

Commentary

“More and Better” Research? Critical Communication Studies and the Problem of Policy Relevance

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Abstract: This article is a programmatic and reflexive report on a conference-workshop entitled *Converging in Parallel: Linking Communications Research and Policy in Emerging Canadian Scholarship*, held at McGill University November 9-10, 2006, and what we believe it suggests about improving the policy relevance of critical research in the field of communication studies in Canada. After canvassing three broad areas of communication policy research activity—methodology, linkages, and research topics—the report suggests several steps to address challenges identified in these areas.

Keywords: Policy; Regulation/CRTC; Methodology; Telecommunications policy

Résumé : Cet article est un rapport programmatique et réflexif sur un colloque intitulé *Converging in Parallel: Linking Communications Research and Policy in Emerging Canadian Scholarship*, tenu à l'Université McGill les 9 et 10 novembre 2006. L'article évalue ce que, à notre avis, ce colloque a à proposer pour rendre les recherches critiques en communication au Canada plus pertinentes pour la formulation de politiques. L'article, après avoir passé en revue trois champs de recherche sur les politiques communicationnelles (la

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méthodologie, les connections possibles et les sujets de recherche), présente plusieurs manières de surmonter les défis identifiés dans ces domaines.

Mots clés : politiques; Réglementation/CRTC; Méthodologie; Politiques en télécommunications.

Introduction

The Telecommunications Policy Review Panel (TPRP) was a three-person committee mandated by the Canadian Minister of Industry in 2005 to review Canada's telecommunications framework. Included in the TPRP's final report was the observation that, in Canada, a "relative paucity of academic work on what has been referred to as the 'regulatory craft'" has led to "heavy reliance on foreign (mostly U.S.-based) experts on economic, technical and even social regulation." It is time, the report suggested, for "more and better policy research and analysis . . . to keep Canadian telecommunications and ICT policy and regulation at the forefront of ICT developments" (Sinclair, Intven, & Tremblay, 2006, p. 265).

The policy domain addressed by the TPRP was federal telecom policy and regulation. Among its tasks was a substantive review of the reasoning underlying Canada's existing approach to telecom regulation. Yet only a small proportion of the supporting research presented to the panel was conducted within or with respect to the Canadian jurisdiction. Few of the scholars on whose research the panel relied to examine the underpinnings of Canadian telecom regulation worked in Canada. Only a handful of submissions to the panel relied on research undertaken by Canadians. Not many submissions to the panel were made by researchers as stand-alone participants.¹ It is this apparent mismatch which, at least partly, inspired the panel's remarks on the "paucity of academic work" (cf. Canada, House of Commons, 2003; Sauvageau, Fletcher, Logan, & Juneau, 2006).

There is good reason to reflect on how Canadian communication studies scholarship has approached the policy question, including the training and support available for researchers within communication studies who seek to speak to and improve policy and regulation. How can the communication studies discipline provide better analytic footing for sound communication policy, which must be the product of informed debate both within policymaking bodies, and between those bodies and their constituents? How might "more and better policy research and analysis," in the TPRP's words, emerge from the Canadian communication studies disciplinary apparatus and, in the process, from the researchers trained therein?

This commentary addresses these questions through a series of reflections instigated by *Converging in Parallel: Linking Communications Research and Policy in Emerging Canadian Scholarship*, a day-and-a-half event hosted at McGill University in November 2006.² *Converging in Parallel* was an informal conference-workshop aimed at "emerging" policy voices. Academically, these included graduate students, new faculty members, and scholars only beginning to explore communication policy as a research domain. Outside the academy, these included professionals; government policy, regulatory, and agency staff; industry stakeholders; and non-governmental and civil society actors whose experience in the communication policy sector was still limited.³

Converging in Parallel was animated by a series of questions about the linkages between the academy and federal communication policy in Canada. How can academic work inform, influence, and shift the agendas of policymakers accountable to Canadians—and, indeed, should it at all? Just whose work is at issue, as newly trained communication researchers, activists, and decision-makers begin to take their places in Canadian institutions? This report attempts to connect the authors' Converging in Parallel experience to what is a growing intradisciplinary dialogue both on how communication policy research in Canadian communication studies is configured (e.g., Savage, 2007) and on the related but separate matter of Canadian communication studies' capacity to speak to policy issues (cf. McChesney, 2007). We suggest that "more and better" linkages in and among research and policy communities, and "more and better" training for emerging communication policy researchers, could contribute to greater policy relevance for Canadian communication studies.

Disciplines and methodologies

A host of disciplines were represented at the conference, but most striking to us as organizers was how little quantitative research was in evidence at Converging in Parallel. Whatever the utility of the now-classic opposition between administrative and critical scholarship in communication studies and its cognates, there is some consensus in the communication studies literature that an epistemological commitment to critical research should neither scuttle policy work, nor obscure the pursuit of quantitative and, more broadly, strong evidence-based theorization in undertaking it (Bennett, 1992a; see also Acland, 2003; Bennett, 1992b; Flew, 1999; Miller, 1996, on which see DiMaggio, 1994; Sterne, 2005). Yet recognizing this need for more defensible empirical work has not necessarily led to concrete steps to reinsert it in critical communication studies work (Ramirez, 2007).⁴ Much of the research presented at Converging in Parallel, though critical, tended toward larger theoretical concerns that did not always accommodate the more micro-level programmatic issues or evidentiary gaps tied to the institutional concerns of actually existing policymaking (cf. Napoli, 1999). Policymakers participating in Converging in Parallel repeatedly underlined the need for more academic research that engages with existing policy processes. The openness to interdisciplinarity that communication studies brings to policy research may help address this disparity organically. But there is room for it to be addressed explicitly, too, for instance through greater exposure to quantitative and other evidence-based methodological work in undergraduate and graduate communication curricula. This issue is most obvious at the level of data analysis and methodology. Yet it goes even more deeply to the question of data collection itself.

Monica Auer's recent (2007) argument that, given the importance of "broad-based empirical evidence," the CRTC should publish significantly more data so researchers and policy interveners can research and intervene more effectively, suggests some of the nuances of this debate. The CRTC publishes annual broadcasting and telecom monitoring reports and a range of annual financial, operational, and ownership data, much of which is made available in spreadsheet format. Policy researchers in the communication studies setting have only scratched the surface of analyzing this information. There is considerable merit

in Auer's ultimate argument that bodies like the CRTC should view themselves as agencies whose provision of fuller information increases transparency and enables broader public participation in the policy process. Yet the assumptions that underlie Auer's recommendation are worth thinking about carefully.

Auer suggests that "[t]he CRTC . . . has the data, but does not disclose it" (2007, p. 83). We are less certain than is Auer that the CRTC does possess enough consistent data with the necessary underlying data quality infrastructure to increase the Commission's supply of it substantially to the public without significant new effort. Lodging the responsibility for expending some of that effort with the CRTC is one thing. But lodging it only with the CRTC, so that researchers may be freed of data collection responsibility in order to be presented with data sets for higher-order analysis, is quite another—a division of labour yoked to two sets of command metaphors. On one hand, it requires that we shift the CRTC's procedural self-image as a courtlike agency that does not provide evidence but, instead, independently judges that evidence put before it by interveners, in favour of a more agency-like model (e.g., Weiler, 1976)—a worthwhile shift, perhaps, but one that must be engaged with explicitly. The admittedly less interesting, more burdensome, and generally dull task of data collection from public sources, questionnaires, and other means is one from which academic researchers should not shrink, particularly where the price is dependence on an external body for data to analyze. Private-sector collection, tabulation, and reporting of market information is commonplace. Many such reports are the result of work by a relatively small quantity of professional staff. Surely academic researchers are no less able than private-sector ones to collect data (cf. Martin, 2002; Saint-Jacques, Lemieux, Martin, & Nadeau, 1998).

Policy ghettos

At *Converging in Parallel*, it was suggested on several occasions that policymakers and regulators are often unaware of research being done that is relevant to an ongoing policy or regulatory process. The CRTC, for instance, calls for comments frequently, even daily, yet communication studies scholars very rarely respond to these calls. A recent major CRTC report on the future of broadcasting regulation in light of new technologies was widely available on the CRTC website (2006c), announced with a widely distributed press release covered in most major media (CRTC, 2006b), and directed to the kinds of broad issues in which communication policy scholars have proven to be interested: yet few to no academics responded to the call (CRTC, 2006a), and few have appeared to respond to the report in scholarly venues. If researchers are not participating in the relatively open process convened by one of Canada's federal communication regulators, the likelihood of communication studies scholars participating in Canada's other communication regulators' processes—those of the Competition Bureau (which regulates wireless and other forborne telecommunications markets as well as non-broadcast media); of Industry Canada (which regulates radio spectrum and international telecom cables); of the Copyright Board; of the Canadian Television Fund; and a series of others—appears correspondingly diminished.⁵

One approach to this disconnect might be to advocate that policy and regulatory agencies' processes be modified to require literature reviews of current research. At present, such review takes place only to a very limited extent. The CRTC, for instance, consults the public on the great bulk of its material decisions, but the assumption—underwritten by classic marketplace-of-ideas models of deliberative democracy—is that those with something worth saying will muster the enthusiasm and resources to say it, and those who need representing will become aware of the need and find the wherewithal to become represented. Section 56 of the 1993 *Telecommunications Act* does grant the CRTC the power to order costs (Canada, Government of Canada, 1993), and section 44 of the CRTC's superintending *Telecommunications Rules of Procedure* makes use of this power by granting the CRTC the ability to order service providers to reimburse participation costs for interveners who represent subscribers with a direct interest in the hearing, participate responsibly, and contribute to a better understanding of the issues (Canada, Government of Canada, 1979). But because intervener costs under the *Telecommunications Act* are awarded subsequent to participation and do not constitute an assured stream of funding, they are ill-positioned to ensure ongoing policy monitoring and participation in the manner that the CRTC's regular hearings and paper procedures require. With respect to proceedings under the *Broadcasting Act*, meanwhile, intervener costs are unavailable altogether, although the House of Commons Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage recommended in 2003 that this be reexamined (Canada, 2003: Recommendation 15.6) after a private members' bill providing to this effect, numbered S-7, was introduced in the Senate by Senator Sheila Finestone in 2002, where it passed first reading (37th Parliament, 1st Session).

Other agencies are rarely required to go even that far. Yet, if it is reasonable that agencies better accommodate researchers, it is at least as reasonable that communications researchers consider ways in which they can act on the policy process, rather than waiting for that process to come to them. Evaluating and identifying strategies to increase the "impact" of research on policymaking is a well-travelled path worth examining in the Canadian communication studies context (Abderrahmane, 2005; see, for instance, Glover, 1993; Goldmann, 2003; Landry, Amara, & Lamari, 2001), especially in light of existing opportunities to be heard (Raboy, 1995a & 1995b). A study titled "The Role of Research in Communications Policy: Theory and Evidence" by Johannes Bauer and his colleagues takes an important related step in this direction in the U.S. context (Bauer, Kim, Mody, & Wildman, 2004).

Policy research need not be a ghetto within Canadian communication studies. Much of what communication studies research focuses on is shaped fundamentally by state decisions on whether and how to intervene in these very areas of focus, making the disconnect between researchers and policymakers unhelpful to all sides. It is at least as unhelpful to persistently isolate explicit "policy" research as a narrowly defined domain within communication studies. No hard conceptual boundary can convincingly distinguish an explicit focus on state policy with attendance to broader questions of governance and, indeed, the exercise and institutionalization of social power. The study of co-regulatory arrangements and of the public-pri-

vate partnerships that are their stalking-horses, for instance, blurs the boundaries of state, industry, and not-for-profit organizations in ways that render any division between policy and political economy studies unenforceable. Awareness of the basic inseparability between cultural technologies or content, on the one hand; of audiences and users who act on them, on the other; and of the intermediate steps and processes which shape both, in between, similarly makes it impossible to hive off policy work from audience, cultural, and technology studies.

Isolating so-called critical research from highly specific policy questions and, in turn, researchers from the policy processes that crystallize in each such question, represents a missed opportunity for Canadian communication studies not only because communication research matters to policy, as we have argued thus far, but also because the reverse is true. From ad hoc Royal Commissions and government committees, to social sciences and humanities research funding programs, to publications support and other public- and private-sector funding programs, the Canadian communication studies field is affected by government policy in the most fundamental ways. With increasing reliance on the use of ICTs for storing, accessing, and sharing information, however, newer domains of communication policy—copyright, privacy, access to information—move outward to shape a broader context in which research can or cannot be undertaken altogether. Michelle Byers (2007), for instance, argues that it is difficult to conduct extensive research on Canadian television insofar as no readily available archive of Canadian television programming, including public television programming, exists.

The lines of connection between policy-relevant communication research, communication policy research, and communication research-relevant policy may be approached from a number of standpoints. To do so from the standpoint of communication policy researchers, however, means almost inescapably either focusing on the narrower domain that is communication policy research or acting as broker between policy stakeholders and researchers. It was striking, in that sense, to note the extent to which Canadian communication policy's classic problematics were well represented at *Converging in Parallel*: the relative merits of Canadian content, universal access to communication networks and technologies, the CBC's public broadcasting mandate and future, development and protection of Canadian screen, music, and other cultural (or "creative") industries. Other areas attracting interest included social movements around communication issues and, occasionally, intellectual property, especially copyright. On the whole, however, "emerging" researchers appeared to remain preoccupied with the so-called classic questions. Indeed, as part of a roundtable of more-established actors in communication policy formation organized to complement *Converging in Parallel*'s emerging voices format, Donald MacLean, a former high-ranking Canadian communication policymaker who left the Canadian civil service more than two decades ago for a post in an intergovernmental organization based abroad, remarked on how little seemed to have changed in Canada's communication policy dialogue over the years (MacLean, 2006). To what extent has communication policy research been able to generate new ideas and, for that matter, address new policy problems?

Debates around network neutrality, copyright issues, access programs, and other current issues frequently appeared grounded in a limited supply of research

findings. For instance, Teisha Gaylard, Director of Policy at the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council, noted that her co-regulatory body relies on little academic research in its decision-making process, does not conduct much research of its own, and sees little research presented to it or brought to its attention in its public proceedings (Gaylard, 2006).

The growing dialogue on communication policy research taking place within Canadian communication studies has much to gain by engaging both intellectually and substantively with similar conversations taking place in other jurisdictions and to which a disconnect at the interface between communication studies and communication policy is by no means foreign (Mueller, 1995; Noam, 1993). Events such as the Telecommunication Policy Research Conference (TPRC), European Communication Policy Research (EuroCPR), and now Asian Communication Policy Research (CPR_{south}) conferences are important sites of interaction between communication studies-based policy research, other communication policy researchers, and other communication policy stakeholders (Garnham et al., 2004; Owen, 1998/2003; Samarajiva & Gamage, 2007; Streeter, 1996). An intellectual history juxtaposing successive policy research voices, such as Sandra Braman's in the U.S. context (2003), would constitute invaluable primary material in the Canadian setting, building on already-existing studies of past Royal Commissions and related endeavours (cf. Berland, 1995; Robinson, 2000).

But despite the value in looking, for instance, to the ways in which an initiative like the Necessary Knowledge for a Democratic Media project of the U.S. Social Science Research Council (SSRC) has galvanized a community of interest around it—including conferences, a Web-based clearinghouse, and funding initiatives—it is important to underline the necessary “radical contextualism” that is a component of engaging with the policy process and political culture of a particular jurisdiction (Grossberg, 1993). For instance, an approach wherein the policymaking process enrolls “interested knowledge” in policy interventions between opposing interveners is implicit in the guidelines adopted for certain grants awarded by this SSRC program. By matching researchers with non-profit organizations or community groups, the idea is that communications researchers who ally themselves with a particular pole in the context of an adversarial process can redress opposing parties' already-significant reliance on research findings.

The approach that underlies the present commentary, on the other hand, focuses on the role of different disciplinary approaches in the interventions of all stakeholders—assuming both that the nature of communication studies research would in itself render its policy take-up significant, and that a more consensual process is possible in which researchers speak directly to policymakers in a manner that leaves them free to adopt nuanced stances. Each of these differences in assumptions, we would argue, is tied to elements of Canada's distinct political cultures and communications regulatory processes, including the relative industry sizes and corresponding sizes of relevant lobby groups and public affairs consultancies in the two jurisdictions (cf. Livingstone & Lunt, 2007, and Livingstone, Lunt, & Miller, 2007a, 2007b, in the British context, and Raboy 1995a, 1995b, 1995c in the Canadian setting).

More and better training

Communication studies has certain advantages as a home for policy research. New approaches not present in any discipline are welcomed. Multidisciplinarity is an option: those with insights on communication policy and regulation from other fields can be part of the conversation. If academic research is to help open up a constructive dialogue with communication policymaking, we suggest that communication studies is therefore an excellent place to start doing so. But such dialogue falls all too easily into a series of binary oppositions leading to fast preferences: critical, not administrative research; qualitative, not quantitative work; non-market, not market approaches; “neutral,” not biased carriage; academics, not bureaucrats. Communication policy research training can highlight these oppositions and ensure that researchers think them through cautiously and seek to resolve them based on an informed decision, not by default or due to limited skill sets. Such training might include the following:

- *Methodology workshops.* These could take the form of, for instance, a regularly-held intensive summer program for which those participants who are students could be credited at home institutions—but which would try to include non-university-based persons, too. Such an annual workshop could rotate through various institutions or, alternatively, be hosted on a permanent basis by an individual institution. In addition to its direct training role, such a workshop could help promote informal interaction between academic and non-academic policy stakeholders and sensitize each to how to fit rigorous research into the policymaking process, similar to Sandra Braman’s suggestion (2003, p. 235) to “bring policy-makers and academics together in the course of building a discourse and epistemic community.” Such a workshop would lend itself well to creation of a manual, handbook, or toolkit on research methods for communication policy researchers in Canada.
- *Graduate student internships.* Particularly for graduate students who have shown some commitment to research and to developing a particular expertise in the communication policy area, a stint within government departments, arm’s-length institutions, and industry and non-governmental stakeholders—whether through a formal “co-op”-style program or less formalized institutional or individual initiatives—is essential. A hands-on and day-to-day understanding of the policymaking process is otherwise difficult to achieve. David Skinner also proposes a similar undertaking (Savage, 2007).
- *Communication law and policy clinics.* Clinical legal education, in which law students staff a free community resource, plays an increasingly important role in providing students with context while giving them the opportunity to serve their communities. A trend within clinical legal education involves specialized clinics: in the U.S., for instance, intellectual property law clinics, for instance, exist at American University, Boston University, the University of Connecticut, Franklin Pierce Law Center, the University of Maryland,

the University of Southern California, and the University of Virginia, among others. Closer to home, the University of Ottawa houses the Canadian Internet Policy and Public Interest Clinic (CIPPIC). Particularly because communication law and policy act on highly regulated sectors, clinics linking law with graduate communication policy students to dispense high-quality and accurate legal information specific to the artistic, entertainment, information, media, and telecommunications sectors—a musician wondering where she is allowed to busk, a community group wanting to include particular material in an online newsletter, or a consumer unsure where to turn about a phone bill error—are a realisable and, we believe, unique opportunity to practise applied communication policy research.

- *Coming inside the tent.* What steps can be taken to reach out to or encourage existing communication policy workers to undertake doctorates as an entry point for academe? Doing so would represent a significant transfer of knowledge and social capital, and is especially appropriate for communication studies departments since, given our field’s stated commitment to interdisciplinarity, a policy professional’s prior particular disciplinary training in another area should pose less of a barrier to studying communication at a graduate level than it might, say, in accounting, law, or economics.

More and better linkages

More productive links are necessary to connect communication policy research within communication studies with communication policy research within other disciplines that may not share basic assumptions or approaches, and with the commercial, activist, and public sectors engaged in the communications policy-making process in Canada. This might be accomplished through the following means:

- *Policy reviews.* Informed commentary bringing insights from research to bear in reporting to the discipline on the policy process through an established publication venue would be helpful. By regularizing the application of academic insights and approaches to policy releases on an ongoing basis, such releases could be made an increasingly ordinary part of the communication studies landscape, such that academic researchers develop familiarity both with policy’s insights and its gaps (see, for instance, Bartley, 1988; Hariton & Yale, 1995; Taylor, 1988; Wilson, 1995). Special effort should be made to ensure that such a publication published scholarly papers online, to ensure their ongoing airing to a wider interested audience. The *Canadian Journal of Communication* is one possible venue for such an effort.⁶
- *Policy metadata standards and policy-tracking databank.* An information repository for policy researchers providing notice of upcoming proceedings, calls for comments, and other invitations to the policy process in the communication, culture, media, and information policy sectors would enable graduate students and researchers—as well as the public—to weigh in on particular policy questions. A

repository of this type would both notify researchers as to the call for participation and allow them to identify and adapt research questions and designs where appropriate to weigh in on questions relevant to policymakers. Working to develop metadata standards that enable different policy and regulatory bodies to make such announcements in a manner that could straightforwardly be aggregated would, as a research project, be both highly instructive to participants—its authors would need to understand diverse policy processes in great detail—and useful in providing the basic infrastructure for such a databank.

Pointing to much the same gap between policymakers and policy researchers that we have pointed to here, the 1971 “Telecommission” report recommended the reverse of the above proposal—the creation of a standing index of funded and graduate student work relevant to communication policymakers in Canada, so that policymakers could easily locate and contact scholars who might have something to add to particular policy issues, either informally or formally (Canada, Department of Communication, 1971). We are not, however, convinced that such a clearinghouse would contribute as much as hoped: although individual policymakers often respond positively when approached by academics, and policymakers who convene public consultations may be institutionally required to consider and respond to research put forward, we are unaware of institutional constraints that require policymakers to go out of their way to seek out additional research of their own volition.

To the extent that to do so takes additional time and may contradict positions put forward by stakeholders, such that balancing their interests is made more difficult, a policymaker may indeed be incited not to seek out additional research where not strictly necessary. A Telecommission-style databank might therefore work best as part of a strategy to connect researchers with the policy process, much as universities actively promote academic experts to journalists seeking to shape a story. At present in Canadian policymaking, the burden appears to lie on researchers to actively seek out policymakers and policy-relevant projects.

The TPRP’s message to Canadian academics is best taken up as one concerned not simply with “more” research or even “better” research, but with what “more” and “better” can and should mean. The ideas proposed in this report are intended as contributions to that discussion. The discussion itself, however, is ongoing.

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Notes

1. Longford and Shade (2007) report on a content analysis conducted by Rachel Miles, of Concordia University, finding that 2 of 109 submissions to the TPRP’s first round of submissions, and 1 of 89 submissions to the TPRP’s second round of submissions, for a total of 3 of 198 across the two rounds, were from “educational institutions.” Adding to these the individual submissions of 4 academics in the first round, and 2 in the second round, the total suggests that academics were responsible for 4.5% of submissions to the study panel. The length and range of each submission varied, yet such statistics surely convey some meaning. All submissions may be found online on the TPRP’s website, at www.telecomreview.ca/epic/site/tprrp-gecert.nsf/en/h_rx00025e.html, last visited on November 15, 2007.
2. *Converging in Parallel* was organized independently by this article’s three authors, of whom one (Abramson) was a student at McGill University’s Faculty of Law and two (Shtern, Taylor) were also employed by McGill University’s Media@McGill unit at the time. In addition, funding was provided by several bodies to defray the event’s costs. The bulk of this funding was provided by the Beaverbrook Fund for Media@McGill. Additional funding to defray the event’s costs was provided by a project on “media governance” funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council’s Strategic Research Clusters Design program (project applicants: Marc Raboy, Catherine Murray, Florian Sauvageau, and David Taras); by McGill University’s Dean of Arts and Vice-Principal (Research & International Relations), respectively; and by the Concordia-Montréal-UQAM Joint Doctoral Programme in Communications.
3. A full description and participant list is archived on the workshop’s website, at <http://bazu.org/parallel/participants.html>.
4. Because Ramirez’ analysis is based on 30 years of the *Canadian Journal of Communication* and of the French-language journal *Communication* (formerly *Communication-Information*), respectively, the object of her analysis is the contents of Canada’s chief scholarly journals in the field of communications. The object of ours is the output of Canadian communication studies scholarship. The degree to which the former reflects the latter is the extent to which Ramirez’ work illustrates the place of quantitative work in Canadian communications scholarship. The degree to which the two objects diverge is, of course, the extent to which Canada’s chief scholarly communications journals are viewed as inhospitable homes for scholarship by the authors of quantitative studies—suggesting that bibliometric study of the relationship between these journals, on the one hand, and scholarly output by Canadian communication studies scholars and communication scholars studying Canada, on the other, would be a fruitful contribution to the conversation of which this article is a part.
5. Peer-reviewed academic research can take months and, frequently, years to reach publication in established scholarly venues. Responsiveness to in-progress policy processes through discrete research may therefore be incompatible with prior peer-reviewed publication of that research, as it is prone to being dated or even made irrelevant when further policy development inevitably occurs during the gap between submission and publication. More generally, activities related to policy intervention are frequently not recognized within the academic reward system and can, as such, constitute extracurricular, pro bono labour for participating scholars. However, the ability to undertake discrete research for particular policy processes should be distinguished from the ability to produce research whose empirical basis and focused analysis makes it amenable to use in policy proceedings: see, for instance, Hargrave & Livingstone, 2006. This article argues that the former is at least as important as the latter.
6. In August 2007, the authors of this article submitted a proposal to the editors of the *Canadian Journal of Communication* with regard to implementing this recommendation. That proposal may be downloaded at <http://bazu.org/parallel/policyreviews.pdf>.

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