

Cultural Indicators

The study was commissioned by the Turner Broadcasting System and conducted by the Cultural Indicators (CI) research team at The Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania. CI is an ongoing project and data base that relates recurrent features of the world of television to viewer conceptions of reality. At the time of this report, its cumulative computer archives contained observations on 2,816 programs and 34,882 characters coded according to many thematic, demographic and action categories.

The CI research began in 1967-68 with a study for the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence. It continued under the sponsorship of the Surgeon General's Scientific Advisory Committee on Television and Social Behavior, the National Institute of Mental Health, The White House Office of Telecommunications Policy, the American Medical Association, the Administration on Aging, the National Science Foundation, the W. Alton Jones Foundation, the Hosono Bunka Foundation of Japan, the Screen Actors' Guild, the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, the National Cable Television Association, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, the Office of Substance Abuse Prevention and the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention of the U.S. Public Health Service and other organizations.

The Violence Index is an ongoing activity of the CI research project. Co-principal investigators in various studies of the CI project have been Professors Larry Gross, University of Pennsylvania; Michael Morgan, University of Massachusetts; and Nancy Signorielli, University of Delaware. In addition to violence, past reports have focused on television's contributions to images of women and minorities; sex-role stereotypes; occupations; political orientation; aging; disability; mental illness; school achievement and aspirations; health-related issues such as safety, nutrition, and medicine; science and scientists; family life; religion; adoption, and other issues. It has also been extended to comparative studies of television content and effects in several countries. For recent findings on violence see "Television Violence Profile; the Turning Point" (Gerbner, Morgan and Signorielli, 1994).