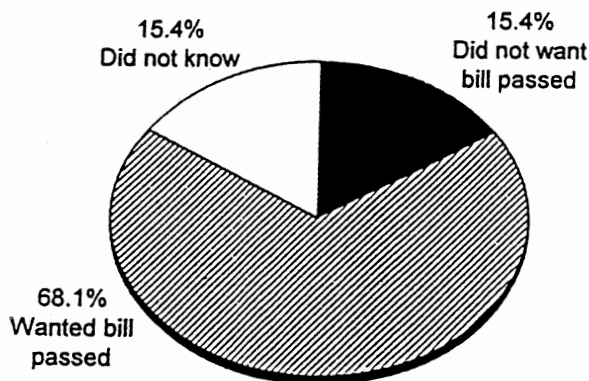


Figure 5. Parental Evaluations of the TV and Radio Program Violence Reduction Act.

Six categories emerged from the qualitative responses of the parents who stated they did not want to see the bill enacted: (1) Expression that individuals should be responsible for regulating the content of their own viewing, (2) Attitudes against government intervention and control, (3) Questions concerning who would determine the definition of violence and how much, if any, violence is acceptable and/or unacceptable, (4) Expression that the industry and networks should regulate themselves,

(5) Violence should not be featured on television, and (6) Miscellaneous comments.

Advertiser Boycotts. Parents were provided with the following description of a proposal concerning advertiser boycotts: "It has been proposed that the Federal Communications Commission compile a list of violent television programs and the advertisers which buy ad time during such programming; these lists then could be distributed to consumers as a boycott mechanism." A plurality (47%) of parents indicated they would, "as a consumer, be willing to boycott a specific company's products if it advertised during violent television programming." Fewer than one fourth (24.5%) of the parents indicated they "did not know," and 26.8% of the parents said they would not boycott products (see Figure 6.).

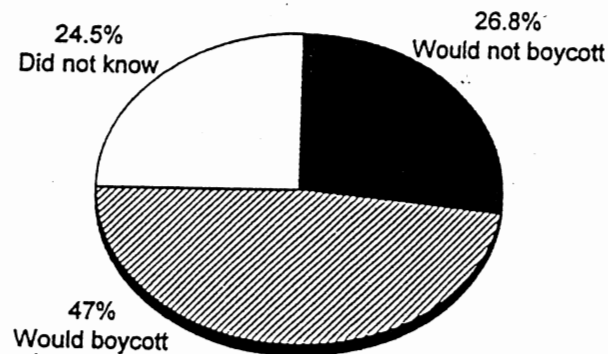


Figure 6. Parental Evaluations of Advertiser Boycotts.

Seven categories emerged from the qualitative data of the parents who stated they would not boycott products: (1) Expression of empathy with the advertisers, (2) Expression that individuals should be responsible for regulating the content of their own viewing, (3) Indication that respondent does not pay attention to commercials, (4) Indication that respondent does not like boycotts, (5) Expression that too much government control already exists, (6) Expression that boycotts would not

be effective, and (7) Miscellaneous comments.

Parents also were asked, "Do you believe advertisers should be responsible for knowing the content of the programs in which their commercials air?" According to the results, a majority (83.5%) of the parents believed that advertisers should be responsible, and 5.1% of the parents indicated they "did not know." Approximately ten percent of the parents stated they did not believe that advertisers should assume such a responsibility.

Legislation Effectiveness Rank. This question provided parents with a list of possible solutions (legislative and non-legislative) concerning television violence. Parents were asked to rank, in terms of effectiveness, their first, second, and third choices from the list provided. A plurality (46.4%) of parents ranked "parental control" as their first choice for the most effective solution. A plurality of respondents (21.4%) ranked the "safe harbor" bill as their second choice. And, a plurality (16.5%) ranked warnings/advisories as their third choice.

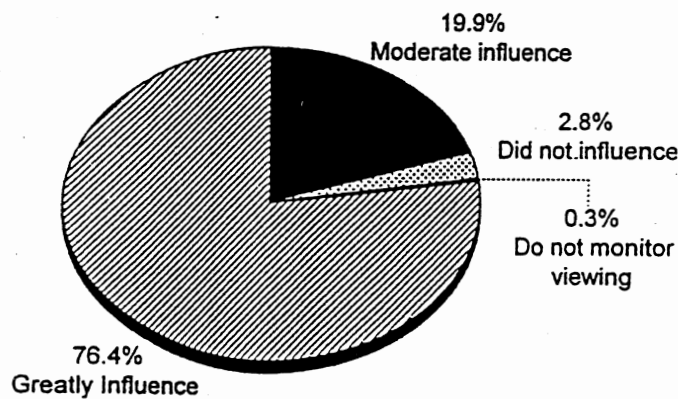


Figure 7. Parental Evaluations of Warnings/Advisories.

Warnings/Advisories. When parents were questioned on how much warnings/advisories influence their decision to allow their child to watch a particular television program, a majority (76.4%) of the parents

indicated the warnings "greatly influence" their decision, 19.9% of the parents said that the warnings/advisories "moderately influence" their decision, 2.8% of the parents indicated that the warnings/advisories "do not" influence their decision, and less than one percent of the parents stated they "do not monitor their children's television viewing" (see Figure 7.).

DISCUSSION

Although it was the "v-chip" legislation which ultimately was enacted, the results of this survey of Wisconsin parents indicate a majority of the respondents did not rank the "v-chip" bill as their first choice or the most effective solution to television violence. Rather, parents ranked **parental control** as their first choice. Parental involvement in television viewing, in fact, has been shown to produce positive behaviors in children. Cantor and Harrison (1995) found that "children whose parents set limits and (are) more involved in their television viewing (are) less likely than other children to choose programs with parental advisories and movies with restrictive ratings" (p. III-46). As Cantor and Harrison argue, this finding suggests that "parental involvement may become internalized and have beneficial effects even when the child selects programming without adult supervision" (1995, p. III-47). Obviously, parents already possess the power to control and regulate television viewing in their households. Many parents who are working, however, are unable to monitor their children's television viewing. A potential solution for those working parent households is a "safe harbor" viewing period. A majority of parents in this study ranked the 1993 "**safe harbor**" bill, as their number two choice. And, when attitudes toward each piece of legislation were measured individually, the parents rated the "safe harbor" bill highest (84%). Although this bill was not enacted, the idea behind the bill remains an attractive solution to many who continue to express concern regarding television violence. In February 1996, White House officials, in fact, advocated a "safe harbor" (Halonen, February 12, 1996). Thus it is likely that another version of the "safe harbor" bill will be introduced this year, since the 1995 version of the bill was not enacted (Andrews, 1995; LEGI-SLATE Gopher Service,

Inc., 1995; Moulton, 1995). Plans also have been made to re-introduce the "toll-free number" legislation (Electronic Media, January 29, 1996, p. 19).

Warnings/advisories, ranked as the third choice by parents in this study, also were perceived as necessary in a 1994 study conducted by Cantor and Harrison (1995). According to the researchers, "91% of a random sample of parents of elementary school children in Madison, Wisconsin agreed that broadcasters and cable operators should be required to issue advisories regarding violent content" (Cantor and Harrison, 1995, p. III-2). A strong majority (76.4%) of the parents in the Eau Claire study also stated the warnings/advisories "greatly influence" their viewing decisions.

As Cantor and Harrison (1995) make clear, one must question if advisories "serve their function to 'protect' people from exposure to objectionable content or serve as a 'magnet' for more viewers" (p. III-3). According to the results of their recent study financed by the National Cable Television Association, "the presence of 'parental discretion advised' and the 'PG-13' and 'R' ratings increased boys' interest in programs and movies...on the other hand...'viewer discretion advised' was used in a sensible fashion by girls and children who frequently experienced fright reactions to television" (Cantor and Harrison, 1995, p. III-48).

Although in 1993 the four major TV networks (NBC, ABC, CBS, and Fox) and fifteen major cable networks announced their agreement to air parental advisories, they are not required to identify all programming containing violent content. According to the results of Donnerstein's (1996) television violence study, when one looks for violence warnings across the television spectrum, few are found, except on premium channels. For example, advisories are not featured on Saturday morning children's shows, which have been identified as a source of violent programming. "Seven Saturday morning network shows for children were singled out for 'sinister combat violence,'" according to the results of a study conducted by researchers at the University of California at Los Angeles (Jensen, 1995, pp. B1,B5). And, while such programs are not new, the study found that "the dark overtones and unrelenting combat in

these shows constitute a fairly recent trend which appears to be on the rise" (Jensen, 1995, pp. B1, B5).

None of the anti-violence legislation proposed in 1993 was enacted. Rather, it was a revised 1995 version of the **violence-chip** bill which ultimately succeeded. A group led by Jack Valenti, chair of the Motion Picture Association of America, has been formed to devise a v-chip ratings system (Mifflin, April 4, 1996; Halonen, March 4, 1996). According to Valenti, television series in the U.S. will be rated categorically for an entire season, with individual episodes singled out for a different rating only if they exceed certain bounds. In addition, the U.S. group has decided not to rate news or sports programs (Mifflin, April 4, 1996).

LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

This research has gathered data which provide scholars, politicians and industry leaders the opinions concerning solutions to television violence of a sample of west central Wisconsin parents whose children attended either public or parochial schools. As a purposive sample served as the basis for this study, it is necessary to consider measures other than the type of sample (non-random) to provide evidence of the sample's representativeness. First, results from this Wisconsin study support the findings of a recent survey administered to a nationwide random sample of 1,100 adults by Electronic Media and research company Bullet Poll. Respondents with children under 16 living at home were asked whether they would use a v-chip. According to the results, 44% of the respondents "would use the v-chip," a percentage quite close to the 43.3% finding in this Wisconsin study that parents "would purchase and use one of these television sets" (Schneider, 1996). Second, it is important to note that a number of the questions on the questionnaire were replicated from a Times Mirror (Kohut, 1993) nationwide television violence survey. These questions, when used in the Wisconsin study, generated data similar to the data gathered in the Times Mirror survey. Third, as indicated previously, results from this Wisconsin study support the findings related to parental advisories from the Cantor and Harrison 1994 study (Cantor and Harrison, 1995).

It should be noted that, as six parochial schools and three public schools were sampled, the religious orientation of these schools might influence the results. However, it also is possible that because of the religious orientation of some of the respondents, the results of this survey may reflect the view of more "involved" parents. And, it may be that the "involved" parent is precisely the type of parent who could provide concrete feedback regarding the topics addressed in this survey. Parents who choose to provide their children with a religious orientation to education may also choose to express concern about television violence and, ultimately, take action to solve the problem.

In order to guide policy makers and others concerned with television violence, it is imperative that scholars continue to research public opinions of proposed congressional legislation and other possible non-legislative solutions such as media literacy programs, innovative blocking technologies and Harvard's Center for Health Communication's "Squash It," campaign (Connolley, 1995; Rubin, 1995).

CONCLUSION

Although parents in this study maintain a strong belief in parental control, they also make clear their desire for additional measures such as a "safe harbor" time period for children's viewing, a toll-free telephone number for call-in complaints to the FCC, and continued use of parental advisories. Parents now have some basic tools -- parental advisories and the violence-chip -- with which to guide their children's television viewing. As Representative Markey (D-MA) stated in the Violence on Television Hearings in 1993, "the more parents know in advance about which shows are violent, the better equipped they will be to perform the parental role of choosing suitable television programming for their children" (p. 2.).

Parental involvement and control may, in fact, be the most effective solution for regulating children's viewing of television violence. Parents can influence what information children gather from television. A child's social, cultural, and family environment also can influence what messages they take from television, how they use television, and how

"literate" they are as viewers. Concerned parents can use tools like the v-chip, as well as strategies of media literacy education, to guide their children's viewing. Equipped with such tools, parents can find alternatives to television violence to better navigate and challenge the American media culture.

References

- Berry, G. and Asamen, J. K. (1993). Children and television: Images in a changing sociocultural world. London: Sage.
- Brand, J. (1994, November 19). Power rangers. St. Paul Pioneer Press, p. 10A.
- Cantor, J. and Harrison, K. (1995, November). Ratings and advisories for television programming: Report for the national television violence study year one.
- Children's Media Protection Act of 1995, S. 332, 104th Congress, 1st Session
- Children's Protection From Violent Programming Act of 1993, S. 1383, 103rd Congress, 1st Session.
- Colford, S. (1993, June 14). TV-violence commission sought: Congressman urges action. Advertising Age, 64 (25), 49.
- Colford, S. (1993). Reno lowers boom on violent TV shows. Advertising Age, 59.
- Comstock, G. & Strasburger, V. (1990). Deceptive appearances: Television violence and aggressive behavior. Journal of Adolescent Health Care, 11, 31-44.
- Connolley, S., Developer of the "Choice-chip" and In television." (1995, August 22). Telephone interview. Spruce Run Technologies, Lewisburg, Pennsylvania.
- Donnerstein, E. (1996, April). Television violence and its context. Paper presented at the meeting of the Broadcast Education Association, Las Vegas, Nevada.
- Etzioni, A. (1993), October). Lock up your TV set: violence can be damaging to children as sexual license. But how to protect them. National Review, 27 (2), 50-52, 54.
- Flint, J. (1993, August 9). Simon delivers violence ultimatum. Broadcasting & Cable, 18-26.
- Frey, L., Botan, C., Friedman, P., & Kreps, G. (1992). Investigating communication: An introduction to research methods. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Gerbner, G. (1993). The killing screens. Media education Foundation. Northampton, MA.
- Halonon, J. (1996, March 18). Canada pushes U.S. on TV ratings code. Electronic Media, p. 3.
- Hontz, J. (1996, February 12). V-chip doesn't ruffle networks: Business as usual for programmers. Electronic Media, p. 1.
- Huston, A.C., Donnerstein, E., Fairchild, H., Fishbach, N. D., Katz, P.A., Murray, J.P., Rubinstein, E.A., Wilcox, B., & Zuckerman, D. (1992). Big world, small screen: The role of television in American society. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Ingrassia, J. (1996, March 4). Canada eyes U.S. as it tests v-chip. Electronic Media, p. 26.
- Jensen, E. (1995, September 20). Violence floods children's TV, new study says. Wall Street Journal, pp. B1, B5.
- Kohut, A. (1993). TV violence: More objectionable in entertainment than in newscasts. Times Mirror Center for the People and the Press.
- LEGI-SLATE Gopher Service, Inc., (1995). legislate@gopher.legislate.com.

- Mifflin, L. (1996, April 4). New plan to simplify rating of TV show. New York Times, p. B1; B4.
- Mills, M. (1993, September 4). TV violence: Hill may not wait for more industry action. Congressional Quarterly Week Report, 51, 2338-41.
- Moulton, D., Chief of Staff of Representative Edward J. Markey, (1995, August 14). Telephone interview.
- Mundy, A. (1993). The capital gang rides again. pp. 28-32.
- Panel examines plan to restrict violence. (1995, July 14). Daily Press, Victorville, CA.
- Parental Choice and TV Amendment to H.R. 1555, 1996.
- Parents TV Empowerment Act of 1993. H.R. 2756, 103rd Congress, 1st Session.
- Prepared text for the president's state of the union message. (1996, January 24). New York Times, p. A9.
- Rep. Kennedy mulls new TV legislation. (1996, January 29). Electronic Media, p. 19.
- Rubin, A.M. (1995, July 21). Using pop culture to fight teen violence. The Chronicle of Higher Education, p. A5.
- Schneider, M. (1996, July 29). Electronic Media, p. 1,3.
- Television and Radio Program Violence Reduction Act of 1993. H.R. 2837, 103rd Congress, 1st Session.
- Television Violence Reduction Through Parental Empowerment Act of 1995, S.306, 104th Congress, 1st Session.
- Television Violence Reduction Through Parental Empowerment Act of 1993. H.R. 2888, 103rd Congress, 1st Session
- Television Violence Act of 1989, P.L. 101-650, 99th Congress, (1990).
- The President's address: We heard America shouting. (1995, January 25). New York Times, p. A11.
- Thoman, E. (1996). 1996 Media literacy resource catalog. Center For Media Literacy, Los Angeles, CA.
- TV networks propose funding channel blockers. (1995, August 2). Daily Press, p. A4, Victorville, CA.
- Violence on television hearings before the subcommittee on telecommunications and finance of the committee on energy and commerce house of representatives. One hundred third congress. First session. (May 12, June 24, July 1, 29, and September 15, 1993). Serial No. 103-79. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Violence on television hearings before the subcommittee on crime and criminal justice of the committee of the judiciary house of representatives. One hundred second congress. Second session. (December 15, 1992). Serial no. 115. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Appendix A:
Legislation and endorsements concerning violence on television

- a. The Television Violence Act of 1989: P.L. 101-650 (Industry Self-Regulation)
- b. Parents TV Empowerment Act of 1993: H.R. 2756, 103rd Congress, 1st Session. (FCC's toll-free telephone number).
- c. Television Violence Reduction Through Parental Empowerment Act of 1993: H.R. 2888, 103rd Congress, 1st Session. (Violence-chip).
- d. Hollings' Children's Protection From Violent Programming Act of 1993: S. 1383, 103rd Congress, 1st Session. (FCC to prohibit broadcast of violent programs during time periods with a high number of child viewers)
- e. Television and Radio Program Violence Reduction Act of 1993: H.R. 2837, 103rd Congress, 1st Session. (FCC would create standards of acceptable violence for television programs including cartoons)
- f. Attorney General Janet Reno's endorsement to boycott a company's products if it advertised during violent television programming.

Appendix B:
Legislative and non-legislative solutions concerning violence on television

- a. The Television Violence Act of 1989: P.L. 101-650 (Industry Self-Regulation).
- b. Parents TV Empowerment Act of 1993: H.R. 2756, 103rd Congress, 1st Session. (FCC's toll-free telephone number).
- c. Television Violence Reduction Through Parental Empowerment Act of 1993: H.R. 2888, 103rd Congress, 1st Session. (Violence-chip).
- d. Children's Protection From Violent Programming Act of 1993: H.R. 2837, 103rd Congress, 1st Session. (FCC to prohibit broadcast of violent programs during time periods with a high number of child viewers).
- e. Television and Radio Program Violence Reduction Act of 1993: H.R. 2837, 103rd Congress, 1st Session. (FCC would create standards of acceptable violence for television programs including cartoons).
- f. Resolution Concerning the Broadcasting of Video Programming Containing Violence in 1993, S. Res. 122. (Feature warnings/advisories).
- g. Attorney General Janet Reno's endorsement to boycott a company's products if it advertised during violent television programming.
- h. Provide public service announcements about violent content on television.
- i. Parental control (oversee, family mediation, etc.).
- j. "Other" solutions.