

## **Report of Cultural Economy and Globalisation Theme's *Media System, Political Context and Informed Citizenship Symposium,* 22 September, 2011.**

The Symposium was convened by Professor David Rowe who, with Professors Rod Tiffen (University of Sydney) and Paul Jones (University of New South Wales), is responsible for the Australian component of an 11-nation research project, *Media System, Political Context and Informed Citizenship: A Comparative Study*\*. This Project is investigating how changes in the organisation of the media and in wider society are affecting the quality of citizenship, and especially people's knowledge of public affairs, in a range of international contexts. In tracking the changing patterns of media consumption and use in different countries, the project is an important examination of media and democracy across the globe.

The international participants who presented at this regional (East Asian) Symposium\*\* were project leader Professor James Curran (Director of the Goldsmiths Leverhulme Media Research Centre, University of London, UK) and senior consultant Dr Sharon Coen (Canterbury Christ Church University, UK – now based at The University of Salford, UK). The East Asian participants presenting their research were Professors Kaori Hayashi and Yukio Maeda (University of Tokyo, Japan) and Professor June Woong Rhee (Seoul National University, Korea).

Professor Graeme Turner, ARC Federation Fellow and Director of the Centre for Critical and Cultural Studies, University of Queensland, was discussant at the Symposium, which will also be attended by invited academics from Charles Sturt, Macquarie, Monash, Newcastle, New South Wales, Sydney, and Tasmania Universities, as well as from UWS\*\*\*. Participants discussed initial findings from the project's 11 national sites, the others being Canada, Colombia, Greece, India, Italy, Norway, and the USA.

In association with the Symposium, Professor James Curran gave a free public talk, 'The Internet: Prophecy and Reality', at the Justice and Police Museum on September 21.

The public lecture can be accessed here on the ABC's [Big Ideas](#) site.

A *Sydney Morning Herald* opinion piece based on the lecture, 'The internet is powerful ... for those who can afford it'. It can be accessed on the [Sydney Morning Herald](#) website.

Several co-authored peer-refereed publications based on the Project and Symposium have been submitted or are in preparation. The Australia-based participants are also seeking to contract a co-edited book with an international publisher.

### **David Rowe**

#### **\*Project Summary: Media System, Political Context and Informed Citizenship: A Comparative Study**

Media systems are changing rapidly as a consequence of the rise of the internet, digitisation and the proliferation of TV channels. Media systems are also becoming more similar as a consequence of increasing market influence. Yet, important national differences – not least strong public service broadcasting in some countries – still persist. One objective of this

study is to investigate, in the context of rapid change, the nature of the news diets consumed by different nations.

In many countries, electoral turnout and party membership are falling, prompting concern that citizen involvement in public affairs is declining. And in some countries but not others, there has been a precipitate decline in the audience for TV news that cannot be attributed simply to the rise of the internet. A second objective is to investigate national differences in media use, and the wider societal influences that promote or inhibit news consumption. For this reason, democratic countries have been selected that differ – in terms of whether they have partisan or consensual political cultures, collectivist or individualistic values, inegalitarian or egalitarian social systems, majoritarian or proportional electoral systems, advanced or developing economies. The third objective is to discover whether national differences in the supply and demand for news influence knowledge of public affairs (including knowledge of major policy differences between political parties). In other words, we are concerned to investigate how changes in the organisation of the media, and in the wider society, are affecting the quality of citizenship.

The countries that form the basis of this 11-nation study are Australia, Columbia, Canada, Greece, India, Italy, Japan, Norway, South Korea, United Kingdom, and the United States. It is based on a quantitative analysis of media content and a representative survey in each country. The principal investigators on the project are:

- James Curran, Goldsmiths, University of London (Project Leader), UK
- Toril Aalberg, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway
- Sharon Coen (Senior Consultant), University of Canterbury, UK
- Kaori Hayashi and Yukio Maeda, University of Tokyo, Japan
- Shanto Iyengar, Stanford University, USA
- Paul Jones, David Rowe and Rod Tiffen, Universities of New South Wales, Western Sydney, and Sydney, Australia (respectively)
- Gianpietro Mazzoleni, University of Milan, Italy
- Stylianos Papathanassopoulos, National University of Athens, Greece
- Vinod Pavarala, Pradeep Krishnatray and Ashok Ranchhod, University of Hyderabad and MICORE, India
- Hernando Rojas, University of Madison-Wisconsin, USA (Colombia case study)
- Stuart Soroka, McGill University, Canada
- June Woong Rhee, Seoul National University, Korea

## **\*\*Main Symposium Presentations**

### **Session 1: 'Backgrounding the 11-Nation Project'**

Professor James Curran (Goldsmiths College, University of London) 'Project Overview: Media System, Political Context and Informed Citizenship: A Comparative Study'

Dr Sharon Coen (Canterbury Christ Church University) 'The Challenges of Designing International Comparative Research in Media'

## **Session 2: 'Re-thinking Hallin and Mancini in East Asia'**

Associate Professor Paul Jones (University of New South Wales), Professor David Rowe (University of Western Sydney), Emeritus Professor Rod Tiffen (University of Sydney)

Professor June Woong Rhee (Seoul National University)

Discussant: Professor James Curran

## **Session 3: 'Media System, Political Context and Informed Citizenship: A Selection of Intriguing Empirical Findings'**

James Curran, Sharon Coen, Professor Kaori Hayashi and Professor Yukio Maeda (University of Tokyo), June Woong Rhee, Paul Jones, David Rowe, Rod Tiffen

## **Session 4: 'Public Service Broadcasting and Informed Citizenship'**

Kaori Hayashi and June Woong Rhee 'Transplanted Public Service Broadcasting: The East Asian Experience'

James Curran and Sharon Coen 'International Varieties of Public Service Broadcasting'

Discussant: Professor Graeme Turner, University of Queensland

### **\*\*\*Symposium Attendees**

Judith Betts (University of Sydney, Australia)

Sharon Coen (Canterbury Christ Church University, UK)

James Curran (Goldsmiths, University of London, UK)

Bridget Griffen-Foley (Macquarie University, Australia)

Kaori Hayashi (University of Tokyo, Japan)

Mitchell Hobbs (University of Newcastle, Australia)

Brett Hutchins (Monash University, Australia)

Paul Jones (University of New South Wales, Australia)

Ki-Sung Kwak (University of Sydney, Australia)

Libby Lester (University of Tasmania, Australia)

Yukio Maeda (University of Tokyo, Japan)

David McKnight (University of New South Wales)

Stephen Mills (University of Sydney, Australia)

Penny O'Donnell (University of Sydney, Australia)

Ned Rossiter (University of Western Sydney, Australia)

David Rowe (University of Western Sydney, Australia)

Juan Francisco Salazar (University of Western Sydney, Australia)

Rod Tiffen (University of Sydney, Australia)

Graeme Turner (University of Queensland, Australia)

Margaret Van Heekeren (Charles Sturt University, Australia)

June Woong Rhee (Seoul National University, Korea)