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The Historical Context of Media Studies

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My points in brief:

Media studies as a field of research and education

1. has its **roots** leading to centuries of history
2. has **expanded** dramatically since the 1950s
3. while getting more and more **diversified**
4. and **politicized** by waves of time

Final questions:

1. **What has the field achieved?**
2. **What should be done?**

1. Historical roots

- Enlightenment and democracy with freedom of opinion and press, public debate – Lomonosov on duties of journalists (18th Century)
- Catholic church propaganda (17th C)
- Greece philosophers Plato, Aristotle (3-4th C BC)
- Chinese philosopher Confucius (5th C BC)
- Arab and Persian cultures

Forefathers in Europe

- Communication and change: Karl Marx (1818–1883)
- News of society: Karl Knies (1821–1898)
- Nerves of society: Albert Schäffle (1831–1903)
- Press as commerce: Karl Bücher (1848–1930)
- Mirrors of society: Ferdinand Tönnies (1855–1936)
- Consciousness of society: Max Weber (1864–1920)

Other European traditions

- Germany: *Zeitungswissenschaft*, *Publizistik* (Dovifat)
- France: *Filmologie*, *structuralism* (Barthes)
- Britain: Cultural studies (Williams, Hall)

Forefathers in USA

- Political scientist Harold Lasswell
- Sociologist Paul Lazarsfeld
- Psychologist Carl Hovland
- Social psychologist Kurt Lewin

Other North American traditions

- Chicago school (John Dewey – Walter Lippmann)
- Frankfurt school (Theodore Adorno, Eric Fromm et al)
- Toronto school (Harold Innis, Marshall McLuhan)

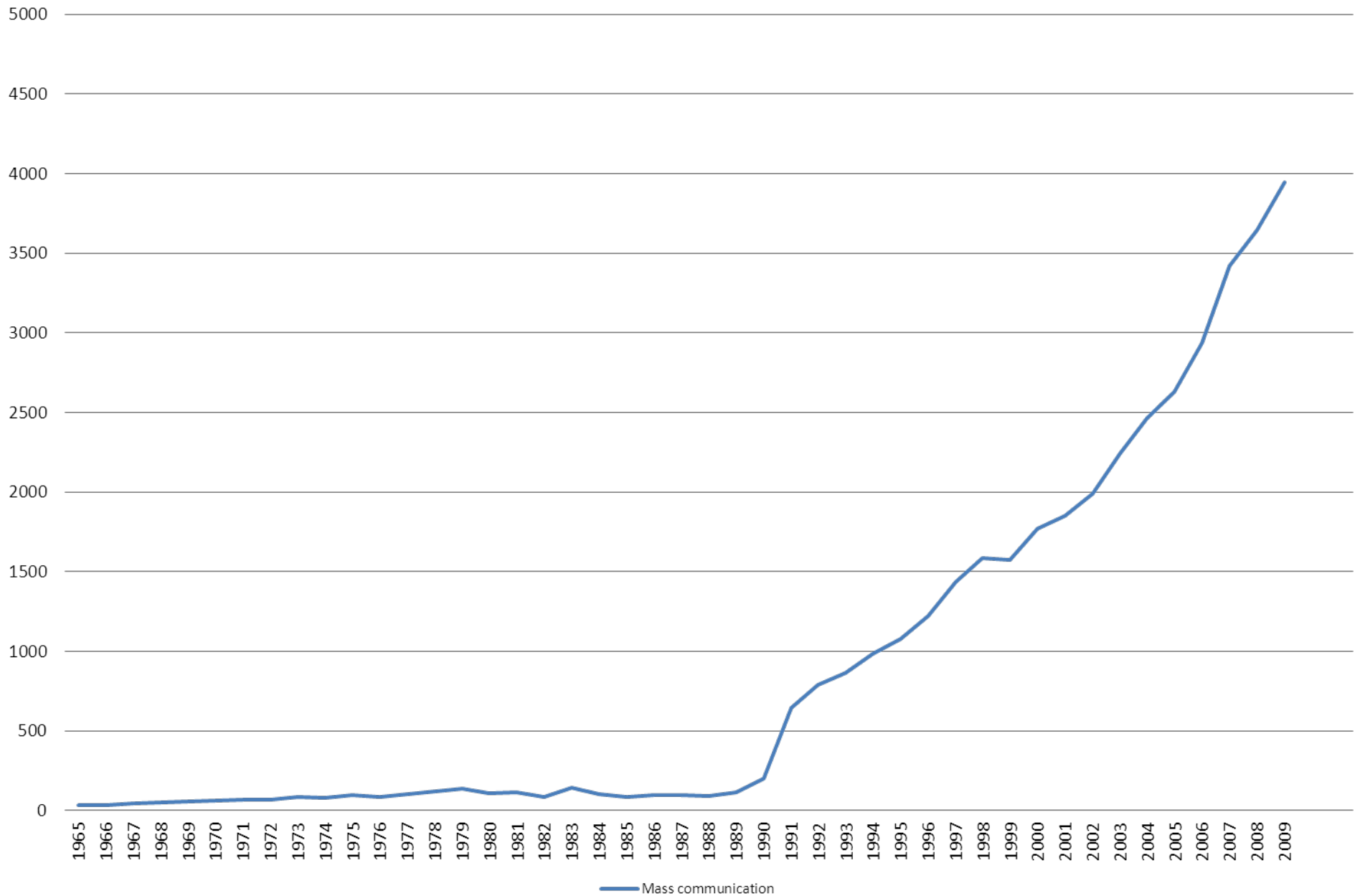
2. Expansion

The field has experienced an **explosive growth** since the 1960s – something that in the academic world compares only with the rise of computer science and biotechnology
as shown by

- growth of **publications** (data from Web of Science)
- increase of **teachers** (data from France and USA)
- Increase of **students** (data from Germany)

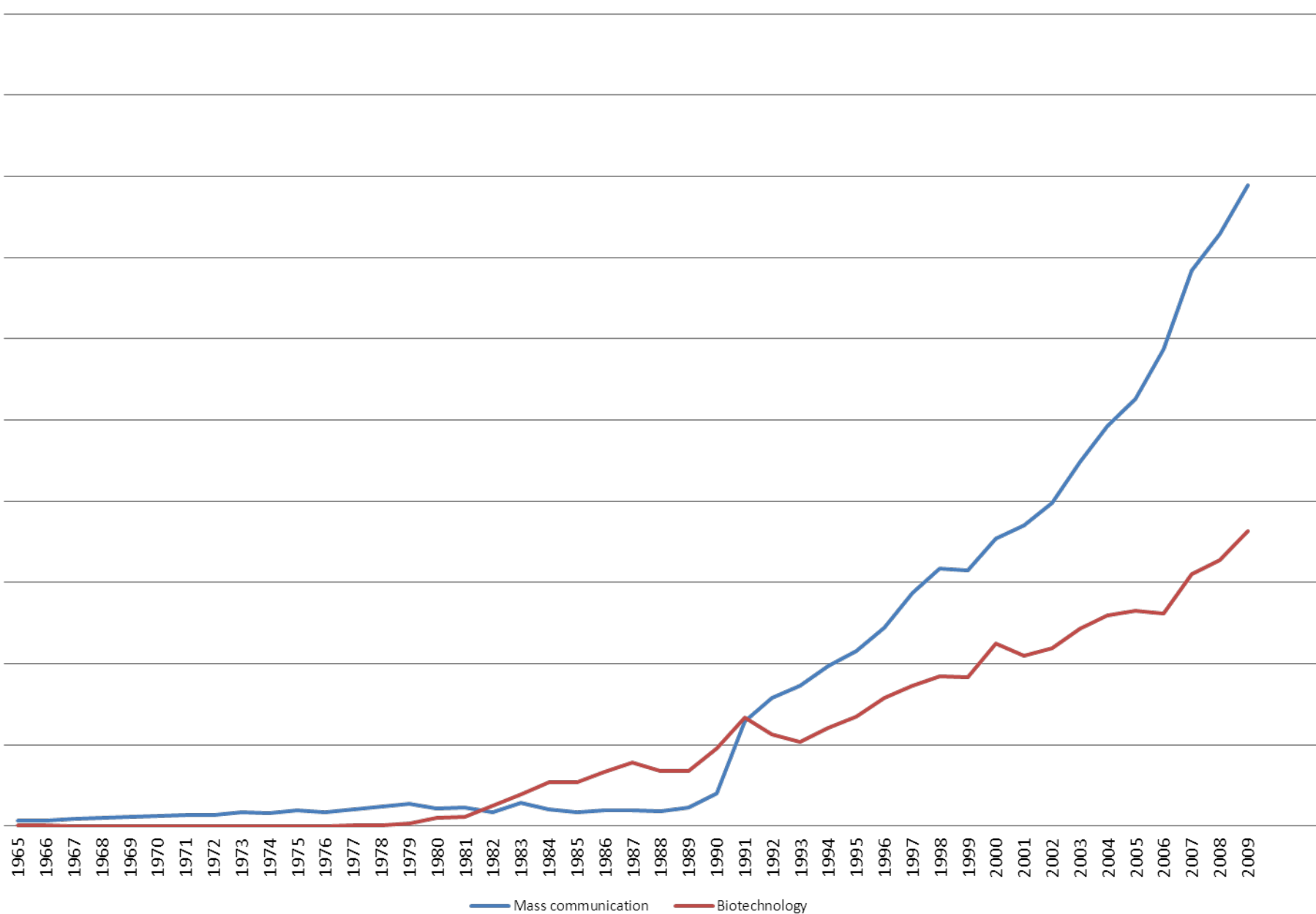
Growth of publications 1965-2009

Source: Web of Science; constructed by Maria Forsman, November 2011



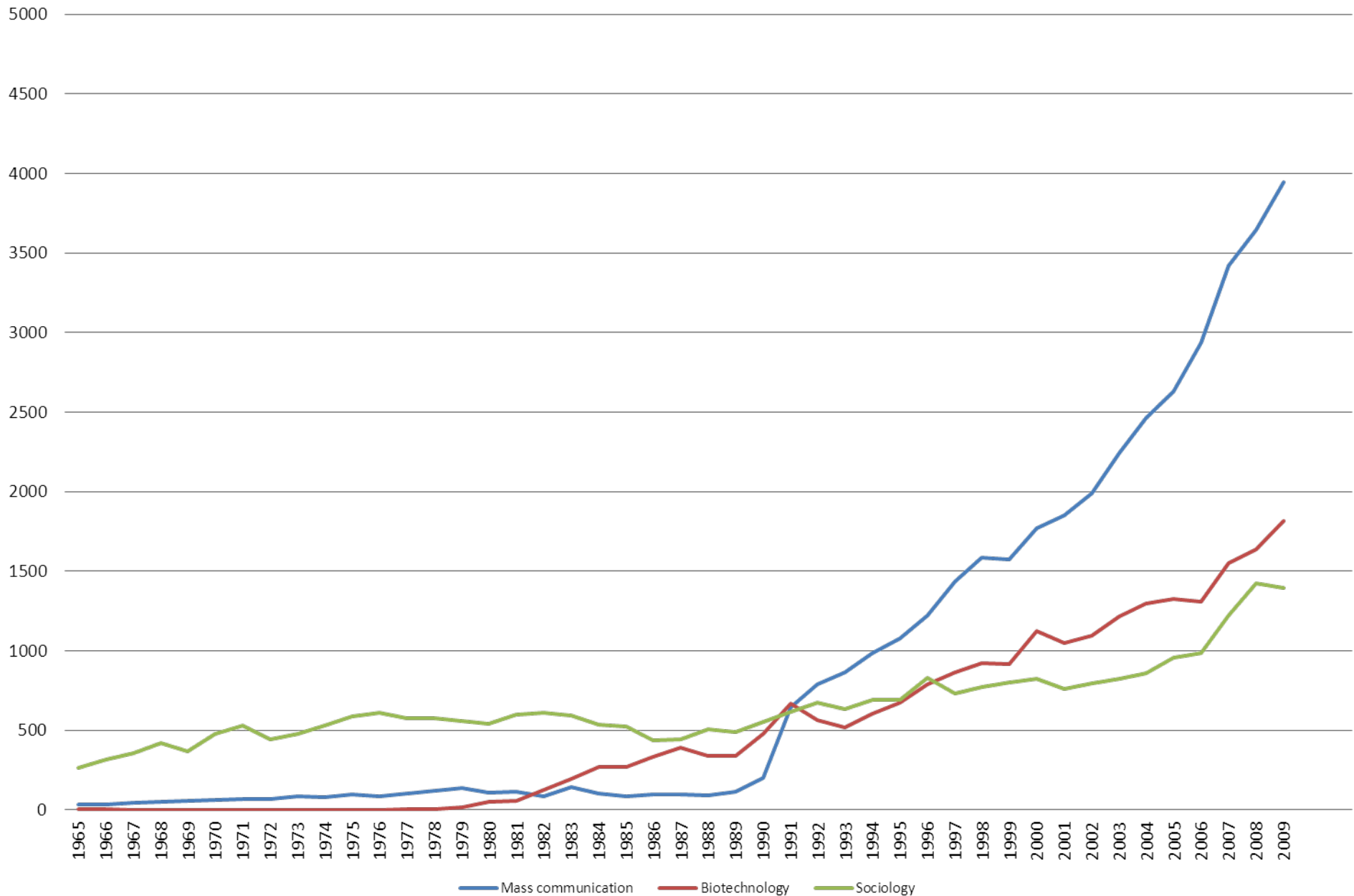
Growth of publications 1965-2009

Source: Web of Science; constructed by Maria Forsman, November 2011



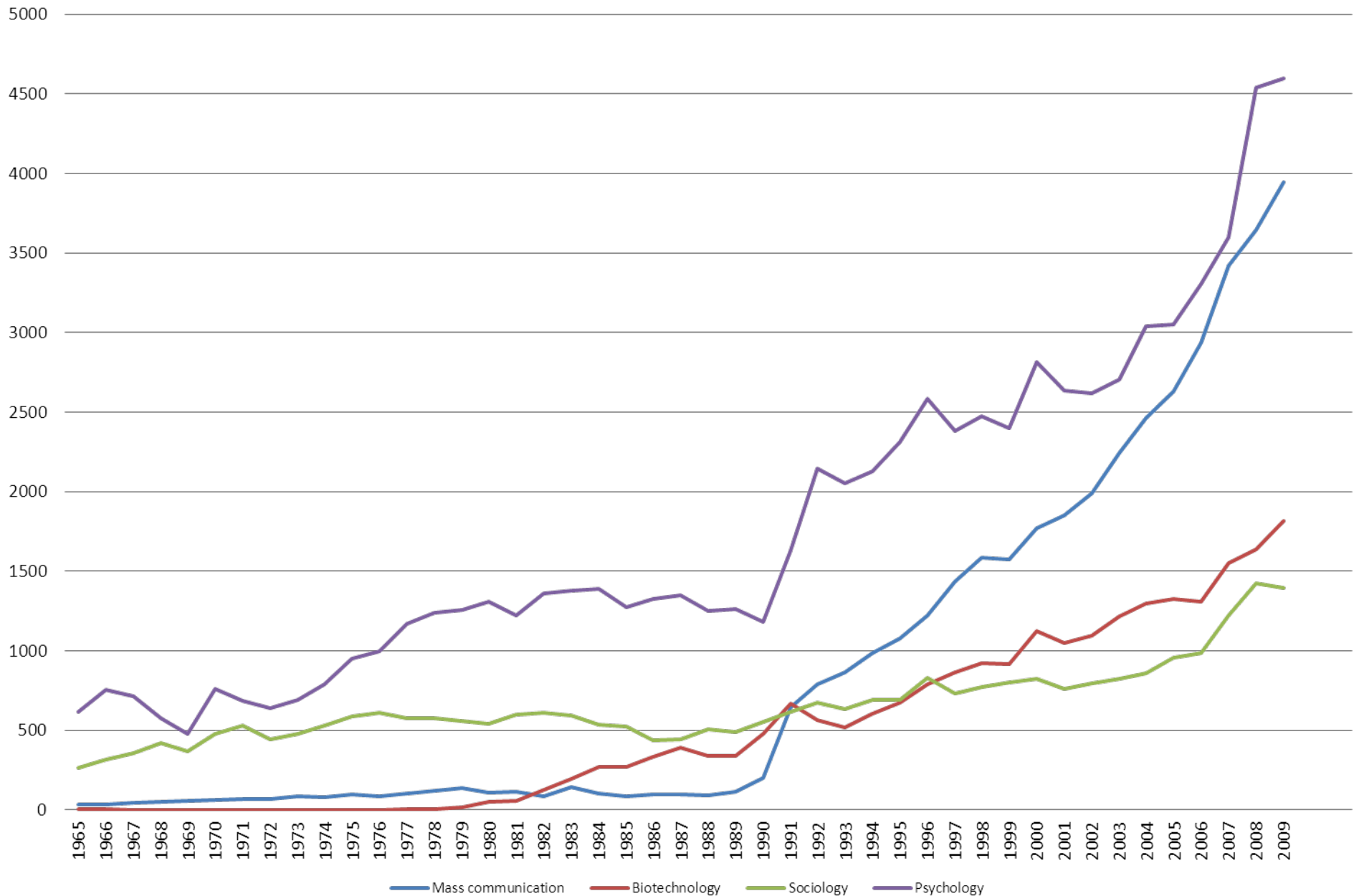
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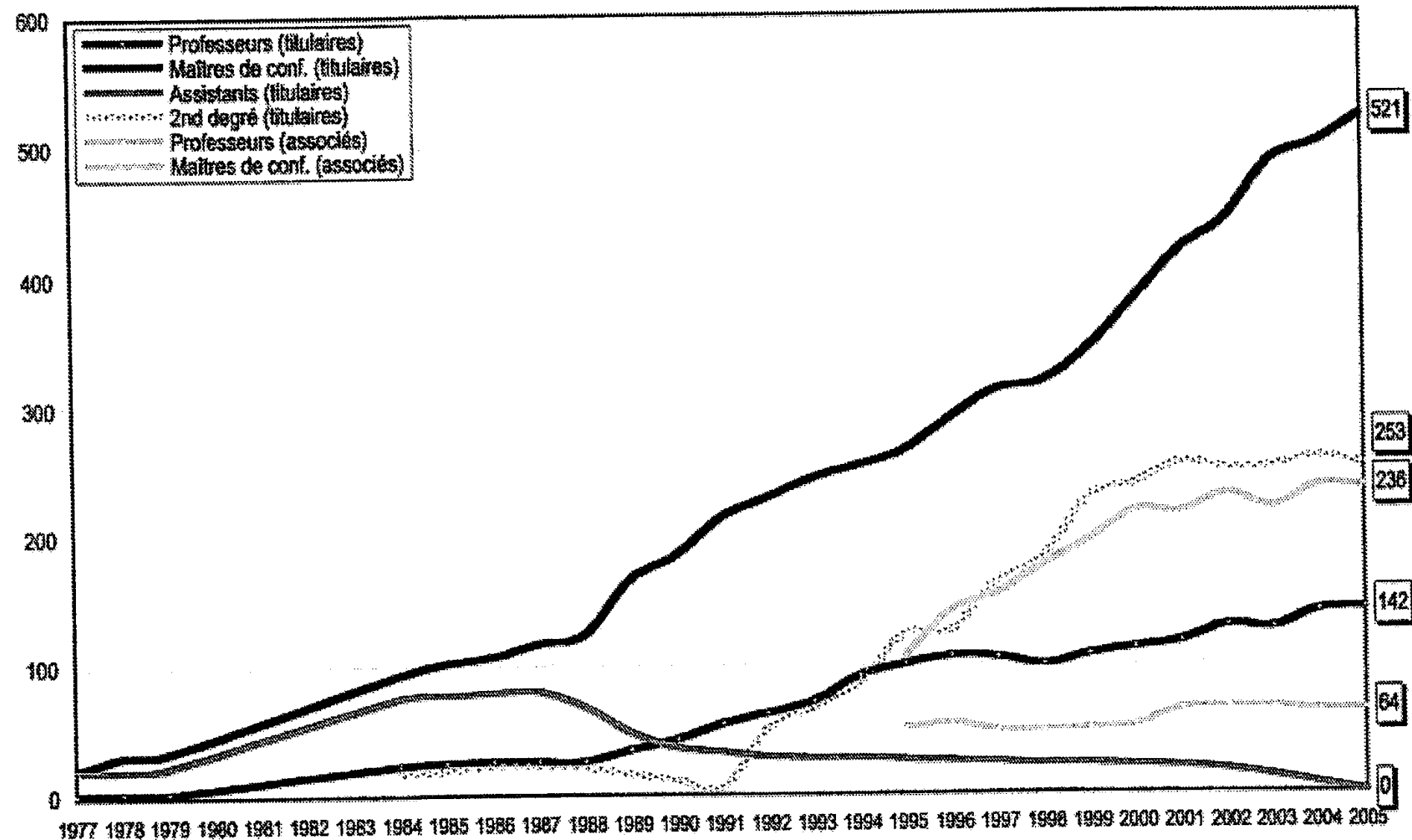


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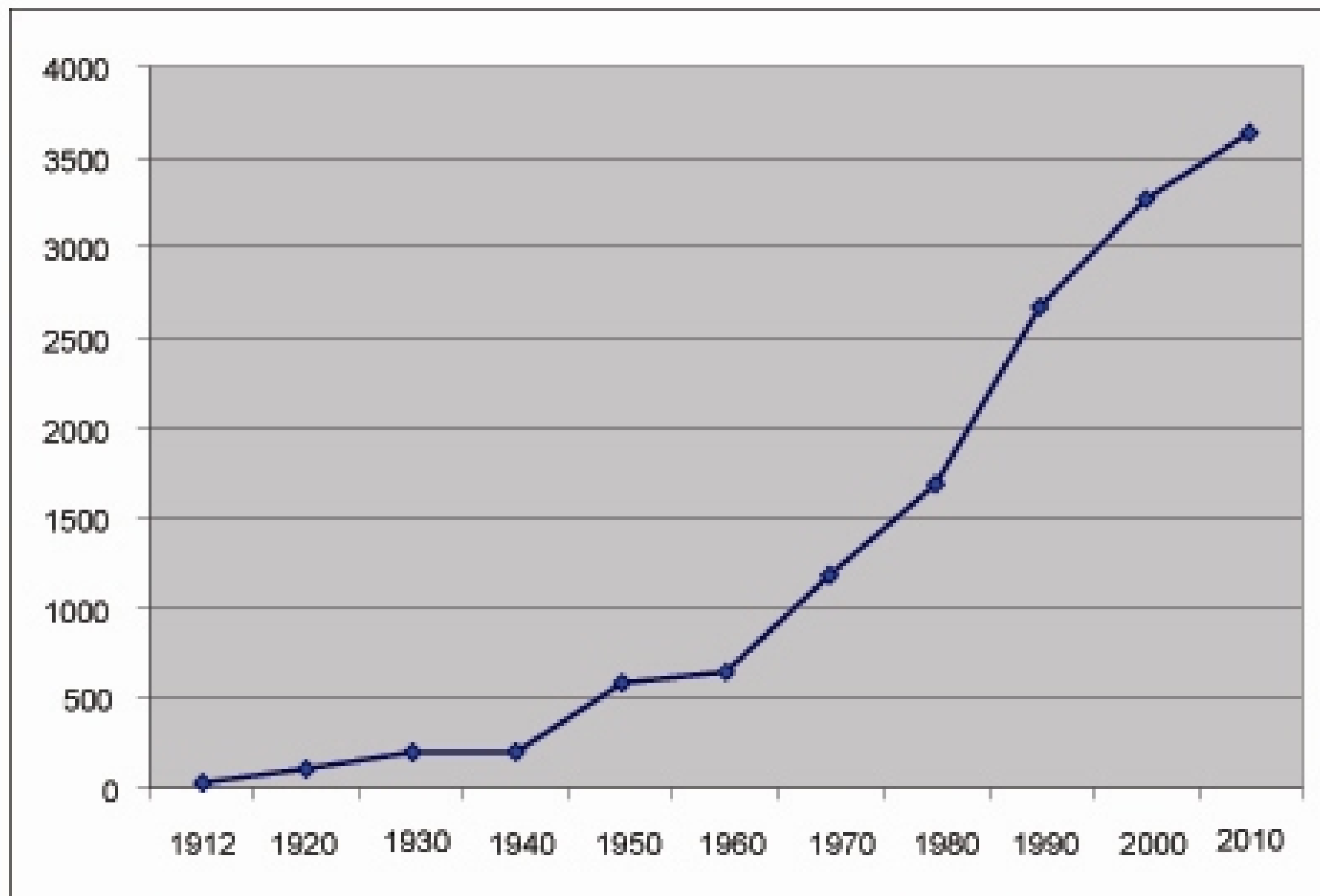


Growth of the Infocom researchers in France

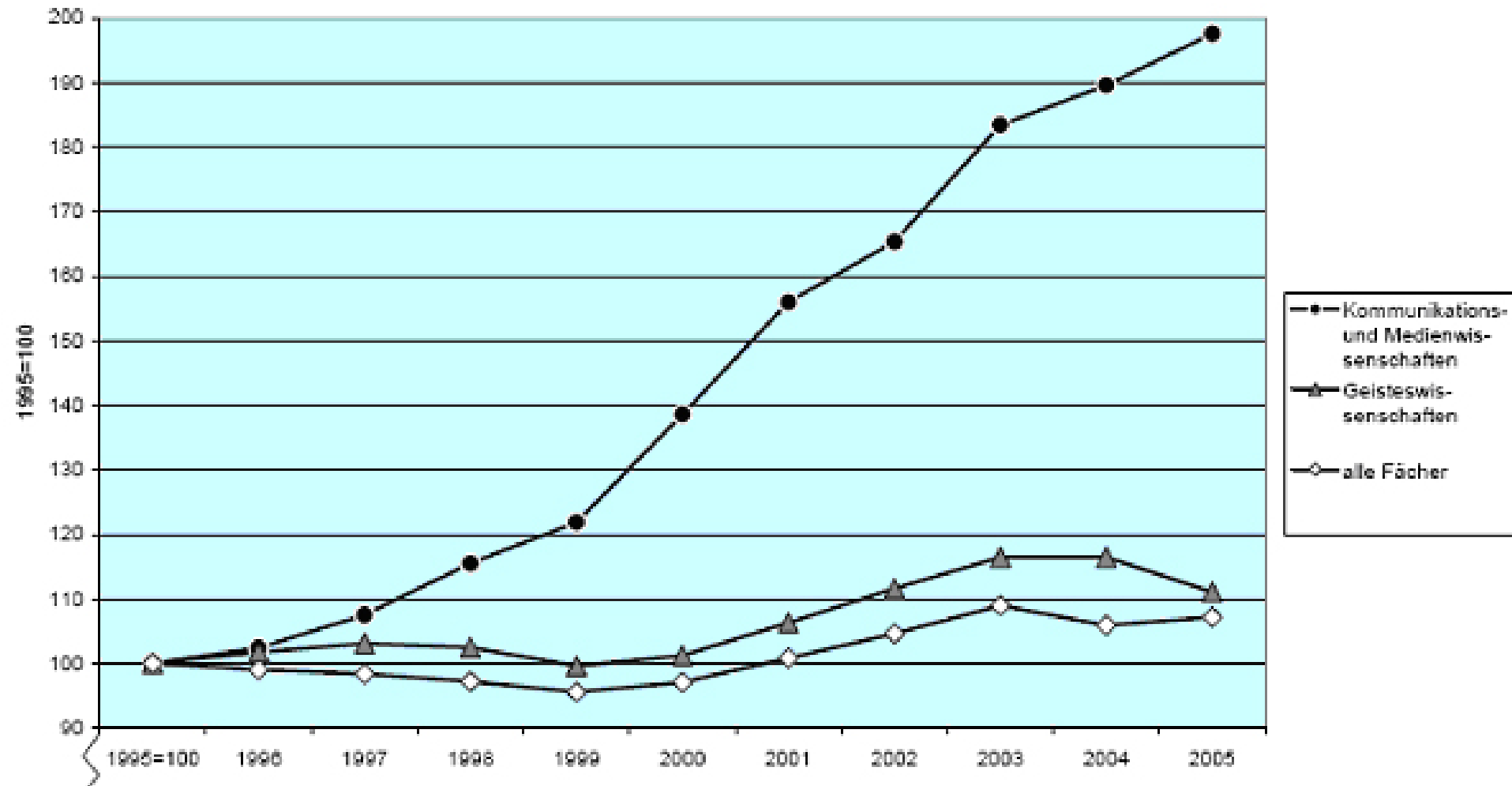


Source: Ministère (DPE A6). Traitement: P. Froissart, 2005.

Members of the American Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC)



Relative increase in students of communication-media field in comparison to other fields of humanities and total student population in Germany



Quelle: Statistisches Bundesamt: Fachserie 11, Reihe 4.1 Studierende an Hochschulen, Tabelle 2 in ausführlicher Gliederung; eigene Berechnungen (vgl. auch Anhang B.1.).

3. Diversification

by **focus**: production, content, audience...

by **approach**: social scientific, political economy, cultural studies...

as shown by

- scholarly **journals** – dominated by American publishers and English language
- contemporary **books**
- international **associations** with sections and interest groups

Top 20 countries of authors in 43 journals

1: Number of articles 2: Share of articles 3: ICA conference attendance
4: Population size 5: Visibility correlation

	1	2	3	4	5
US	3,225	66.2	1	2	1
UK	642	13.2	2	5	3
Canada	167	3.4	3	10	8
Australia	154	3.2	4	12	6
The Netherlands	138	2.8	5	13	2
Germany	113	2.3	6	4	4
China and Hong Kong	82	1.7	7	1	7
Israel	61	1.3	8	17	5
Italy	42	.9	9	7	15
Korea, Rep. of	41	.9	10	8	9
Sweden	41	.8	11	15	11
Japan	39	.8	12	3	10
Finland	34	.7	13	19	16
Spain	31	.6	14	9	20
Belgium	30	.6	15	14	12
France	29	.6	16	6	17
New Zealand	29	.6	17	20	14
Switzerland	27	.5	18	16	19
Taiwan	24	.5	19	11	13
Denmark	21	.4	20	18	18
Total	4,875				

Note: Spearman's correlation of visibility with population is .51 and with conference attendance .85.

(Lauf 2005, 144)

Sections & interest groups in associations focus on

- Audience
- Community
- Education
- Environment
- Ethnicity and race
- Gender
- Health
- History
- Intercultural & international
- Interpersonal & speech
- Islam
- Journalism

Sections & interest groups, cont.

- Law and policy
- Management and economics
- Organizations
- Philosophy
- Political economy
- Politics
- Popular culture
- Production
- Public relations
- Religion
- Sports
- Visual culture

Associations reflect and consolidate the field nationally, regionally & internationally

- National associations in speech and journalism studies in USA since the 1910s
- International association in communication and media pushed by UNESCO since 1946
- International Association for Mass Communication Research (IAMCR) in 1957
- Regional centres and associations in Asia (AMIC) and Latin America (CIESPAL) in the late 1960s, in Africa (ACCE) in the 1970s and in Europe (ECCR/ECREA) in the 1990s

International Association for Mass Communication Research (IAMCR)
founding fathers in late 1957, when IAMCR was founded . From the left:
Francesco Fattorello (Italy), Fernand Terrou (France), Evgeniy Khudyakov
(USSR), Jacques Leaute (France) and Mieczyslaw Kafel (Poland).



4. Politicization

Media studies were **always political** in a broad philosophical sense

However, milestones of politicization in the past 60 years are

- **Modernization** drive by USA (1950s)
- **Decolonization** drive by Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (1970s)
- **NWICO** drive for a New World Information and Communication Order with the **MacBride** Commission & Report at UNESCO (1970s and 1980s)
- **WSIS** drive by World Summit on the Information Society (2000s)

The Passing of Traditional Society

Modernizing the Middle East

Daniel Lerner

with the collaboration
of Lucille W. Pevsner

Introduction by
David Riesman



Many Voices, One World

COMMUNICATION AND SOCIETY
TODAY AND TOMORROW

● Sean MacBride ●

● Elie Abel ● Hubert Beuve-Méry ● Elebe Ma Ekonzo ●
● Gabriel Garcia Marquez ● Sergei Losev ● Mochtar Lubis ●
● Mustapha Masmoudi ● Michio Nagai ● Fred Isaac Akporuaro Omu ●
● Bogdan Osolnik ● Gamal El Oteifi ● Johannes Pieter Pronk ●
● Juan Somavia ● Boobli George Verghese ●
● Betty Zimmerman ●

Kogan Page/Unipub/UNESCO

World Summit on Information Society

21.6.2012



Geneva 2003 & Tunis 2005

What has the field achieved?

- Contributed to modernization plus post-industrial, postmodern society and globalization
- Constructed the excitement of media independence and Information Society
- Integrated social sciences and humanities while delinking from their roots
- Created interdisciplinary specialties highlighting new phenomena and canonizing them
- The expanded field became more and more fragmented, with new media & internet boosting specialities, which easily gained the status of another major subject and discipline in the academic nomenclature

What should be done?

- It is deceptive to celebrate popularity of the field as a success story which has created new disciplines
- Be open to novelties but do not let them carry you to a “surfing syndrome” whereby one eclectically combines features without in-depth analysis
- With such a trend the field is both losing its healthy roots to basic disciplines (philosophy, psychology, sociology, political science, linguistics, etc) and it is also turning more and more dependent on empirical and practical aspects of reality – typically applied research serving existing institutions, i.e. administrative instead of critical research
- Better to see media studies as a field – interdisciplinary with close links to basic disciplines

- Respect diversity but not at the expense of coherence
- I call for serious soul-searching and critical examination of the identity of the field, by
- studying the history of ideas in the field to understand how communication and media study has evolved and how it relates to other fields of inquiry
- pursuing research on research to deal with the concepts of communication and mediation in relation to the system of sciences
- Welcome to fascinating realm of self-reflection of the field!



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Thank you!

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