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Publishing of media and communication research in Finland and in other Nordic countries

Media and communication research is a multidisciplinary research field. In the 1970s, when the Nordic Council of Ministers decided to establish Nordicom, Nordic Information Centre for Media and Communication Research¹, this research field was still in its infancy in Nordic countries. The need for the documentation and information centre was explained by reasoning that information cooperation in media research would improve contacts between separate media researchers in various departments in the Nordic countries. Moreover, it was argued that the Nordic countries together constitute an interesting research field for comparative studies and even research results gained from separate studies would be comparable enough. (Carlsson 2007:280; Schröder 2002:576-577).

Nordicom has operated a literature reference database (NCOM) since 1975. Information specialists (earlier called documentalists) locating in five national divisions have registered research literature published in their own country and also research literature published abroad by Nordic scholars, as well as research literature concerning Nordic media published by foreign researchers. The core field of the NCOM database has been media research, but more and more communication research in general has been taken in.

At the moment, there are two literature databases, the old NCOM database covering approximately the years 1975-2006 and the new NCOM database covering years since 2006/2007. Unfortunately, it has not been financially possible to convert references from the old database to the new database. Both databases are available on the Internet (www.nordicom.gu.se).

The following analyses lean on the options the literature databases and their user interfaces give to an information specialist.

Language of the publications

The new NCOM database allows language distribution analysis. As Table 1 shows, national languages still rule in the publishing of media and com-

munication research in the Nordic countries, but English is very strongly gaining ground. My previous analysis that covered Finnish publishing in 2002 only, proved that the share of English language publishing was 20 percent (Poteri 2004:2). This time the share of English language had increased to 44 percent in Finnish publications. The share of national languages would be some what higher if master's theses that regularly are written in national languages were still included in the database. The registration of master's theses ended at the beginning of the 2000s.

Table 1. Publishing languages, 2007-2009. (Aggregated 12/01/2010 from the new NCOM database)

	National language (only Finnish in Finland)	Other Nordic languages	English	Other languages/ Multilingual	All
Denmark	1197 (56.4 %)	11	878 (41.4 %)	35	2121
Finland	502 (51.4 %)	36	432 (44.2 %)	7	977
Norway	295 (48.4 %)	10	302 (49.6 %)	2	609
Sweden	274 (41.5 %)	13	370 (56 %)	4	661
	2268 (52 %)	70 (1,5 %)	1982 (45.3%)	48 (1 %)	4368 (100 %)

In general, there are not very dramatic differences between the country profiles, and the emerging differences can be explained by the different publishing structures (see Table 2 in the next chapter) and also by the use of technical tools used in registration in Denmark.

Publication types

Media and communication researchers publish more and more in article format. (See Table 2.) The share of monographs and anthologies together constitutes only 10.6 percent of all publications. When doctoral and other theses are included, the share is 16.6 percent. However, that is less than the share of scientific journal articles (17.7 percent) or articles in scientific ant-

hologies (30.2 percent). Recent Finnish survey claimed that monographs and edited books are still the most common type of publication in social sciences and humanities (Puuska & Miettinen 2008:37-38). According to this analysis, this claim doesn't seem to apply to media and communication research.

Table 2. Publication types 2007-2009. (Aggregated 12/01/2010 from the new NCOM database)

	Denmark	Finland	Norway	Sweden	All
Articles in scientific journals	345 (16.2 %)	199 (20.4 %)	143 (23.5 %)	85 (12.8 %)	772 (17.7 %)
Articles in scientific anthologies	445 (21 %)	414 (42.4 %)	164 (26.9 %)	300 (45.3 %)	1323 (30.2 %)
Research monographs	40 (1.9 %)	55 (5.6 %)	21 (3.4 %)	34 (5.1 %)	150 (3.4 %)
Doctoral and licentiate theses	60 (2.8 %)	64 (6.5 %)	37 (6 %)	81 (12.2 %)	242 (5.5 %)
Anthologies (edited)	137 (6.5 %)	58 (5.9 %)	58 (9.5 %)	63 (9.5 %)	316 (7.2 %)
Text books, popular publications	433 (20.4 %)	17 (1.7 %)	10 (1.6 %)	4 (0.6 %)	464 (10.6 %)
Conference papers	257 (12.1 %)	156 (16 %)	174 (28.6 %)	87 (13.2 %)	674 (15.4 %)
Other	404 (19 %)	14 (1.4 %)	2 (0.3 %)	7 (1 %)	427 (9.8 %)
All	2121 (100 %)	977 (100 %)	609 (100 %)	661 (100 %)	4368

Scholars have increasingly taken into account the system of peer-reviewed journals and journal impact-factors in media and communication studies. Ulla Carlsson, as the editor of Nordicom's scientific journals, noticed these desires early on and improved the formal status of Nordicom journals. Moreover, she has been an active participant in discussions on Open Access publishing (for example Carlsson 2005). Nordicom Review has been peer-reviewed and available free of charge on the Internet since the early 2000's.

In this analysis, it was not possible to count separately the shares of electronic publishing or Open Access publishing. Nordic media and communication research publications are rather well available electronically, especially dissertations, journal articles and conference papers.

Denmark seems to have a different publishing profile from other Nordic countries. The reason for that is mostly technical: the Danish Nordicom officer locates media research publications from the national research archive by using an automatic harvesting tool. This utility is offered at the moment only in Denmark. Other Nordicom officers register publications more or less manually. The bigger quantity of publications and especially bigger quantity of popular publications in Denmark is a consequence of this technical solution.

Statistical overview of research content

The NCOM literature database (the old database) offers a tempting opportunity to analyse the contents of media and communication research all through the years. The following statistical tables are based on keyword searches in the old NCOM database. However, the question is how much do the results tell about Nordic media and communication research and how much do they tell about the content of the NCOM database? Can we put equal signs between the published research and the content of the database? Are all research fields covered equally in the database? What if keywords have been used differently during the years and by various information specialists? What about human factors, such as information specialists' own favorite topics? Despite the reservations, an experiment was carried out and Tables 3, 4 and 5, as well as, Chart 1 show the results of the keyword analysis.²

**Table 3. Journalism research in Nordic countries 1975-2004
(references in the old NCOM)**

	1975-79	1980-84	1985-89	1990-94	1995-99	2000-04	All years
Denmark	96	132	178	186	142	191	925 (19.7 %)
Finland	50	114	162	249	361	437	1373 (29.3 %)
Norway	71	97	123	256	246	291	1084 (23.1 %)
Sweden	92	154	213	240	293	318	1310 (27.9 %)
All	309 (7.5 %)	497 (9.0 %)	676 (9.4 %)	931 (15.1 %)	1042 (15 %)	1237 (17 %)	4692 (12.6 %)
N=	4129	5488	7183	6147	6913	7296	37 156

Table 3 proves that journalism research has been one of the growing fields in media and communication research. The total amount of media and communication research has also increased. However, the share of journalism research has at any rate increased from 7 percent to 12 percent. The biggest increase has occurred in Finland. Also, a national survey supports the Finnish finding: according to Herkman's (2008:93) analysis, one of the main approaches in media and communication research in Finland is journalism studies, especially if master's theses are excluded.

**Table 4. Television research in Nordic countries 1975-2004
(references in the old NCOM)**

	1975-79	1980-84	1985-89	1990-94	1995-99	2000-04	All years
Denmark	155	322	480	418	323	249	1947 (29.4 %)
Finland	136	144	240	253	294	310	1377 (20.8 %)
Norway	121	195	302	268	323	257	1466 (22.1%)
Sweden	199	329	468	311	309	213	1829 (27.6 %)
All	611 (14.8 %)	990 (18 %)	1490 (20.7 %)	1250 (20.3 %)	1249 (18 %)	1029 (18 %)	6619 (17.8 %)
N=	4129	5488	7183	6147	6913	7296	37 156

According to the statistical overview (Table 4), television studies have been a strong research field, especially in Denmark and in Sweden. One reason for this might be that public broadcasting companies used to conduct and publish a lot user and other kind of studies. Newer statistics might show more decrease in the numbers of television studies.

Table 5. Research on theoretical aspects of media and communication in Nordic countries 1975-2004 (references in the old NCOM)

	1975-79	1980-84	1985-89	1990-94	1995-99	2000-04	All years
Denmark	96	100	133	170	180	180	859 (39.7 %)
Finland	41	72	108	62	101	80	464 (21.4 %)
Norway	23	20	85	112	95	51	386 (17.8 %)
Sweden	25	125	90	67	93	54	454 (21 %)
All	185 (4.5 %)	317 (5.8 %)	416 (5.8 %)	411 (6.9 %)	469 (6.8 %)	365 (5 %)	2163 (5.8 %)
N=	4129	5488	7183	6147	6913	7296	37 156

Theoretical media and communication research has been published mostly in Denmark. Of all theoretical studies almost 40 percent were carried out in Denmark. Remaining 60 percent is divided rather equally between Finland, Sweden and Norway.

Table 6. Research on historical aspects of media and communication in Nordic countries 1975-2004 (references in the old NCOM)

	1975-79	1980-84	1985-89	1990-94	1995-99	2000-04	All years
Denmark	125	217	234	237	262	293	1368 (31.5 %)
Finland	132	227	146	90	196	161	952 (21.9 %)
Norway	66	35	80	170	179	191	721 (16.6 %)
Sweden	79	147	205	173	357	344	1305 (30 %)
	402 (9.7 %)	626 (11.4 %)	665 (9.3 %)	670 (10.9 %)	994 (14.4 %)	989 (13.6 %)	4346 (11.7 %)
N=	4129	5488	7183	6147	6913	7296	37 156

According to Table 6, the field of media and communication history is studied mostly in Denmark, as well as in Sweden. Their combined share is over 60 percent. This can be explained at least partially by huge media history

projects, such as, *Dansk mediehistorie* and periodicals, such as *Presshistorisk årsbok* or *Sylwan* series that do not have their counterparts in Finland or in Norway.

Chart 1. References / years (old NCOM database)

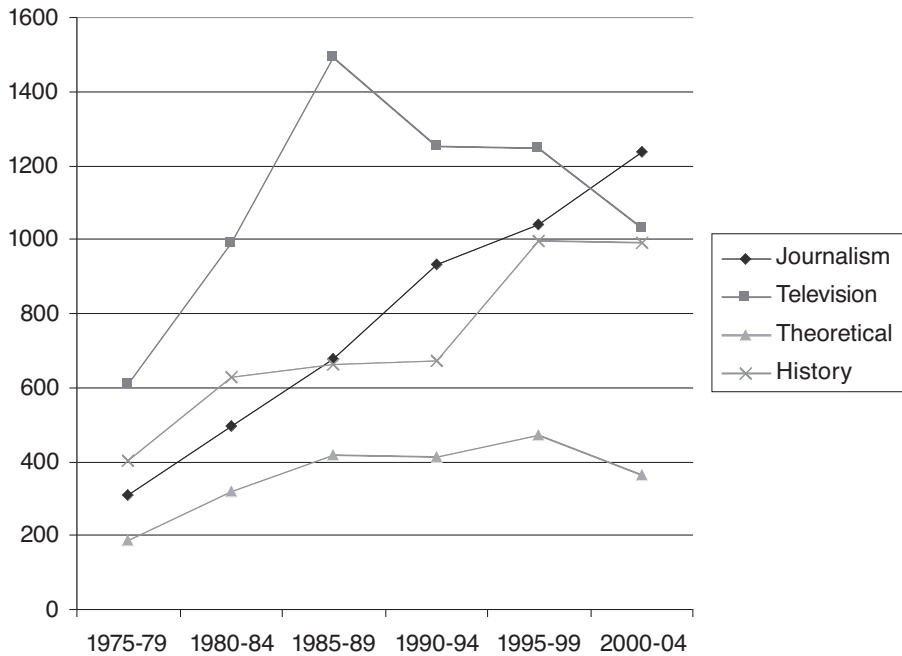


Chart 1 demonstrates the growth of certain topics, such as journalism research, television studies and historical studies in the Nordic countries. We must remember that since the 1970s the whole field of media and communication research has increased significantly, as Nordenstreng (2010) proves. According to Nordenstreng, media and communication studies have expanded perhaps more than any other academic field over the past decades, apart from computer science and biomedicine.

Nordicom has tried to respond to the growth of the research field. The database registration has been expanded as much as staff resources have allowed. Nordicom's own publishing has increased from a quarterly newsletter to two peer-reviewed scientific journals, plus a number of edited books annually. In the 2010s, Nordicom remains a platform for Nordic scholars to introduce their research at home and abroad.

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Notes

- ¹ The name was Nordic Documentation Centre for Mass Communication Research until 1995. Taisto Hujanen, in this book, explores the science political backgrounds that caused the change of the name.
- ² Thanks to Margareta Ekman (acting information specialist 2000-2001) who first had the courage to conduct the analysis of keywords. I have followed her example but I did my own analysis.

NORDEN OCH VÄRLDEN

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