



UPPSALA
UNIVERSITET

Prolegomena to the Study of Media and Communication in the Information Society

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DN, 25. Sep. 2010



DN, 16. Oct. 2010

Media like the Internet have become integral parts of everyday life, politics, and working life



WHAT IS MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION STUDIES?

What is Media/Communication Studies?

Media/communication studies

“seeks to understand the **production, processing and effects of symbol and signal systems** by developing testable theories, containing lawful generalizations, that explain phenomena associated with production, processing and effects” (Berger and Chaffee 1987, 17).

Berger, Charles R. and Steven H. Chaffee. 1987. The study of communication as a science. In *Handbook of communication science*, ed. Charles R. Berger and Steven H. Chaffee, 15-19. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

What is Media/Communication Studies?

Paul F. Lazarsfeld (1941):

administrative communication research

VS.

critical communication research

Critical communication research is concerned with:

- **society as context** of communication
- discusses what the **desirable and undesirable effects** of communication in society are and how the desirable ones can be strengthened

What is Media/Communication Studies?

Vincent **Mosco** (2009, 66);

The **task of Media and Communication Studies** is to

“**decenter the media of communication**” by “investigating its economic, political, and other material constituents.

Decentering the media means **viewing systems of communication as integral to fundamental economic, political, social, and cultural processes in society**“

Media and Communication Studies analyzes the production, communication, diffusion, contexts, conditions, contents, actors, usages, effects, consequences, **problems, power structures, and normative implications of information in society.**



INSTITUTIONEN FÖR INFORMATIK OCH MEDIA

=>

WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP OF MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION STUDIES TO INFORMATICS AND COMPUTER SCIENCE?

Media/Communication Studies & Informatics

Journal of Communication – Special Issues about the Status of Communication Studies

JoC 33 (3) (1983)

JoC 43 (3+4) (1993)

JoC 58 (4) (2008)

media/communication studies as a **fragmented and highly specialized field** that consists of **relatively isolated subfields** and is as a whole isolated from other disciplines

Karl Erik **Rosengren** (1993): “isolated frog ponds“

Robert McChesney (2007, 6) about communication studies: “little of the work commands much interest or attention outside narrow confines of the field“

Michael Pfau
(2008):

introduction to JoC
special issue:
media/
communication
studies has
interdisciplinary
roots and
connections

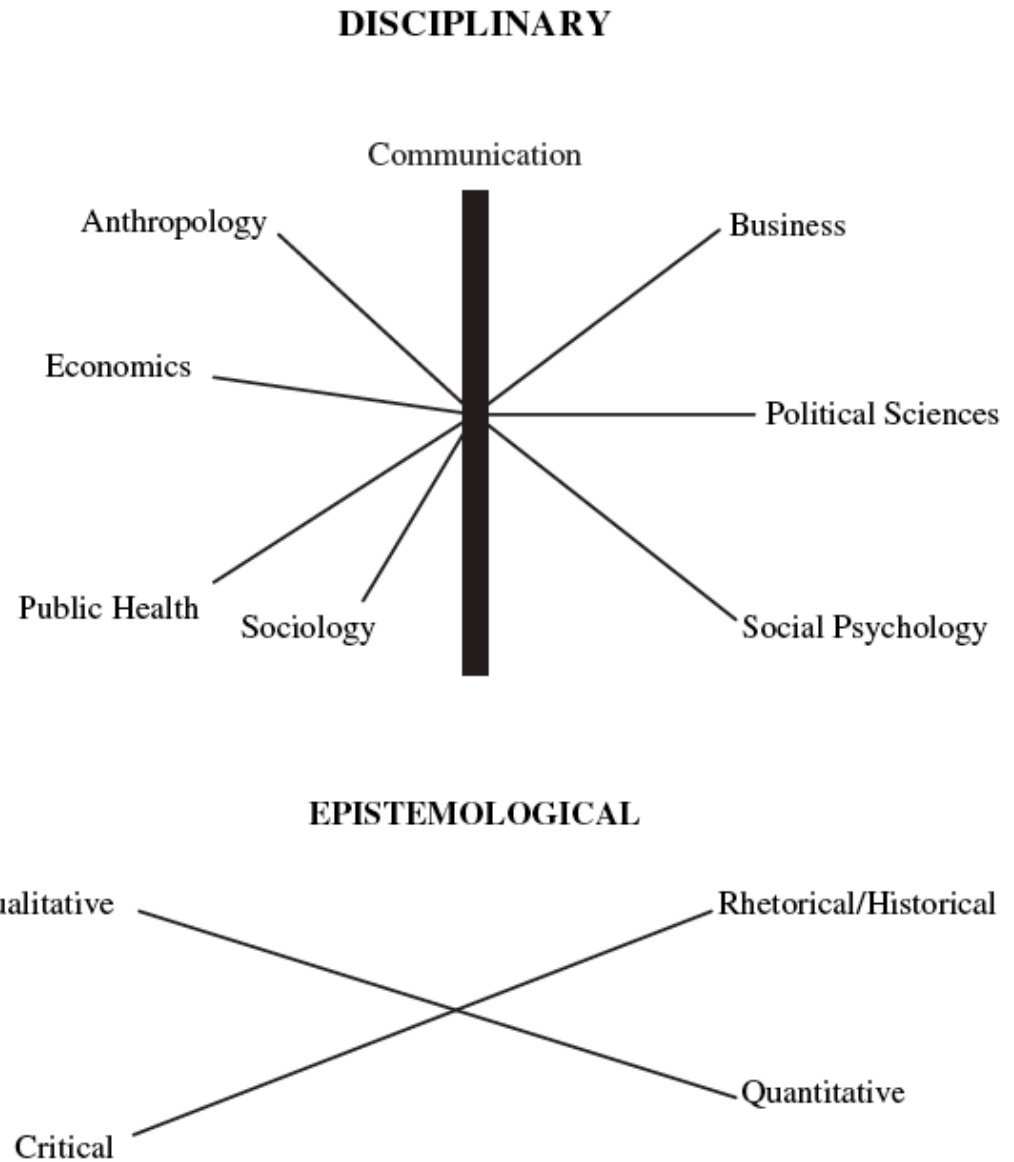
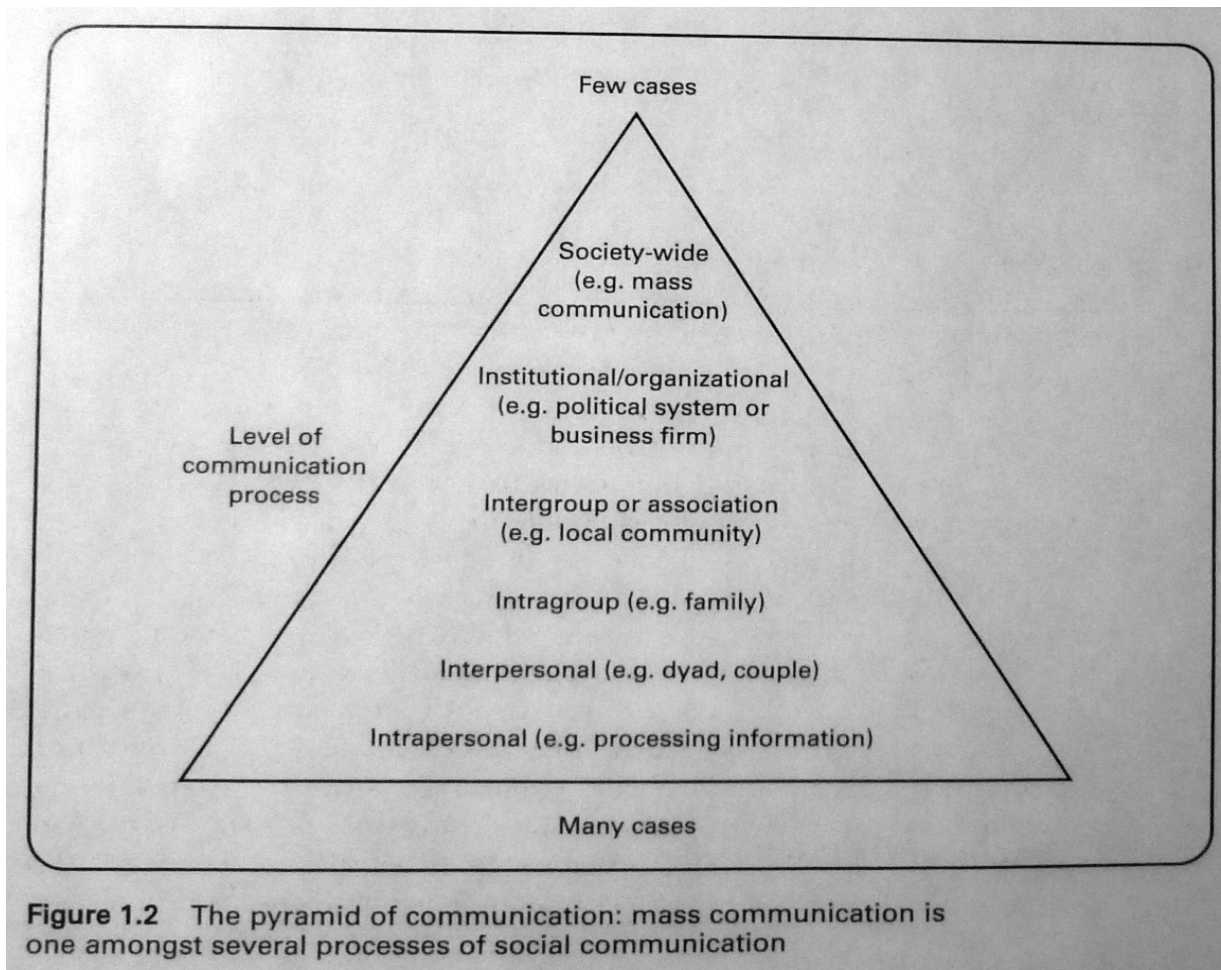


Figure 1 Intersections.

Media/Communication Studies & Informatics

Networked digital technologies like the Internet have become topics of many analyses in Media/Communication Studies.



Denis McQuail
(2008, p. 18)

Media/Communication Studies & Informatics

Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Wikipedia
("WEB 2.0", "SOCIAL MEDIA")

=> mass communication is no longer only the realm of media companies, but **private users produce public information**

Manuel Castells (2009)

web 2.0 = mass self-communication

the divide between private/public-, personal/mass-communication vanishes

Media/Communication Studies & Informatics

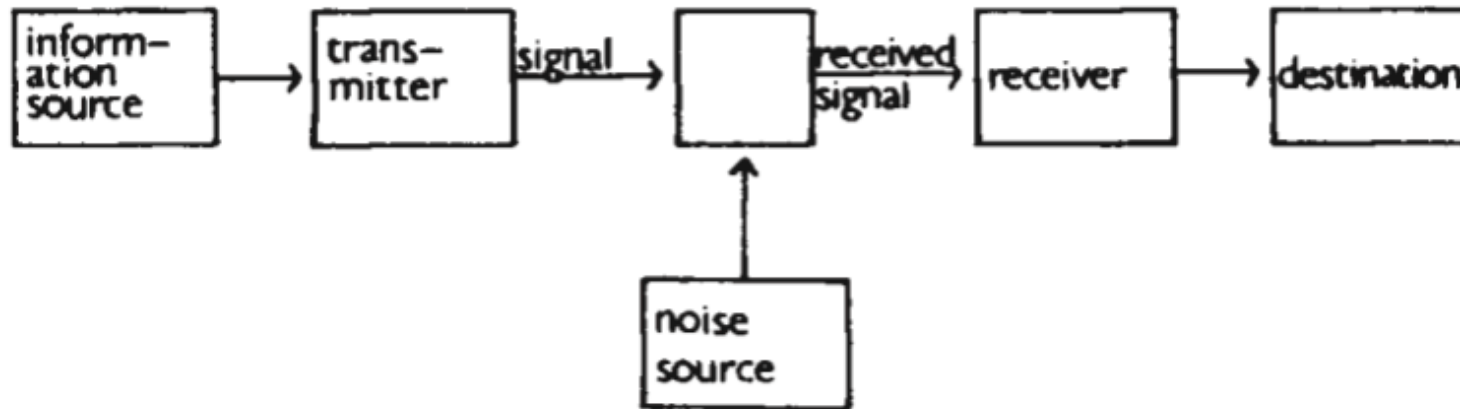


Figure 2 *Shannon and Weaver's model of communication*

Fiske (1990, p. 7)

Media/Communication Studies & Informatics

Facebook, YouTube, Twitter
("WEB 2.0")

=> consumers of information become producers of
information = **PROSUMERS (PRODUCER + CONSUMER)**

Media/Communication Studies & Informatics

Informatics, Computer Science:

increasing acknowledgement that it needs to be studied that **computing is inherently social**:

- * Computing has implications for society (=> information society)
- * The design and usage of computers are social processes
- * Computer/software engineers need social skills
- * Computer scientists have ethical responsibility for the tools they create

=> **Social Informatics**

Media/Communication Studies & Informatics

Social Informatics (SI) is “the **interdisciplinary study of the design, uses, and consequences of ICTs** that takes into account their interaction with institutional and cultural contexts” (Rob Kling et al. 2005, 6).

Gunilla Bradley defines SI as the analysis of “the prerequisites, the applications and the impact of ICT on humans” (Bradley 2006, 72) and the **analysis of the interaction of ”societal factors and information technology”** (Bradley 2001, 34).

Media/Communication Studies & Informatics

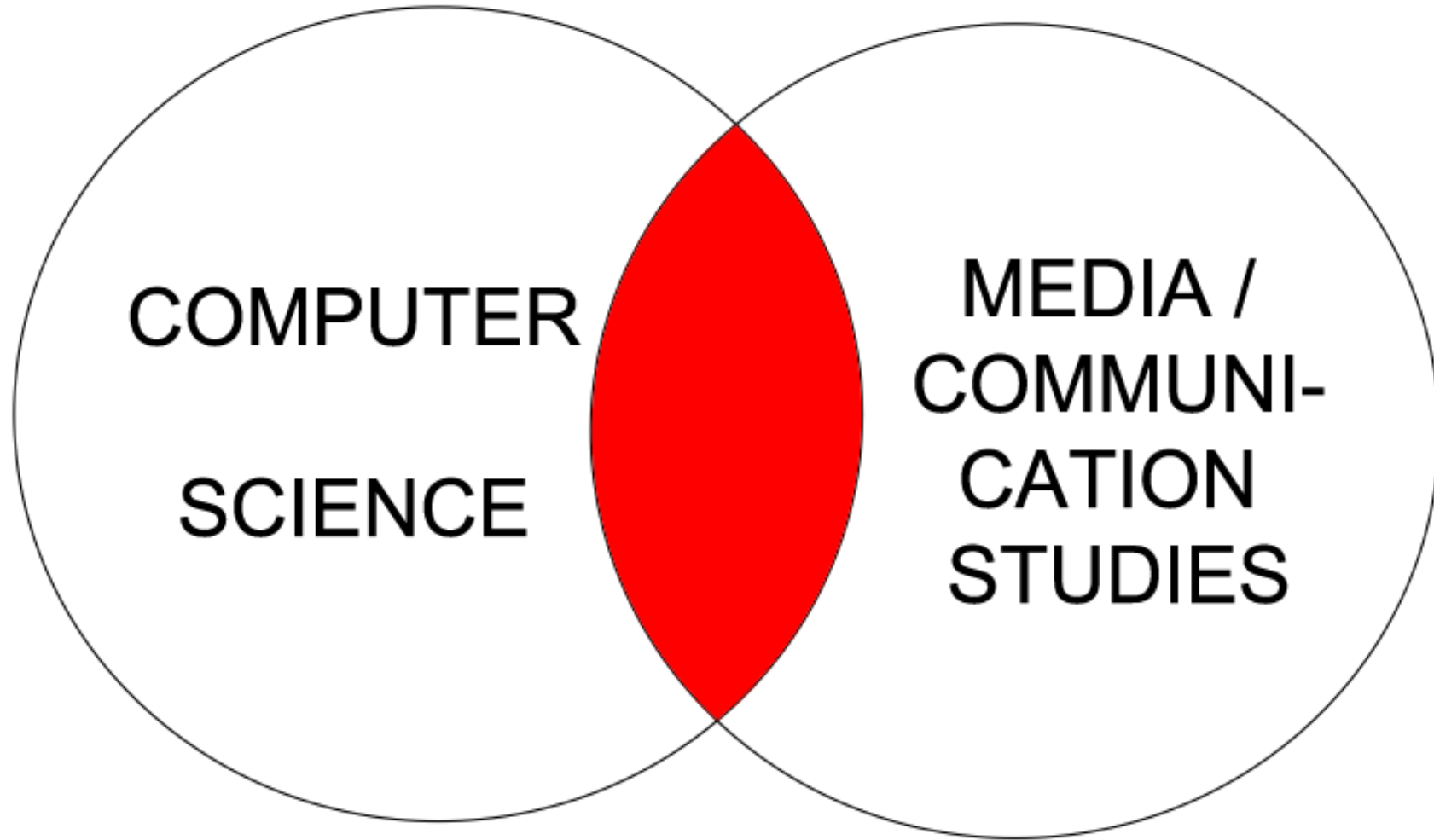
Implications:

Computers and the Internet transform all realms of society, therefore Computer Science is connected to all other sciences

Media/Communication Studies is increasingly interested in Digital Media

=> Studying the context of computing and the Internet is an intersection of Informatics/Computer Science and Media/Communication Studies

=> Media/Communication Studies is a transdisciplinary science.



**Study of Digital Media & Society
(Social Informatics,
Digital Media Studies/Internet Studies)**



WHAT ARE THE MAIN CHALLENGES FOR MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION STUDIES?

Digitization



Digital Media
Social Media

Globalization



Global Media/
Media & Globalization

Global Problems



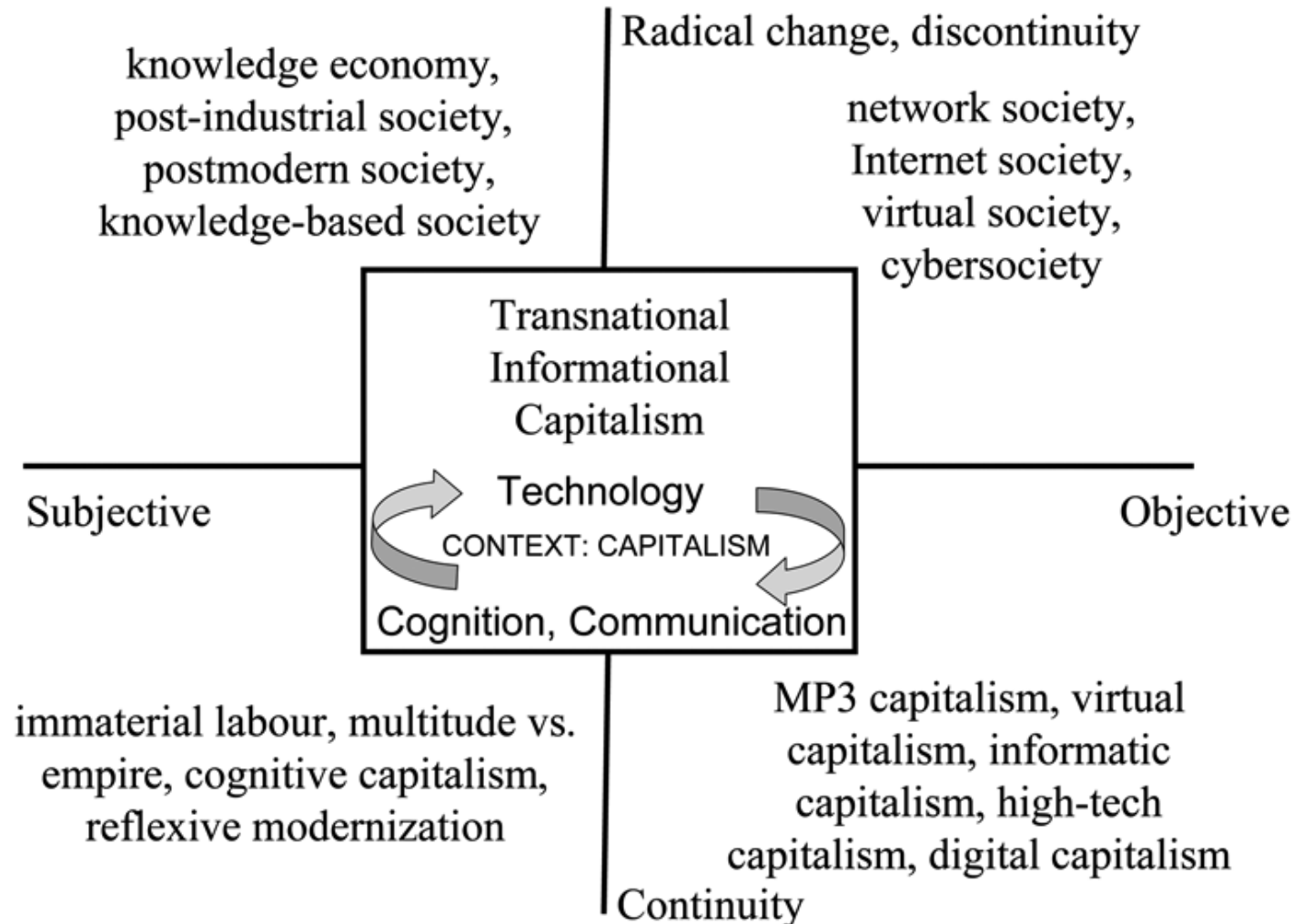
Critical Media/
Communication Studies

= CRITICAL INFORMATION SOCIETY STUDIES

Task:

To elaborate analyses of media and communication that help to advance the establishment of a **global sustainable, participatory information society**

1) INFORMATION SOCIETY THEORY



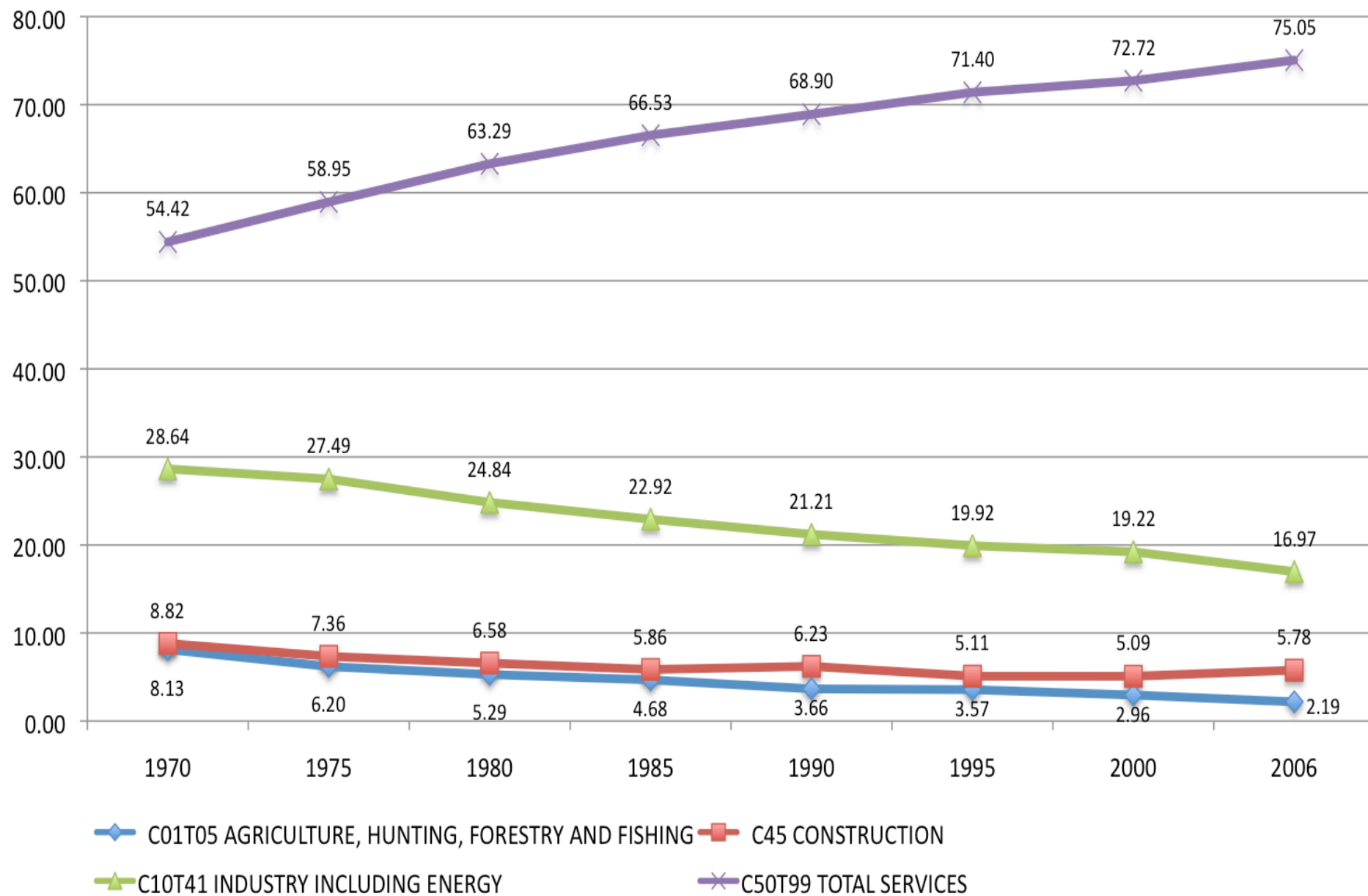
2) INFORMATION SOCIETY MEASUREMENTS

1990s:

Göran Therborn (1995, 76):

“**Sweden** is the only country in the world which has gone from being an **industrial society**, in the sense defined above, to a ‘**knowledge and information society**’, i.e. to having [...] more ‘**professional, technical, and related workers**’ than ‘production and related workers, transport equipment and labourers’”.

Employment Structure in Sweden (in % of total employment, data source: OECD STAN)



Distribution of Value Added in Sweden (in % of total value added at current prices, data source: OECD STAN)



3) INFORMATION SOCIETY ETHICS

Discussing principles of how to achieve a sustainable, participatory information society for all

3) INFORMATION SOCIETY ETHICS

FACEBOOK

42.9% of all Swedes use Facebook (Facebakers, 26-10-2010)

2nd most accessed website in Sweden (after google.se, data source: Alexa, 26-10-2010)

PROBLEMS

- **Complex** and long **privacy policy**
- **Intransparent data collection** and usage
- **Lack of user involvement** in decisions
- **Surveillance and selling of user data** for advertising purposes

3) INFORMATION SOCIETY ETHICS

Solutions?

Alternative Internet platforms

Diaspora

<http://www.joindiaspora.com>

“the privacy aware, personally controlled, do-it-all distributed open source social network”

MEDIA/COMMUNICATION AND POWER

Pirate Bay:

BitTorrent indexing and file sharing search site,
Launched in 2003

Charged for copyright infringement in 2009 in
Stockholm, charges were supported by the International
Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI) with a civic
law claim.

94th most accessed website in the world, 20th most
accessed in Sweden (alexa.com, Nov. 13th, 2010)

Peter Sunde, Fredrik Neij, Gottfrid Svartholm and Carl
Lundström were sentenced to a **fine of 30 million SEK** and
**one year of prison for assistance to copyright
infringement** on April 17th, 2009

MEDIA/COMMUNICATION AND POWER

1) Identification and Analysis of Conflicts and Contradictions

The Internet is a technology of co-operation and sharing.

Information is an intangible good that can be endlessly copied and thereby has multiple ownership.

MEDIA/COMMUNICATION AND POWER

In the **Pirate Bay conflict**, there are **two opposing interests**:

- * **Media companies** wanting to make money from digital content and arguing for **intellectual property rights**.
- * **Media activists** who argue that it is a question of democracy that cultural products should be free for all.

MEDIA/COMMUNICATION AND POWER

20% of all Swedes are filesharers
data source: WII Report 2010

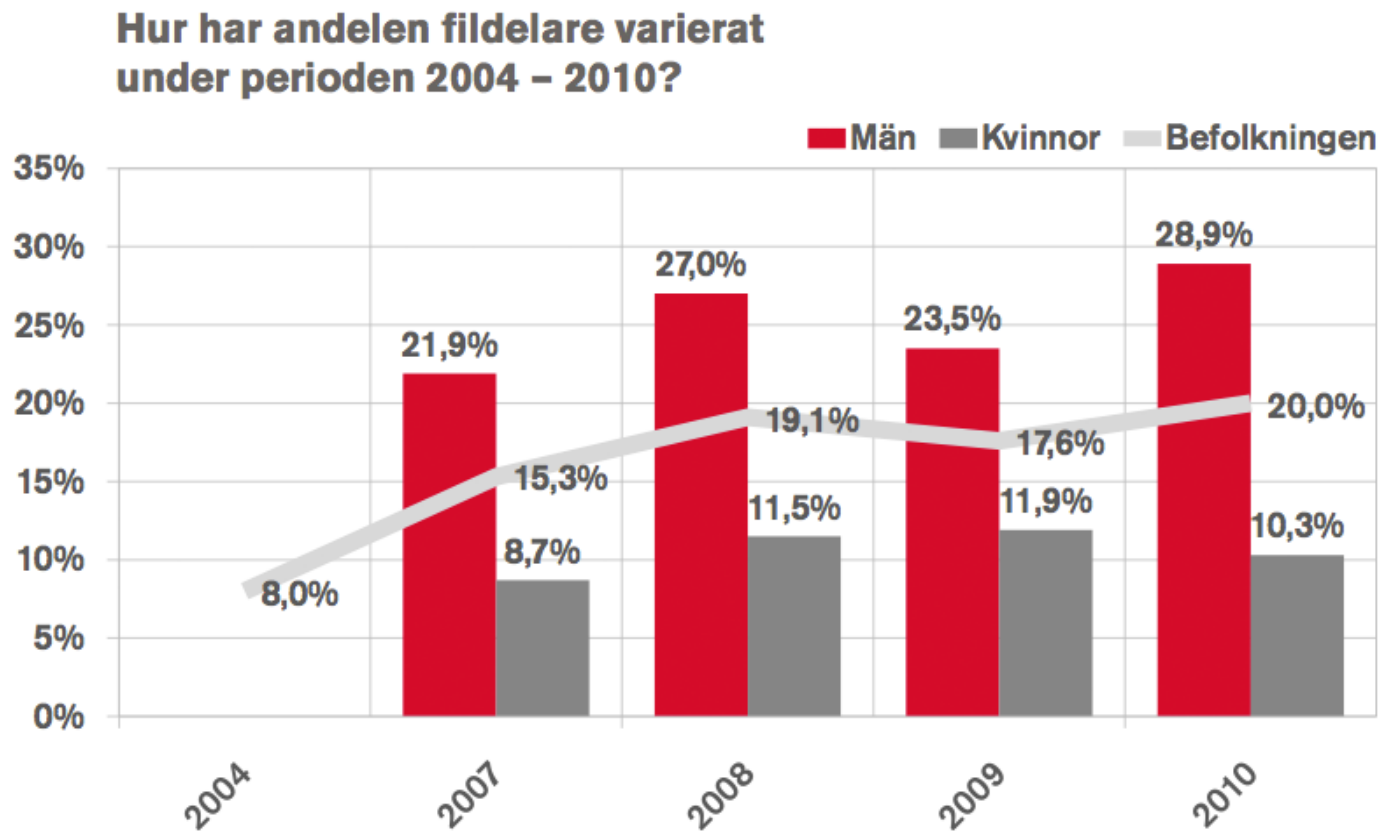


Diagram 7:10 Andel av män och kvinnor i befolkningen (16+ år) som fildelar.

MEDIA/COMMUNICATION AND POWER

72% of all male Internet users aged 16-25 are filesharers
data source: WII Report 2009

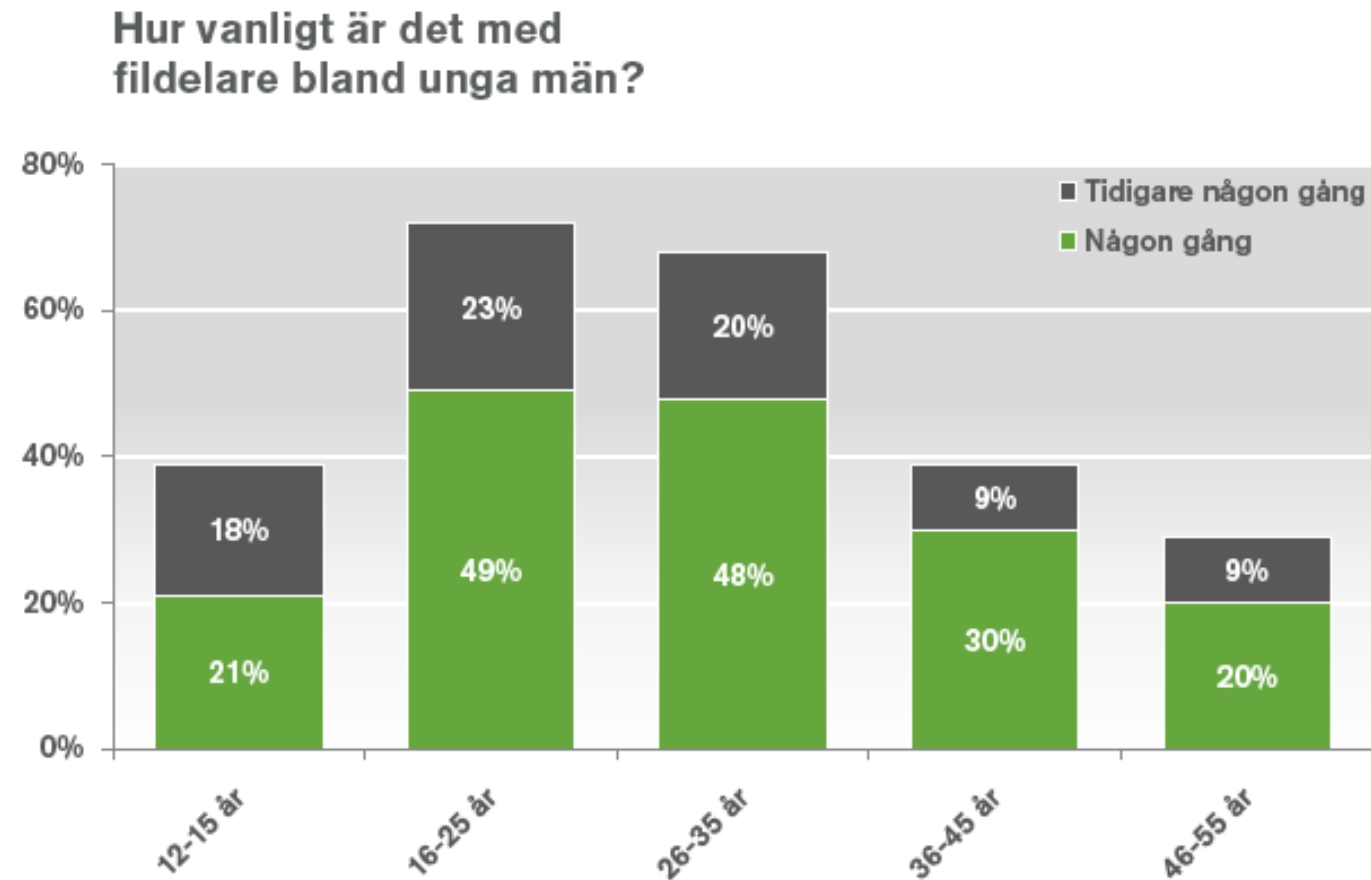
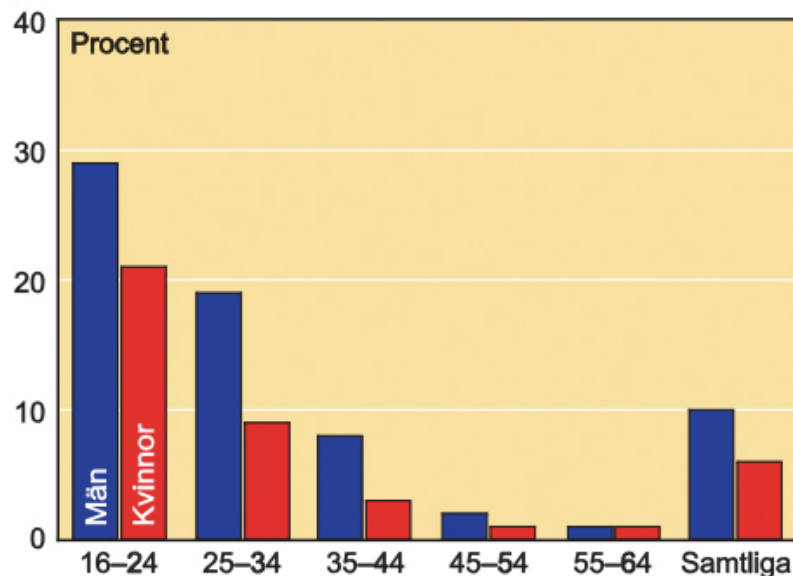


Diagram 9:10 Andelen av manliga Internetanvändare som fildelar eller har fildelat.

MEDIA/COMMUNICATION AND POWER

30% of young males and 20% of young females do not buy CDs, but download music instead

248 Andel personer som i stor utsträckning laddar ner musik istället för att köpa en CD-skiva, 2008
Percentage of persons who have very much replaced buying a CD with downloading music files



Nära 30 procent av männen 16–24 år har valt nedladdning istället för köp av musik. För kvinnor i motsvarande ålder är andelen drygt 20 procent.

Intresset för nedladdning av musik sjunker med stigande ålder vilket klart framgår av diagrammet.



Källa: SCB Privatpersoners användning av datorer och Internet 2008 (www.scb.se/IT0102).

MEDIA/COMMUNICATION AND POWER

Are 72% of young male Internet users and 20% of the Swedish population criminal intellectual property rights infringers that should be punished?

Or do old property rights legislations not match the Internet age?

MEDIA/COMMUNICATION AND POWER

2) Make policy conclusions of analyses

- Legalization of filesharing
- Cultural flat rate
- Bit tax

And what about the artists?

- Basic income guarantee for cultural producers
- Donation models (e.g. Radiohead)
- Royalty payments

CONCLUSION

Media/Communication Studies in the Internet and information age:

It critically analyzes the role of media and communication in the information society,

It employs theory, empirical research methods, and ethical reasoning.

It wants to contribute to the establishment of a sustainable participatory information society for all.

