

COMMENTARY

Media and Communication as a Field of Research

Kaarle Nordenstreng

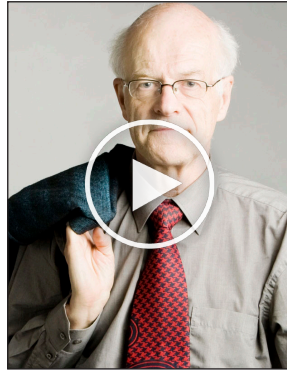
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The field has been characterized by enormous expansion and diversification with abundance and popularity not resulting in integration. This contribution considers the roots of the discipline to be very long leading back to the enlightenment, early democracy and diverse international sources such as the first freedom of information bill in Sweden's Diet in 1766 and the nineteenth century as Hardt (2001) details.

Academically the field is something of a sunrise industry comparable even to computer science and biotechnology as Web of Science data (Nordenstreng, 2015) indicates with exponential growth notable from the 1990s. Dramatic increases in publications, students and the blossoming of associations has followed. Dominated by US/English language research, diversification has been felt in approach and focus (Koivisto and Thomas, 2010). Looking back to an earlier phase concerned with modernization is however instructive for example Lerner (1958) or the comments and debate surrounding Berelson (1959). Currently, extremely dispersed communication studies is characterized by presentism with gaps such as the absence of national histories of communication research very apparent.

Reporting Denis McQuail's thoughts on the conference's headings this contribution suggests that traditions of inquiry from social science and literary/cultural studies have not been 'resolved or got together' (Nordenstreng, 2015).

Keywords: Mass communication; publications; modernization; media studies; presentism



Download the audio file here: <https://doi.org/10.16997/wpcc.254.s1>

Competing Interests

The author has no competing interests to declare.

Author Information

From 1971 Kaarle Nordenstreng has worked as Professor of Journalism and Mass Communication, at the University of Tampere with visiting professorships undertaken at numerous universities including those of Maryland, Minnesota and Texas at Austin. He is the author or editor of over 30 books including the co-authored *Normative Theories of the Media: Journalism in Democratic Societies* (2009), winner of the Frank Luther Mott-Kappa Tau Alpha Research Award for best research-based book on journalism/mass communication (2010) and more recently the edited books (with Daya Thussu) *Mapping BRICS Media* (2015) and (with Richard C. Vincent) *Towards Equity in Global Communication* (2016).

Note

The contributor's original powerpoint presentation (Nordenstreng, 2015) may be viewed as a PDF. See below.

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How to cite this article: Nordenstreng, K. (2017). Media and Communication as a Field of Research. *Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture*, 12(1), 40–42, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.16997/wpcc.254>

Submitted: 15 December 2016 **Accepted:** 15 December 2016 **Published:** 30 January 2017

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