

Activities and Future Outlook of the Japan Society for Studies in Journalism and Mass Communication

Japan Society for Studies in Journalism and Mass Communication

The Japan Society for Studies in Journalism and Mass Communication was established on June 16, 1951, first under the name of the Journalism Society of Japan. Even then, the use of the name the Society for Studies in Journalism and Mass Communication came up for discussion as a likely candidate, but the Journalism Society of Japan was selected on the basis of the idea that newspapers primarily deliver news, thereby encompassing a wide range of fields such as journalism and reporting. This name was also significant as it was based on the tradition of journalism and media studies that had been conducted under the concept of journalism studies since the days before World War II.

1. Formation of Prewar Journalism Studies

Works conceived as journalism studies were already being published in the 19th century. The earliest work in journalism studies was MATSUMOTO Kunpei's *Journalism Studies: The Journalism Business in the West* written in 1899, which was a textbook for journalists. From the beginning, journalism studies and journalist training have been intertwined.

It was the mass-ification of the media as a social phenomenon in the 1920s that became the turning point that led to the rise of journalism studies as an academic discipline. In 1924, two newspaper companies announced that their circulation had surpassed one million, and other mass media were also emerging due to the large-scale production and sale of magazines and books as well as the commencement of radio broadcasting. Thus there emerged a new academic discipline focusing on this social trend. One such researcher was HASEGAWA Nyozeikan, who began his career as a journalist. Based on his experiences and thoughts, he advocated a theory of journalism that made use of original concepts entirely distinct from any Western social theory. While his theory received a lot of attention as being indigenous to Japan, it was not sufficiently organized and therefore was not pursued in subsequent studies. In that same period (in 1922), ONO Hideo authored what can be called the first comprehensive history of journalism in Japan—*The History of the Development of Japanese Journalism*. Based on his research in Europe he endeavored to systematize journalism studies by introducing German journalism studies into Japan, while making every possible effort to establish a center for journalism studies at Tokyo Imperial University's Faculty of Letters. The center opened in 1929 and was run by Ono, KOYAMA Eizo, and others, fulfilling a key role in journalism studies in Japan's academic world. YONEYAMA Keizo and others at Keio University were also researching journalism, as such prewar research became quite active in the 1930s. However, journalism studies like these were gradually incorporated into the national propaganda machine as cogs to wage an all-out war. As a result, Ono along with others worked for the Information Bureau undertaking research and theorization on wartime propaganda.

2. Journalism Research and Mass Communication Research in the Postwar Period

The postwar years saw the remarkable growth of this research, particularly under the influence of American research. American research invigorated Japanese research, forming two main branches: journalism research and mass communication research. While German journalism studies had influenced prewar Japanese journalism studies, it was American journalism research that was now introduced into Japan. It had two aspects; one of them was research on journalistic activities and systems that were developing and changing in such media as journalism, broadcasting, and magazines through the application of sociology, political science, history, legal studies, and other academic fields. This was an attempt to advance research from a new perspective, while simultaneously following the prewar tradition of journalism studies to a certain extent. The other aspect was journalist training. This aimed to build up a more practical and systemized form of journalism education by working in close cooperation with journalism research. While drawing on the prewar journalism studies for journalist training, the field was also influenced by the democratization policy of the General Headquarters (GHQ) at the time. As part of the efforts to establish firmly democratic journalism in Japan, the GHQ advocated the introduction of journalist training curricula in many universities. Under such direct and indirect pressure, the following institutions were founded: the Institute of Socio-Information and Communication Studies at the University of Tokyo, the Institute for Communications Research at Keio University, the Department of Journalism at Waseda University's School of Political Science, the Department of Journalism at Nihon University's Faculty of Law, the Department of Journalism at Sophia University's Faculty of Humanities, the Department of Journalism at Kansai University, and the Department of Journalism at Doshisha University's School of Humanities. Some of these research and training institutions have changed their names, but they are still playing key roles in journalism research and training.

Another impact that American approaches brought us was mass communication research. Before the war, the concept of mass communication was hardly known. IGUCHI Ichiro is considered to have first introduced it to Japan in 1951 with his work *What Effect Does Mass Communication Have on the Populace: Theory and Proof*. Around the same time, in 1951, MINAMI Hiroshi's *Social Psychology: Social Activity and Foundational Theory* was published, introducing the concept of socio-psychological mass communication as well as that of communication. This can be considered to have had a fresh impact on Japanese researchers at the time. Attempts to find an appropriate Japanese translation of the phrase "mass communication" were made, but in vain; as a result the English term was incorporated directly and has been used since then.

Mass communication research became very prominent with the successive publications of research undertaken from different angles, including *Lectures on Mass Communication* edited by SHIMIZU Ikutaro and others in 1955, *Lectures on Modern Mass Communication* edited by HIDAKA Rokuro and others in 1961, and *Lectures on Applications of Social Psychology* edited by MINAMI Hiroshi and others in 1959.

In addition, through journalism studies there emerged new approaches to address problems:

SHIMIZU Ikutaro's *Journalism* in 1949 and *Mass Media Control in the Formative Period of Japanese Fascism* by UCHIKAWA Yoshimi and others from the University of Tokyo's Institute of Socio-Information and Communication Studies (published in the *Shiso* journals starting in July 1961), to give a few examples.

Thus, in June 1951 the Journalism Society of Japan was established as a forum where journalism research and mass communication research could stimulate each other and at times be integrated. ONO Hideo became our organization's first president, with 109 official members at the time. The next year, in 1952, our first research presentation seminar took place at Nihon University, and since then academic conferences or symposia have been held twice annually in the spring and autumn. The publication of our organization's journal, the *Shimbungaku Hyouron* (*Japanese Journalism Review*), which is devoted to studies in journalism and mass communication, also began in 1952. Since then our membership has continued to expand, reaching 848 by 1991.

3. Changing Our Name to the Japan Society for Studies in Journalism and Mass Communication

In recent times mass media trends have varied greatly, particularly with the advent of television broadcasting in 1953, which had not begun when the Journalism Society of Japan was established. This turned out to have a substantial effect on politics, society, and culture. Furthermore, with the growth of the so-called interpersonal media, the need has arisen to survey not merely the mass media, but also diversified types of media, considering all forms of communication in society as a whole. Our members' research fields and methods have increasingly expanded with these changes.

On the basis of this expansion, our Society was compartmentalized into the following research committees in 1989: the Theory Research Committee, Journalism Research Committee, and Broadcast Research Committee. After going through various discussions within the Society, our name was changed to the Japan Society for Studies in Journalism and Mass Communication in June 1991. The reason why the English name was chosen was that we had a definite intention to reflect the significance of journalism studies, which had accounted for the majority of our activities up until that point. Along with the change in name, the journal name was also changed—to keep up with the dynamism and diversification of our members' research—from the *Japanese Journalism Review* to *The Journal of Mass Communication Studies*, which has been published twice annually since 1993.

Our membership, particularly with regard to younger members, has also expanded greatly, reaching 1,323 members as of March 31, 2012. The Society organizes a research summit twice a year and draws up plans for symposia and workshops based upon timely themes, thereby raising questions over themes and methods of research and promoting debate among members. Recently, the quality and quantity of our members' individual research have also improved. In terms of our management structure, research committees focusing on theory research, journalism research, broadcast research, multimedia research, media history studies, and media ethics/legal studies have been established. Each committee has been developing research activities by holding seminars and

integrating and expanding the diversifying interests of our members.

Our Society is distinct in that it enables researchers from diverse academic fields such as sociology, political science, legal studies, history, social psychology, and psychology to gather to debate mass communication and media issues and deepen their studies. With the diversification of the media in recent years and the accompanying social phenomena, our Society has broadened and grown steadily to include the increasing number of researchers who are pursuing such new research methods as are being adopted in socio-information or cultural studies.

Another striking feature of our Society is that it has a large number of active journalists as members. Since its inception, a defining trend in the Society has been that researchers and journalists explore the problems faced by journalism and search for solutions together. Furthermore, journalist training has also been a pillar of our Society's activities. Since 1985, unofficial discussion-based gatherings on mass communication training have been held between academic researchers or educators and mass media leaders.

Furthermore, since 2001 our Society has been honoring publicly its promising members; their research articles are published in its journal, the *Journal of Mass Communication Studies*, some of which receive every other year the Japan Society for Studies in Journalism and Mass Communication Distinguished Article Award. The Uchikawa Yoshimi Memorial Mass Communication Studies Fund, dedicated in the memory of our former president Uchikawa Yoshimi, has also been established with funds provided by him. As part of the Fund's activities, the Uchikawa Yoshimi Memorial Society Award was created to recognize exceptionally distinguished studies by the members.

4. Mass Communication Research and Journalism Research

Under the strong influence of postwar American mass communication studies, mass communication research in Japan has grown in dynamism. Naturally enough, however, the research in Japan has developed differently from that in the United States and Europe, with it being influenced by the uniqueness of Japanese society, academic research traditions, and associated research fields. In particular, early postwar Japanese mass communication researchers mostly shared their perceptions of certain issues, focusing on the mobilizing mechanism of minds and bodies in wartime, particularly in relation to the role the media played at the time. This role was considered to include issues that should be elucidated in many fields such as legal systems and media companies, as well as the mindset of readers and audiences.

Japanese mass communication research can be broadly split into three approaches: the mass society approach, the Marxist approach, and the American-born socio-psychology approach.

The mass society approach is considered to have been strongly affected initially by Shimizu Ikutaro's *Social Psychology* in 1951, and the American mass society theory and popular culture theory were subsequently introduced into the approach. Mass communication studies from this type of approach did flourish; partly because it was a theory completely suitable for explaining the wartime system; partly because Japanese society at the time was about to take a turn for the rapid economic growth after going through its postwar recovery stages; and partly because mass society

phenomena were beginning to become prominent with such media as newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and film rapidly expanding. This trend should have been a trigger for a major debate over social and cultural issues. It was not always accompanied, however, by empirical methods, and therefore temporary fads tended to predominate in discussions.

Marxism flourished in economics, political science, and sociology in postwar Japan and had significant effects on mass communication research. It opened new fields of inquiry, focusing on industry analyses of the mass media, or labor processes and organizational theories in the media companies. In addition, it bore noteworthy results such as deciphering the ideology of the principles of neutrality, nonpartisanship, and editorial control extolled by the mass media. Representative works of this research were *Comprehensive Theory of Mass Media* by INABA Michio in 1987 and *Modern Japanese Mass Communication Lectures* edited by KITAGAWA Takayoshi and others in 1972.

The most vigorous of all the approaches in mass communication research was the socio-psychological approach. This approach became quite prominent on the basis of the continued introduction of theories from American mass communication research, which were appealing in terms of not only theory but also in stimulating sociological and psychological research methods that applied statistics. This does not imply that such research methods did not exist in Japan before; rather, it implies that quantitative research methods had not been sufficiently developed up to that point. The newly introduced quantitative research methods and socio-psychology theory came together to lead researchers to proactively conduct research that adopted this new approach. Furthermore, with the rapid spread of television, extensive discussions on its political, social, and other implications advanced the requirement of positivist research.

However, Japanese researchers did not necessarily incorporate American theory directly into their own research as it is. For instance, Japanese researchers conducted surveys and research on the two-tiered mass communication theory and small-group role theory developed based upon American society. But what concerned these researchers most was whether thought based on club activities, grassroots movements, and individual experience could overcome the influence of mass communication. It reflected the firm resolution to actively oppose the influence of the mass media through the formation of local groups. This matter can be traced back to concerns about regrets over the past all-out wars. Not all researchers held these concerns, of course; however, it existed at the core of the leading research and gave birth to unique studies and theories.

Representative works from the socio-psychological approach include TAKEUCHI Ikuro's *Social Theory of Mass Communication* in 1990, KOJIMA Kazuto's *Development of Mass Communication Reception Theory* in 1993, and OKADA Naoyuki's *Political Sociology in Public Opinion* in 2001, all of which developed theories based on investigative research. There are various other unique communication theories such as SATO Takeshi's *Mass Communication Reception Theory: Discursive Dissimilation Intermediary Variables* in 1990 and FUJITAKE Akira's *Modern Mass Communication Theory* in 1968.

Concerning the effects of mass communication in elections, a significant number of surveys and theoretical frameworks have been undertaken in America. In Japan as well, a long series of

fresh empirical studies have been made based upon these American theories. Naturally, given that American research serves as the base, differences between American and Japanese societies have given birth to new theoretical developments.

Meanwhile, journalism research has overlapped with constitutional studies, history, political science, and ethics in such various domains as legal systems, history, and ethical conduct. Research on certain legal systems existed before the war; however, the weak understanding of freedom of speech made it no better than an interpretation of legal articles. In the postwar period, freedom of speech and the press became the most important pillars of journalistic legal system research. This was closely related to constitutional theory and therefore has overlapped with excellent theoretical research undertaken by constitutional scholars. Research on concrete issues from the perspective of freedom of speech and press that journalistic activities face has been very important. Excellent thoughts on this area by scholars such as ISHIMURA Zensuke and SHIMIZU Hideo have been presented and collected in great volume.

A great deal of research has been conducted on what the broadcast systems ought to be, because the massive postwar development of broadcasting was made possible by a medium whose management can be only formed under a system. *The Broadcasting System: Its Present State and Future Prospects* edited by ITO Masami in 1978, *An Introduction to Broadcast Studies* edited by the NHK Broadcasting Cultural Research Institute in 1970, and *The Public Aspect of Broadcasting* edited by the Japan Commercial Broadcasters Association in 1966 have discussed and analyzed the broadcasting system from many angles. Since then, however, the broadcast media has greatly changed and corresponding theories have grown significantly more diverse.

Not only systems but also journalism models are being strongly considered, having become a major theme of journalism research. The concept of editorial control was advocated in postwar Japan as an internal journalism model, and a large number of significant studies have been made on the subject. YAMAMOTO Akira's *Modern Journalism*, 1967, provides a particularly astute critical analysis on the concept of editorial control.

In terms of historical research, the question of how to deal with research on the highs and lows of journalism since the prewar years was a major topic. YAMAMOTO Fumio authored the earliest postwar book examining this area from a social history's perspective, *A History of Japanese Journalism*, in 1948. In the 1950s and '60s, the possibilities of applying mass communication theory to historical research were debated. However, applying existing theories to historical phenomena is merely a tautology and may close the rich field of historical research that results from a conversation between past and present. In fact, various positivist historical studies have been compiled with emphasis on individual phases while considering the overall communication process. The examples include UCHINO Shigeki's *The Process of the Creation of American Journalism* in 1960 and Uchikawa Yoshimi's *History of Legal Policy on Mass Media* in 1989.

Recently, the concept of the media has become important to historical research as well, with the widespread use of a broader framework of media history, which used to be referred to as the mass communication development history. The approaches to the research have grown increasingly broad and diverse by historically relativizing the acts of reading, writing, and watching. New

horizons for historical research have been ushered in by KOUCHI Saburo's *The Birth of 'the Reader'* in 2004 and TSUGANESAWA Toshihiro's *Research on Modern Japanese Media History* in 1998.

In recent years, the maintenance of the necessary materials for historical research has notably advanced. Most newspapers have been converted to microfilm and are housed in libraries; many papers such as the *Asahi Shimbun* and the *Yomiuri Shimbun* can be accessed through databases. Discontinued major papers such as the *Jiji Shimpō*, the *Nihon*, *The Nation's Friend*, and the *Nihonjin* have been reprinted and are easily accessible. Preservation efforts for such broadcast media as radio and television are lagging; however, maintenance systems for preservation and access are advancing in NHK's Archives, The Broadcast Library, and the like.

Major topics for mass communication or journalism research now include the problem of combining and unifying these research domains as well as creating a path for the spontaneous development of broadly defined communication research which has its basis in new media trends. Interest in the mass media and journalism as they appear in everyday communication activities has been advanced by *The Science of Thought* group of TSURUMI Shunsuke and others. In addition, KATO Hidetoshi has presented a great deal of interesting research. Works have been edited based on this perspective, including *The Mass Communication Encyclopedia* edited by Minami Hiroshi in 1971; the 1973 five-volume *Lectures on Modern Society and Communication* edited by Uchikawa Yoshimi, OKABE Keizo, and others; and the 1973 six-volume *Lectures on Communication* edited by ETO Fumio, Tsurumi Shunsuke, and YAMAMOTO Akira.

However, as new media continue to develop, creating previously non-existent possibilities for communication, it becomes all the more urgent that issues of concern for the core of existing research frameworks be invigorated while also developing new research frameworks and methods. Since its inception, the *Japan Society for Studies in Journalism and Mass Communication* has been a forum for researchers with wide academic research backgrounds to come together to elucidate the real-life social phenomena of mass communication. The diversity of our research as well as the exchange and debate brought by it has been the hallmarks of our organization. In an era when great changes have been happening in the media, a key focus area is the deepening and expanding of our research activities through applying the dynamism from our diverse interactions.

5. International Exchange and Post-earthquake Research Activities

In such an environment, research exchanges with overseas researchers have become a very important issue. Furthermore, it is important to focus on research on core social issues that have been exposed by the March 11, 2011 earthquake and tsunami.

International exchange has been a consideration for the Society since its founding, and various individual members have taken part in international research conferences. However, our exchanges as an organization are not necessarily well developed. The Japan-Korea or Korea-Japan International Symposium has been co-hosted each year since 1991 in both countries in collaboration with the Korean Society for Journalism and Communication Studies. The project has been highly successful, with its 18th meeting held in 2012. However, the three-country Northeast

Asian Symposium in June 2005, which also included China and was held in Beijing and Tokyo, did not last.

A group of interested members of our Society organized “a journalism studies visit” to China in 1983, visiting Beijing and interacting with Chinese research societies. The same year, a delegation from the journalism studies research center at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences visited Japan and exchanged their views with our Society. Based on these exchanges, the Society sent eight members to China in 1986 to visit China’s journalism studies research institutes and mass media institutions in a series of academic exchanges. In addition, we received a research delegation from the same research center at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in 1991.

During our 50th anniversary year in 2001, we invited American and British researchers to international symposia in Tokyo and Kyoto, which had an energizing effect on all Society activities. A similar international symposium was planned for 2011 for our 60th anniversary, but was unfortunately canceled because of the earthquake and tsunami.

Though our individual members have attended international research conferences for many years, our exchanges as an academic organization are not necessarily well developed. However, for the first World Journalism Education Congress in Singapore in 2007, hosted by the Asian Media Information and Communication Centre (AMIC) and the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC), three of our members attended and presented their research.

Furthermore, we have been concerned about publishing an international journal to present our research activities to a wider audience abroad. Preparations for it are currently underway. The unprecedented destruction from the March 11, 2011 earthquake and tsunami shocked the very foundation of our society. This was not a passing incident, but exposed the deep fault lines in the strata of this society that were already existent, and presented a glimpse of the dark side of the society. The disaster led researchers to question the basis of their research frameworks.

The issues facing mass communication and media research are both profound and vast. To begin with, it is difficult to fully ascertain these issues. Our Society held its 60th anniversary symposium on March 3, 2012 under the title, “Assessing Reporting on the Earthquake and Nuclear Disasters: 3/11 and Postwar Japanese Society.” Researchers and active journalists presented their views on the current understanding and issues to be addressed. Moving forward, it is essential that we further deepen our discussions on reassessing the problems in our research frameworks and methods that have been exposed by 3/11.

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