

Looking at history through the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR)¹

Cees Hamelink and Kaarle Nordenstreng

Histories of the emerging field of mass communication (e.g. Hardt, 2001; Pietilä, 2005) —in continental Europe from the late seventeenth century onward and in the United States from the early nineteenth century onward—lead one to notice how little and how late international institutions have played a role in shaping communication research. Although the roots of the field go back to the classics of sociology and political science, it is only in the twentieth century that we can find any systematic international networking of research, built through particular structures such as international meetings or associations among relevant scholars. Journalists and other “press people” had their first international congress in 1894, followed by their own international association(s) in the first half of the twentieth century (Nordenstreng et al. 2016). Global media policies began to take shape in the League of Nations in the 1920s—at a time when communication research was not only established but already being divided into various traditions. But communication research remained conspicuously remiss on its own international platforms and structures until the end of World War II.

1. Prehistory²

The history of IAMCR brings us back to the first years of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), formed in the aftermath of World War II. In 1946, UNESCO proposed an “International Institute of the Press and Information, designed to promote the training of journalists and the study of press problems throughout the world”. This initiative was marked by the idealism that had inspired the founding of the United Nations (UN) itself.

At this time, the mass media included mainly the press, radio, and cinema— as television was still at an experimental stage. Given their role during the war, the mass media were being recognized as an important factor in international relations. Accordingly, one of the first special conferences organized by the UN in April 1948 was devoted to the freedom of information. This was where the famous Article 19 on Freedom of Expression and Information was drafted as part of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the UN General Assembly in December of the same year. Two founders and future presidents of IAMCR—Fernand Terrou and Jacques Bourquin—were actively involved in drafting Article 19 during the UN Conference on Freedom of Expression and Information.

A decade passed, however, before the IAMCR was established. One reason for this slow progress was the rapid deterioration of East-West relations and the onset of the Cold War in the late 1940s. Issues related to the role of public opinion and the media were of concern to domestic politics and became increasingly important to international relations. In addition, the International Press Institute (IPI) was established in 1951 as an international association of newspaper editors and publishers in the Western countries, representing the “free world”, as opposed to the “Communist world”. At this stage, UNESCO refrained from promoting the establishment of a separate research

association, anticipating that the IPI would meet this need when it undertook, for example, a content analysis of the international news flows.

However, the limitations of the IPI's geopolitical and thematic base soon became obvious. UNESCO realized that in addition to press freedom there were other issues in the growing field of mass communication, particularly relating to journalism education, that would benefit from internationally coordinated activity by a separate organization. In 1952, UNESCO returned to this topic, setting out two lines of activity: establishing training centers for journalists and founding an international organization for the promotion of scientific research on mass communication.

At this time the UNESCO Secretariat established a Clearing House within its Department of Mass Communication, which was charged "to collect, analyse and disseminate information on press, film, radio and television, pointing out their use for educational, cultural and scientific purpose," as stated in the standing preface of its publication series *Reports and Papers on Mass Communication*. The first twenty issues of this series, published between 1952 and 1956, covered topics related mainly to film, television, and newsprint, but its December 1956 issue was entitled, "Current Mass Communication Research—I." This volume included a register of ongoing research projects and a bibliography of books and articles published since early 1955. The list of research in progress included nearly 400 projects in fourteen countries, while the bibliography listed some 800 publications in twenty-five countries. This impressive research overview was compiled with the aid of a questionnaire sent to 32 selected institutions in nineteen countries. The data gathering was assisted by national clearinghouses established in France, Japan, and the United States. The process encouraged the establishment of clearinghouses in other countries, beginning with West Germany and Italy.

The year 1956 was crucial for developments under the aegis of UNESCO. In April, a meeting of experts on the professional training of journalists was held at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris. This meeting of 40 professors and other media experts, with accompanying documents and resolutions, demonstrated that there indeed existed a dynamic field of research and training in need of international coordination. A list of establishments for professional training of journalists included 100 institutes from the United States alone, and nearly a hundred more from some thirty other countries.

At this point a colloquium was held in Strasbourg, where the International Centre for Higher Education in Journalism had been established. It was on this occasion, in December 1956, that a preparatory group called the "Interim Committee" was formed by four dedicated colleagues: Fernand Terrou (director of the French Institute of the Press and president of the French Association for Communication Sciences), Mieczyslaw Kafel (director of the Institute of Journalism at the University of Warsaw), Marcel Stijns (editor-in-chief of the Belgian journal *Het Laatste Nieuws* and vice president of the International Federation of Journalists), and David Manning White (professor of journalism at Boston University and chairman of the Council on Research of the American Association for Education in Journalism, AEJ). Terrou chaired the committee and Jacques Kayser, director of research at the French Institute of the Press, served as its executive secretary.

The tasks to be carried out by the new Association were now foreseen to include not only general promotion of international contacts within the field but also specific clearinghouse functions, such

as the production of bibliographies and lists of institutions as had been issued in UNESCO's inventory. The committee prepared a draft constitution and sent two circular letters out to potential participants. It convened the founding conference in December—after the IPI held its conference in Asia (Colombo) in November.

In summary, once mass communication, like other fields of socioeconomic activity, had reached a certain level of importance and specialization in society, this led to an institutionalization of the field, both nationally and internationally. Accordingly, IAMCR grew out of a rapidly developing media field, particularly with respect to journalism, which created its own branch of institutional interests and a need for professional education as well as for scientific research. As Terrou wrote in *Etudes de Presse*, the periodical of the French Institute of the Press, in 1956, “The professional training of journalists and the science of communication are the agenda of the day”, and added, “This is very good for the freedom of information”. For Terrou, as for Bourquin, IAMCR represented not only a technical project to promote training and research, but also an ideological project to serve a broader cause aimed at fostering peace and freedom in an international order.

In terms of its focus, IAMCR initially concentrated first and foremost on journalism and mass communication—rather than, for example, on speech communication (which had a long academic tradition in the USA), or on telecommunication (which at the time remained largely a technical subject). The actors involved were predominantly academics, with a strong presence of print journalists and others from the media industry.

The springboard for IAMCR was a combination of training needs and the growth of research in mass communication. As has not been the case in other fields, the emergence of a scientific association proceeded—on national and international levels—according to the demands of not just academic research but also of nonacademic professional training. From the beginning, mass communication research has been inseparable from the training of communicators, especially journalists. Contrast this with, say, political science, which has played only a very small role in the training of politicians. However, although training was crucial for ensuring that the research interests received international recognition, at least in getting the association started, training and research would need to be separated eventually.

Geopolitically, IAMCR had a broad—even global—base, with institutions and individuals from all continents affiliated with it. There is no doubt that the initiative to create IAMCR was dominated by Europeans, particularly the French, but colleagues from countries such as Brazil, Peru, Uruguay, Egypt, Israel, India, Indonesia, Japan, Australia, the United States, and Canada were also involved. The new Eastern Europe, behind the so-called Iron Curtain, was represented by leading academics from Poland, Czechoslovakia, and the Soviet Union, making the IAMCR configuration more balanced than the IPI or the two international associations of professional journalists, the International Organization of Journalists (IOJ, representing mainly the East and the South), and the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ, representing mainly the West). Accordingly, IAMCR was not a Cold War project. On the contrary, it was founded on ecumenical soil crossing both East-West and North-South divides.

2. Developments³

IAMCR's history spans six decades, with four stages of development: (1) the foundation, 1957–1964; (2) a period of consolidation, 1964–1972; (3) the years of growth, 1972–1990; and, finally, (4) the period of challenges, since 1990. It has held 30 biennial conferences and has had 11 presidents, reflecting its global profile as listed below:

Conferences		Presidents
1957	Paris (France)	Fernand Terrou (France)
1959	Milan (Italy)	Raymond B. Nixon (USA)
1961	Vevey (Switzerland)	
1964	Vienna (Austria)	Jacques Bourquin (Switzerland)
1966	Herceg Novi (Yugoslavia)	
1968	Pamplona (Spain)	
1970	Konstanz (West Germany)	
1972	Buenos Aires (Argentina)	James D. Halloran (UK)
1974	Leipzig (East Germany)	
1976	Leicester (UK))	
1978	Warsaw (Poland)	
1980	Caracas (Venezuela)	
1982	Paris (France)	
1984	Prague (Czechoslovakia)	
1986	New Delhi (India)	
1988	Barcelona (Spain)	Cees Hamelink (Netherlands)
1990	Bled (Yugoslavia)	
1992	Guaruja (Brazil)	Hamid Mowlana (USA)
1994	Seoul (South Korea)	
1996	Sydney (Australia)	Manuel Pares i Maicas (Spain)
1998	Glasgow (Scotland)	
2000	Singapore	Frank Morgan (Australia)
2002	Barcelona (Spain)	
2004	Porto Alegre (Brazil)	Robin Mansell (Canada & UK)
2006	Cairo (Egypt)	
2008	Stockholm (Sweden)	Annabelle Sreberny (UK)
2010	Braga (Portugal)	
2012	Durban (South Africa)	Janet Wasko (USA)
2014	Hyderabad (India)	
2016	Leicester (UK)	

2.1 Foundation, 1957–1964

The constitutive conference was held at UNESCO headquarters in Paris in December 1957. Fifty experts from 15 countries attended to establish the Association for promotion throughout the world of the development of research on problems related to press, radio, television and films. The Association's membership list included about 200 names of institutes, educational establishments and individuals. Educators in journalism were the most numerous on the individual list of educators and sociologists. Fernad Terrou from France was elected as the first President.

The first General Assembly after the founding conference was held in Milan, Italy, in 1959. On this occasion, IAMCR elected its first American President, Raymond Nixon, while the French founding President, Fernand Terrou, became Secretary General. Most of those elected as officers in Paris in 1957 remained in office in Milan in 1959, although some changed positions. The General Assembly in Milan modified the organizational structure of IAMCR with a rotating presidency and a permanent secretariat with the posts of Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General. Four permanent sections were also established, for (1) historical research, (2) legal and political research, (3) psychological and sociological research, and (4) economic and technical research.

Apart from the work of the sections, IAMCR mobilized scholarly attention to topical issues through separate colloquia and thematic sessions at its biennial conferences. The first major thematic undertaking was an international colloquium on the professional secrecy of journalists, held in Strasbourg in October 1958. This was followed by a study on the same topic commissioned by UNESCO and issued jointly by IAMCR and IPI in 1959. Another early project that UNESCO invited IAMCR to contribute was the preparation of a selective bibliography on the influence of cinema on children. IAMCR also began to collect and publish general bibliographies on mass communication research—something that was foreseen as one of its main tasks at the founding conference. Although the harvest of these inventories was not as abundant as that gathered by UNESCO's Clearing House in 1956, the first IAMCR Bulletin served as a channel to share bibliographical data.

The foundation stage continued through the General Assemblies in Vevey, Switzerland, in 1961, and in Vienna, Austria, in 1964. President Nixon introduced the transfer of the secretariat from Paris to Amsterdam, with Maarten Rooy as Secretary General, *Gazette* as the official journal of the Association, and the *IAMCR Bulletin* as its supplement. At this stage, there was clear friction between the French and the Americans—UNESCO siding with the Americans rather than with the French—but formally the Association was functioning normally. Nixon was succeeded in Vienna by Jacques Bourquin as president, leading to a new era.

2.2 Consolidation, 1964–1972

After Vienna, the secretariat was transferred from Amsterdam to President Bourquin's office in Lausanne, Switzerland, where he began to issue presidential letters. During his eight-year presidency, 26 letters were issued in English and French as mimeographed copies reporting on the organization's news. Bourquin wrote these himself, though, as director of the association for Switzerland's French-language press, he had a personal assistant for translations and clerical tasks. The letters evoke an active international association but in a manner that resembles a familiar cottage industry rather than an official world body.

In this new Lausanne-based IAMCR, *Gazette* had only a nominal relation to the Association, and its supplement, the *Bulletin*, gradually disappeared, owing to lack of funding. Formally, Rooy was appointed as an officer in charge of publications, while Terrou was listed as director of research. In practice, the clearinghouse function of IAMCR was limited to occasional lists of studies and publications by the

members, distributed with the presidential letters. Yet some thematic studies were carried out under UNESCO contracts, including a comparison of the statutes of radio and television companies.

The main activity of IAMCR at this stage was the biennial conferences and other symposia; these were fairly well attended and served as important platforms for academic and political exchanges. Through these live occasions, the membership grew slowly but surely and kept its balance, especially between Eastern and Western Europe.

The 1966 conference, held in Herceg Novi, Yugoslavia, was a milestone in IAMCR's early history. More than 70 participants from 17 countries of Europe, Asia, and the United States discussed, among other things, the topic of mass media and national development. The development theme was introduced by Gerhard Maletzke of Germany, while Lakshman Rao from India was present as UNESCO representative. Many Americans, including George Gerbner and Herbert Schiller, as well as Walery Pisarek from Poland, Yassen Zassoursky from the Soviet Union and Kaarle Nordenstreng from Finland, joined the Association at this time.

Additional sections were established in Herceg Novi, for terminology and methodology, for professional training, as well as for marketing and advertising. The latter section was led by an American, Leo Bogart, who proposed, in a letter to the General Assembly, a merger with the World Association for Public Opinion Research (WAPOR). The Assembly invited Bogart to seek close cooperation—and eventually a merger—between his section and WAPOR. Participants envisioned a similar merger between the history section and the International Council of Historical Sciences. These initiatives remained without any follow up.

In 1968 IAMCR held its General Assembly in Pamplona, Spain—under Franco's regime. Paradoxically, this venue replaced Oxford in the UK, where visas could not be guaranteed for representatives from the East European "Communist countries". Thus, in this turbulent year 1968, there were red flags at the University of Navarra marking the presence of delegates such as Emil Dusiska from East Germany's main School of Journalism, Karl Marx University in Leipzig. Politically, this was an indication of "liberal" tendencies in Spanish society in the sensitive field of mass media, and served as encouragement for the radical elements among the students and faculty (Barrera, 2007).

In Pamplona, Zassoursky was elected vice president—the first Russian in the leadership, although his predecessor as dean of the Faculty of Journalism at Moscow State University, Evgeniy Khudyakov, had been involved in the preparatory process. Irena Tetelowska of Poland became head of a new section on bibliography; this director of the Press Research Centre in Cracow was the first woman to hold a leading position in the Association. Another section was established for research on mass media and international understanding, after a big international symposium on this topic held in Ljubljana jointly with the Yugoslav IAMCR members in September 1968 to highlight the 20th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Paradoxically, this was just after the "Prague spring" was crushed.

The 1970 General Assembly was held in Konstanz, West Germany—after Moscow had been considered as a venue in connection with a world conference of historians. Here IAMCR adopted an extensive set of recommendations to the UN and its member states on various aspects of mass communication, notably freedom of information, the cultural integrity of nations, and the use of satellites. Those active in drafting the recommendations included Bogdan Osolnik of Yugoslavia and Dallas Smythe of Canada. A separate resolution was adopted in support of journalists on dangerous missions and another in support of the efforts to set up a UN University, with the expressed hope that "the science of mass communication" would be accorded the recognition appropriate to its importance. This conference was the first attended by James Halloran, and he was immediately elected vice president.

At this time—from the late 1960s to the early 1970s—significant developments took place around the Association. First, mass communication research grew everywhere along with the expansion of the media themselves, especially television. New university programmes were established and national committees were appointed to highlight the field, leading to new institutions like Halloran’s Centre for Mass Communication Research at the University of Leicester. Second, the scientific and political orientation of communication research was diversified by the entry of critical, “anti-positivist” scholars—among them many who were active in IAMCR, notably Smythe from Canada and Schiller from the USA— and younger scholars, such as Robin Cheesman, Nicholas Garnham, and Armand Mattelart from Western Europe. Third, UNESCO assumed a more prominent role for itself in the field.

The UNESCO initiative is a story in itself—its explicit policy orientation bringing it close to the critical generation of scholars, and its global resonance connecting it to the Non-Aligned Movement of the developing world, with Yugoslavia as one of its leading members. The General Conference of UNESCO had adopted in 1968 a new strategy for promoting communication research and policy, including a study on the role and effects of mass communication in modern society (UNESCO, 1970: 3). Its Department of Mass Communication commissioned from Halloran a working paper on mass media and society for a meeting of experts convened in Montreal in 1969. Halloran was also consulted about whom to invite and many on his list were active in IAMCR, including Bourquin, Maletzke, Nordenstreng, and Smythe.

Halloran’s working paper for Montreal and the final report of the meeting were issued as a publication in English, French, and Spanish (UNESCO, 1970). Taken together, this event and the publication stand as a milestone in the history of mass communication research. They were followed by UNESCO’s international panel of consultants on communication research, which included Halloran, Nordenstreng, Pisarek, Smythe, and others from the Association. The panel was first convened in April 1971 to prepare Proposals for an International Programme of Communication Research—another landmark document (Nordenstreng, 1994).

2.3 Growth, 1972–1990

Buenos Aires, in 1972, was more than just the first conference that IAMCR held in Latin America. It signaled a new era of cooperation with UNESCO—at a time when mass communication research was going through what might be called a “social turn”, the stage when a young field becomes conscious of itself and actively involved in social policy. UNESCO’s role in Buenos Aires was crucial, as it paid the travel costs of the twelve members of its panel on communication research (which held its second meeting there on the eve of the conference). Also many others found the means to travel to Argentina at the time, including Dusiska and Schiller.

According to Bourquin’s last presidential letter, the Buenos Aires conference, under the theme “Communication and Development”, was attended by some 50 IAMCR members in addition to “an important South American and Argentinian participation”. Elections resulted in Halloran as president and Dusiska as secretary general. Nordenstreng and Schiller were elected vice presidents, in addition to four others who had held office in the earlier years. A sign of the times was the establishment of a new section for research on media and developing countries. Alfred Opubor of Nigeria was elected head of this section, while Annette Suffert of France was appointed head of another new section on television studies.

From 1973, we can follow IAMCR developments in Halloran’s presidential letters, issued from the Leicester Centre, where the secretariat was effectively moved from Bourquin’s office in Lausanne. Halloran’s mimeographed letters followed the same familiar tone established by Bourquin, and they became longer and longer, reporting in detail not only the Association’s events and plans but also whom he had met and who had contacted him as the Association president. This networking established “Jim Halloran” as a man known by

hundreds of colleagues around the world and made Leicester a focal point in the field, with Peggy Gray as the president's right hand in administrative matters.

Secretary general Dusiska, at his Leipzig office, remained somewhat in the background but cooperated effectively with Halloran. Dusiska hosted a meeting of the Executive Committee with a thorough debate on the Association's past, present, and future. The Committee welcomed the host's offer to organize the next biennial conference in Leipzig, employing large institutional resources that secretary general Dusiska had at the Karl Marx University with the backing of the East German authorities. With Leipzig, the Association's tradition of holding successive conferences in the Eastern, Southern, and Western hemispheres was established.

The Leipzig conference in 1974 addressed the general theme of "Mass Communication and Social Consciousness in a Changing World", with four subthemes cutting across the field: economics, participation, socialization, and developing nations. Over 60 papers were presented, and all the papers together with the keynote addresses were printed by the Leipzig host in a multilingual book of two volumes. The conference had a record attendance of 250 delegates from 31 countries. They included, again, the UNESCO panel members who were scheduled to meet before the conference. President Halloran praised the conference in his "Dear Friends and Colleagues" letter of December 1974: "To me, one of the most encouraging features was to be found in the number of new faces at Leipzig. For an Association like ours it is good to have the continued support and loyalty of old friends, but it is also absolutely essential to attract and keep the interest of new and younger researchers."

In the area of publications, Halloran reported that UNESCO was willing to subsidize the publication of an IAMCR Monograph which, in addition to containing articles and an extended bibliography on a selected theme appropriate to our field of interest, will include two other sections. The Monograph became a book of 130 pages, published on the eve of the next conference (Halloran 1976). It contained two substantive articles on media and socialization (by a British and a Soviet author), with an extensive international bibliography on the topic, compiled by Pisarek. In addition, the book included Halloran's profile of IAMCR and Nordenstreng's presentation of an emerging global system of documentation and information centers for mass communication research.

The General Assembly in Leipzig left the officers elected in Buenos Aires in place, but voted to appoint a committee to prepare a proposal to overhaul the association's statutes for the next conference, in two years' time. The conference, it was decided, would take place in Leicester, with a title lifted from UNESCO's International Program: "Mass Media and Man's View of Society." In the General Assembly debate, Gerbner pointed out "the sexist interpretation of 'Man's View,'" and this reminder led to the inclusion of Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann as additional member of the conference planning committee, comprised of Halloran, Dusiska, Nordenstreng, and Schiller. This was the first time that gender issues were recorded in IAMCR proceedings.

The Leicester conference was held in late August and early September 1976. It was attended by over 300 scholars from 40 countries. This made it the best ever attended meeting in the history of the Association. The conference programme was divided into four main themes: (1) the state-of-the-art in communication research, addressed by Lothar Bisky (German Democratic Republic), George Gerbner (USA), and Peter Golding (UK); (2) structures and contexts of media production, addressed by Stuart Hall (Jamaica/ UK), Michael Tracey (UK), and John Pollock (USA); (3) media influence, addressed by Neville Jayaweera (Sri Lanka/World Association for Christian Communication), N. Mansurov (USSR), and Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann (FRG); and (4) media and

international understanding, addressed by Luis Beltran (Colombia/Canada), Phil Harris (UK), Al Hester (USA), and Frank Ugboajah (Nigeria). Discussants included Jay Blumler, Theodore Glasser, Jan Ekecrantz, Cees Hamelink, Elihu Katz, Ramona Rush, and Percy Tannenbaum.

In addition to the plenary sessions, workshops were convened around specific topics and projects, including “Cultural Indicators”, “Women and Mass Media”, “Media/Cultural Imperialism”, “Ethical Problems in Mass Communication”, and “Communication and Community” (an eight-nation project contracted by UNESCO to IAMCR). These as well as the section meetings facilitated the presentation of dozens of individual papers. Most of the proceedings raised highly topical issues, making the Leicester conference a timely platform for intellectual exchanges. Indeed, the conference offered a panorama of mass communication research that no historian of the field should neglect. The conference was also remarkable because of the adoption of resolutions on the need for international communication policies in the service of democratic development, and for the support for the universal right to communicate.

Leicester 1976 was a landmark in the organizational history of IAMCR, since the statutes were revised, following recommendations by the committee appointed in Leipzig, and elections held according to the new structure, whereby the Executive Board was to be supervised by a large International Council that included both ordinary members and the section heads. The composition of the Board remained more or less the same, while the International Council was internationally worldwide in its membership. The slate for elections was adopted by the general assembly, as proposed by Halloran. His proposal was prepared behind the scenes during the conference itself, by Nordenstreng, who tried to achieve a balanced representation not only in terms of geopolitics but also of scholarly generations as well as gender. Accordingly, seven women were brought to the Council, including Nelly de Camargo of Brazil, Anita Werner of Norway, and Gertrude Robinson of Canada. Robinson’s entry pushed out Dallas Smythe, who had been a leadership member since 1970.

After Leicester, IAMCR published another book with UNESCO’s support (IAMCR, 1978). Halloran and his assistants reviewed the main themes of the Leicester conference, and relevant bibliographies were compiled by Pisarek in Cracow and documentary workers in other regional centers of communication research.

The next conference was held in Warsaw, in September 1978, with the general theme “Mass Media and Culture”. Its attendance once more surpassed the preceding conferences: nearly 500 participants from 38 countries. The Association’s membership had already grown to nearly a thousand, from more than 50 countries. While the membership kept growing, special interest groups became more organized. One of these was a Marxist or “materialist theory” approach to communication research, which was first convened as an informal group at the Leicester conference and was approved in the Warsaw General Assembly, after heated debate, as a section called “Political Economy”. The section on professional education convened a special session jointly with the American AEJ and the IOJ, with Nordenstreng as its president since the Leicester conference.

As before, this conference also led to a UNESCO-supported book (IAMCR, 1980). It covered the four thematic aspects of the conference: ideologies, theories, and methodologies of mass media and culture; structure, content, and influence of national cultures; political, economic, and technological

factors of cross-cultural and international communication; and content, values, and effects of cross-cultural and international communication. The four reviews were written by two Polish and two British scholars, followed by a comprehensive bibliography compiled with the assistance of the UNESCO-related International Network of Information and Communication Centres on Communication Research (COMNET).

IAMCR returned to Latin America in August 1980, eight years after Buenos Aires, to Caracas, Venezuela, for a conference titled “New Structures of International Communication”. This was another successful event, although not very many participants from other continents could afford the trip. Among those present, in addition to most of the officers, were Nelly de Camargo of Brazil and Cees Hamelink of the Netherlands—both of whom were elected vice president in Caracas. A highlight of the conference was an unscheduled debate between Ithiel de Sola Pool and Herbert Schiller on the topic of media technology and ideology. An offshoot of the Caracas conference was a critical examination of the draft report of the International Commission for the Study on Communication Problems. The draft, known as the MacBride Report for the commission’s chair, Sean MacBride, had just been issued and closely read by several IAMCR activists, and led to a collection of essays (Hamelink, 1980).

By this time, the UNESCO panel of consultants on communication research had finished its term and could no longer meet parallel to IAMCR, thus ending UNESCO’s indirect subsidy. UNESCO’s support to thematic publications was also discontinued, a development parallel to its declining support to COMNET. This was due to changing priorities in UNESCO’s communication programme that, in the late 1970s, was increasingly concerned with the MacBride Commission (MacBride et al., 1980). Several IAMCR members, including president Halloran and vice president Zassoursky, contributed to the Commission’s work through its secretariat and series of background papers, but this work bypassed IAMCR as an institution.

Nevertheless, UNESCO did contract with IAMCR to carry out a major study on foreign news (Sreberny-Mohammadi et al. 1985). Also, the section on professional education (headed by Zassoursky and later by Nordenstreng) mobilized, together with the AEJ, IOJ, WACC, and the regional sister associations in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, a project for the promotion of textbooks in journalism education in the developing world. This project received a major grant from UNESCO’s new International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC)—thanks to the efficient lobbying of Alfred Opubor, who represented Nigeria on the IPDC board. Later, in the 1990s, the project continued with support from the Finnish International Development Agency (FINNIDA).

Caracas was followed by conferences in Paris (1982), Prague (1984), Delhi (1986), and Barcelona (1988). In Barcelona, the Association’s statutes were modified again, to restrict the presidency to a single term: two years as president-elect, followed by four years as president, and then two more years as past president. Halloran had been reelected three times since Buenos Aires in 1972, making him the longest-serving president of the Association, with eighteen years of service (with the final two alongside President-Elect Cees Hamelink). The Iranian-American Hamid Mowlana became Vice President, together with K. E. Eapen of India. The revised statutes no longer called for a long list of vice presidents (twelve had been elected in Prague); the number was now limited to five, to

be followed by a limit of two after the Barcelona conference. Halloran's term ended formally in Bled in 1990, after which he became Honorary President, along with his predecessors Bourquin, Nixon, and Terrou.

The conferences and other activities of IAMCR in the 1980s continued to be broadly based and successful, with Barcelona in 1988 as the highlight—attended by more than 600 participants from 46 countries. The eight sections and 32 ad hoc working groups organized more than 70 panels in all, with more than 250 papers presented. Adding to this record attendance, Halloran could proudly announce the latest membership figures: 1850 members from 60 countries.

Yet the rapid growth and dynamism of the previous decade, partly stimulated by UNESCO's financial assistance, was no longer present. IAMCR continued its established forms of formal activity, without introducing a newsletter, or its own journal. After Gerbner became editor of the *Journal of Communication*, published by the Annenberg School for Communication in Philadelphia, he suggested that it become an IAMCR journal, but the proposal was rejected by the International Council, mainly on financial grounds but also because of hesitancy about being tied to only one journal—and an American one at that. Meanwhile, other associations in different regions mobilized researchers closer to home, including the African Council for Communication Education (ACCE), the Asian Media Information and Communication Centre (AMIC), and the Asociación Latinoamericana de Investigadores de la Comunicación (ALAIC).

By 1987 there was already a commonly held sentiment within the leading IAMCR bodies that the Association was approaching a state of stagnation and that it was time for a change of generation—as well as a change in the presidency. This message was first presented to Halloran in a letter by the Finnish Association of Mass Communication Research during a meeting of the Executive Board in Tampere in August 1987, which suggested two candidates for a replacement: Hamelink and Mowlana.

The elections in Barcelona 1988 were historic in the sense that there was an open election for the International Council, with each position having a male as well as a female candidate—a process proposed by Gerbner. Indeed, it was after 1988 that “female members began to penetrate what until then had been the top management ‘glass ceiling’ in our organization, thanks in part to a more egalitarian attitude on the part of our male colleagues and pressure from the newly formed Women's Network” (Robinson, 2002). But gender did not just surface in IAMCR management; it also attracted scholars doing research on media and gender, leading to a section headed by Madeleine Kleberg of Sweden. A new section was also established in media education, headed by Birgitte Tufte of Denmark.

IAMCR was a close witness to the “collapse of Communism” in Eastern Europe from 1989 to 1991, first in August 1989 in Budapest, where Secretary General Tamás Szecskö hosted a meeting of the International Council during the days when the first East Germans escaped to the West via their embassy in Budapest—a prelude to the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989. The next IAMCR conference was held in Bled, Slovenia, which in August 1990 was in a state of violent conflict, leading to its secession from Yugoslavia. Yet the resort town at Lake Bled hosted a peaceful and professionally efficient meeting with the theme “Developments in Communication and Democracy”, paving the way to the new millennium.

2.4 Challenges⁴

The list of conferences after 1990 is quite long, since “off-year” meetings were held at sites offering to host IAMCR between the regular biennial events.⁵ Starting with Istanbul in 1991, these conferences were intended to be smaller and to combine a meeting of the International Council with selected plenary sessions and a number of section meetings. In practice, they were often quite large and rich in their scholarly content—for example, Dublin in 1993 with Anthony Giddens as the keynote speaker, and Oaxaca in 1997 with a celebration of IAMCR’s 40th anniversary—so that there was little difference between these meetings and the regular biennial conferences. There was, clearly, a demand for international platforms to be catered and more than enough enthusiastic hosts. On the other hand, the rising costs of international travel and improved Internet facilities for maintaining virtual contacts depressed to some extent the spontaneous interest in using IAMCR conferences for networking.

These developments created a challenge that led to a variety of proposals: to orient the Association toward virtual networking based on special interests mobilized by the sections; to focus on regional meetings in the off-years; and to convene the main conferences less frequently than every other year—perhaps every fourth or fifth year as many other scientific world congresses have done. However, no consensus emerged, and the Association continued more or less as before. For rank-and-file members, the core activities were organized by the sections, which grew in number despite attempts by a section review committee to establish a logic that would avoid proliferation. Working groups were introduced as a subcategory of sections, gradually leading to a total of thirty sections and working groups.⁶

There continues to be a fundamental challenge, one that has followed IAMCR throughout its history, created by the tension between special disciplinary approaches in the field (history, law, etc.) and a more general interest in interdisciplinary areas of research (development, new technology, etc.). This poses a dilemma that cannot easily be resolved through organizational arrangements. This was recognized by Halloran and his predecessors and, in consequence, they were quite open to different initiatives and concerned with achieving a truly international representation. As Terrou used to say, no scientific progress was possible without extensive international collaboration.

Maintaining a worldwide association—first in terms of its East-West balance and later its North-South balance—has been a challenge throughout the history of IAMCR. There have also been periods of friction between different regional interests within the Western world—Spanish-speaking versus Anglophone regions, Europe versus North America—but these conflicts never overtook a common interest in a global platform. In fact, it can be argued that geopolitics has not been an obstacle so much as a positive factor that has made IAMCR both internationally representative and intellectually stimulating. If there have been obstacles throughout our history—as in all human organizations—they are to be found in personalities and their “chemistry” rather than in scholarly traditions as such.

The changing nature of mass communication itself in the era of new media and digitalization has also presented many challenges. A manifestation of this was the decision to change the Association’s name: “Mass” was replaced by “Media” at the general assembly in Sydney in 1996.

The proposal was made by Wolfgang Kleinwächter, then head of the legal section, and it was approved by acclamation. The name change was smooth because there was no need to revise the English acronym IAMCR. Moreover, the other language versions of the name remained unchanged, as “mass” was absent from both the French Association Internationale des Etudes et Recherches sur l’Information et la Communication (AIERI) and the Spanish Asociación Internacional de Estudios en Comunicación Social (AIECS).

The change was a natural step reflecting a general trend since the 1990s to do away with “mass” as the distinctive feature of the field and instead elevate “media” as its central designator. Accordingly, many academic programmes and institutions adopted “media and communication” in their names. On the other hand, “mass communication” has not become totally anachronistic either, retaining its status as a valid label for the field in individual institutions as well as associations.⁷ One should recall that six decades ago the concept of mass communication was quite modern, and in the 1940s it was even written into UNESCO’s constitution, according to which the organization was charged to “collaborate in the work of advancing the mutual knowledge and understanding of peoples, through all means of mass communication and to that end recommend such international agreements as may be necessary to promote the free flow of ideas by word and image” (Article 2a).⁸

The Association has continuously faced new challenges, both institutionally and substantively. The institutional challenge was met by expanded relationships with the UN system beyond UNESCO, to include the Economics and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), as well as NGOs, including the IFJ, which after the Cold War embraced most of the former IOJ. Perhaps the most significant challenge was presented by the particularly topical debates in the field of human rights in platforms such as the Organization of Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE, Helsinki 1992), the World Conference of Human Rights (Vienna 1993), and the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS, Geneva 2003 and Tunis 2005). A focus on communication rights meant a return to IAMCR’s roots, when its founders had participated in the drafting of Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. IAMCR members offered a critical-analytical approach, seeking to achieve a balance between those with proprietary interests in employing the concept of human rights as an instrument to justify globalization for commercial purposes, and those with democratic interests, championing fundamental freedoms in pursuit of enhancing civil society and its media in the post-Cold War world.

These challenges were created in part by UNESCO’s move away from the so-called New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO), its abandonment of the MacBride Commission’s approach, and its acceptance of a neoliberal solution to communication problems.⁹ Personality changes in UNESCO’s communication sector led to less emphasis on the scientific tradition represented by IAMCR’s activities. The most obvious change occurred in the early 1990s when Alain Modoux (former head of UNESCO’s press relations) became the director of the Communication Sector, succeeding Alan Hancock, the media research and policy expert. Until Hancock, the sector had always been quite sympathetic to communication research, and regarded IAMCR as its prime representative. With Modoux, IAMCR lost its special status at UNESCO, which had begun looking for partners among media proprietors and public relations circles. This was also reflected in the process of reorganizing the NGOs associated with UNESCO, whereby

IAMCR is nowadays found among a dozen media-related NGOs, replacing its earlier status as one of three media NGOs and the only one representing research (Nordenstreng, 2007).

As part of this reorientation, UNESCO helped to create a new body called ORBICOM, the International Network of UNESCO Chairs in Communication. It was established in 1994 around the so-called UNESCO Chairs in Communication, which were endowed partly with UNESCO funding in several universities, particularly in developing and former socialist countries. However, in practice, most of its membership was made up of academic and industrial representatives from the West. Formally, this new body was not directed against IAMCR, but in practice it contributed to a confusing and divisive state in the international field of communication research.

The global landscape of communication associations was further confused by the strengthening of regional research associations, although most of them have friendly and even formalized relationships with IAMCR. The first of these was AMIC, the Asian Media Information and Communication Centre, established in 1971, and the most recent is ECREA, the European Communication Research and Education Association, established in 2005. Also, several international organizations of a special thematic nature have entered the field, including the Association for Cultural Studies (ACS) and the Association for Internet Researchers (AoIR).

A particular challenge was posed by ICA, the International Communication Association, which in the 1990s began a process aimed at internationalizing its membership beyond its predominantly North American base. At the same time, Klaus Krippendorff of the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania, with David Mitchell from the University of Calgary in Canada, launched IFCA, the International Federation of Communication Associations, aiming to establish a common platform for different research-oriented associations in the field. IAMCR was lukewarm to this initiative, which was more or less the same as its own original mission, but it did not oppose the idea as such. Other international and national associations were not too enthusiastic, either, to join a common global platform for the sharing of research in the field. After some initial enthusiasm, this voluntary club has remained more or less a paper tiger.

By the turn of the millennium, the international landscape of media and communication research organizations had grown to be quite abundant and diverse (cf. Nordenstreng, 2011). What does this suggest about IAMCR?

On the one hand, we may say that the mission of IAMCR has been successfully carried out, as the field has expanded not only in terms of national institutions but also of international networks. On the other hand, we may ask to what extent this historical success story is attributable to IAMCR—has it happened perhaps in spite of, rather than because of, IAMCR influence?

The present authors' answer to this question is quite cautious and even cynical: IAMCR cannot be celebrated as a decisive factor in internationalizing the field—the Association has followed rather than driven the development. Still, IAMCR has played a vital part in mobilizing the international dimension of the field, especially in the earlier decades. It is unlikely that any other body could have more effectively promoted international networking in a field so deeply rooted in national conditions of politics, economy, and culture. This is a research problem for the sociology of science, but in any case we may conclude that an overall lesson of the IAMCR history is a paradox—an

irony—of the fact that its relative importance seems to have decreased the more the field has developed in general and become internationalized in particular.

3. Reflections¹⁰

The list of IAMCR conferences throughout its nearly 60 years of history demonstrates the impressive geographical spread of our Association. IAMCR has met in all continents, and although most of the venues have been in Europe, the list includes also several developing countries of the South, beginning with Argentina in 1972. The first 30 years of our history were under the Cold War conditions when IAMCR played a special role in facilitating East-West contacts and exchanges.

Michael Meyen has recently published an article on IAMCR in the East-West battlefield, exposing the East German attempts to use the Association as an instrument in Cold War politics (Meyen, 2014). As pointed out in Nordenstreng's comment on the article, this was only a side affair in the big picture whereby IAMCR served as a constructive and ecumenical platform for scholarly contact across political and cultural divides.

It is obvious that the Association has provided an opportunity for many emerging ideas to be articulated and internationally promoted in the field. For example, the gender approach was pushed to the agenda in Caracas in 1980, leading to a working group on "Sex Roles within Mass Media" which in 1990 became the Section of Gender and Communication. IAMCR has been fairly open to allow silent??weak signals in the field to be tried and mobilized, while not allowing the mainstream to enjoy hegemony.

On the other hand, the phenomenal expansion and diversification of our field over the past few decades has made it impossible to accommodate all special interests in the scholarship within one international association. Some of them have found it more practical to establish their own institutional homes outside IAMCR (and ICA) – such as scholars of Internet (<http://aoir.org/>) or of literary journalism (<http://ialjs.org/>). Particular aspects of communication, theoretical approaches and cultural as well as geopolitical areas are too varied to any longer allow a nice architecture within a single organization – what we face today is an increasingly hybrid world of communication research.

Yet a universal interest has not become obsolete. Along with diversification of the field and with increasing networking of scholars around the world there is even greater need for worldwide platforms. Therefore the original mission of IAMCR is still very much valid: "provide a forum where researchers and others involved in media and communication can meet and exchange information about their work" (Statutes Article 2.1.1.).

It is important to remember that in addition to serving as a "forum", the Association has throughout its history pursued a human rights inspiration and a concern for social relevance of academic research. From its pre-history that begins with the 1948 UN Conference on Freedom of Information to its involvement in the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in the early 21st century, the Association has pursued issues of free speech, participation in cultural life, sharing of knowledge, and the right to communicate. Late President Jim Halloran used to urge fellow scholars to not conduct research with the back to the world and the face towards the books. In this spirit of seeking academic and social relevance the Association's openness to East/West conversations and to

interaction with the global South and its regional associations has to be understood. Following from its history the Association is bound to continue its role in global scholarship since there are still major questions ahead of us in the field of media and communication studies. We face enormous challenges in the area of theoretical reflection and in particular in de-westernizing and de-colonizing conventional mind-sets. We need to find creative approaches to the science/policy encounter, to the researcher/practitioner confrontation and to gender and ethnic issues. It is also of critical importance that we engage with future studies: our very meaningful past gives us promising prospects for dealing with the future of public communication in both global and local perspective.

3.1 The Association as a forum for scientific reflection

In public and political perceptions of science finding answers to questions is prominently presented as the core activity of scientists. This is most prominently displayed in the popular science quizzes on television. These shows transform science into a game of solving puzzles. What a perversion of our trade! Science is above all else the art of asking critical questions.

One may think uncritically about many things, but one cannot think scientifically in an uncritical way. It is difficult to imagine how anyone could engage in scientific research without being critical! Uncritical thinking may be characteristic of other discourses in society, science can only be critical as it is to make distinctions and engage in analysis and assessment. This mental exercise requires a reflective mind. In science there is no place for the absolutist mind. The essential clash we face in today's world is a collision of mindsets that is more fundamental than rifts between cultures, ethnicities or religions. This is the clash between the absolutist mind and the reflective mind.

Their reflective mindset tells scientists that all claims to validity – be they political, moral, or religious – are open to examination and critique. The reflective mind is willing to test all ideas in public, listen to those who criticize them and be open to the need to revise earlier convictions. The core of the reflective mindset is the urge to ask questions. It thus defies the philosophical tradition that largely shaped Western educational programs and instead, inspired by Plato, insists that intelligence should be measured by the capacity to respond to questions. The suggestion that science equals finding smart answers to questions is fatal for the development of creative and critical thinking. In the reflective mindset, intelligence is measured by the capacity to ask questions. Reflective pedagogy allows children to have questions and uncertainties and thus develop their own visions and dreams about the world. To enable the art of asking questions inevitably entails leaving space for uncertainty. It is very promising for scientific development that to-day cosmologists are willing to accept that the universe consists of some 96 per cent of invisible dark energy and dark matter that we do not understand and cannot explain. In the same vein, it is an important step that advanced genetics research looks at itself as primarily 'driven by ignorance'.

The reflective mindset challenges such notions as absolute truth and certainty. It avoids solid foundations, fixed grounds and beliefs that there should be indubitable knowledge without which the world would be hopelessly lost. Reflectivity recognizes that Immanuel Kant liberated the human mind for speculative exploration and from the Cartesian craving for certain knowledge. Science is

not about definitive proof but about temporary approximations of reality which may be replaced by better approximations. For this critical reflective exercise science requires platforms with such essential characteristics as:

- discursive freedom which is the capacity to agree or disagree with each other's positions on the basis of reasons which we can evaluate and the validity of which we can freely accept or reject;
- respect for this discursive freedom which implies the recognition of the dignity of the agency of the other by accepting their autonomy to accept or reject claims which we hold as essential to our identities;
- co-operative behaviour, trust, diversity, and mobility: the key elements – according to Charles Darwin – for the survival of all species;
- creativity in dealing with the multiplicity of human identities;
- capacity to improvise in confronting uncertainty;
- acceptance of the temporality of all solutions to the complex problems of human adaptation to ever faster developments.

The required platform in science needs the features of a jazz band whose members make music not against each other but with each other, and learn from their errors without being penalized, find the right groove to swing together and hang-out after-hours to try out new ideas.

Without a declaration of canonization we have experienced since the early 1970s that the Association among other platforms comes closest to this fantasy platform!

We inevitably had our ups and downs in the quality of our critical reflection and the collegial spirit often left a lot to be desired. At times the band certainly played out of tune. But we also had the good fortune to have many scholars in our midst who really made a difference in our understanding of the role of communicative processes in a troubled world.

The key challenge for studies on communication and culture is whether this field of scientific enquiry can move into the adventure of questions about the ethics and perspectives of (human) life and thus accept responsibility for the social environment it investigates.

In this spirit we should continue to provide an essential contribution to the science of communication and herewith to the survival of the communicative species on the planet.

We are still young and our journey since 1957 promises bright futures. When Socrates stood before his judges in Athens, he argued that critique begins with the exercise of critical self-reflection. He admonished the court that, “the unexamined life is not worth living”. The IAMCR should continue to provide a forum for the kind of self-scrutiny and reflective thought that makes academic life worth living.

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NOTES

1 The present article is published in Spanish in *Disertaciones*, special issue on *Communication Research: history, current situation and prospective*, edited by Miguel Vicente and Manuel Martínez Nicolás [Estudiando la historia a través de la Asociación Internacional para el Estudio de la Comunicación Social (IAMCR). *Anuario Electrónico de Estudios en Comunicación Social "Disertaciones"*, 9(2), 46-67. Doi: [dx.doi.org/10.12804/disertaciones.09.02.2016.03](https://doi.org/10.12804/disertaciones.09.02.2016.03)], see <http://revistas.urosario.edu.co/index.php/disertaciones/article/view/4633>

The article is based on the authors' joint project on the history of the IAMCR. Its first manifestations are a booklet published for the 50th anniversary conference, *IAMCR in Retrospect* (Hamelink and Nordenstreng, 2007); an entry, "IAMCR," in the *International Encyclopedia of Communication* (Hamelink 2008); and a chapter, "Institutional networking: The story of the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR)" in the reader *The History of Media and Communication Research: Contested Memories* (Nordenstreng, 2008). The project will culminate in a book on the history of the IAMCR in the context of the history of the field.

2 This passage is based on Hamelink and Nordenstreng, 2007, pp. 6–8. Available online <http://iamcr.org/in-retrospect/preparation> It contains more detailed source references. See also <http://iamcr.org/in-retrospect>

3 This passage is based on Hamelink and Nordenstreng, 2007, pp. 10–19. Available online in respective subdivisions <http://iamcr.org/in-retrospect/foundation> <http://iamcr.org/in-retrospect/consolidation> <http://iamcr.org/in-retrospect/growth>

4 This passage is based mainly on Hamelink and Nordenstreng, 2007, pp. 20–21. Available online <http://iamcr.org/node/3024>

5 For a full list of the conferences, see <http://iamcr.org/node/2943>

6 These are presented in the IAMCR Web site: <http://iamcr.org/s-wg>

7 See, for example, that of the U.S. journalism-based academics <http://www.aejmc.org>

8 http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=15244&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

9 For a review of these changes, see Mansell and Nordenstreng (2006).

10 This passage is partly based on the authors' essay "IAMCR making history" in *IAMCR Newsletter* December 2014 <http://iamcr.org/newsletter-201412>