

Research in media and communication studies

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Who are we?

At the Department of Media and Communication Studies at Karlstad University we conduct internationally competitive research within three profile areas:

- (1) Communication, Citizenship and Social Change
- (2) Digital Media and Cultural Circulation
- (3) Global Media Studies

Our research is at the same time critically autonomous and socially oriented, and marked by theoretical and methodological inventiveness. The research profiles and the epistemological approach saturate the educational programmes of the department. Media and Communication Studies at Karlstad University is an internationally oriented intellectual environment which involves researchers with diverse backgrounds, and stimulate doctoral students to cosmopolitan modes of thinking.

Profile 1: Communication, Citizenship and Social Change

Communication is by its very nature the foundation of community making. In democratic societies the media provide both a material basis and a cultural form for the expression of identity and citizenship, as well as for the implementation and deliberation of political visions and decision processes. In other words, (mediated) communication bridges the distance between everyday life and institutional power, and thus also mediates social change in many different sectors of society. Communication both responds to and produces social change, and at Karlstad University we scrutinize these dynamics with a particular eye on the construction of citizenship. This involves an interest in the role of alternative media and transnational public spheres; media literacy and social learning, and the mediated construction of centres and peripheries in society (e.g. digital divides, urban/rural).

Profile 2: Digital Media and Cultural Circulation

The digitization of old and new media forms involves features such as interactivity, convergence and increased mobility. These features alter the modes of production and consumption in a variety of cultural branches, such as journalism, music production, and art. Ultimately, older distinctions between production and consumption, between culture industries, artists, journalists, audiences, etc, can no longer be taken for granted. One can in some areas more significantly speak of "cultural circulation", which is also a way of highlighting the intersection of economic and cultural processes. At Karlstad University research within this field is marked by great sensitivity to the mutual interplay between technological, cultural and economic dynamics. Our projects are thematically oriented towards areas where media convergence and interactivity are most clearly spelled out, such as in audio-visual culture, online social media, news making, surveillance,

and consumer culture, and try to explain their logics and consequences.

Profile 3: Global Media Studies

Information and communication technologies are at the core of the globalization process. While they generate global relationships, they also sustain local identities and development. Global Media Studies are a matter of understanding, explaining and evaluating these dual implications. Our research in this field focuses on how the media (re)shapes social relations, power structures and cultural representations in a global context, and how these patterns are experienced and enacted at the local level across the globe. Global Media Studies at Karlstad University unite political economic analyses of media ownership and policy-making with ethnographic accounts of social agency and expressivity. The profile is linked to the Master's programme (MSSc) in Global Media Studies at Karlstad University. From fall 2009 there is also a visiting professorship in Global Media Studies, funded by the Ander Foundation in Karlstad.

Within these profiles Media and Communication Studies is involved in the following faculty based research platforms:

- HumanIT: The Human Values of Information Technology
- DigiCom

Media and Communication Studies is one of a number of prioritized subjects at Karlstad University.