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1 Introduction

Canada has had greater historical impact in the field of communication studies than a country of its economic and political stature would indicate. Canadian scholars pioneered sub fields such as the political economy of communication (Dallas Smythe, William Melody, Vincent Mosco) and medium theory (Harold Innis, Marshall McLuhan). Canada has also played an oversized position in the historical development of communication technologies, from the telephone (Scottish-Canadian Alexander Graham Bell), wireless technologies (Reginald Fessenden), to plug-in radios (Ted Rogers). Canada's overall impression in communications seems disproportionate to its generally quiet place in the global power dynamic. The first episode of the UK's Monty Python's Flying Circus in 1969 was entitled "Whither Canada?" because the very idea of caring about such a thing seemed perfectly suited to absurdist humour (Kingwell 2018). Nevertheless, that is indeed the question this article seeks to address.

At its core this paper asks: what is Canadian communication studies in 2018? How has communication studies changed in the face of the enormous upheaval in technology and growth of communication studies departments across Canada in the last two decades? We focus primarily on the last two decades as there has been little reflection on the field in Canada since a series of studies between 1999 and 2001. We wish to revive this self-rumination and look at how Canadian communication

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scholarship has evolved with the social, economic and political disruptions of the internet era.

Much of Canada's concern with communication is undoubtedly the product of its expansive geography and the enormous cultural impact of its immediate southern neighbour. Mexico may also share a border with the United States but it has always had the cultural protection of the Spanish language; English speaking Canada has no such media buffer. A key conceptual moment in the history of national broadcasting in Canada is a 1932 speech before a parliamentary committee on broadcasting by public radio advocate Graham Spry, where regarding the future of public radio in Canada he affirmed "The question is the state or the United States" (Nash 1994, p. 85). This foundational element in Canadian media, the role of government and policy, is clearly reflected in the nation's communications scholarship. The study of communications in Canada is also characterized by efforts to distance itself from the U.S. approach. In the literature, a rule of thumb for Canadians comparing the two countries seems to be that American communication scholarship is characterized by being "predominantly administrative in its orientation" (Lorimer 2000) while it is readily understood that Canada has "a penchant for political economic analysis" (Babe 2000, p. 32). As Michael Dorland noted in 2002 "American university communication programs were more closely linked to the growth of American media industries, whereas in Canada, university programs were more closely linked to the growth of the public policy agenda" (Dorland 2002, p. 50). This pronounced dichotomy between a more critical political economy and policy-based Canadian school as opposed to the administrative American approach remains a central point for many Canadian scholars. According to former Canadian Communication Association president Sheryl Hamilton "Canadian communication thought is unique (i.e., non-American) because it is critical" (Hamilton 2014, p. 17). Graham Spry's 1932 quip before the parliamentary committee has echoed for decades across Canadian communication scholarship.

The continued truth of this foundational belief of Canadian communication scholarship is difficult to assess with accuracy. The Canadian community in 2018 is as diverse in background and belief as it is in geography. Any earlier sense of "Canadian identity" in this field was largely the product of an era with few communication studies departments across the country and a scholarly cannon that was still taking shape. The key players involved did not really reflect the sweeping ethnic diversity that came to define the post 1970s Canadian experience. Also, when studying Canadian communications, or its scholarship, one must always be cognisant of the very different experience of French Canada, which does not worry as much about American intrusions as it does the loss of French culture within Canada. French Canada supports much of its homegrown media industry in ways that English Canada simply does not match. There are clear cultural insecurities that come to the fore regarding English Canada's lack of cohesive identity and the place of national communication. In 2001 David Taras offered the following insight of the centrality of communication to the Canadian experience: "sharing a border with the largest economic, military, and entertainment power on the planet, plagued by deep linguistic and regional differences, and having undergone a series of painful national unity and constitutional

crises in recent history, Canada must depend on its media system to be a cultural and information lifeline in a way that other countries need not" (Taras 2001, p. 4).

At the structural level, Canadian media borrows heavily from the American commercial model while reflecting some of its colonial heritage via the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), a prominent public broadcaster modeled after the BBC. For some scholars, Canada's reliance on American mass media, specifically in English Canada, created a system of dependency that has stifled the development of a truly unique nation (Grant 2005; Smythe 1981). Others thought that Canada had managed to navigate a distinctive path despite facing enormous economic and cultural pressures (Peers 1969). Reflecting on the changing global media landscape in 1990, UK scholar Richard Collins noted that "broadcasting across the world is being 'Canadianized'" (Collins 1990, p. 337). According to Collins, to be "Canadianized" meant that previously clearly defined national borders are increasingly porous to foreign-based media and nation states are being asked to reflect a progressively diverse citizenry in their broadcasting systems, both public and private. For Collins, the Canadian model offered a blueprint for modern states.

Canada's unique public/private broadcasting hybrid has endured since the 1930's but, as with many countries, this established media dynamic is under increased pressure, leaving governments with more questions than answers. A regular policy response has been to commission major studies that offer extensive recommendations that, more often than not, do not result in action of any consequence (Canada 2006; Canada. Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage 2003). During the period of writing for this article, 2018, the Canadian government is in the process of conducting two formal reviews of both the Broadcasting Act and the Telecommunications Act.

Canada does not spend a great deal of mental energy debating whether communication studies is a discipline or a field. By as early as 1980, the discipline/field of study debate was already well-trodden academic territory. In a preface to a 1980 collection entitled, plainly enough, "Communication studies in Canada", Canadian Communication Association inaugural President Gaëtan Tremblay discusses what he calls the "Vieux debat (old debate)—Les communications: discipline ou champ d'etudes (field of study)?" (in Salter 1981, p. vii). In 1998, Gertrude Robinson simply referenced communication studies as an "interdiscipline" (Robinson 1998).

This paper explores and builds upon past reflections on the field of communication studies in Canada and also offers something unique in the study of this interdiscipline. Drawing upon the seemingly eternal Canadian dialectic between time and space, this paper includes an empirical element designed to illuminate the changing look of Canadian communication studies over time by asking past presidents of the Canadian Communication Association to reflect on what they viewed as the strengthened and diminished areas of the field during their tenure as presidents. All nine CCA presidents since 1999 participated in this study.[1] The CCA president is a position not directly engaged in any one department but has a unique vantage point over the field in Canada and plays a central role in organizing the annual academic conference which showcases much of the most recent communication

[1] One past CCA president has unfortunately passed away.

studies research. To complement this historical arc, we also requested participation in a survey from current department heads in communication studies departments across the country, to evaluate their department's primary areas of focus in a range of topics that currently inform the interdisciplinary nature of this field. The CCA presidents offer a view of the changing nature of the field over almost 20 years, while the current department heads offer a snapshot of Canadian communication studies in 2018.

In 1987, Liora Salter believed that it was appropriate to reflect on the development of Canadian communication studies, as there had not really been a proper analysis for seven years (Salter 1987). This observation came before a wave of articles, books and presentations on Canadian communication studies that occurred between 1999–2000. Since then, despite numerous turns and twists across the various disciplines that inform communication studies, not to mention technological leaps that would have seemed unfathomable at the time to these authors, we seem to have discarded the spirit of introspection that we witnessed nearly 20 years ago. This paper seeks to revive this tradition and add to the established literature by exploring the trajectory of Canadian communication studies over the past two decades and assessing the current state of the field. It also explores the prominent place of communication in Canadian history and the academic foundation of this interdiscipline.

2 Communication and Canadian History

There is little debate about the centrality of communication in the development of the Canadian nation. Communication has historically been viewed as more than technology; it is a key part of a wider nation-building project. In reflecting on radio and the emerging medium of television, a federal 1966 White Paper on Broadcasting noted "Broadcasting may well be regarded as the central nervous system of Canadian nationhood" (Babe 1990, p. 5). A key policy illustration of the centrality of communication to the Canadian experience is that in 2018 Canada maintains strict foreign ownership restrictions on broadcasters, distributors, and telecommunications operators and uses content quotas to ensure space for Canadian productions in the national mass media. Even privately-owned broadcasters and telecommunications operators routinely drape themselves in nationalist rhetoric when discussing their industry before the Canadian government, hoping this approach will curry favour with politicians and regulators. In 1970 CRTC Vice Chair Harry Boyle said in a speech that "Canada is a country that exists by reason of communication" (Barney 2005, p. 71). This idea of communication and nationhood is a century old and gained momentum post 1967, the year of Canada's centennial, an era viewed as strongly culturally nationalist, as the country sought to assert its independence from the U.S. as well as its colonial British past. The expansion of the communication system was, and is, often viewed in the same nationalistic lens. A federal Department of Communications was launched in 1969 and one of its early ministers, Gerard Pelletier noted in a 1973 speech "The existence of Canada as a political and social entity has always been heavily dependent upon effective systems of east/west communications" (Babe

1990, p. 5). Communication has been repeatedly cited as the irreplaceable binding element for a country that contains the second largest land mass in the world.

Communication studies in Canada has long grappled with the unique challenges faced by new technological developments but not always with the same sense of nationalistic fervour as Canada's federal government. In 1965, Canadian philosopher George Grant published *Lament For A Nation: the Defeat of Canadian Nationalism* which concluded "Canada has ceased to be a nation" (Grant 2005, p. 85) and placed the blame, at least partially, at the feet of an increasingly privatized broadcasting system, the purpose of which "is to make money, and the easiest way to do this is to import canned American programs appealing to the lowest common denominator of the audience" (Grant 2005, p. 20). At the same time as the crest of Canada's period of cultural nationalism, other critical academic voices such as Dallas Smythe argued that, despite the nationalistic hoopla, the truth of the matter was that Canada had become economically and culturally submissive to the United States. In an approach that became known as dependency theory, Smythe pessimistically concluded that "It seems to be impossible to liberate Canada from the domination of the United States so long as the present ruling class in Canada remains in power" (Smythe 1981, p. 291), and for Smythe "Control of the means of communications is the basis of political power" (Smythe 1981, p. 299). Dependency theory certainly gained academic acceptance to the point where UK scholar Richard Collins observed in 1990 that "arguments such as these now form the dominant paradigm in Canadian communication studies" (Collins 1990, p. 169).

Other critical communication studies voices challenged the celebration of the nation-building powers of communication technologies without necessarily tying this to dependency theory. In a highly cited 1986 article entitled *Technological Nationalism,* Maurice Charland writes "Canada is a technological state. This is just to say that Canada's existence as an economic unit is predicated upon transportation and communication technology. In addition, the idea of Canada depends upon a rhetoric about technology" (Charland 1986, p. 199). Far from celebrating Canada's strong ties to modern technology, Charland argues "... the rhetoric of technological nationalism is insidious, for it ties a Canadian identity, not to its people, but to their mediation through technology" (Charland 1986, p. 196). Charland believes that English-speaking Canada has little by way of a collective voice, only communication systems that enrich the few. Likewise, Darin Barney speaks against technological nationalism as "a form of nationalism that has historically served the interests of industrial capitalism and continental assimilation more directly than it has served Canadian democracy" (Barney 2005, p. 103).

The critical element within Canadian communication scholarship, which many believe to be an identifiable national trait, has consistently demonstrated a willingness to challenge the prevailing hegemony of the era. Still, some Canadian scholars were more optimistic than many of their colleagues in their take on Canadian communications. In 1969, historian Frank Peers wrote "A unique Canadian system of broadcasting endures. It reflects values different from those prevailing in the British or American systems. It not only mirrors the Canadian experience, but helps define it" (Peers 1969, p. 3). Likewise, key early scholarship in communication studies

drew from Canada's geography and proximity to American popular culture to create an original, still contentious approach to the study of mass media.

3 The Toronto School

The most internationally known Canadian communication scholarship predates the establishment of any university communication studies programs in Canada. What later became known as "The Toronto School" is the product of the work of two faculty members at the University of Toronto in the middle decades of the 20th century: Harold Innis and Marshall McLuhan.

Innis was a "first generation communication theorist" (Babe 2000, p. 33) whose early work focused upon Canadian economic history including *A History of the Canadian Pacific Railway* (1923), *The Fur Trade in Canada* (1930) and *The Cod Fisheries* (1940). Innis emphasized a clear division in Canada between the economic centres, largely in the east (Montreal, Toronto) and the periphery (Babe 2008). One of Innis' most enduring theories distinguishes between the separate effects of time-binding and space-binding media. According to Innis' theory, time-binding media favour stability, community, and tradition; while space-binding media facilitate materialism, and empire.

For McLuhan, who cited Innis as a mentor and wrote an introduction to a reprint of Innis' *Bias of Communication* in 1964, media were extensions of the human body, as developed in his most widely known work *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (1964). McLuhan's unorthodox theories gained a wide degree of public recognition in the 1960s and 70s. Expressions like "global village" (from *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, 1962) and "the medium is the message" (*Understanding Media*, 1964) achieved a high level of recognition, if not full understanding, with the general public. In the 1960s and 70s, the University of Toronto professor became the focus of the very mass media analyzed in his theories. McLuhan was the subject of a widely-viewed interview on the popular American television news show *60 Minutes*, and the question "Marshall McLuhan, what are you doin'?" became a tag line on the popular TV show *Rowan and Martin's Laugh-In*, one of the most popular weekly comedies of the early 1970s. McLuhan had a notable cameo as himself in the 1977 Woody Allen film *Annie Hall*—a clip that lives in YouTube infamy in communication studies classes around the world.

Among the scholarly community, McLuhan and Innis became viewed as technologically determinist. Michael Dorland notes that "in Canada, McLuhan was rapidly drummed out of the academy's worldview as unworthy of serious consideration" (Dorland 2002, p. 49). Among those who led the charge against McLuhan were American scholar James Carey and UK media theorist Raymond Williams. Carey posed an early challenge to McLuhan, arguing that McLuhan's work exaggerated the role of technology and ignored individual agency. Carey wrote in 1967: "McLuhan argues that the effect of the media on sensory organization is automatic, without resistance, subliminal … McLuhan's parable on the restorative powers of the media in expanding the consciousness of man is one more myth, one more illusion by which men can organize their lives" (Carey 1967, pp. 37–38). Williams viewed

McLuhan was more of a passing fad than an academic pioneer, writing in his seminal book *Television*, "The particular rhetoric of McLuhan's theory of communications is unlikely to last long" (Williams 1975, p. 131).

Williams' prophesy proved only partially accurate. Despite falling out of academic favour in the 1980s, McLuhan's stature rose again posthumously in the late 1990s amid the growth of new digital communications. In 2011, Canada's national newspaper, the Globe and Mail, heralded "The Return of Marshall McLuhan" (Valpy 2011). The popular technology journal *Wired Magazine* dubbed him "Saint Marshall" and quoted him in its premier issue. It is easy to see the connection. Decades before the rise of the internet, McLuhan foresaw the potential power of early computing technologies. In 1966, McLuhan wrote: "The computer is able to take over the whole mechanical age. Everything that was done under mechanical conditions can be computerized with relative ease, and that includes our educational system" (McLuhan and Zingrone 1995, p. 295). Innis and McLuhan remain controversial and continue to cast an academic shadow in Canada and abroad.

4 The Birth of the Academic Field

Though early academic work was conducted at the University of Toronto, the birth of actual programs began in Montreal. The first college-level department devoted to communication studies was established in 1965 by John J. O'Brien, a Jesuit scholar at Montreal's Loyola College. Loyola College became part of Concordia University in 1975 and O'Brien went on to become head of communications for the Vatican (Dorland in Attallah and Shade 2002, p. 51). In its early development, communication studies in Quebec was closely tied to both the provincial state and the growing provincial media industry. Though this tie continues in communication studies in Quebec, Lacroix and Lesvesque note a turn to more critical forms of communication studies in the 1980s (Lacroix and Levesque 1985, p. 19). This view is supported by a 2014 special issue of the *Canadian Journal of Communication* on "The Francophone School of Communication and Information" which notes the "manifestly critical orientation" of the contributors to the issue (George 2014, p. 7).

From beginnings in Quebec, the growth of communications programs spread across Canada. Other early programs included those at the University of Windsor in Ontario and the French language program at the Université du Québec à Montréal which began in 1970. In some cases, this growth was reflected in the development of new programs at recently established universities, as the 1960s saw the creation of a number of new institutions of higher learning across the country. For example, the University of Calgary in Alberta, founded in 1966, launched its communications program in 1982, and Simon Fraser University in British Columbia (founded in 1965) began its program in 1975.

However, these schools of communication were often like isolated islands. They developed across the country due to necessity, as the nearest school offering a program could be quite distant, and the local need was important. This relative isolation meant that the various programs could operate with a degree of autonomy. One of the few sources of connection was the various government commissions and

departments with which Canadian academics interacted. Key events included the publication of the report by the Davey Commission (Special Senate Committee on Mass Media 1970), the formation of the Task Force on Government Information by the Trudeau government in 1968, and the expansion of the Canadian Radio and Television Commission (CRTC) to the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission in 1975 (Osler in Tate 2000). Each of these events precipitated much academic comment on the changes, and were crucial in drawing the academic field together, even if scholars in the field were not directly invited to the table on matters of policy or political economy.

For Canadian communication studies, key points of its historical development included the establishment of the Canadian Communication Association in 1980 and its annual conference as gatherings for scholarship in the country. In 1974, Earle and Gisele Beattie founded the magazine *Media Probe,* which later changed its name to the *Canadian Journal of Communication* and became the Canadian peer-reviewed academic journal of record for communication studies scholars within Canada and abroad. According to Eugene Tate in 2000 "The *Canadian Journal of Communication* and the Canadian Communication Association provided the vehicles necessary for the growth of the discipline" (Tate 2000).

At the turn of this century, despite a relatively brief academic lifespan, the study of the development of Canadian communication studies received substantial academic discussion. The field was certainly in a reflective mood in the millennial year. Academic articles, keynote talks and a key book all explored the place of communication studies in Canadian academia. In 2000, the *Canadian Journal of Communication* dedicated an entire issue to the history of Canadian communication studies. Arthur Seigel, Gregory Fouts, Adam Osler, Robert Babe, and Rowland Lorimer reflected on the growth of the field in Canada. The same issue published Gertrude Robinson's 1999 CCA keynote talk entitled "Remembering Our Past: Reconstructing the Field of Canadian Communication Studies" (Robinson 2000). It was also in 2000 that Robert Babe published his seminal book *Canadian Communication Thought* in which he noted the Canadian communication tradition as having "an abiding concern for democracy and for freedom" (Babe 2000, p. 32). As the new century arrived, Canadian communication studies began to tell its own story.

5 Canadian Communication Studies in the 2000s: key institutions

In 1987, Liora Salter wrote of the difficulties of an uphill battle for resources and legitimation within the university structure (Salter 1987). The same cannot be said in 2018. Communication studies programs have proliferated across the country, though their names may vary. Table 1 outlines the programs in universities across Canada. It includes only universities that offer degrees in communication studies; it does not include universities that offer communications as a minor. The list demonstrates that a large portion of the programs are in the traditional political and economic centres of Ontario and Quebec but there has been growth in the west, in particular the provinces of Alberta and British Columbia.

Table 1 Canadian Communication Studies Programs in 2018. (Source: Canadian Communication Association 2018; Dorland 2002)

Province	University	City	Faculty	Degrees Offered
Alberta	Athabasca University	Athabasca	Humanities & Social Sciences	BPA-CS
Alberta	MacEwan University	Edmonton	Fine Arts and Communications	BA
Alberta	University of Alberta	Edmonton	Extension	MA
Alberta	University of Calgary	Calgary	Arts	BA, MA, PhD
Alberta	Mount Royal University	Calgary	Communication studies	Bachelor of Communication
Alberta	University of Lethbridge	Lethbridge	Fine Arts	BFA-NM, MFA-NM
British Columbia	Royal Roads University	Victoria	Communication and Culture	BA, MA, Graduate Certificate, Doctor of Social Sciences
British Columbia	Simon Fraser University	Vancouver	Applied Science	BA, MA, Graduate Diploma, PhD
British Columbia	University of British Columbia	Vancouver	Arts	BMS
Manitoba	University of Winnipeg	Winnipeg	Arts	BA
New Brunswick	University of New Brunswick	St. John	Arts; Business	BA, BBA
Ontario	Brock University	St. Catharines	Social Sciences	BA
Ontario	Carleton University	Ottawa	Public Affairs and Management	BA, BJ, MA, MJ, PhD
Ontario	Laurentian University	Sudbury	Arts	BA
Ontario	McMaster University	Hamilton	Humanities	BA, MA, MCM, PhD
Ontario	Ryerson University	Toronto	School of Graduate Studies	BJ, MA, PhD
Ontario	Saint-Paul University	Ottawa	Arts	BA
Ontario	University of Toronto	Toronto	Graduate Studies—Faculty of Information Studies	MIS, PhD (in Info Studies)
Ontario	Université de Sudbury	Sudbury	Arts	BA (Journalism)
Ontario	University of Ottawa—Université d'Ottawa	Ottawa	Arts	BA, MA, DESS
Ontario	University of Toronto Scarborough	Scarborough	Arts	BA, Ontario College Certificate
Ontario	University of Windsor	Windsor	Arts and Social Sciences	BA, MA
Ontario	University of Western Ontario	London	Information and Media Studies	BA, MA, PhD
Ontario	Wilfrid Laurier University	Waterloo	Arts	BA, MA

Table 1 (Continued)

Province	University	City	Faculty	Degrees Offered
Ontario	York University	Toronto	Arts	Diploma, BA, MA, PhD
Ontario	University of Ontario Institute of Technology (UOIT)	Oshawa	Social Sciences and Humanities	BA
Ontario	Huntington University	Sudbury	Arts	BA
Québec	Concordia University	Montréal	Arts and Science	BA, BJ, Graduate Diploma, MA, PhD
Québec	McGill University	Montréal	Arts	MA, PhD
Québec	Université de Montréal	Montréal	Arts and Sciences	BSc, MSc, PhD
Québec	Université de Sherbrooke	Sherbrooke	Humanities & Social Sciences	BA, MA
Québec	Université du Québec à Montréal	Montréal	Lettres, langues et communications	BA, BJ, MA, PhD
Québec	Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières	Trois-Rivières	Lettres, langues et communications	BA
Québec	Université Laval	Ville de Québec, Québec	Lettres	BA, MA, Graduate Diploma, DESS, PhD

BA Bachelor of Arts, *MA* Master of Arts, *PhD* Doctor of Philosophy, *BFA-NM* Bachelor of Fine Arts—New Media, *MFA-NM* Master of Fine Arts—New Media, *BMS* Bachelor of Media Studies, *BBA* Bachelor of Business Administration, *BJ* Bachelor of Journalism, *MJ* Master of Journalism, *MCM* Master in Communication Management, *MIS* Master of Information Studies, *DESS* Diplôme d'études supérieures spécialisées, *BSc* Bachelor of Science, *MSc* Master of Science, *BPA-CS* Bachelor of Professional Arts in communication studies

Communication studies in Canada has a solid institutional base beyond the universities that house the programs. There are also a range of scholarly publication venues for communications scholars that showcase recent work and serve as a venue for debate for many current issues (Table 2).

The main organization for communication studies in Canada is the Canadian Communication Association, founded in 1980. There are a number of new or related associations within the larger Congress of the Humanities that used to be under the "umbrella" of a broader communications tent. The Film Studies Association of Canada (FSAC), Canadian Game Studies Association (CGSA), and the Canadian Society for the Study of Rhetoric (CSSR—which also launched in 1980) now host their own annual conferences.

6 Canadian Communication Studies Survey Data

Over the course of several months in 2018, data was collected via an online survey conducted with department heads in approximately 50% of communication studies departments across Canada. All departments were offered the opportunity to participate. The results reinforce a sense of a rapidly expanding field of study, both in terms of student numbers and scope of research and teaching.

Table 2 Academic publications

Canadian Academic Journals for Research in communication studies (descriptions from journal sites)	Website
Canadian Journal of Communication (est. 1974 as Media Probe) "The purview of the journal is the entire field of communication studies as practiced in Canada or with relevance to Canada"	https://www.cjc-online.ca/index.php/journal
Canadian Journal of Film Studies (est. 1990) "Canada's leading academic peer-reviewed film journal ... publishes scholarly articles on film, television, and other audio-visual media"	https://www.utpjournals.press/loi/cjfs/
Canadian Journal of Media Studies (est. 2006) "a peer reviewed electronic journal which will provide a forum for research and discussion for both scholars and professional media workers pursuing interests in Canadian media issues"	http://cjms.fims.uwo.ca/default.htm
Global Media Journal, Canadian Edition (est. 2008) "a free open-access online double-blind refereed publication that is hosted by the University of Ottawa and Saint Paul University which is dedicated to research in the fields of communication and media studies"	http://www.gmj.uottawa.ca/index_e.html
TOPIA: Canadian Journal of Cultural Studies (est. 1997) "a venue for critical thinkers in the domains of culture, nationality, technology, environment, gender, race and the politics of space and time"	https://www.calj-acrs.ca/journal/topia-canadian-journal-cultural-studies
Revue française des sciences de l'information et de la communication (est. 2012, but offers conference proceedings from 1994) "... a scientific journal in French aimed at the international public of researchers, teachers and information and communication professionals, all specialties combined." (author's translation)	https://journals.openedition.org/rfsic/

This survey should not be viewed as the final word on Canadian communication studies; it does, however, demonstrate clear contemporary trends and offers a unique window into this field of study across the country. The survey consists of data and comments from past presidents of the Canadian Communication Association and current department heads in degree-granting programs across the country. In the end, the data supports the view that "communication studies" is an umbrella term that has become an increasingly diverse field of inquiry. How we perceive communication studies in Canada has continued to expand since the earlier series of reflections written around the year 2000.

The methodology included establishing a list of communication studies degree-granting institutions in Canada. This inventory was compiled via a list maintained on the Canadian Communication Association website (which provided a base but was found to be incomplete), combined with earlier work by Michael Dorland (Dorland

2002) and online searches. These departments (and faculties) did not all identify by the umbrella term "communication studies" but included such varied names as Digital Media Studies; New Media Program; Faculty of Information and Media Studies; Département des lettres et communications; Department of Rhetoric, Writing and Communications; and the Department of Communication, Popular Culture, and Film. We determined there were 34 individual departments in Canada. On three occasions between April and August 2018, we reached out to all 34 departments to participate in our study. Representatives of 16 department successfully completed the survey.

To create a survey to reflect the current academic environment, a list of subfields was developed using categories established for the Canadian Communication Association Annual Conference, as well as consultation with CCA president Daniel Paré. The following list of 28 sub fields were the options given in all surveys to determine areas of strength and diminishment in research and teaching:

1. Communication Theory
2. International Communication and Development
3. Journalism and News
4. Media History
5. Organizational Communication
6. Interpersonal Communication
7. Policy, Regulation and Governance
8. Political Economy of Communication and Media
9. Political Communications
10. Public Relations and Advertising
11. Communication and Health
12. Environmental Media
13. Feminist Media Studies
14. Representation
15. Reconciliation
16. Race Studies
17. Cultural Studies
18. Sexuality and Gender
19. Social Movements
20. Emerging Media
21. Infrastructure and Technology
22. Big Data
23. Information Ethics
24. Visual Communication
25. Digital Gaming
26. Knowledge Translation
27. Popular Culture
28. Rhetoric
29. Other Research Areas

The data demonstrate the Likert scale results (the questions asking strength of research and teaching) via an average score out of five, while other questions are weighted by average number of responses. Film Studies does not appear on this list, despite its inclusion in many communication studies departments, as it has its own national organization, the Film Studies Association of Canada, its own annual conference, and its own academic journal, the Canadian Journal of Film Studies.

We believe this data offers a unique snapshot of Canadian communication studies in 2018; however, we do recognize shortcomings in the methodology that need to be noted. Among the methodological difficulties:

- While all former CCA presidents participated, not every communications department responded to our survey, despite our repeated efforts over several months. Still, roughly half of Canadian communication studies departments did participate, including most of the larger programs, so we believe the sample to be indicative of the general direction of Canadian communication studies in 2018.
- Equal voice is given to programs that vary greatly in size. While smaller programs may have as few as 50 undergraduates enrolled, the largest programs report as many as 3500 undergraduates in its program.
- Our list of responses to each question offered a wide range but could not cover every area of study offered in programs across the country.
- The choices are not always clearly divided and often merge. For example, political economy may involve elements of policy studies or infrastructure studies.
- CCA presidents were asked to reflect on an era that for some was more than a decade ago and more than one noted they may be somewhat unclear in their recollection.

For these reasons, the data provided, especially the department head results, should not be viewed as a precise representation but as an indicator of historic and contemporary trends. Despite these stated shortcomings, we believe the results of our survey offer a useful perspective on the current state of the field of communication studies in Canada.

7 Results: CCA Presidents

All nine past presidents of the CCA between 1999 and the present participated in our survey. CCA presidents serve for a term of two years. There are no omissions in our sample with the exception of one former president who has passed away. This range of dates of all presidents provides a view of the field in Canada as it has evolved over the past two decades, and in particular since the internet has risen to the fore of modern communications. The position of CCA president has a particular vantage point for communication studies in Canada since they play an essential role in organizing the annual CCA conference, which showcases much of the contemporary research in the field. Since the number of actual participants is relatively small (nine), we have chosen to highlight the key trends instead of numerical figures and include some of the qualitative data presidents included in their comments.

On the question of areas of strength in research during their tenure as CCA president, the two highest scores on the Likert scale were for Policy, Regulation and Governance; and Political Economy of Communication and Media. This would appear to support much of the earlier studies that had demonstrated these areas to be central to Canadian communication studies (Babe 2000; Wagman 2010). The other two highest ranked areas were Journalism and News, and Cultural Studies. Again, these are seen as foundational areas of communication studies in Canada. One former president was clear they could not remember all areas of focus during their tenure and another noted they were not familiar with all of the areas outlined as subfields.

The lowest ranked scores were Interpersonal Communication, and Reconciliation—an area addressing Canada's relationship with its indigenous population. There may be growth in Reconciliation in the coming years following the release of reports by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2015 that explored the long-term effects of Indian residential schools in Canada. Universities across Canada are now introducing indigenous strategies that include promoting research with an indigenous focus.

On the question of what areas saw the most growth in research and course coverage during their tenure, the overall response differed substantially from the areas of research strength, suggesting many of the strongest areas of research mentioned in question one were already established when the president began their term and did not experience much further growth. The strongest area of growth by a wide margin was Emerging Media, clearly reflecting the exponential expansion of new digital communications since 1999. This was followed by a three-way tie for growth between relatively diverse areas in the field: Sexuality and Gender, Communication and Health and Environmental Media. None of these three areas were prominent in the earlier question on strongest areas of research, showing their expanding influence in communication studies as the new century has progressed. On the subject of the changing face of research in the field, one former president noted "I would say that there was a certain amount of policy analysis fatigue in the field, at least in certain quarters, and more interest in a more diversified field".

In response to the most diminished area of study during their tenure, there was a three-way tie between Communication Theory, Organizational Communication, and Interpersonal Communication. The choice of Communication Theory is perplexing as it generally scored well in most surveys on areas of prominence; however, the other two areas consistently had lower scores in research. It may be that Communication Theory is not as highly represented in the papers presented at the annual conference, or theoretical work was seen as stronger around the turn of the century. Another explanation may be, like many journal article reviews, it is a reflex among communication scholars to say we lack theory.

One former president commented that there was a reconfiguring of the categories that may account for some of the changes:

> Media history seemed to decline somewhat with respect to papers delivered at the annual conference. While there was certainly strong research in the field, most papers were delivered at the Canadian Historical Association's (CHA)

> annual conference rather than the CCA. The CHA had a number of sessions and (I believe) a working group devoted to media history at this time. It seems to me that much of the research in policy, regulation, and governance shifted and merged with research in political economy and political communication around this time. Similarly, feminist media research more or less merged with sexuality and gender. I think that this reflected a general trend in a number of academic fields during this period.

Another president was clear they did not think new fields came at the expense of others:

> I actually don't think areas were diminished just because other areas garnered more attention. You have to take into account the proliferation of programs and the significant increases in program sizes that we were experiencing at the time. I challenge the premise that because some areas rose in prominence, others declined. ... I think that the more traditional areas that were strong in the Canadian academy continued and continue to be strong, while new areas, with new people also grew in strength.

Overall, the CCA presidents' responses demonstrate a field that is rooted in a study of political economy but has clearly undergone some substantial changes in the last two decades. While the established areas of political economy and policy studies have not gone away by any means, they now have to share space with relative newcomers to the field such as Emerging Media (which still may include a political economy or policy-oriented approach), Studies in Health, and Environmental Communications. The overall impact of this widening of the field was summarized by one former CCA president in attached comments to the completed survey:

> In my tenure the CCA was characterized by a broad array of interests which tended to be identified with smaller groupings of individuals. Ultimately, the diversity of research presented at the (CCA) conference reflects the lack of any 'one' dominant or defining feature of comm studies in Canada. Indeed, I'd go so far as to say that the research presented at the CCA's annual conference provides evidence to support the adage that, 'In Canada, media/comm studies is whatever your home institution/department says it is ...' This also serves to further persuade me that media/comm studies in Canada is more reflective of a dynamic field of study than a discipline per se.

8 Results: Department Heads

The data provided by the CCA presidents provides a view of the field of communication studies as it has evolved over two decades; the results from a similar survey distributed to department heads across the country offer a snapshot of where the field stands in Canada in 2018. The same list of sub areas was offered in the department heads' survey as was noted in the CCA presidents' survey.

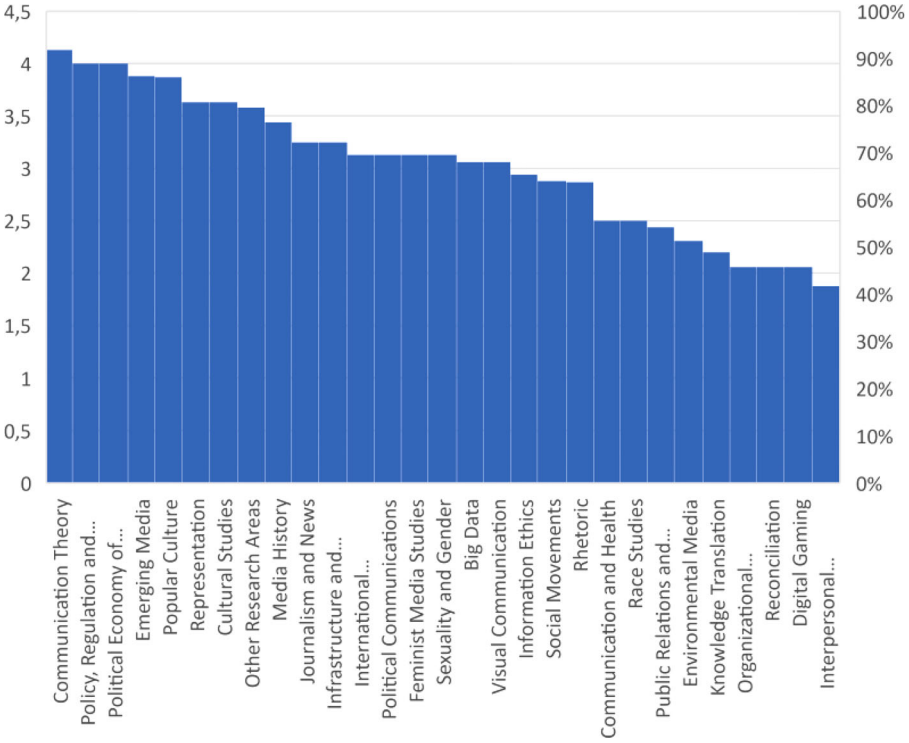

Fig. 1 Departments—Strength of Research

There is little doubt that department heads who read this study will feel the complete scope of their program is not fully represented in the data. Despite the 28 sub fields offered as a response to the "strength of research" question, 13 of the 16 respondents suggested further additions, ranging from fashion studies, to popular music studies, to blockchain. While we recognize the difficulty in satisfying all respondents, we believe the data from 16 different programs offer a revealing contemporary snapshot of the field. Some results are on a Likert scale (0–5) while others offer an overall percentage.

Question Based on the following topic areas, how do you see the strengths (or areas of focus) of your department with respect to research, on a scale of 0–5 (5 being strongest) (Fig. 1)?

What is most apparent in this data is the sheer breadth of scholarly research. All areas receive some support as a strong focus of research and the strength of "other" as a category indicates the scope is wider than we even see here. Theory is the strongest category and the traditional strengths of Policy and Political Economy also retain a clear foundation across Canadian departments. However, newer subfields such as Emerging Media, Popular Culture, and Representation also scored highly across the country.

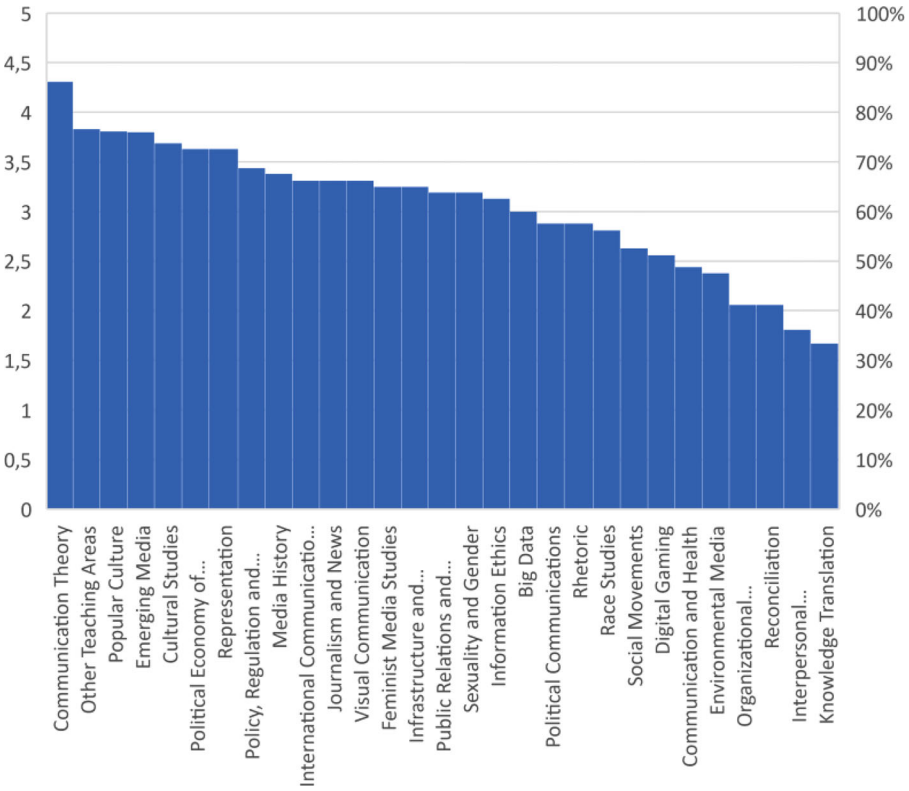

Fig. 2 Departments—Teaching Strength

Question Based on the following topic areas, how do you see the strengths (or areas of focus) of your department with respect to pedagogy, on a scale of 0–5 (5 being strongest) (Fig. 2)?

The data reveals an interesting flip between teaching and research, though again, all areas receive votes, demonstrating the current breadth of teaching subjects. Communication theory remains prominent in teaching as it was in research. According to this data, although Policy and Political Economy may continue to be strong areas of research, they are not necessarily as dominant in the classroom. Popular Culture, Emerging Media, and Cultural Studies all prove more prevalent in teaching than Political Economy, which is tied with Representation in the teaching data.

Question In your time in your department, choose the areas of focus you think have seen the most growth in terms of research and course coverage (Fig. 3).

It should not be a surprise that digital media areas like emerging media and big data have seen the most growth according to current department heads. They obviously do not have the same historic base to draw from, so all growth is magnified. An unexpected twist on this data is that prominent research areas such as Theory, Policy, and Political Economy are generally in the middle. They are not growing with the same intensity as relatively newer areas like Communication and Health.

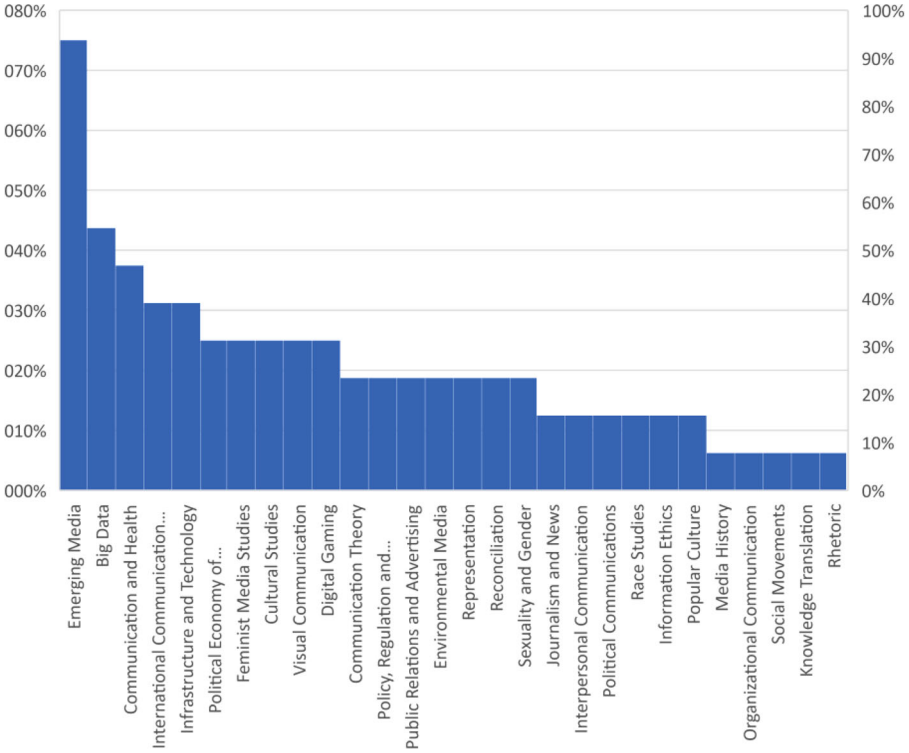

Fig. 3 Departments—Areas of Growth

There is a consistency here between the responses of department chairs and the past presidents of the CCA.

Question Which of the following types of media does your institution focus on as primary areas of research, on a scale of 0–5 (5 being strongest) (Fig. 4)?

This data shows a dominance by the study of new digital media in various forms. Internet and Social Media have clearly risen to prominence in the types of media that are being researched and taught in universities. Some of the "other" categories noted by department heads included areas that could be viewed as internet and new media including algorithm studies and platform studies. Film was also a popular "other" choice but the authors decided to view that as a separate field. In a reflection of the current wider media economy, television has lost its previous position of dominance but remains a formidable force in communication studies.

Question In your time in your department, choose the areas of focus you think are most diminished in terms of research and course coverage (Fig. 5).

International Communication and Development was clearly the most diminished subject area. This was also identified by CCA presidents as an area of shrinking importance. We are unable to account for this drop. Also, like the past CCA presidents, the department chairs presented the strange result of Communication Theory

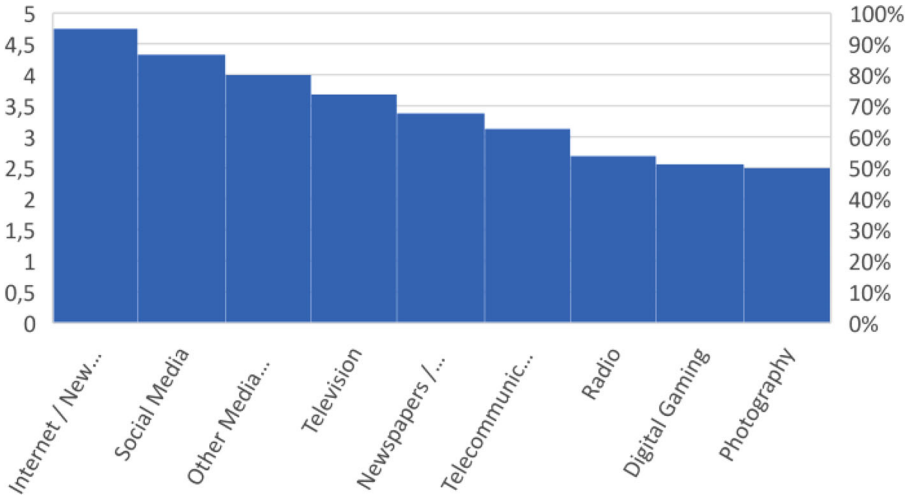

Fig. 4 Departments—Areas of Media Focus

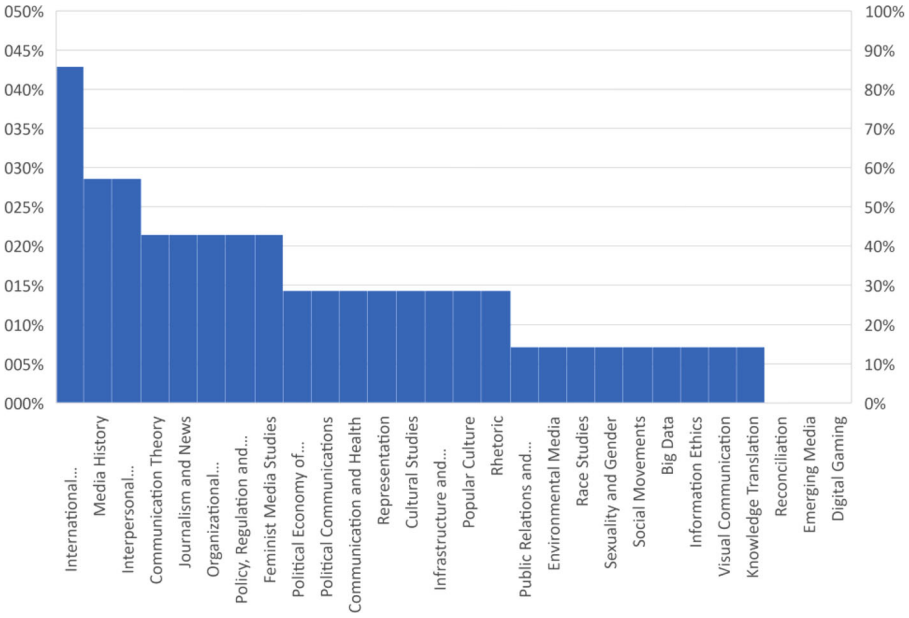

Fig. 5 Departments—Diminished Subject Areas (research and teaching)

being a diminished area even though it is the highest ranked area of teaching and research. No participating department head listed Reconciliation, Emerging Media or Digital Gaming as shrinking areas of study, demonstrating their relatively new and growing status.

Surveys for department chairs were available in English and French, which allowed for an interesting comparison between Canada's main linguistic groups. There was not a large discrepancy in the data between English and French communication studies departments within Canada with a few notable exceptions. The francophone departments that participated demonstrated a much stronger emphasis on the study of journalism and news. Journalism scored higher than the national trends as an area of research in French speaking universities, and newspapers/print received a very strong average in the question on areas of media focus. French speaking departments also scored higher than the wider national trend in the area of Public Relations and Advertising. This may indicate the continued presence of more applied forms of scholarship in French programs.

Although speech communication (Rhetoric, Interpersonal Communication) actually has a longer history in Canadian academia than the study of mass media (Merrigan et al. 2012, p. 3), current data shows that it has been all but eclipsed by mass media studies in current communication studies departments. In their comments, one chair noted "Our programme is unique in being rhetoric-centred".

Results regarding the sub field of Communication Theory was perplexing: offering a seemingly contradictory place of dominance and a diminished relevance in research. Not all scholars support the ascendance of theory in communication studies and some indeed may be happy that it was identified by both presidents and department heads as diminishing. Reflecting on the place of theory in the Canadian field in 2000, Lorimer writes that the emphasis of theory was coming at the expense of political engagement: "most engagements have been rather peripheral focusing on some interesting but often ultimately quite insignificant dynamic. Increasingly, the focus has been on abstract theoretical conceptualization rather than effective action and trenchant description" (Lorimer 2000). Theory remains prominent in current research and teaching across Canada, but according to responses, is not as central as it once was.

9 Conclusion

Overall, the data shows how the current situation in Canada has been shaped by its initial conditions. There is a high degree of path dependency at play. While there is a 'bias of the new' prevalent in areas of growth in both teaching and research, as well as media focus, the foundational elements of communications scholarship in Canada have not faded. This breadth and diversity allows for students and faculty that specialize in a particular area to find a suitable institution to pursue their work.

Canadian communication studies may have roots in the political economy tradition, but the branches of the contemporary field cover a much wider area. Canadian communication studies has embraced the exploration of new digital technologies and current research and teaching cover an increasingly diverse range of topics. Despite the extensive list on the survey of 28 sub fields, many submissions pointed out limitations of this range and proposed further areas such as audience research, risk communication, indigenous media, digital literacy, girl studies, semiotics, food

and communication, and others. It proved very difficult to offer enough options to cover the range of foci in the current Canadian field.

Although communication studies in Canada has a long history of being critical, policy-oriented, and interventionist, we believe the current picture clearly extends beyond this traditional approach and is indicative of a wider trend that has been happening for some time. Critical political economy continues to be a thriving area of Canadian communication scholarship (Mosco 2008; Winseck and Yong 2011. In 2015, the national media regulator, the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunication Commission, established an annual prize for graduate research in media policy.) but it can no longer necessarily be seen as exemplifying the Canadian approach. Communication studies in Canada in 2018 has extended far beyond any sense of the traditional perspective. Michael Dorland notes a "cultural turn" in the field in 2002 and even then, it was clear that this had been under way for some time and was by no means limited to the field of communication studies (Dorland 2002, p. 56). Yet, as Gertrude Robinson notes in 2000 (referencing Theall), emphasis on a wider cultural view including feminist perspectives and marginalized voices may continue the practice started by Innis that scholarship in communication must explore voices at the periphery of power (Robinson 2000). Much of the data we see from our survey confirms the cultural turn but also indicates the continued centrality of policy and political economy.

This fragmentation of the field should not be surprising. Canadian communication studies was constructed with faculty from a range of disciplines. For decades now, communication studies has been growing from its earlier preoccupations with issues of governance and political economy into more diverse areas such as feminist media studies (Robinson 1998), indigenous media (Roth 2007) and race (Hirji and Karim 2009) among many others. This could be viewed less as a branching out, and more as a return to roots. Canadian communication studies has always drawn from scholars from diverse interests. Reflecting on the first CCA conference held in Montreal in 1980, Liora Salter writes "what brought people together was the experience of working at the margin of traditional disciplines, and the experience of being rebels in their fields" (Salter 1981, p. xi).

Canadian communication studies remains on the margins of other disciplines and not beholding to any one well-defined direction of study. The data from our surveys clearly demonstrates that the policy and political economy stream of communication studies remain strong; however, they do not appear to have the same position of prominence that they once did. All of the 28 topics listed in the survey received recognition by department heads as having a level of importance in Canadian communication studies departments. Depending on perspective, this may be viewed as a watering down of the field, or conversely, a return to Canadian communication studies' rebellious roots.

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