This paper examines the demographic and professional attributes of radio announcers. Practitioners emerged as young, mobile males for whom radio was a career stage rather than a career in itself. Traditional professional communicator concerns were not as important as anticipated.

One of the least studied aspects of the communication process is the communicator, the 'who' in Lasswell's classic paradigm (1960, 117-140). Research has tended to ignore the communicator in favour of audience centred effects work (Gantz, Gartenberg, Pearson and Schiller, 1978; Plummer, 1971-72; Troldahl and Skolnick, 1967-68). Thus, while the final product has garnered considerable attention, the individuals behind it, the professional communicators who are ostensibly responsible for it, have gone unnoticed.

As a result, understanding of the communi-
cations process remains incomplete. That under-
standing can be enhanced by focusing research
attention on the communicator. Of particular
interest, says Naymen (1973), should be informa-
tion about who the communicators are, what back-
ground and training they have, what beliefs and
values they hold about their own particular job
and about the occupational community in general
(pp. 196-197).

The radio announcer is a case in point. Al-
though an important ingredient in the success
of the local medium for the past forty years,
little effort has been made to profile these
communicators. Originally, an inexpensive and
expedient method of filling non-network time,
the announcer became increasingly popular in the
1930's as proliferating independent stations
concentrated on recorded music and audience
interest slowly shifted from the record to the
introducer (Barnouw, 1968, 216-219). It was
television, however, that finally secured the
announcer's place. By the mid-fifties, with no
network radio programming and forced to rely on
a comparatively small pool of recorded music,
local radio stations found the announcer to be a
highly effective and economical means of differ-
entiation.

Today, this communicator's role transcends
the introduction of materials prepared by
others. She or he can be an adult companion
(Mendelsohn, 1964), helping to ally the tensions
and stresses of the day with a well-planned ad-
lib, a generous flow of news and information,
and empathy for the listener's milieu (Altheide
and Snow, 1979, 23-34). The routine up-dating
of time, temperature and traffic conditions, for
example, helps the listener organize and pace
the day (Altheide and Snow, 1979). From the
hustle-and-bustle of early morning, through the
more moderately paced mid-day and home again in
the late afternoon, radio helps the listener
set, maintain or change the rhythm of the day.
In the evening and overnight periods, telephone talk shows proffer surrogate interpersonal contact for the alone and the lonely (Turow, 1974) and may operate, especially in larger metropolitan centres (Bierig and Dimmick, 1979) as a means of vicarious participation in events beyond the normal purvey of the listener (Mendelsohn, 1964). In this capacity, the radio communicator may act as an agent of social integration (Crittenden, 1971) helping the listener supplant knowledge-of for participation-in the days' events (Altheide and Snow, 1979, 161-169; McLaughlin and Pollard, 1981, chapter one). As a result, radio can be deployed to bind the listener to others of a similar bent (Altheide and Snow, 1979, 24-34; Shaw, 1977). Knowledge-of, moreover, may be a social lubricant. "Walking into the office and being able to say, 'Hey, did you hear about...', may be socially advantageous for some people" (Shaw, 1977, 163).

The radio announcer as social communicator, then, has not only been economically efficient for the license but important to the routine day-to-day life of the community. Furthermore, the fact that radio has found such a serviceable niche in a television society suggests that the two media fulfill quite different functions for the same audience (Mendelsohn, 1964) a process to which the announcer is fundamental.

Still, little is known of this communicator. There is a scarcity of expository literature focusing on the announcer chronicling his or her background or positing the influence of various things one may bring to the job. The purpose of this paper is to offer such an analysis of the radio communicator. In addition to a basic demographic analysis, some insight into this communicator's attitudinal make-up is offered via assessment of professional-orientation.

A profession is viewed as a highly desirable ideal-type of occupational organization
(Larson, 1977; Ritzer, 1972; Hall, 1968; Carr-Saunders, 1966). Since not all occupations can hope to fully professionalize, analysis focusing on the professional-orientations of individual practitioners rather than the profession, itself, are considerably more useful (Wright, 1976; 1974a; 1974b; McLeod and Hawley, 1964). Such analysis evaluate individual attitudes toward professionalism among occupational practitioners (Wright, 1976, 39). These attitudes are the basis upon which respondents are located on a continuum; analysis then concentrates on the differences between various levels of self-perceived professionalism (McLeod and Hawley, 1964; Wright, 1974a).

Does professional-orientation make a difference? The consensus of the literature is that it does. McLeod and Hawley, in their seminal study of professionalism among communicators, concluded that it was indeed valuable to consider professional-orientation because, "those having such an outlook tend to exhibit distinctive patterns of cognitive judgement" and differing specific attitudes (1964, 538).

Subsequent studies have buttressed this finding. Ward (1966) found that more professional advertising agency personnel were more concerned with ethical and evaluative issues. Coldwell (1974), Graff (1971), Lattimore and Naymen (1974), and Idsvoog and Hoyt (1977) all found that professionals tended to perform significantly better. Linehan (1970) found that professional newspeople were more favourable disposed toward increased occupational specialization and shield laws, for instance, and demanded greater say in determining content. Wright (1976; 1974a; 1974b) identified considerable discontent and occupational frustration, ostensibly resulting from inadequate educational opportunities, among more professional newspeople in Canada. Naymen, McKee and Lattimore (1977) in a comparative study of public rela-
tions practitioners and newspeople, found that, although both groups placed a high value on professionalism, public relations workers were more concerned with influencing decisions while newspeople stressed the performance of a valuable and essential service.

These studies have tended to characterize the professional communicator as younger and better educated than other communicators. Professionals have also tended to be more prevalent in smaller media markets and, therefore, generally less experienced and less well paid.

This study employs the basic McLeod-Hawley method to assess the professional-orientation of radio announcers. This will provide an additional dimension upon which to compare these communicators and further evidence for the ongoing evaluation of the generalizability of the technique. As suggested in the literature, more professionally-oriented announcers are expected to display certain attitudes which will differentiate them from their co-workers. As well, more professional respondents are expected to be younger, better educated, more prevalent in smaller radio markets, less experienced and subsequently less well paid. Finally, more professional respondents can be expected to have entered the occupation for a social service rather than a personal achievement orientation.

METHOD

Data for the study were gathered with a seventy-two item self-administered questionnaire sent to a stratified random sample of 230 announcers. A total of one hundred and thirty-five completed questionnaires were returned (58.7%). Of these one hundred and thirty-one (57%) were usable. The sample, stratified by region and radio market size, was drawn from a population of 1298 qualified individuals published in the Matthews' List (1979). Region was
defined along traditional lines: British Columbia, The Prairies, Ontario and The Maritimes. Radio market size was operationalized using the limits currently employed by the Broadcast Programmes Directorate of the CRTC: a small radio market has one or two commercial stations; a medium market, three to five commercial stations; a large radio market has more than five commercial stations. Because of the concentration of qualified respondents in Ontario, British Columbia, The Prairies and The Maritimes were oversampled to obtain a more representative cross section.

The questionnaire was based on the version used by Wright (1974a). It solicited, among other things, information on work experience, demographics and professional orientation. The latter used sixteen of the twenty-four items included in the original McLeod and Hawley scale. The former stressed such attributes as a service orientation, full use of abilities and training, having a job which is essential to the community and so on. The latter items stressed job security, a monetary reward system and peer acceptance among other things. The underlying assumption is that the more professional respondents will emphasize the former items and de-emphasize the latter. Consequently, these items can be transformed into a Professional-orientation Index (PI) by summing across the nine professional items and subtracting the total of the summation of the seven Non-professional items (cf. Linehan, 1976). Naymen (1970) suggests a refinement to this basic calculation which maximizes the variance on the professional items, thereby eliminating the possibility of negative PI values,

\[ P = 2PI - NPi \]

where P is the Professional-orientation index score, 2PI is twice the sum of Professional item
ratings, and NPi is the sum of Non-professional item ratings. This method is used to calculate PI values. A pre-test among radio communicators in Ontario confirmed the effectiveness of this method.

RESULTS

As Table One reveals, this aspect of radio is a young man's occupation. Just 4.6% of respondents were female. Overall, ages ranged from seventeen to fifty-seven. Half the respondents were under 25.2 years of age: two thirds were between twenty and 35.5 years old. Age differences among high, medium and low professionals were not significant (F(2,127) = .198, ns).

Announcers as an aggregate have completed high school but not graduated from a post-secondary institution. Formal education ranged from six to twenty years. Half completed less than thirteen years of schooling; two-thirds had between eleven and fifteen years of formal education. An analysis of variance supported the expectation that medium professionals would be significantly better educated than their co-workers (F(2,128) = 3.55, p. = .031).

More than a third (36.6%) of respondents reported having attended a university or community college. Of these, 60.4% had enrolled in a radio or radio related program at the community college level. A third said they graduated. Of those who left prior to graduation, majority did so after the first year. Individuals in liberal arts or social sciences at the university level were more likely to have graduated.

Asked, "How much formal education do you feel a young person should have when entering broadcasting or announcing?", 43.5% of all respondents thought a community college diploma was sufficient; 10.7% believed high school grad-
uation would do; 8.4% said some form of trade school; 37.4% were unable to say. Some form of formal broadcasting training was believed necessary by 63.4% of respondents. Forty-five percent said trade school was enough and 32.7% said graduation from a community college program. A majority (70.2%) felt that formal broadcasting training gave the beginner a definite advantage on entering the occupation, 73.3% said it would have an impact on performance, 60.3% thought it would be important to career advancement and 56.7% believed that formal training would result in a higher income.

Mean income of respondents was thirty percent higher than reported by newspeople in British Columbia three years earlier (Wright, 1976) and it was slightly above the national average in 1979. Actual income ranged from a low of $6,000.00 to a high of $78,000.00. Half the respondents reported earning less than $13,205.00 per year; two-thirds earned less than $28,031.00 a year. Income differences among high, medium and low professionals were not significant \( F(2,116 = 1.626, \text{ ns}) \). Income, as expected, was positively related to market size \( r = .2106, p = .012 \) with 118 d.f.) Respondents in larger markets earned significantly more than those in smaller radio markets \( F(2,114) = 8.32, p = .00004 \).

As expected, the regional distribution of respondents by radio market size was skewed toward small markets in Ontario \( X^2 = 13.647, p \). Professionals were more evident in large radio markets, low professionals in small markets and medium professionals in medium radio markets. The distribution of professional level by market size was, however, not statistically significant \( X^2=7.35, p = 119, 4 \text{ d.f.} \).

This income figure is the total of salary and freelancing fees. Fifty percent of the respondents indicated that they had freelancing incomes. Of these, 88.5% engaged in a combina-
tion of commercial and documentary voicing, public appearances, endorsements and television-cable-newspaper freelancing to earn an average income of $3,938.00 per year. Freelancing incomes ranged from less than two hundred dollars per year to $48,000.00. Half of all freelance incomes totalled less than $1,680.00 per year; two thirds earned less than $10,836.00 per year. Freelance income was positively related to radio market size (r = .256, p = .001, 57 d.f.). Respondents in larger markets earned significantly more than those in smaller radio markets (F (2,54)=11.094, p = .001).

Considering the relative youthfulness of respondents, the amount of radio experience is high. Years of radio experience ranged from less than one to thirty-six. Half the sample had less than 4.9 years of experience; two-thirds had eight or fewer years experience. High, medium and low professionals did not differ significantly on years in radio (F(2,116)=.572, n.s.).

Years as an announcer similarly ranged from less than one to thirty-six years. Half said they had been announcers for less than three years and two-thirds for less than four years. Only 6.1% of all respondents reported having worked as announcers for more than eight years. High, medium, and low professionals did not differ significantly in years as an announcer (F (2,128) = 1.359, n.s.). As expected, respondents in larger markets had more announcing experience (r = .1906, p = .016 with 218 d.f.)

While experience is relatively extensive, tenure in any one location is not. Overall, respondents averaged about four years with their current employer; half had been with the current station for two years or less, and two-thirds for less than 7.1 years. High, medium and low professionals did not differ significantly on the number of years spent with their current
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>HP</th>
<th>MP</th>
<th>LP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Age</td>
<td>28.0 yrs</td>
<td>28.7 yrs</td>
<td>28.9 yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Years of Education</td>
<td>14.1 yrs</td>
<td>13.3 yrs</td>
<td>12.7 yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Income</td>
<td>$18,906</td>
<td>$15,580</td>
<td>$16,042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio Market Size:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small</td>
<td>37.8%</td>
<td>31.6%</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>31.1%</td>
<td>52.6%</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large</td>
<td>31.1%</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
<td>28.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maritimes</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontario</td>
<td>30.4%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>35.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prairies</td>
<td>32.6%</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Columbia</td>
<td>26.1%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>31.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Means Years in Radio</td>
<td>6.0 yrs</td>
<td>8.4 yrs</td>
<td>7.6 yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Means Years as Announcer</td>
<td>4.7 yrs</td>
<td>6.9 yrs</td>
<td>7.4 yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Number of stations</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Years at current station</td>
<td>3.9 yrs</td>
<td>4.3 yrs</td>
<td>3.9 yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why Announcing career?</td>
<td>Long time desire</td>
<td>Long time desire</td>
<td>Long time desire</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HP = High Professionals, MP = Medium Professionals, LP = Low Professionals
employer \( F(2,128) = .153, \text{ ns} \). Earlier career stages are definitely characterized by job mobility. During the first few years of an announcer's career, several job changes are made. Prior to joining their current employer, a respondent had typically made two to four job changes over a two to three year period. Again, differences among high, medium and low professionals were not significant \( F(2,128) = .352, \text{ ns} \). As expected, younger respondents were considerably more mobile than older ones \( F(1,129) = 29.276, p = .0001 \). Older respondents, i.e., those over twenty-five years of age, had worked at an average of 2.25 stations over their career while younger respondents had worked an average 4.25 stations. Interestingly, the more mobile the respondent, (i.e., the greater number of stations worked for) the greater the income \( r = .1990, p = .014 \) with 126 d.f.

Almost forty-three percent of the respondents indicated they had worked in other areas of radio, or in other media. Of these, 71.9% had worked in, or were concurrently freelancing in television, 12.3% had newspaper experience and 14% reported a combination of media experience. High professionals were marginally more likely to have worked in another medium or done other radio jobs prior to becoming an announcer (modally, they had been copywriters or technical operators/producers).

Finally, the motivation to pursue an announcing career, to enter radio in general, resulted from the need to fulfill a long standing desire rather than to perform an important public service, to influence people's thinking, to have a job that is important to the community or to apply acquired knowledge (in music, for instance). Professional motives, in other words, were not an important consideration to entering radio. Moreover, there appeared to be
no intent to emulate a significant other (a favorite announcer from the respondent's youth, for example). Overall, however, career motivation was not well articulated.

Underlying the Professionalism Index (PI) employed in this study is the assumption that High Professionals will place more emphasis on the Professional Items than will others, and that the opposite will be true for the Non-professional Items. Medium professionals are viewed as a transitional stage between High and Low professionals. Table two offers support for the first part of the assumption but not for the second. High professionals placed significantly more emphasis on all professional items than Low professionals. With three exceptions, differences on Non-professional Items were not significant. The exceptions were 'having a job that is exciting and varied', 'getting ahead in the organization' and 'support of co-workers in tough situations'. In each instance, High professionals placed more emphasis on the item than did Low professionals.

While unexpected, the finding is not unique to this study. Naymen, for example, found that High professionals placed more emphasis on eight of his twelve Non-professional items than did low professionals (1970, 15-136) Wright also reported that high professionals placed more emphasis on all Non-professional Items than did low professionals (1974b, 136). Medium professionals tended to be closer to high professionals than to Low professionals. While also evident in Wright's studies (1976; 1974a) the trend is stronger here.

The homogeneity that characterized the demographic profile is also evident among the professional items. High, medium and low professionals all tend to be achievement oriented, stressing in various degrees, the 'opportunity for originality and initiative', 'getting ahead
Table Two

Comparison of Professionalism Index Items
Among Radio Announcers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional Items</th>
<th>Mean Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Getting ahead in your career 6.7 5.6 4.9 5.9
Opportunity to influence public thinking 5.4 4.7 4.3 4.8
Freedom from close, continual supervision 6.0 5.3 4.7 5.3
Opportunity for originality & initiative 6.8 6.3 4.8 6.9
Respect for ability & competence of co-workers 6.1 5.8 4.1 5.3
Opportunity to acquire new skills & knowledge 6.8 5.9 4.0 5.6
Job that makes station different in some way 6.6 6.0 4.4 5.7
Job that is valuable & essential to the community 6.6 6.1 4.2 5.7
Full use of abilities 5.5 5.4 3.8 4.9

Non professional Items

Importance of...

Having a job my family is proud of 4.5 5.1 4.3 4.6
Salary: earning enough to live on 5.8 5.9 5.3 5.7
Being with people who are congenial and easy to work with 5.6 5.9 5.2 5.6
Security of the job: it is permanent 4.8 5.6 4.6 5.0
Having a job that is exciting and varied 6.2 6.0 4.4 5.6
Getting ahead in organization 5.7 5.7 4.3 5.2
Support of co-workers in tough situations 6.0 5.7 4.2 5.3
in your professional career' and 'full use of abilities'. High professionals are more intense in their support of these items than either medium or low professionals.

Homogeneity is somewhat less evident among the Non-professional items. Low professionals place primary emphasis on 'salary: earning enough to live on', 'getting ahead in the organization' and 'security of the job: it is permanent'. Medium professionals agree with low professionals on salary and indicated the importance of 'having a job that is exciting and varied'. High professionals agree with mediums on the importance of an exciting job and with lows on getting ahead in the organization, adding that the 'the support of co-workers in tough situations' is also important to them.

Overall, the more traditional professional communicator concerns such as the 'opportunity to influence people's thinking', 'freedom from continual, close supervision' and 'respect for the ability and competence of co-workers' are not as important as anticipated.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to provide an initial analysis of one category of contemporary communicator: the radio announcer. Research focused on demographic and professional attributes. Data were gathered from a stratified random sample using a seventy-two item questionnaire.

The notion that announcing is a young man's occupation finds support here: more than ninety-five percent of respondents were male; half were under twenty-five.

Announcing emerges as a career stage rather
than a career. Few announcers had more than eight years of experience; few were over thirty-five years of age. Half the respondents had been in announcing for less than three years, and in radio for less than four years. Announcers appear to enter the occupation in their early twenties, possibly enticed by its glamourous public image, and exit by their early thirties. Part of the problem may be the mobility requirement for career advancement. An increase in pay, for instance, and a concomitant extension of responsibilities appear to accompany a change of employer and market. This may place considerable strain on incipient family relationships. Leaving the occupation or settling for a lower paying, less responsible but relatively secure position in a small market may be the alternatives.

Announcers are a comparatively homogeneous group. They have graduated from high school but not from a post-secondary institution. High professionals are significantly better educated than other respondents. They are, for instance, more likely to have attended and graduated from a university-based liberal arts or social science program. While three-fifths of all respondents reported having started a community college radio-television course, only a third of these said they had graduated. Typically, non-graduates found employment after the first year of the program. This raises questions about the adequacy of such programs. Are they too long? Would the needs of the student be better met in a shorter, more intensive program? Possibly second and third years do not introduce sufficient new material? Still, nearly two-thirds of respondents felt that some form of formal training gave the beginner a distinct advantage. A clear majority thought it would improve performance.

As expected, high professionals placed significantly more emphasis on the Professional
Items than did low professionals, but, there was more general agreement on the Non-professional Items than anticipated. There is, at best, limited support for the McLeod and Hawley finding that a distinctive judgmental perspective and attitudinal set differentiates levels of professional-orientation among contemporary communicators. Moreover, items that garnered the most support reflected a Non-professional rather than a Professional-orientation; personal achievement, for example, rather than social service. Overall, the index does not appear to be sufficiently discriminating when applied to this group of communicators.

Several factors appear to contribute to the weakness of the index, in this instance, Announcers, unlike Journalists or public relations practitioners, are less likely to have attended a formal, university based program where ethical issues and social commitment might be stressed. The practice of announcing, moreover, tends to be a solo undertaking while journalism is a group enterprise which may contribute to a broader perspective. Finally, autonomy among announcers is reduced by the myriad of systems and quotas established by individual stations, often as a means of meeting regulations set out by the Canadian Radio-televison and Telecommunications Commission.

The McLeod and Hawley Index of professional-orientation cannot, of course, control for the performance differences among announcers and journalists. Announcers, however, may be more employees than are journalists (Lujack, 1975). A professional-orientation index, such as Hall's (1968), which takes into account employee status might provide more insights into the attitudes, opinions and occupational concerns of these communicators.
REFERENCES


Bierig, Jeffery and John Dimmick. The Late Night Radio Talk Show as Interpersonal Communication, Journalism Quarterly, 1979, 56, (1), 92-96.


Wright, Donald. An Analysis of the Level of Professionalism Among Canadian Journalists, Gazette, 1974b, 20 (2), 133-144.

George Pollard (M.A. 1979, Carleton) is lecturer at the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Carleton University, Ottawa. His research interests are in radio-television usage and programming, broadcast regulation and policy.