A Bibliometric Analysis of Scholarly Articles Pertinent to Radio Studies.

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To investigate what is meant by the term "radio studies," a study analyzed 156 randomly selected scholarly communication journal articles pertinent to the radio broadcasting industry. Articles were chosen through the use of Matlon and Ortiz's (1992) "Index to Journals in Communication Studies through 1990." A master bibliography was constructed consisting of 1,220 nonduplicated articles in the "Index." Findings revealed coverage primarily of programming and policy issues. Average article length was 9.3 pages, with 14.5 citations on average. Articles were most often empirically based or descriptive or opinion based. Methods employed most often were survey and legal policy analysis. Most studies were solely authored by male writers. Article production was highest by authors affiliated with institutions in the western and central states, specifically California, Michigan and Wisconsin. The domain of article content, methodology, and general thrust of findings significantly varied by journal. (Includes nine tables of data, and the 88-page master bibliography of radio research articles from 1934-1990 selected through the "Index" is appended.) (SR)
A Bibliometric Analysis of Scholarly Articles Pertinent to Radio Studies

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Abstract
Analysis of 156 randomly selected scholarly communication journal articles pertinent to the radio broadcasting industry revealed coverage primarily of programming and policy issues. Average article length was 9.3 pages, with 14.5 citations on average. Articles were most often either empirically based or descriptive or opinion based. Methods employed most often were survey and legal policy analysis. Most studies were solely authored by male writers. Article production was highest by authors affiliated with institutions in the western and central states, specifically California, Michigan and Wisconsin. The domain of article content, methodology, and general thrust of findings significantly varied by journal.
A Bibliometric Analysis of Scholarly Articles Pertinent to Radio Studies

With the advent of the Journal of Radio Studies has come a predictable question: What, exactly, is meant by the term "radio studies"? And how should studies of radio in the Journal differ from or resemble studies of radio found in the wider scholarly communication literature?

A useful place to begin answering such questions is the construction of a frame of reference based upon past scholarly practice. In other words, a bibliometric map of the scholarly literature already devoted to studies of radio may be a useful point of reference as the Journal of Radio Studies unfolds its own agenda.

Those unfamiliar with bibliometrics may find Broadus' (1987) definition of bibliometry of value. Bibliometry, to Broadus, consisted of "the quantitative study of physical published units, or of bibliographic units, or of the surrogates of either" (p. 376). As Frey, Botan, Friedman and Kreps (1991) have noted, "the unit of analysis used in bibliometric studies may be links among authors, sources, publications, or article contents, but most often it is the citation, a reference an author makes to another article" (p. 226).

Because bibliometric techniques are used to analyze the distribution of scholarly literature, they can be very useful in informing communication scholars about the growth and status of the communication discipline (Frey et al., 1991, p. 226). Various bibliometric studies have made the point that the literature of communication generally suffers from extensive inbreeding (Rice,
Bibliometric Analysis

Borgman, & Reeves, 1988), and that it relies extensively on social sciences such as psychology and sociology while the reverse is seldom true (Wispe & Osborn, 1982; Reeves & Borgman, 1983; So, 1988).

In this study, bibliometry was used in a more general sense as an approach to understanding the characteristics of communication research devoted to radio. While co-citation analysis or bibliographic coupling would be useful in assessing the degree to which radio research either is inbred or overly reliant on certain social science disciplines, the purpose of this study was more fundamental in its attempt simply to identify the corpus of scholarly communication literature that included radio and to discern patterns within it.

The purpose of this study, then, was to offer a bibliometric map of past scholarly research on radio. Specifically, three research questions were formed to guide this exploration:

RQ 1: What characteristics best describe the scholarly research devoted to radio?

RQ 2: What patterns regarding the authors of publication exist in the scholarly literature devoted to radio?

RQ 3: What differences exist among communication journals regarding research devoted to radio?

Method

Materials

Scholarly literature pertinent to radio broadcasting was chosen through the use of Matlon and Ortiz’s (1992) Index to Journals in Communications Studies Through 1990.

This reference work indexes major journals in communication,

Although more recent editions of the Index have appeared since 1990 (newer versions are now available on CD-ROM), this edition was chosen to assess the state of the radio literature immediately prior to the debut of the Journal of Radio Studies. Procedure

A master bibliography was constructed consisting of 1220 nonduplicated articles in the Index included under section 5.10, "Radio." A copy of this master bibliography is attached as Appendix A.

Section 5.10 included subsections devoted to policy (.01), production (.02), programming (.03), writing (.04), and other studies (.05). Choosing the article as the unit of analysis, each of the 1220 articles was assigned an identifying number to form a usable sample frame.

Because correlational analysis was presumed early in the study, a random selection of 134 articles was made in accordance with guidelines provided by Marascuilo & Serlin (1988) to allow the detection of correlational coefficient differences at the .40 level with an alpha level of .05 and a beta level of .10.

During coding, however, it became evident that some of the articles selected had to do with radio in only the vaguest of ways. These studies typically discussed radio within a context of
total media or within a "radio and television" context.

A second sample of 22 was drawn to replace these marginally-related original studies. However, some of the replacements also were deemed marginally related to radio.

After some reflection, it was decided simply to describe what lie in the Index's pages without further attempts at a priori judgments about whether a given study contained "enough" relevance to radio studies. At that point, the second set of 22 was simply added to the first group to form a total sample of 156 studies.

Because the bulk of the coding was performed by the second author, a check of intercoder reliability was conducted. Using Scott's (1955) procedure, the intercoder reliability was found to be acceptable at the .90 level.

Results

Research Question 1

Research question 1 asked "what characteristics best describe the scholarly research devoted to radio?"

As Table 1 demonstrates, the largest proportion of the 156 articles selected involved studies of radio programming (n = 90, 57.7%). Policy studies accounted for another 11% (n = 17, 10.9%) of the articles. There were few scholarly studies of radio production and writing.

About 20% (n = 32, 20.5%) of the studies were found to extend into multiple areas and had been listed under more than one domain. These were coded as "multiple entries" and set aside.
Table 1

**Frequency Distribution of Radio Article Content Domain**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value Label</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cum Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programming</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>57.7</td>
<td>74.4</td>
<td>95.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td>75.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>95.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>156</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As might be expected, and as table 2 demonstrates, the amount of published research related to radio varied widely according to scholarly journal.

Not surprisingly, the *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* (formerly *Journal of Broadcasting*) had the largest number of radio articles (n = 68, or 43.6%). *Journalism Quarterly* ranked second (n = 44, or 28.2%), with the *Journal of Communication* a distant third (n = 14, or 9%).

Some journals listed in the Index had no entries in this sample devoted to radio. These included *Human Communication Research* and the *Journal of Applied Communication Research*. 
Table 2

**Frequency Distribution of Scholarly Journals of Radio Articles**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value Label</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Cum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication Education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td>.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Monographs</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Quarterly</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Research</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Studies</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Studies in Mass Comm</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of Broadcasting</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>43.6</td>
<td>43.6</td>
<td>54.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of Communication</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>63.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journalism Quarterly</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>91.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quarterly Journal of Speech</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>96.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Communication Journal</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>99.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Journal of Speech Comm</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>15i</td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3

**Frequency Distribution of Radio Article Methodologies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value Label</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Cum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>28.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiment</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>36.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content analysis</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>53.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnography</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>60.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy legal</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>81.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>94.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary analysis</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown/None</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>Missing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>156</td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Articles were examined to determine if there were any preferred method. Table 3 indicates a varied distribution of methods, with survey methodology (n = 33, 28%) and legal policy analysis (n = 25, 21.2%) used most frequently.

Although a useful meta-analysis could be conducted regarding the findings of radio studies, a more general approach in this study was to examine the overall thrust of the article's findings. In other words, did the researchers conduct data-driven empirical studies, or were they more descriptive?

Table 4 demonstrates that most studies either were empirical (n = 58, 37.4%) or were based on description or personal "expert" opinion (n = 44, 28.4%). A few studies embraced a critical perspective, were pedagogical, or analyzed case studies. The smallest number involved the formation of theory (n = 4, 2.6%).

Table 4
Frequency Distribution of the Thrust of Radio Articles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value Label</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cum Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>empirical</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>37.2</td>
<td>37.4</td>
<td>37.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>critical</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>45.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pedagogy</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>54.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>case study</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>61.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bibliography</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>65.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rebuttal</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>69.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>theory</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>71.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>opinion descr</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td>Missing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Finally, how has the publication of radio research varied across time? To answer this question, the year of each article’s publication was coded and collapsed into decades. Table 5 shows that radio research has held fairly constant after the 1950s.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value Label</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cum Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1930s</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940s</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950s</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>23.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960s</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>48.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970s</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>78.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980s</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>156</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To summarize, then, the research literature pertinent to radio can best be described as follows:

Research articles on radio were most likely encountered in the pages of the *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, *Journalism Quarterly*, or the *Journal of Communication*, in that order.

Studies most likely examined radio programming or policy practices, and most likely used survey or policy analytical methods.

The findings of these studies most likely were data-driven
and empirically-based, although many were also purely descriptive or consisted of expert prescriptive opinions.

Articles on average were less than 10 pages long, and contained about 15 citations on average.

Research Question 2

Research question 2 asked, "what patterns regarding the authors of publication exist in the scholarly literature devoted to radio?"

Three variables were coded for each article examined: The number of authors, the biological sex of the first author, and the geographic location of the first author's institutional affiliation.

Of the 156 articles examined, 121 were solely authored (78.1%). Another 25 were dual-authored (16%). The few remaining articles had 3 or 4 authors.

Men outnumbered women more than 10 to 1 (male n = 140, or 91.5%, female n = 13, or 8.5%).

The institution of the first author was coded according to its state. States showing the greatest article productivity were California (n = 14, 9%) and Michigan (n = 11, 7.1%). International scholars comprised another 7.7% (n = 12). Other states had nine or fewer studies each, with several states having none (e.g., Alaska, Delaware, Idaho, Louisiana, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, North Dakota, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Utah, West Virginia and Wyoming).

States were collapsed into four general geographic regions. As table 6 indicates, most research productivity came from authors whose institutions were located in the Western or Central states.
Table 6

Frequency Distribution of Research Productivity by U.S. Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value Label</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cum Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>60.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>39.7</td>
<td>39.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>155</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To summarize, radio research articles most likely were solely authored by male researchers. Researchers whose institutional affiliations were in the West and Central regions of the United States demonstrated the most article productivity.

Research Question 3

Research question 3 asked, "what differences exist among communication journals regarding research devoted to radio?"

To investigate this question, a number of variables were recoded and collapsed to allow crosstabulation.

The variable journal was condensed from 14 categories to four, which included the three journals that most frequently published radio research (Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media, Journalism Quarterly, and Journal of Communication) and a fourth category of all "other" journals.

The length variable was split at the median into "short" and "long" categories. The number of citations was recoded by
splitting it at the median into "low" and "high" categories as well.

**Thrust** was recoded into four categories of "empirical," "critical," "pedagogy," and "opinion."

Other variables such as decade of publication and region of the United States had previously been recoded.

Were there differences between journals regarding the domain of content published? As table 7 shows, there were several clear overall differences.

Table 7

**Crosstabulation of Recoded Journal By Recoded Content Domain**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JOURNAL</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>IPOLICY</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PRODUCE</strong></td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>76.2%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PROGRAM</strong></td>
<td>52.9%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>35.6%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IPOLICY</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PRODUCE</strong></td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PROGRAM</strong></td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IPOLICY</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PRODUCE</strong></td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>94.7%</td>
<td>33.9%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PROGRAM</strong></td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IPOLICY</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PRODUCE</strong></td>
<td>17.4%</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
<td>69.6%</td>
<td>20.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PROGRAM</strong></td>
<td>23.5%</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Column 17 5 90 112
Total 15.2 4.5 80.4 100.0
On an overall basis, there was a significant difference between communication research journals in terms of content domain, $\chi^2 (6, N = 112) = 12.31, p = .05$. While both the Journal of Broadcasting and Journalism Quarterly favored studies of programming, the Journal of Broadcasting was much more likely to include legal and policy analyses than was Journalism Quarterly.

Were there significant differences between journals in terms of article length? Yes, $\chi^2 (3, N = 156) = 14.80, p < .01$.

Table 8
Crosstabulation of Recoded Journal and Recoded Article Length

<table>
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Were there differences between journals regarding the thrust of the research findings? Table 9 confirms this on an overall basis, $\chi^2 (9, N = 128) = 22.38, p < .01$.

Table 9

Crosstabulation of Recoded Journal and Recoded Thrust of Findings

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There also was a significant overall difference among journals with regard to the methodology used, $\chi^2 (18, N = 118) = 32.77, p < .05$. Generally, the Journal of Broadcasting preferred
Bibliometric Analysis

policy and legal analyses (n = 12, 26.1%), followed by surveys (n = 10, 21.7%) and content analyses (n = 8, 17.4%). Journalism Quarterly, on the other hand, favored articles based on surveys (n = 18, 42.9%) and policy and legal analysis (n = 8, 19%). The Journal of Communication seemed evenly split into content analysis (n = 3, 30%) legal and policy analysis (n = 3, 30%), and historic (n = 3, 30%).

There were no significant differences overall among journals regarding the number of citations in use, the first author’s gender, or the first author’s geographic region.

To summarize, differences among journals were detected regarding the domain of content chosen, article length, method chosen for data collection, and the general thrust of the research findings. Typical articles in the three primary communication journal that published radio research could be described as follows:

Articles in the Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media were likely to embrace studies of radio programming or policy, to equally feature both short and long articles, to use policy and legal analytical or survey methods, and to present either empirical or opinion based findings.

Articles in Journalism Quarterly were likely to embrace studies of radio programming. JQ also clearly preferred shorter articles based on survey methods, and to present empirical and opinion based findings.

Articles in the Journal of Communication were likely to embrace studies of radio programming as well. Although JOC preferred shorter articles, its preference was not as clearly
Bibliometric Analysis

pronounced as was Journalism Quarterly’s. Methods featured in the Journal of Communication were more varied than were those in JOBEM and JQ, featuring content analyses; policy and legal analyses, and historical analyses. The thrust of the findings in JOC was largely prescriptive expert opinion.

Discussion

Only a naive person would fail to understand that, to a large extent, many of the patterns discerned in this study’s analysis mirror larger patterns within the social sciences generally. It is simply a truism that social science methods continue to develop and evolve, and that their use is practiced at an individual level in a largely monomethod manner.

In other words, the methodologies available are dependent on the state of the larger social sciences and are not normally distributed across researchers. Nor are articles on any subject, including radio, equally distributed across academic journals.

Knowledgeable persons also realize that academic credentials to conduct research are not evenly distributed on the basis of biological sex or geographic region. And where research variance is detected across time, it is worth remembering that some of the journals in this study are more recent arrivals than others (the Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media did not appear until the 1950s, for example).

So what guidance does the construction of this bibliometric map offer for the introductory phase of a new scholarly journal such as the Journal of Radio Studies? To some extent, this involves consideration of whether “imitation is the sincerest form of flattery” or whether “niche marketing” or a hybrid approach is
more desirable.

For example, in this study, a preponderance of research interest targeted radio programming (mostly on an effects basis) or federal policies relevant to radio and broadcasting. The imitation strategy would suggest that mining more studies from these already well-developed motherlodes would be the most appropriate approach.

On the other hand, a niche marketing or hybrid approach would ask whether research devoted to written materials or production aspects of radio from a theoretical, rather than pedagogical skills, perspective might have value as well.

Given the interest in radio programming and policy analysis, it is not surprising that methods chosen reflect this interest. Many studies of programming effects have used survey methods, while policy studies have used legal and policy analytical methods. Again, the imitation strategy would suggest continuance of this methodological preference. But a niche approach might target more research done from an historic, experimental, ethnographic, or secondary analytical (replicative) methodological perspective.

Finally, of the general thrust of the research findings, the vast majority were empirically based, although expert opinion and description were also strongly evident. As observed earlier, articles on theory development were least frequently encountered.

Although a debate rages about what communication theory itself should encompass, and whether communication even has a theoretical base, this does not obviate researchers in radio from their own attempts to discern the theoretical underpinnings of
their phenomena of interest. That too many studies are expert opinion and descriptive in nature perhaps tells us that the conceptual basis of theorizing is lurking in our midst, perhaps as themata, but that we need to encourage its development into fully formed and coherent, testable theory. Until that task is undertaken, regardless of the publication venue, research in radio offers merely an interesting and pleasant vehicle for scholarly advancement instead of a useful social explanation of its attributes or impact.

With the advent of a new journal specifically devoted to “radio studies,” this is perhaps a defining moment in realizing the theoretical promise of this part of the communications field. We can ask no less, and we should expect no less, than that this new publication will lead, rather than follow, that field.
Bibliometric Analysis

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Appendix A:
Master Bibliography of Radio Research Articles, 1934–1990
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