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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationships between those aspects of bureaucratic organization which could foster professionalism and those which could hinder professionalism among television journalists. Two existing scales, one dealing with self-perceived professionalism and the other a self-report of bureaucratic features at one's work-site, were modified for a mail survey of television journalists. Some of the findings are: on the hierarchy of authority, division of labor and rules scales, the sample ranked at the median; on the procedures scale, newsmen had relatively low bureaucracy scores, suggesting that television journalists are allowed much latitude in their day-to-day activities: on the impersonality scale, newsmen had the highest bureaucracy scores, possibly because of the required impartiality in news gathering; the most bureaucratized group in the sample were cameramen; news directors had the most autonomy; technical competence scores revealed that television news departments appear to have little in the way of rigid rules for recruitment and promotion; and most news departments are relatively small. (RB)



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PATTERNS OF BUREAUCRATIZATION AND PROFESSIONALISM IN A SAMPLE OF TELEVISION **JOURNALISTS**

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In an earlier paper, findings concerning the levels of selfperceived professionalism were reported. This report extends the
earlier discussion by introducing the findings from the same sample
of television journalists in the area of bureaucracy. Also of interest
will be the possible "interaction" of bureaucracy and professionalism.

Among the reasons advanced for the relatively low level of professionalism in journalism is the possible impact of a repressive bureaucracy that supposedly thwarts the evolution of a profession orientation within the occupation. For example, Edelstein concludes his review of appropriate studies in the area of print journalists as follows: "The evidence suggests that bureaucratization has triumphed in many newsrooms. Organization, personnel policies and other practices have become invulnerable to assault, suggesting that the benefits for the editors and publishers cutweigh the personal needs" of the reporter.²

Yet, the assumption that bureaucracy is inimical to established professions is not supported in the research literature. As Hall has noted, bureaucracies can accomodate professions quite well if they are allowed a quasi-independent department within the bureaucracy run by a fellow professional. While established professions have the power to extract meaningful compromises from the bureaucrats, it is perhaps another matter for an occupation seeking to professionalize itself. The assumption then, should be that some aspects of bureaucratic organization could foster professionalism while other organizational features could hinder the professionalization process. Given appropriate data then, one might examine the relationships between certain types of bureaucracies and professionalism.



For the purposes of this study, two existing scales developed by Hall were modified for a mail survey of television journalists. One scale dealt with self-perceived professionalism, and the other, a self-report of bureaucratic features of one's work-site's rules and regulations. Hall has argued that bureaucracy should be conceptualized in six dimensions. This decision was reached after Hall surveyed the existing empirical literature and the theoretical writings of the scholars dealing with bureaucracy. The six categories are:

- 1. The hierarchy of authority—the extent to which the locus of decision making is pre-structured by the organization.
- Division of labor--the extent to which work tasks are subdivided by functional specialization decided by the organization.
- 3. Presence of rules--the degree to which the behavior of organizational members is subject to organizational control.
- 4. Procedural specifications—the extent to which organizational members must follow organizationally defined techniques in dealing with situations which they encounter.
- 5. Impersonality—the extent to which both organizational members and outsiders are treated without regard to individual qualities.
- 6. Technical competence—the extent to which organizationally defined "universalistic" standards are utilized in the personal selection and advancement process.⁵

Hall developed a 62 item scale to tap these domains employing a Likert format. Like his professionalism scale, the bureaucracy scale was validated in a study of 12 professions and occupations in 27 worksites. Particularly valuable, both traditional and aspiring professionals were included in the sample. This allows for comparisons between a wide variety of occupational types, resulting, hopefully, in a more heuristic grasp of the relative standing of



television journalists.

Since the design, sampling and other procedures related to this study have been reported elsewhere, a brief summary should suffice. Besides the typical problems attendent with any mail survey, one principal shortcoming in the data should be stressed. In order to locate television journalists for the sampling frame, it was necessary to obtain co-operation of the various news directors. Of the stratified random sample of news directors contacted, co-operation was quite poor in the ten largest television markets. Since so few co-operated, the analysis to follow reports only the data obtained from the medium and small television markets.

RESULTS

The findings will be discussed as follows: First, the bureaucracy sub-scale scores for the various jobs within the news department will be presented following the pattern established by Hall, namely tabular inspection, description and analysis. This section will be followed by a discussion of the results of a factor analysis of the bureaucracy scale. The section will be concluded with a presentation of the results of a factor analysis of the bureaucracy and professionalism scales together.

TABLE 1

Bureaucracy Scores

The discussion here will proceed to examine each group's scores on the various subscales. From time to time, reference will be made to Hall's original 27 worksite scores. The various occupations



have been rank ordered and the television sample contrasted with them for purpose of comparison. The job classifications employed here are self-explanatory, except perhaps the miscellaneous category, which is comprised of such jobs as farm director, weather man and part-time help.

The first sub-scale dealt with the hierarchy of authority in the respondent's job. The television sample as a whole had a mean of 45 on the scale for an equivalent rank of 14 in comparison with Hall's data collected in 27 different work-sites.

The second bureaucracy scale dealt with the division of labor.

The questions here were mainly concerned with the routine and monotony of the job. That is, what are the specific duties done each day with little variation. The overall mean for the television sample was 36, equal to an approximate rank of 14. The occupations which scored high on this scale were accountants and personnel department managers. There was little difference between the job classifications in the television sample (Table 1).

The third scale dealt with the presence of a highly restricted set of rules concerning work-site behavior. In general, the questions dealt with picayune restrictions like smoking on the job and leaving the work area. The overall mean for the television sample was 38, for an approximate rank of 19 in comparison with Hall's data. It should be noted that in both Hall's sample and the television group, there were no blue collar workers; hence, all occupations tend to have relatively low mean bureaucracy scores. The non-CPA accountants had the highest rules score. There was little variation between the job classifications on this scale for the television sample.



The fourth scale dealt with procedures for performing one's duties. While the rules scale was concerned with work-site behavior, the procedures scale considered how a task is to be performed. For example, is an individual allowed to solve problems by using his initiative and cutting through red tape, or must be follow a rigid set of rules?

Here the television sample had a mean of 37, equal to an approximate rank of 21 in the sample of 27 agencies. This places newsmen in the least bureaucratized cluster of Hall's occupations. There was little variation among the job classifications within the television sample.

The impersonality scale dealt with a mixture of two attitude domains. The first concerned the impersonality with which individuals who come in contact with the organization are treated, and secondly, how impersonally the organization treats the individual employee. With an overall mean of 25, the television sample out-ranked even the non-CPA accountants with a rank of one for the highest bureaucracy score on this scale.

Does this mean that the newsmen are the most bureaucratized occupation on this scale? The rank of one certainly suggests this; however, consideration must be given to the behaviors a newsman is expected to engage in when dealing with people in the news. Items on the impersonality scale include:

No matter how serious a person's problems are, he is to be treated the same as everyone else.

Everyone who calls the organization from the outside is treated in exactly the same manner.

People are to be treated within the rules, no matter how serious a problem they may have.



We are expected to be courteous, but reserved at all times.

Management sticks pretty much to themselves.

It is possible that for a practicing newsman, the term impersonal could be interpreted as impartial; the two terms could be seen as semantic equivalents. Impartiality is a key element in the traditional conception of "objective" reporting. Further, the two questions dealing with management could have generated some confusion, since the station management, especially in the larger stations, has little to do with the day to day operations of the news department. Also, management's interference with everyday management of the news department would be frowned upon in most journalistic circles.

There is some support, admittedly weak, for the above assertions. Those respondents who come in daily contact with the public could be expected to have higher impersonality scores then those individuals who spend most of their time in the station. Ranking the means from the most to the least bureaucratic on the impersonality scale, the cameramen have the highest score with a mean of 31, followed by the reporters at 33, the newscasters at 32, and the news directors at While at first glance, the newscasters with a mean of 32 seem to refute the argument, the evidence also indicates that the newscasters in the larger markets who rarely go into the field to gath news have a mean of 33, while small market newscasters who ofter double as reporters have a mean of 31. This pattern of means some support then, for the assumption that those individua' in daily contact with the public have a higher rank on ality scale than newsmen who have little public contact news directors and large market newscasters. assumption must be rested in a more rigorous manner



accepted.

The technical competence scale attempted to measure how individuals are hired, fired and promoted by the organization. Are individuals promoted by seniority and technical competence or because they have an "in" with the boss or are good-looking? In other words, are there systematic procedures for recruiting and promotion?

The newsmen had an overall mean of 33. This would give the television sample a rank of 27 in comparison with Hall's data. The television sample was less bureaucratized on this scale than any profession or occupation. (The twenty-seventh rank in Hall's sample had a mean of 29.7.) News directors had a mean of 37, while the most bureaucratized of the television sample were the cameramen, with a mean of 31.

Summary. The television sample's pattern of scores on the bureaucracy scale reflected some of the unique aspects of the television news department. On the hierarchy of authority, division of labor and rules scales, the television sample ranked at about the median in comparison with Hall's sample of occupations and work-sites. On the procedures scale, the newsmen had a relatively low bureaucracy score, which suggests that television journalists are allowed a great deal of latitude in their day-to-day activities.

On the impersonality scale, the newsmen had the highest bureaucracy scores. It was suggested that one possible reason for this score was the fact that newsmen are required to be impartial in gathering the news.



Finally, the technical competence scores revealed that the television news departments appear to have little in the way of rigid rules for recruitment and promotion. Promotion, it would seem, depends upon a number of intangible factors. It is difficult to conceive of an objective check list to evaluate one's journalistic performance, especially in an industry which blends together journalism and screen performance.

In addition, most news departments are relatively small, especially the stations present in this sample. Thus, to be promoted, the newsman changes jobs, ideally, by moving "up" to a larger market.

Factor Analysis

In order to factor analyze the data from the bureaucracy scale, a number of item analyses were performed before converting the retained items to dummy variables. A number of items were dropped for the simple reason that there was no variance on the item after its conversion to a dummy variable. The numbers associated with the questionnaire items in Table 2 are the original Hall scale, to allow for comparison. The items themselves have been paraphrased for the sake of space.

TABLE 2

Table 2 displays the results for the newsmen. The first factor reveals a pattern of employment where monotony, red tape and following standard operating procedures are stressed. Also loading on this factor, negatively, is the lack of systematic promotion procedures at the station.



The second factor is like the first except that decisions must be checked out first with the boss before they can be implemented.

The third factor loads with items dealing with the lack of variety in one's job. Also loading are items dealing with smoking prohibitions and impersonality in the establishment's treatment of individuals.

The fourth factor loads with items dealing with the fact that supplies must be checked out, smoking prohibitions exist, and that orders must be followed without questions. In addition, executives are said to lack the qualifications for their positions.

The fifth factor is somewhat the converse of the fourth factor. Here the items deal with an implicit understanding of how one must behave on the job, and the management being present, but, in this case, they are considered qualified. Note also that here the station has systematic promotion procedures, the converse of factor one.

The last factor extracted has items loading which deal with monotony and similar day-to-day circumstances surrounding the job. Also loading on this factor is the item dealing with the existence of strict operating procedures and that only executives can make decisions. The last item, with high negative loading, is one stating that people are not hired at the station because of their appearance alone.

While the bureaucratic factor matrix has six factors, it in no way resembles Hall's pure bureaucratic domains. In a sense, they represent types of patterns of jobs in the portion of industry sampled for this Study. Factors five and six are clearly identified with news directors, while the first four factors characterize reporters and

RUCnewscasters.

The importance of the bureaucratic factor matrix is not that news departments are mini-bureaucracies, but how this bureaucracy relates to profession-

TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

Factor Analysis of Both Scales

The sixteen items from the professionalism scale were combined with the nineteen items from the bureaucracy scale and factor analyzed. Table 3 displays the results.

Note that the first two factors extracted are bureaucratic. These items deal with the routine, boring and restrictive nature of one's work. In the first factor the public service item dealing with the essential nature of the profession for society loads negatively. Also loading negatively is an item dealing with one's ability to use his intelligence on the job.

The second factor resembles the first but with one important distinction. Both factors are loaded heavily with items dealing with the routine and restrictive components of the job, but the first factor has two negative loadings on the professionalism scale. The item relating to one's inability to employ his intelligence on the job is a logical loading for this first factor. However, the second negative item loading on factor one may be cause for concern. Essentially, the item asks if the profession is essential to society. On this factor the item loads negatively. Does factor one display a type of job that "causes" this down-grading of the essential elements of the profession?

Comparing the second with the first factor, it is apparent that the two factors are quite similar. In factor two, one must check with the boss concerning decisions, follow orders without question with the concomitant inability to employ one's judgment in job related activities. Yet, the second factor has no loadings whatever on the professionalism scales. A clue perhaps for an explanation can be seen in item 48, the lack of a friendly working atmosphere. This item loads only on factor one.



This suggests that the existence of a cold and efficient work environment may have an unfortunate side effect upon the perception of the profession's essential nature to society. The individual in this case may perceive his job as being no different than thousands of other jobs and that he can be replaced with a substitute quite easily since the job is so standardized. Thus, how can this job be associated with an essential profession? Rather, it is merely a service occupation, supplying pictures and stories to its audience.

The third factor deals exclusively with professionalism. The items loading here indicate that the respondent reads his professional journals, supports his professional organization, feels a calling to the field and thinks the profession is underestimated in its contribution to society.

The fourth factor contains three loadings: Two bureaucratic items and a negatively loaded professional item. Thus the lack of variety in one's jot and the fact that everyone is treated the same, load with a professional item, the inability to employ one's judgment on the job. This factor differs from the earlier bureaucratic factors, one and two, in that the pattern suggests treatment of individuals is similar regardless of the circumstances, and that there is no variety in the job. If the job lacks variety and there is no differential treatment of individuals, it is not surprising that the inability to employ one's judgment loads on this factor, since the daily routine is always the same. In comparison to the earlier factors, note that this factor contains none of the monotony, boredom or frustration items which were present on factors one and two.

The fifth factor contains two professionalism items and one bureaucratic item. This factor is sort of a "localized" version of factor three. The items indicate that the individual attends local meetings, and in doing so supports his organization. What is interesting is the bureaucracy item which loads on this factor. The item as stated in the questionnaire is a negative item: "There really are no specific rules, but the employees understand how they should act." One knows how to behave at work because of socialization into the role.



However, this item loading with two professionalism items dealing with attendance and support of one's organization, suggests that perhaps the socialization at the work site is augmented and extended by peer contact at local association meetings.

The sixth and seventh factors are quite similar. Both contain only professionalism items with the idealism of one's colleagues toward the field loading on both factors. In factor six, idealism is associated with colleague enthusiasm for the field and the respondent's ability to employ his own judgment in his work.

In factor seven, the idealism item loads with a gregarious item, enjoyment in seeing colleagues and exchanging ideas with them, and an item concerning the dedication of one's peers to the profession.

A retrospective consideration of the two previous professionalism factors (three and five) would suggest that the attitudes expressed on factors six and seven are somewhat independent of the professional and autonomy scales. That is, the respondent indicates that idealism can be related to freedom of making one's own decisions, or that one enjoys seeing his colleagues and exchanging ideas. The point is, that these items loaded on separate factors and not together with factors two and three. Factor six may be said to be determined by a work-site variable and factor seven by a gregarious variable. Note also that on factor seven, the pattern reveals no attendance or supporting of professional organizations.

Factor eight contains three variables in a most unusual combination. The first item is the professionalism question dealing with autonomy in work schedules. The remaining two items are from the bureaucracy scale. One loads negatively. An item which states one's job involves the same circumstances from day to day. The negative relationship between autonomy and similarity in day to day work patterns is logical. What is peculiar is the positive loading of the item which states that people are hired because of their appearance. Certainly any potential reporter or newscaster must be presentable in appearance and this would be a



consideration in the array of variables which a news director considers in evaluating an applicant. What is surprising is that the item was negatively loaded on the bureaucracy matrix. However, when both scales are factored together, it appears as a positive item associated with news directors. It is not that the veracity of the item pattern of this factor is questioned, but rather that the item loads so clearly with autonomy and the only individual who has substantial control over his environment, the news director.

The remaining five factors, nine through thirteen, exhibit some "strange" relationships. Factor nine contains two professional items, the ability to judge another's performance competency and the ability to exercise one's judgment in daily work. While these two items go together, the third item loading on the factor is somewhat confusing. The bureaucratic item states that supplies must be checked out with permission. A case could be made for the wording of the original questions and of the fact that the judgment and supply questions have been reversed or reflected for this discussion and that the questions may in fact be semantically irreversible. However, this explanation must be rejected, since there is no other evidence of irreversibility on any of the other scale items.

Factor ten reveals a similar pattern of somewhat mixed loadings. The only public service item on the professionalism scale loads here with two bureaucratic items of a peculiar sort. An interpretation of the factor is possible, but little weight should be given its veracity.

The bureaucratic item states that management sticks to itself and that the station lacks a systematic promotion policy. This combination is comprehensible in that lack of contact with management and its policies (in this case, promotion) could explain the positive-negative loading. However, the loading of the professionalism item dealing with the essential nature of the profession to society on this factor is confusing. In terms of an attitude cluster, it suggests that the lack of systematic promotion procedures and the lack of contact with management are related. The linkage between these two items and the idea that the profession is essential to society is at best conjectural. It can be suggested that perhaps this



is the "way things should be." That is, a commitment to the profession requires that management stick to itself and not interfere with the operations of the news staff, and that any systematic promotion procedures would be unduly bureaucratic.

Factor eleven is comprised of one item, the existence of smoking rules at the station. This finding is reassuring since in the rotated bureaucratic factor matrix, the item was associated with two factors. Needless to say, a smoking rule should hold for all individuals in a news department, not just a select few.

Factor eleven is a dim reflection of factor five, the "localized" professionalism factor. Two bureaucratic items load on the factor, stating that employees know how to act on the job without a specific set of rules, the other suggesting that the news department stresses the following of established procedures and routines. Also loading on the factor is one professionalism item dealing with the fact that everybody knows what everybody else is doing. This factor represents a subtle type of socialization into a role, but in this case, without any of the outside professional interactions as represented in factor five.

The last factor represents a sort of "pure" dyad between the news director and management. The individual here makes all of his decisions at work and feels that executives are qualified for their positions. It is also possible that the news director is merely evaluating himself. That is, he is an executive in the station hierarchy and he is, of course, qualified.

Summary and Discussion

A number of important limitations and constraints upon the generality of the findings from the factor analysis of the various scales should be restated.

First, the sample employed in this study had a restricted range in terms of the total universe of broadcast journalists. The sample included only respondents from the lower two market triads. Missing were radio journalists, network journalists and, of course, respondents from the large metropolitan television markets.

Second, the sample respondents whose questionnaires were submitted to factor analysis were engaged in one occupation. This homogeneity of respondents



constrained the item selection process since factor analysis, like any multivariate statistical technique, requires some variation in response pattern.

Third, the analysis of the two scales suparately and the final factoring together sought to discover any underlying relationships within the theoretical model set forth by Hall. The key relationship sought was an interactive pattern of bureaucracy and professionalism within this sample. Given the small sample size, two types of analysis could not be performed (factoring by market size and by all job classifications).

Granted these restrictions, the factor analysis revealed a number of patterns worthy of future investigation. If one accepts the validity of the professional model as set forth by Hall, it can be concluded that this sample of television newsmen exhibit a pattern of germinal professionalism. Given the opportunity to exercise their intelligence and judgment, newsmen exhibit two somewhat crude professional types. There is a localized professional who attends and participates in his state association and a professional type who is a nationally oriented member, combining a calling to the field, support of the national organization, and regularity in reading the professional journals of the field.

Concomitant with the two professional types are three factors all linked to the presence of the opportunity to exercise one's judgment in work activities. Thus, autonomy, self-regulation and a calling to the field are factored with the judgment item. Being denied the opportunity to exercise judgment in one's work reveals a startling pattern when both scales are analyzed together.

This can be seen in the first two factors in Table 3. Denied the freedom to employ one's judgmental ability loads with a series of items that display all of the negative properties commonly associated with bureaucracy.

Thus bureaucratic structures exist which can thwart the development of a professional attitude. That is, the attitude cluster represented in factor one (Table 3) is associated with a negative evaluation of the occupation's essential nature to the society in which it functions.

The second major pattern to emerge is the existence of a variety of professional types. They were identified as <u>localized</u> and national professional reference types. In the combined analysis of the bureaucracy and professional



scales, this initial puttern does not disappear. The national type, factor three in Table 3 is quite "pure." It is associated with no bureaucracy items. The localized type also appears with little relationship to the bureaucracy scale.

Two other variations appear that deserve mention. There is a pattern of calling to the field, or more accurately, a high degree of idealism, dedication and enthusiasm for one's work, which is independent of the aforementioned professional types. This may suggest that future development in the area of professionalization is possible, given this committed cadre of idealistic respondents.

Secondly, complete autonomy in one's work is constrained to one individual, the news director. If future research substantiates this finding, a number of important ramifications for the professionalization of broadcast journalism are conceivable. A key to professionalism as demonstrated in this study is the ability to employ one's judgment in one's work. Complete autonomy is not required for the emergence of the professional types proviously discussed. In the final analysis, autonomy and the power to make decisions load separately from the judgment factors. Being denied the ability to employ one's judgment loads on factor one of Table 3, certainly one of the most brutal and harsh descriptions of a work environment possible, given the items in the bureaucracy scale.

The ability to use one's judgment in work tasks may be more psychological than real. However, its presence is crucial it would seem, to the development of professionalism.



MEAN BUREAUGRACY SCORES
AND JOB CLASSIFICATION

	*л	В	С	D	E	F	X
News Director	46	36	3 8	38	21	37	216
Neuscaster	44	37	38	36	27	32	214
Reporter	43	34	39	36	28	3 3	213
Comeramen	46	37	38,	36	27	31	21.5
Miscellaneous	45	3 5	39	37	24	33	213
Scale flour	45	36	3 8	37	35	33	214

Note: The lower the score, the higher the level of bureaucracy.

- *A Hierarchy of authority
 - B Division of labor
 - C Rules
- D Procedures
- E Impersonality
- F Technical competence



TABLE 2

ROTATED FACTOR LOADINGS FOR

TELEVISION NEWS NEW ON

THE BUREAUCRACY SCALE

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- 1. See David J. LeRoy, "Levels of Professionalism in a Sample of Television Newsman," Journal of Broadcasting, 17:1 (Winter 1972-73).
- 2. Alex Edelstein, <u>Perspectives in Mass Communications</u> (Kobenhaven: Einan Harcks Forlog, 1966), p. 53.
- 3. The relevant works of the prolific Professor Hall are: Richard H. Hall,

 "Professionalization and Eurocucretization," American Sociological Review,

 30: 92-92-104 (February, 1968); Richard H. Hall, Occupations and Social

 Structure (Engelwood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1969) and Richard H.

 Hall, Organizations: Structures and Processes (Engelvood Cliffs, N.J.:

 Prentice-Hall, 1972)
- 4. Consult David J. LeRoy, "Measuring Professionalism in a Sample of Televicion Journalists," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1971). Appended in the above dissertation are all of the relevant scales and keys as well as a more detailed discussion of the research literature.
- 5. Hall, "Professionalization..." p. 93-94.
- 6. See footnote one for reference.
- 7. The difficulty with mail questionnaires is of course well known. The response rate for this survey was 40 percent, which is similar to other surveys in the area of broadcast journalism. The principle short coming of the study is that news directors did not choose to co-operate in the larger markets. Thus, the findings in this study reflect, at best, the attitudes of journalists in the medium and smaller markets. The total usable questionnaires from 187 sent out was 74. Of these 51 individual were clearly engaged in the daily rituals of journalism. Future studies should follow the tack employed by Johnstone, who employed a long questionnaire and long distance telephone calls. See John W. C. Johnstone, Edward J. Slawski and William W. Bowman, "The Professional Values of American Newsmen," <u>Public</u> Opinion Cuerionly 35:4, 820-540 (Winter 1972-1973).



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- 8. For an introduction to dummy variables see Thomas H. Wonnacott and Renald J. Wonnacott, <u>Introductory Statistics</u> (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1989), pp. or Herbert M. Blatock, Jr., <u>Social Statistics</u>, <u>Second Edition</u> (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972), pp. 498-506.
- 9. Not reported here are the analyses of the cameramen and miscellaneous category. The resulting factor structure from their analysis is more complex, requiring six factors. Given the wide variations of duties for the individuals involved the value of such an analysis is minimal at best.

