FERMENT IN THE FIELD: NOTES ON THE EVOLUTION OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES AND ITS DISCIPLINARY NATURE

KAARLE NORDENSTRENG

Abstract

This article focuses on the changing status and character of communication and media studies in universities in general and critical media studies in particular. First the evolution of the field since the 1950s is reviewed through a number of stages, which coincide with the history of leftist thinking – six ferments, one for each decade. Then the disciplinary nature of the field is discussed, with special reference to the ongoing reform of higher education in Europe known as the "Bologna process." An illustrative case is provided by a survey of the field in the Scandinavian countries. The conclusion is that there is a need for radical reflection about the discipline in the contemporary world, calling for an approach to media studies in terms of the philosophy of science. The article presents notes for further thought rather than suggests final scenarios, and this is done from an admittedly personal and national perspective – as a veteran of the field and as a member of the Finnish community.

Kaarle Nordenstreng is Professor of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Tampere, Finland, e-mail: kaarle.nordenstreng@uta.fi.

"Ferment in the field" became a concept in communication research in the early 1980s, when George Gerbner as editor of *Journal of Communication* mobilised a large number of colleagues to review the field from the point of view of research paradigms and their challenges – not least the challenge posed by leftist-critical thinking.[1] The resulting special issue (Summer 1983) did not reveal any final truth about the state of the art, but it did serve as a healthy reminder of the need to periodically take a "meta look" at what we are doing. A new look at the ferment in the field was taken by the same journal ten years later (Summer and Autumn 1993), but that turned out to be just another panorama of the field "between fragmentation and cohesion" (the title of the issue). More of that ferment has been exposed by histories of the field, either attempts to paint the whole landscape (e.g., Pietilä 2004) or stories of a single modern classic (e.g., Munson and Warren 1997).

My point in choosing the title for this article was not just to recall Gerbner's important initiative but to highlight the need for a continuous examination of the scholarly roots of communication research. In fact, I claim that the need for critical stocktaking is especially acute just now when the field has consolidated and become so popular in the Information Society[2] that it is about to lose its identity. A particular boost for state-of-the-art thinking in Europe is given by the university degree reform calling for a (re)definition of the disciplinary foundation of academic studies and research.

An Outline of History Through Six Decades of Ferment

There have been several stages in the evolution of the field over the past half a century, i.e. the post-World War II period, not counting earlier developments such as the Frankfurt School. This leads me to single out one characteristic aspect for each of the past five decades plus the present one, based on how the Left can be associated with turns of the field in each decade. The aspects are called "ferments," admitting that this is only a rough sketch.[3] However, my point with this listing of ferments is to demonstrate that the evolution of the field as a whole is closely related to leftist ideas – although they are by no means the only driving force of the field – and that this development has taken many turns and included many contradictions.

First ferment: 1950s – the Left is invisible. This is the formative stage of modern (mass) communication research, when the field had emerged and established itself in academia as well as in the media industry throughout Europe and North America. An institutional landmark of this stage is the founding of the International Association for Mass Communication Research (IAMCR) in 1957. And it is characteristic of this period that leftist thinking had little or no place in the mainstream of the new field. However, beside the mainstream there were significant pockets of Marxism, especially in France (Louis Althusser), but also in the UK (Raymond Williams). Yet these were identified with other areas of intellectual activity, and the new field of mass communication research was typically void of leftist thinking.

Under these circumstances, Bernard Berelson presented his prognosis of the demise of the field in *Public Opinion Quarterly* (Berelson 1959). This "obituary" and Wilbur Schramm's response to it (Schramm 1959) stand as a family quarrel within basically bourgeois scholarship. Although this dispute did not have overt political

overtones, it is a very important confrontation in terms of research policy with appetizing food for thought for the philosophy of science.

Second ferment: 1960s – the Left is on the offensive. This is part and parcel of the well-known socio-political revolt of workers and students, based on national injustices in labour and racial conditions, and boosted by international events such as the Vietnam War. It resulted in reforms in universities, in terms of both institutional governance and academic substance. All the social sciences were affected, typically by greater emphasis on social relevance and political economy as well as questioning the hegemonic status of logical positivism as an approach to the world. Prevailing paradigms were also challenged in communication research, as exposed in my criticism of America in *Gazette* (Nordenstreng 1968).

Third ferment: 1970s – the Left is established. The intellectual offensive of the 1960s brought the Left often into an established position as the main challenger of hegemonic powers in media as well as academia.[4] Strong support for progressive thinking came from international institutions, above all UNESCO and the Non-Aligned Movement of the developing countries with their advocacy of a new international order – known in the communication field as the New World Information and Communication Order, NWICO (Nordenstreng 1993). UNESCO had begun to promote progressive communication research already in the late 1960s, leading to an international programme in the early 1970s (Nordenstreng 1994). The IAMCR not only actively supported this but also established an international home base for leftist communication scholarship by setting up a section for political economy (with Robin Cheesman as its first chair). In the US, the Union of Democratic Communication (UDC) was established at the end of the decade.

However, this ferment did not only signal the promotion and consolidation of leftist ideas; it also led to internal strife within the progressive movement and even confusion about the nature of leftism.[5] The main factions of the division were the moderate leftists including the Social Democrats, on the one hand, and hard-liners including the ultra-left Stalinists and Maoists on the other. Cold War-related positions regarding the countries of "real socialism" in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, China, North Korea, Cuba, etc., were often quite sensitive, fuelling both soft and hard variants of the leftist thinking in the West. Accordingly, the ferment of the 1970s brought both strengths and weaknesses for leftist scholarship – from within the leftist movement itself.

Fourth ferment: 1980s – the Left is being challenged. This ferment represents a confrontation to leftist thinking, partly emanating from within its own intellectual heritage and partly due to outside pressure. The internal challenge was mainly posed by the growing attraction of cultural studies and feminism, while the outside challenge was represented by increased commercialisation in media and culture. If the previous ferment of the 1970s was based on the establishment of an offensive movement, at the expense of undermining unity, the 1980s displays a movement on the defensive and under multiple challenges. It was under such conditions of paradigm clashes that the ferment issue of the *Journal of Communication* appeared in 1983.

Fifth ferment: 1990s – the Left is being co-opted. This ferment occurs in a post-Cold War world where the field is heavily influenced by neo-liberal and populist-

conservative politics, on the one hand, and new information and communication technologies, ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies), on the other. The former pushed many leftists such as Stuart Hall to focus on analyzing and attacking these policies, while the latter, with new media and their academic corollaries, attracted a good deal of the leftist scholars to replace their politically oriented thinking with more or less technocratic approaches. In this situation it was not difficult for many erstwhile Marxist-Leninists to replace a paradigm of totality with another variant of the same kind of paradigm based on information technology. But again it should be noted that this was a ferment with several variants and internal contradictions. And one of them was persistent hostility between the camps of cultural studies and political economy, as demonstrated by the debate between Nicholas Garnham, Lawrence Grossberg, James Carey and Graham Murdock in a Colloquy edited by Oscar Gandy in *Critical Studies In Mass Communication*, March 1995.

Sixth ferment: 2000s – the Left is making a comeback? This current ferment manifests itself in a world of globalisation, which is full of contradictions. It is possible to see it as the writing on the wall for true leftist ideas – as the final stage when the Left is being totally co-opted by the System, not least through the active role of the leftists in applying ICT not only as technical instruments but above all as conceptual tools in the construction of a new network theory of society à la Manuel Castells. On the other hand, there are also good grounds for an optimistic reading of the trends, whereby the Left is not only sustained but even invigorated by the logic of the socio-economic development itself, including the new social movements and radicalisation tendencies within the middle class. Moreover, the Bush administration has helped to politicise cultural studies not only in the USA but also worldwide, thus narrowing the gulf to the political economy camp.[6]

The universities in today's Europe show how higher education is being increasingly treated as a branch of the economy with performance targets and closer links to the industrial world and its professional life. ICT and demands by corporations such as Nokia have played a pivotal role in this marketisation of academia. But the socio-political landscape is not so black and white: a market-driven university policy in the Information Society also opens up progressive windows of opportunity. "Education, education, education," as the Blairian slogan for post-industrial society goes (see Webster 2001), is vital not only for reproducing a labour force with professional capacities but also for ensuring innovation and creativity which, coupled with risk-taking, constitute the essence of the Schumpeterian economy described in Nicholas Garnham's contribution to this issue.

The Field Expanded and Diversified

My overview of the successive ferments in the field should be seen against the fact that throughout this half century the field of media studies has expanded perhaps more than any other academic field apart from computer science and biomedicine.[7] Its status next to the old established fields has been consolidated, but its expansion has also led to friction and conflict between the old "ivy league" sciences and the new and popular "Micky Mouse studies," as it is called by opponents in the UK debate (a regular topic in the *British The Times Higher Education Supplement*). The conflicts are not just based on prestige and jealousy but literally

on the vital prospects of each field – not least the old and established – in the middle of the "structural adjustment" of universities.

In its expansion, the field has become more and more diversified. Different media (newspapers, magazines, radio, television, cinema, etc.) and different aspects of communication (journalism, visual communication, media culture, media economy, etc.) have emerged as more or less independent branches of the field. This multiplication process has not been halted by the convergence development brought about by the digitalisation of media production and distribution. On the contrary, new media, Internet, etc., have entered as further specialities in media studies, often gaining the status of another study programme, major subject or even a discipline of its own.

Placed in a broader perspective of the history of science, such multiplication is quite problematic. The field is both deserting its roots in such basic disciplines as psychology, sociology and political science, and it is also becoming more and more dependent on empirical and practical aspects of reality. This typically means applied research under the terms of the existing institutions, i.e. administrative instead of critical research. Moreover, there is a practical question of naming the various subdivisions of media studies, which does not follow any systematic patterns – neither internationally nor within one country.

In this situation it is high time to return to the crossroads question raisedby Berelson and Schramm in their debate in 1959: Is mass communication research really a discipline or just a field? My answer is that it remains rather a field than a discipline, and my suggestion is that it is an unhealthy illusion to celebrate the popularity of media studies with the distinction of an independent discipline – not to speak of several disciplines. In any case, some serious soul-searching and critical examination of the identity of the field are called for.

This call for critical reflection is particularly crucial for leftist scholars who by their nature should be in the vanguard of any consciousness-raising efforts. In this case it is even more relevant since critical scholarship is facing a dilemma: while being accepted and legitimised, it also runs the risk of being co-opted.

Accordingly, there are good grounds to search for the identity of the field. Moreover, in addition to these reasons for soul-searching, which stem from the field itself, Europe has an additional challenge for a reform of its whole higher education system.

The Challenge of Bologna

The site of Europe's oldest university has become a buzzword for the latest reform of higher education in this part of the world due to the declaration in 1999 by 29 Ministers of Education from various European countries. The Bologna Declaration confirmed an initiative taken one year earlier at the Sorbonne by the Ministers of Education of France, Germany, Italy and the UK. Bologna was followed up by even broader meetings of Education Ministers in Prague in 2001 and, most recently, in Berlin in 2003, which extended the Bologna process to forty countries.[8]

This reform seeks to replace the different systems of higher education in European countries by a common "European Higher Education Area" (EHEA) with increased mobility of students, teachers, researchers and administrative staff, and with easily readable and comparable degrees using the "European Credit Transfer

System" (ECTS) and a Diploma Supplement. The reform boils down to a uniform degree structure with two main degrees, Bachelor's in three years and Master's in one to two more years, followed by a doctoral degree in four more years. The two-cycle basic degrees are supposed to create a competitive and attractive market for academic studies in Europe compared to the USA.

What is called for is both a rejuvenation of the often outdated academic systems – as typically happened in France and elsewhere in 1968 – and a push for academic institutions to serve more directly the needs of the European labour market. The Berlin Communiqué refers to EU's commitments from Lisbon (2000) and Barcelona (2002) aimed at making Europe "the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion." But the Communiqué also stresses research and doctoral studies with a more ecumenical approach:

> *Ministers agree that efforts shall be undertaken in order to secure closer links overall between the higher education and research systems in their respective countries. The emerging European Higher Education Area will benefit from synergies with the European Research Area, thus strengthening the basis of the Europe of Knowledge. The aim is to preserve Europe's cultural richness and linguistic diversity, based on its heritage of diversified traditions, and to foster its potential of innovation and social and economic development through enhanced co-operation among European Higher Education Institutions.*

Moreover, the Communiqué declares in its preamble:

> *Ministers reaffirm the importance of the social dimension of the Bologna Process. The need to increase competitiveness must be balanced with the objective of improving the social characteristics of the European Higher Education Area, aiming at strengthening social cohesion and reducing social and gender inequalities both at national and at European level. In that context, Ministers reaffirm their position that higher education is a public good and public responsibility. They emphasise that in international academic cooperation and exchanges, academic values should prevail.*

Accordingly, the Bologna process includes positive elements from the point of view of critical and progressive interests – the Left in the vague sense used above. Yet it would be naïve not to admit the overwhelming economic and market interest behind Bologna – as such a paradox given the name symbolizing institutions of free academia. The current Bologna process is indeed full of contradictions.

This is particularly true of media studies and communication research. The field is rapidly moving to the two-tier degree system throughout Europe,[9] which brings further ferment to the field – not least from the perspective of "what's left." Bologna invites – in practice compels – each major subject to rewrite its curriculum in terms of the two-tier degree BA-MA system, and in this process one cannot help defining the disciplinary profile and core elements of each subject.[10] This will naturally lead to soul-searching not only within each department but also at the higher faculty or college level. Especially challenging prospects are provided by interdisciplinary programmes, which seem to become popular at the MA level opening the possibility to combine different BA backgrounds and to focus on cutting edge topics not least in the ICT and new media.

A Survey in Scandinavia

An illustrative case of the state of the art is provided by the Scandinavian countries of Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden (this time excluding the fifth Nordic country, Iceland). A couple of years ago I suggested in the context of the biannual Nordic conferences a systematic survey of the concepts and terms by which the field of (mass) communication is defined in our universities. The motivation was both theoretical-intellectual in terms of the philosophy of science and practical-bureaucratic in terms of the names given to disciplines, departments and positions. Both aspects have become more and more intriguing with the development of new media, convergence and globalisation. The field in this connection refers broadly to all approaches to media and communication within humanities, social sciences and arts, apart from purely technical approaches, and it covers both research and education.

Such an inventory based on lists of all relevant departments and disciplines to be found in the Nordic universities proved to be too ambitious to be fulfilled as first planned by 2003. I underestimated the difficulties of ascertaining the disciplinary profiles from published materials and websites. I therefore started from what Nordicom had already compiled: a country-by-country listing of university programmes in the field, indicating for each its institutional frame (university, faculty, department), name of subject or discipline, level and length of programme as well as keyword-type characterisation of the programme content.[11] My preliminary survey[12] based on this Nordicom mapping of the situation in 2002 led to the following national characteristics:

Sweden has nearly twenty institutions which offer BA/MA-level studies, six of them doctoral studies. All of these use the same name for the discipline: "media and communication science" (medie- och kommunikationsvetenskap, MKV). This does not include a number of journalism programmes; the institutions for film studies as well as those of library studies are likewise missing.

Norway has only four institutions, with "media studies" (medievitenskap, literally translated "media science") as the national discipline label, except for one of "film studies" (filmvitenskap). In addition, there are several institutions for professional journalism and library studies. Moreover, new regional institutions of higher education are coming to the field.

Denmark has five institutions but no common label for the discipline. "Media studies" (medievidenskap) is used in Aarhus, "film and media studies" (film og medievidenskap) in Copenhagen, "communication" (kommunikation) in Aalborg and Roskilde, while the labels "multi media" and "humanistic informatics" are also used. Other institutions/programmes offer education for professional journalism and librarianship.

Finland has eight university-level institutions which offer BA/MA + PhD programmes in all media, and beyond media also in speech communication and organisational communication – generally designated as "communication sciences" (viestintätieteet). In addition, there are three university institutions offering library and information studies, which in Finland is also included within communication sciences. Outside all these are non-university-level polytechnics, which offer vari-

ous programmes in media and communication, not least related to new media, and they are more numerous than the university institutions. Finnish university programmes have no common name for the discipline; several labels are used, each with a specific meaning determined by the history of the academic subject and its professorship.

In general, the Nordic landscape of the academic discipline gave rise to the following observations:

- The field in Sweden and Finland is institutionally quite abundant and diverse. In these countries the discipline represents both the faculties of humanities and social sciences, and those fairly evenly. Moreover, Finland brings to the field also the faculty of art and design (Helsinki, Rovaniemi). Sweden has a nationally used umbrella term for the discipline in contrast to Finland's anarchic terminology. However, the difference may be more cosmetic than real.
- Denmark and Norway have fewer institutions and programmes. In these two countries the discipline is mostly administered by the faculty of humanities, but the actual study programmes and research activities display more or less a balance between humanities and social sciences. Actually, the difference between humanities and social sciences appears to be largely artificial and obsolete in this discipline.
- The true nature of the discipline is revealed only through a careful examination, case by case, of its historical evolution and institutional position. There is no short-cut to map out the disciplinary landscape, and a proper survey requires thorough knowledge of the respective national territory.
- The current challenge posed by new information technologies, on the one hand, and the Bologna process, on the other, has led most institutions and programmes in the field to critically assess the foundations of their discipline. Regardless of such reflection, institutional changes occur, notably mergers between classic humanistic media studies and (post)modern information sciences, as experienced in Denmark and Norway.

The last-mentioned changes are symptomatic of a more general trend, well known in the USA, where multimedia and digital media are no longer designators for a pilot speciality but part and parcel of mainstream media studies. Take the Department of Information and Media Studies at the University of Aarhus, Faculty of Humanities. This is how it describes its departmental profile (see http://www.imv.au.dk/eng/):

> *The departmental research in Information Studies includes historical, sociological, communicative, and design-oriented approaches to the study of the development and application of information technology on the level of individuals, organisations and society. The departmental research in Media Studies includes projects concerning production aesthetics, textual analysis and reception within the print media, radio, TV, film and the Internet as well as topics concerning the theory, policy, history and institution of the media. In between these two fields, where information and media studies increasingly meet, research is carried out in such areas as IT and Learning, the Internet and in Multi Media.*

This profile is clearly more technology-oriented than the earlier programme of Media Studies, which grew out of Nordic Literature. A reorientation was natural, given the fact that the department incorporated a branch of computer science.[13] A similar merger was recently carried out in Bergen, motivated by the new media society and prospects of convergence.[14] On the other hand, a similar merger did not materialise at the University of Tampere in Finland, where a new Faculty of Information Sciences was established, with Computer Science and Information Studies brought under the same umbrella. Journalism and Mass Communication was invited to join the new Faculty, but preferred to remain in the Faculty of Social Sciences, next to Sociology and Political Science, without moving into what was considered too much of a 'bits and bytes faculty.'[15]

Conclusion

As an actor in the field during the past forty years,[16] I should naturally first express gratification about the expansion and consolidation of the field. Instead of its withering away as suggested by Berelson in the late 1950s, we have seen an impressive growth of the field which has brought communication and media studies to the centre of contemporary paradigms of socio-economic development – the Information Society. As George Gerbner put it in the editor's epilogue to the ferment issue, "if Marx were alive today, his principal work would be entitled Communications rather than Capital" (Gerbner 1983, 348).

But I have mixed feelings about this success story. My second thought – more poignant than the first one – is that the field, with all the expansion and diversity, runs the risk of becoming professionally self-centred and scientifically shallow. Therefore one of the first points I nowadays make in the introductory course of the most popular subject at my home university is what I call "the paradox of media studies": our task is to deconstruct the naïve view that communication is the core of society and we specialise in undoing media hubris.

Lack of scientific depth follows all too easily from an eclectic and multidisciplinary approach. Both are important as such for the healthy evolution of a discipline, but in a rapid pace of development they may become too dominant and offset the foundations of the body of knowledge. Such a "surfing syndrome" is particularly close to studies of fashionable topics such as information technology. As a matter of fact, information technology tends to lead not only to excessive eclecticism but also to the neglect of other phenomena. I have introduced the term "Nokia syndrome"[17] to refer to these risks of a fashionable dominance of technology.

A particular problem in the field is its own scientific identity and its 'genealogical' nature, not least regarding the concept of communication. Within the field communication is typically understood as the constituting factor of related studies and disciplines, whereby various aspects of human communication – from speech and organisational communication to different media – have their specialities which are based on this core concept and its foundational theory.[18] However, it is by no means self-evident that communication should be taken as the core of related disciplines. True, communication may be understood as the essence of social relations and society may be understood not only as something held together by the 'glue' of communication but as something that itself is made up of communication in the Luhmannian sense.[19] On the other hand, communication can be seen merely as

camouflage distracting attention from more fundamental levels such as economics or socio-political power structures. This latter perspective does not support the idea of communication studies as an independent discipline or a group of disciplines united by the foundational concept of communication; it rather takes communication as a complementary aspect of more fundamental factors and thus communication studies as a loosely constructed field.[20]

The question about the nature of communication and the related problem of discipline vs. field is far from settled and therefore it should be actively discussed instead of slipping it under the carpet, either by overlooking it or by addressing it with clichés. Pursuing this and other issues raised above leads us ultimately to the philosophy of science – asking how scientific knowledge is constructed and organised; what are the principles which designate sciences and disciplines. This examination includes the well-known distinctions between basic and applied research: whereas basic sciences are supposed to describe, explain and help to understand, applied sciences are supposed first and foremost to predict; the basic sciences tell us what is and predictive applied sciences tell us what will be. In addition to these two main types, there is an often overlooked form of applied sciences which tells us what ought to be so that we can attain a given goal. These "design sciences" are not supposed to produce true or false knowledge, nor to predict correctly what will happen, but to enhance human skills and to generate instrumental knowledge for the manipulation of both natural and artificial systems – something that is highly relevant in communication studies.

The distinction between critical and administrative research cuts across both basic and applied sciences, including design sciences. These categories should not be vulgarised by identifying critical research only with basic theorising and administrative research only with applied data gathering and processing. Both theoretical and empirical research can be critical as well as administrative, and critical scholars should be particularly wary of simplistic labelling of this or that orientation.

Consequently, I make a strong claim for the philosophy of science in order to deal with the concept of communication and its relation to the system of sciences. At the same time I call for a continuous study of the history of ideas in the field. However young the field, and however burning the challenges of the day, it is vital to realise how it has evolved and how it relates to other fields of research. Being aware of one's own research tradition is a precondition for an organic growth of science – and a medicine against the "surfing syndrome."

Accordingly, all Master-level communication study programmes should have a module on the history of the field and on the nature of the discipline. Likewise, all established institutions of communication studies should maintain some research on research, not only by mapping out the development of their research agenda, both in terms of topics and underlining paradigms, but also by examining the nature of the field.[21]

I am convinced that this will be good for both science in general and critical studies in particular.

Notes:

1. I also received an invitation to contribute but could not because at the time I was working in Tanzania and preoccupied by my presidency of the International Organization of Journalists. George Gerbner has never forgotten that I missed this train, even though I usually managed to

get on board the books and journal issues which he edited (typically at the last minute after the deadline).

2 The concept of Information Society is perhaps the most telling argument in favour of the view that the sphere of information, communication and media has established itself as a central aspect of life – both in reality and studies about it. For Finnish contributions on the Information Society, see Castells and Himanen 2002; Karvonen 2001; Webster 2004.

3. The concept of Left itself is problematic and is taken here as a sweeping generalisation for critical and progressive approaches. As my colleague Tarmo Malmberg pointed out in discussing this outline of history, one should distinguish not only between the two political sides of the Left – Communists and Social Democrats – but also between the old Left preceding the 1960s, the new Left of the 1960s and 1970s, and the postmodern Left of the 1980s and 1990s.

4. Finland was a special case, where progressive forces with leftist leanings assumed a dominant position both in the national broadcasting organization (already in the late 1960s) and in the university centres of communication research (see Pietilä et al. 1990)

5. Symptomatic of this confusion were the disputes among the founders of progressive academic and professional bodies, including the UDC, in the 1970s. There were typically those who wanted to write a very straightforward and uncompromised position in constitutional documents and to follow the same line in practical action, while others wanted a broad front of progressive forces with a more flexible approach. And it was not simply that hard-line Marxist-Leninists were in the first-mentioned group – rather the contrary, they typically claimed to be mature politicians ready for alliances with the liberal centre and accused new leftist converts of being infantile and lacking a tactical approach. Accordingly, the institution-building under this ferment often repeated history of big political movements, including the Communist and Social Democratic parties in the early 20th century.

6. This became clear at the conference of Crossroads in Cultural Studies, held at the University of Illinois at Urbana in June 2004.

7. I have no data to substantiate this generalisation and thus it should be taken as an informed guess rather than an empirical observation. Reliable data on the volume of different scholarly fields are hardly available at the national level, not to mention compatible data at the international level.

8. The conference in Berlin also brought Russia to the Bologna process. While its basis is within the EU area, it is not formally steered by the Union but by an independent platform of ministers, bureaucrats and academic lobbies. For the results of the Berlin conference and useful links to other relevant bodies, see http://www.bologna-berlin2003.de/.

9. This was shown at a meeting convened by the European Consortium for Communications Research (ECCR) in Brussels in April 2003, see http://www.eccr.info/.

10. In Finland it has been customary to start the process with a "core material analysis," usually carried out by teams of teachers and students, for both individual study modules and the programme at large.

11. "Utbildningar i medie- och kommunikationsämnen vid universitet och högskolor in Norden" (2001), published in a slightly abridged form in 2002 by Nordicom Information 24, 4, 105-111. (For Nordicom publications, see http://www.nordicom.gu.se/publications_index.html.) A second useful source was "Utvärdering av medie- och kommunikationsvetenskapliga utbildningar vid svenska universitet och högskolor," the evaluation report of Sweden's media and communication study programmes, produced by the Swedish Högskoleverket (2001) with an appendix overview of media and communication education in other Nordic countries, based on the same Nordicom survey.

12. First presented as a paper "Disciplines of Media and Communication – A Survey of the Field," at the 16th Nordic Conference of Media and Communication Research (Kristiansand, Norway, August 2003) in Working Group 25: Media Theories – Media Studies – Media Research.

13. An interesting – even ironic – aspect of this case is the fact that the department has been headed by Professor Frands Mortensen, who was Denmark's leading leftist scholar of communication in

the late 1960s and the early 1970s. He and other young scholars were instrumental in importing Habermas, Negt and Kluge to Scandinavia, and, for instance, Finns got to know continental radicalism largely via Denmark. Mortensen has since continued to pursue media studies with a critical approach – however no longer something that is dubbed "radical." In any case, neither he nor anybody else would have imagined, even in their wildest dreams in the 1960s, that one day he would head a department focusing on information technology in a fairly affirmative way.

14. The new Department of Information Science and Media Studies (Institutt for informasjons- og medievitenskap) is located, like the earlier Department of Media Studies, both in the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Social Sciences. The first head of the merged department is Professor Jostein Gripsrud, one of Scandinavia's leading critical media scholars. The setting up of this Department in the beginning of 2004 should be taken into account when reading the above survey based on the situation in 2002.

15. A status quo solution regarding the faculty reform in 2001 did not mean that Journalism and Mass Communication wanted to avoid new media, digitalisation, convergence, etc. On the contrary, the Department (http://www.uta.fi/laitokset/tiedotus/index1.html) was the first in Finland to introduce Master's programmes in this area and its Journalism Research and Development Centre (http://www.uta.fi/jourtutkimus/english.html) has focused largely on projects around new media. Moreover, the Department has among its staff a (part-time) Visiting Professor who happens to be the Executive Director of MIT Media Lab. Regarding Information Studies, earlier named "Library Science and Informatics," it also used to belong to the Faculty of Social Sciences, but unlike Journalism and Mass Communication, it decided after a lengthy discussion to move to the new Faculty of Information Sciences.

16. I entered communication research in 1965 on my recruitment as junior faculty at the University of Tampere and when beginning to work also in the research division of the Finnish Broadcasting Company. My entrance to the international circles of communication research followed in 1966 at the conference of the IAMCR in Herzeg Novi, Yugoslavia. For more on this early history and its relation to critical studies, see Lent 1995.

17. Nokia is a perfect label to be used by one coming from Tampere: the Finnish company started in the late 19th century in Nokia, a little township next to Tampere. The company, which adopted the name of its place of origin, began in wood processing, moving soon to rubber boots and later to car tyres and electric cables followed by mobile phones as late as in the 1980s. By now none of Nokia Corporation's business is located in the town of Nokia, whereas a good share of its R & D activity has landed in Tampere next to the academic community.

18. This is manifested in Colleges or Schools of Communication, which typically include departments of speech, journalism, radio-TV, PR and advertising. In Finland the idea of communication as a unifying concept in higher education and research is quite concretely suggested by the fact that there are several and different kinds of university departments concerned with communication and media at the graduate and postgraduate level – altogether 15 units in ten universities – and that these departments have established a network for cooperation, University Network for Communication Sciences (http://www.uta.fi/viesverk/english/basics/members.html).

19. This view is held by my colleague Kauko Pietilä (Veikko Pietilä's younger brother), who offers a welcome challenge to my sceptical view. Actually he represents my alter ego, as my textbook on the study of social communication processes, published in Finnish first in 1975, presented this view as an alternative to the other extreme whereby communication is but an aspect of other and more fundamental social processes.

20. A proponent of this view is my colleague Tarmo Malmberg, who offers welcome criticism of the fetish nature of communication (studies).

21. An exemplary project in this respect has been launched at the University of Aarhus, Department of Information and Media Studies. "Theories of Media and Communication – Histories and Relevance" seeks to prioritise the field of media and communication theory and its histories and relevance as an independent field of research within media and communication studies (see http://www.medieteori.dk/english/).

References:

Berelson, Bernard. 1959. The State of Communication Research. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 23, 1, 1-6.

Castells, Manuel and Pekka Himanen. 2002. *Information Society and the Welfare State: Finnish Model*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gandy, Oscar, ed. 1995. Colloquy. *Critical Studies In Mass Communication* 12, 1, 60-100.

Gerbner, George. 1983. The Importance of Being Critical – In One's Own Fashion. *Journal of Communication* 33, 3, 355-362.

Karvonen, Erkki, ed. 2001. *Informational Societies: Understanding the Third Industrial Revolution*. Tampere: Tampere University Press.

Lent, John. 1995. *A Different Road Taken: Profiles in Critical Communication*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Munson, Eve Stryker and Catherine A. Warren, eds. 1997. *James Carey: A Critical Reader*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Nordenstreng, Kaarle. 1968. Communication Research in the United States: A Critical Perspective. *Gazette* 14, 3, 207-216.

Nordenstreng, Kaarle. 1993. The New Information Order and Communication Scholarship: Reflections on a Delicate Relationship. In V. Mosco, J. Wasko and M. Pendakur (eds.), *Illuminating the Blindspots: Essays Dedicated to Dallas W. Smythe*, 251-273. Norwood, N.J.: Ablex.

Nordenstreng, Kaarle. 1994. The Unesco Expert Panel with the Benefit of Hindsight. In C. Hamelink and O. Linne (eds.), *Mass Communication Research: On Problems and Policies; In Honor of James D. Halloran*, 3-19. Norwood N.J.: Ablex.

Pietilä, Veikko, Tarmo Malmberg, and Kaarle Nordenstreng.1990. Theoretical Convergencies and Contrasts: A View from Finland. *European Journal of Communication* 5, 2-3, 165-185.

Pietilä, Veikko. 2004. *On the Highway of Mass Communication Studies*. Chesskill, NJ: Hampton.

Schramm, Wilbur. 1959. Comments on Berelson's Article. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 23, 1, 6-9.

Webster, Frank. 2001. Global Challenges and National Answers. In E. Karvonen (ed.), *Informational Societies: Understanding the Third Industrial Revolution*, 259-278. Tampere: Tampere University Press.

Webster, Frank, ed. with the assistance of R. Blom, E. Karvonen, H. Melin, K. Nordenstreng, and E. Puoskari. 2004. *Information Society Reader*. London and New York: Routledge.