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Drodzy Czytelnicy.

Niniejszy regularny zeszyt kwartalnika *Silva Iaponicarum* 日林 ukazuje się ponownie w przerwie w ciągu serii zeszytów specjalnych. Zeszyt zawiera artykuły o problematyce medioznawczej oraz politologicznej.

Wydanie niniejszego zeszytu poprzedziło kolejne rozszerzenie składu Kolegium. Odpowiednie zmiany uwzględniono w stopce kwartalnika.

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Niezmiennie oczekujemy na artykuły do kolejnych regularnych wydań kwartalnika *Silva Iaponicarum* 日林.

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Poznań-Kraków-Warszawa-Kuki, grudzień 2012

Dear Readers,

This regular fascicle of the *Silva Iaponicarum* 日林 quarterly is again issued in between a series of special edition fascilces. It contains articles on media and political studies.

The issue of this fascicle was preceded by an enlargement of the editorial board. New board members are listed in the editorial imprint.

The next edition of the quarterly will be issued as the next year's spring/summer fascicle.

We await contributions for the incoming editions of the *Silva Iaponicarum* 日林 quarterly.

The Editorial Board   E-mail: silvajp@amu.edu.pl

Poznań-Cracow-Warsaw-Kuki, December 2012

読者のみなさまへ

本号は、季刊誌 *Silva Iaponicarum* 日林の定期号です。2 冊の特別号の間に刊行されます。メディア研究と政治学の領域から、2 本の論文を掲載いたしました。

本号はまた、編集委員会拡大後、最初の号でもあります。編集委員会の新メンバーについては、奥付に記載しましたので、ご覧ください。

Silva Iaponicarum 日林次号は、来年年度春・夏号合併号として刊行の予定です。

その後は再び、通常の定期号に戻ります。みなさまのご投稿をお待ちしております。

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Aleksandra Kaniewska

Gender in Japanese Television Cooking Shows – Comparative Content Analysis of Contemporary Broadcast Media

Introduction

In October 1993, the face of hitherto conservative culinary programming in Japan changed significantly, as a completely new type of entertainment show began to be aired on Japanese TV screens. *Iron Chef* (*Ryōri no Tetsujin* 料理の鉄人) was created by Tokyo's Fuji Television. It was designed to offer a new, *avant-garde* culinary combat, with 'an atmosphere like [in] the Harrods' food emporium' and chefs who would be 'a cross between characters on video games and Nikkatsu[1] films' (*Iron Chef: The Official Book* 2000: 69, 113). The show's screenwriter, Itō Masahiro, recalls saying, 'I wanted the programme to be humanised, more of a documentary or a drama. [I thought that] something like a Formula 1 pit report would be fun' (*Iron Chef: The Official Book* 2000: 141-142).

In a nutshell, the idea behind the creation of *Iron Chef* was to show the battle between differing cuisines and professional cooks in the manner of an exciting sports contest. Hosted by Kaga Takashi, who impersonated an extravagant European millionaire living in a castle and fascinated with *haute cuisine*, the programme pitted chefs from around Japan against one of the show's resident 'Iron Chefs', all of them specialists in their chosen cuisine[2]. The contestants combated live in the special cooking arena called the 'Kitchen Stadium'. There were first-line reporters from the cooking site, cameramen jumping to get close-ups of all the cutting and stirring, and real sports journalists and culinary experts commenting on the scenes. *Iron Chef* was, by far, the first Japanese culinary show of its kind, smoothly merging the stylistic conventions of video games, professional wrestling, reality-show and traditional cooking programmes, all these while

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[1] Nikkatsu action movies were super-stylised films produced by the Nikkatsu film studio (one of the oldest in Japan) and heavily influenced by Hollywood and the French New Wave. They were high-budget yakuza and gangster movies (full of tough men, beautiful ladies and Western jazz), and later also *romaporn* – romance/porn films (produced mainly in the 1980s and 1990s). Nowadays the company makes all manner of different film and television genres. More about Nikkatsu's most famous action movies may be found in Schilling (2007).

[2] At the beginning of the show, there were three Iron Chefs, each of them specialising in one particular type of cuisine: French, Japanese or Chinese. In 1997, a fourth member of the team was introduced – Iron Chef Italian. Producers' decisions may have been linked to the rising popularity of Italian cuisine and lifestyle (both imagined to be easier, lighter, less rigid than French) that was observable in Japan from the mid-1990s (White 2002: 70-71).

embracing 'hypermasculine competition, intertextuality, and camp' (Kackman 2004: 585).

Broadcast during the peak hours (11.00-11.45 p.m.) on Fridays, the show generated impressive ratings. Starting with 7.5% during the first episode in 1993, its audience rose to 23% of households at the peak of popularity in 1995, and stayed at the impressive average level of 15% until the programme's very last broadcast, in September 1999[3]. Since its creation, *Iron Chef* was on air for six full years in a weekly one-hour show, and proved so successful that, by the fifth year, the profession of chef became the number-one aspiration amongst Japanese elementary school children (*Iron Chef: The Official Book* 2000: 208). It is also believed to have increased people's interest in *gurume* – gourmet food[4] (Schilling 1997: 62-63). Although the programme was discontinued in 1999, it still seems to enjoy unceasing popularity, especially amongst its Internet fans, and has been a widely popular hit on the Food Network channel in the United States[5]. On certain occasions in Japan, 'special TV battles' are produced and broadcast; and *Iron Chef* residents, all now highly respected and popular chefs and restaurant owners, often make appearances on all types of television talk-shows as celebrity guest-stars, giving culinary and lifestyle advice.

As a typical evening prime time TV production, *Iron Chef* was aimed at both male and female viewers,[6] and emphasised the aspects of competition and rivalry. If we take into consideration that the majority of challengers who tried to defeat Iron Chef's resident cooks were male,[7] and that a very

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[3] Fuji TV original data obtained in August 2008 through Fuji Television's International Relations Department. All the data refer to the viewership ratings from the Kanto region. These figures could be a realistic average for the whole nation, according to private conversations with a Fuji TV representative.

[4] Mark Schilling (1997: 62) argues that food fetishism is not a new thing in Japan, but that it has experienced a real boom since the beginning of the 1980s, with the 'bubble economy' impulse towards consumerism.

[5] The show was also acclaimed internationally, securing US Emmy Award nominations in 1994 and 1995. Subsequently, the US cooking channel the Food Network decided to broadcast *Iron Chef* in the United States, half-dubbed, starting in July 1999 (*Iron Chef: The Official Book* 2000). According to some authors (Holden, n.d., Lukacs, 2008) and Internet postings, it is still proving very successful.

[6] For example, between 1997 and 1998 the gendered structure of *Iron Chef's* audience was as follows – the show was watched by 10% of all women between the age of 30-50, and 9.6% of all men living in the Kantō region. The ratio for younger women/men was 9%, compared with 6% for older women/. By contrast with other cooking shows, such as *Today's Cooking* (*Kyō no Ryōri*, NHK Educational), which was watched mainly by women, the audience here had a more equally gendered structure. Source: Fuji TV data.

[7] According to my investigation, only 12 female contestants appeared on *Iron Chef*, with 297 battles officially produced.

small percentage of *Iron Chef*'s so called 'Gourmet Academy' members were female, the show is probably one of the most intriguing examples of TV cooking programming in Japan, with its neatly delineated gender roles and messages. But, of course, it is not the *only* example. Culinary entertainment seems to form a centrepiece of Japanese television, with all sorts of food-themed soap operas, cooking battles, food-related variety shows and travel programmes streaming constantly from the channels (Holden 2005). For example, in August 2008 there was as many as 70 food-related programmes being shown weekly on seven main TV channels between 5 a.m. and 12 p.m.[8] These were all different types of broadcasts, from the classical 'cookery-educative' (Strange 1998: 301) programmes, featuring housewives as cooks (*Kyō no Ryōri, 3 pun no Kukkingu* or *Kaminuma Emiko no Oshaberi Kukkingu*), through food-oriented variety shows (i.e. *Merenge no Kimochi*), to food-corners and food-segments within larger independent programmes, such as SMAP Bistro or *Gotchi Battaru*, a sub-section of *Guru Guru Ninety-Nine* show*,* in which four guests, usually men, travel to a restaurant to try food and guess its price.

The majority of Japanese culinary shows tend to 'navigate a path between discourses of expertise and certified technique, and those of familial comfort' (Kackman 2004: 584), and are usually anchored either in the highly masculine world of chefs and gourmet schools, or in the manifestly feminised space of the domestic kitchen. It is not accidental – as Alice Julier and Laura Lindenfeld prove in their analysis of masculinities and food in American reality TV (2005: 1-16) – that performing food labour is intertwined with performing gender. Given that, in most cultures, gender has always been the principal line of demarcation for the distribution of power, it usually is in the kitchen, where the distinctions between the male and female areas of influence are classified and cemented. And, while cooking practices in cuisines all over the entire world are typically associated with women's role, it seems that when a particular culture reaches a tradition of *haute cuisine*, it is male chefs who reign in the kitchen. As Sherry Ortner argues (1974: 80), this pattern is also replicated in other areas of human life, including socialisation – women tend to

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[8] To obtain the data, I read and analysed two subsequent weeks' worth (11-17 and 18-24 August 2008) of one of the TV guide magazines, counting every programme or sub-section of a programme that was related to food/cooking. The data covers programmes shown between 4.30 a.m. and 12 p.m. from Monday to Sunday, inclusive of those that are repeated in morning and evening segments. The seven channels mentioned include: NHK, NHK Educational, Nihon TV, TBS, Fuji TV, TV Asahi, TV Tokyo. The number of food-related programmes in the second and third week of August reached 66 and 74 respectively. Thus it can be assumed that on average there were 70 food-related programs broadcast weekly.

perform lower-level conversions from nature to culture (as in food processing when they convert raw into cooked), but, when the culture distinguishes a higher level of the same functions, this higher realm is restricted to men.

Here, it makes sense to remind ourselves of Candace West and Don H. Zimmerman's argument about 'doing gender' (1987: 129), in which they claim that, although often exhibited or portrayed as natural, gender is produced as a socially-organised achievement, through human actions and interactions. That assertion, present also in the writings of Ueno Chizuko, who criticises gender roles and the division of labour that have been naturalised and legitimated by biology (Lenz 2006: 97), laid the foundations for the new 'gender-equal', or even 'gender-free' (*jendā kara no kaihō* ジエンダーからの解放), policy of the Japanese government[9]. While the first EEOL (Equal Employment Opportunity Law, *danjokoyōkikaikintōhō* 男女雇用機会均等法), implemented in 1986, did nothing to break the very masculine mould of the 'regular employee', which naturally required the counterpart of a 'professional housewife' to make family life manageable (Roberts 2005: 193), the revised law of 1999 attempted to readdress old gender problems, and encouraged a move away from a male bread-winner model of society toward an individual one (Osawa 2005: 172).

Are gendered 'cooking roles' in Japan delineated according to the distinction between 'the male chef' and 'the female domestic cook'? The ultimate aim of this article will be to investigate the extent to which there exists a relation between cooking performance and gender roles. However, my intention is neither to show a whole delineation of Japanese gender representations visible both on and beyond the screen, nor to assert that food labour is the *only* logical way to observe them. The interpretative perspective that I apply involves watching how gender is socially

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[9] Osawa Mari mentions (2005: 160-162) that the English term 'gender' (*jendā*) was first used in Japan in a 1996 government document entitled 'A Vision on Gender Equality: Creation of New Values for the Twenty-first Century'. This was virtually at the same time that Japanese feminists became familiar with a theory of gender proposed by the French feminist and sociologist, Christine Delphy, who stressed that gender precedes sex and is a differentiation in itself. Delphy's arguments were later popularised by Ueno Chizuko, and to a large extent influenced her definition of gender, a definition used by legislators in the revised EEOL of 1999. Ironically, as mentioned by Millie R. Creigton in her analysis of *giri-choco* ritual, the English word 'feminist' (*feiminisuto*) was embraced by the media in order to neutralise the previous apparent threat that the word had appeared to present through its associations with Western-style individualism and equality. Hence, in the series from the mid-1980s, Tokyo Gas called itself 'feminist' on the basis that it had designed a new vacuum cleaner and other household products to help women in their daily duties (1993: 16).

constructed and performed in the media. To achieve this, I attempt to map women and men's roles in the 'televised kitchen', and, more specifically, in two popular Japanese cooking shows[10]: *Iron Chef* (*Ryōri no Tetsujin*, Fuji TV) and *Today's Cooking* (*Kyō no Ryōri* 今日の料理, NHK Educational).

Gendered Division of Labour in TV Cooking Shows

"The antithesis between quantity and quality, substance and form, corresponds to the opposition — linked to different distances from necessity — between the taste of necessity, which favours the most 'filling' and most economical foods, and the taste of liberty or luxury — which shifts the emphasis to the manner (of presenting, serving, eating etc.) and tends to use stylized forms to deny function."

(Bourdieu 1984: 6)

Food performance is not just a transparent act of transforming raw into cooked (Levi-Strauss 1969), just as food consumption is not only about nourishment. Food tells us stories about national identity and morale, promotes lifestyles and consumers' habits (Ketchum 2005: 217-234), and allows us to indulge in dialogues about politics and globalisation. But most importantly, cooking – with the cook as its embodiment – is a cultural practice that transmits cultural meanings (Bell 2000), gender and national identity among them.

In Japan, food discourses emerging from the ubiquitous TV culinary shows are but one example of how gender is expressed and reinforced through cultural practice. And, although the diversity and complexity of Japanese cooking shows are outstanding, the dominant gender discourse, which classifies women as nurturers and home-cooks and men as flamboyant chefs or culinary hobbyists, has managed to create a narrow and repetitive narrative. Of course, it is not infrequent for dissonant gender identities to appear even within the hegemonic discourses of masculinity and femininity. However, I will argue that, in many cases, these alternative representations serve only as a complement to the mainstream discourse.

Iron Chef and *Today's Cooking* represent two different types of cooking programme genre. The first is highly masculinised, and serves a mostly

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[10] In order to obtain data for a comparative media content analysis, I watched and analysed a sample of 10 archival episodes of each show, which will serve as a foundation for my investigation. Additionally, in order to achieve a wider spectrum of the topic, I recorded and watched a cross-selection of random Japanese food-related TV programmes, among them *Dotchi no Ryōri* and *Bistro SMAP*. My choice of the programme sample was random. As with *Iron Chef*, I watched a cross-selection of episodes from the years 1993-1999, and my *Today's Cooking* analysis refers to the programmes broadcast between 1999 and 2005. Both digital materials are in their original, Japanese-language version.

entertaining function. The latter probably fits best to the 'cookery-educative' (Strange 1998: 301) or 'traditional domestic' (Ketchum 2005: 223) instructional program category; and by focusing on easy, inexpensive and nutritious meals, it is targeted mostly at Japanese housewives. Whatever the differences in audience structure[11], cooking process and television genre, the 'gender' ingredients in both of these shows seem to communicate and reinforce the mediated identities, both feminine and masculine, through either the lack, under- or overrepresentation of certain roles.

Gendered Performance in Masculine Cooking World
In Japan, being a professional chef with good culinary 'lineage' (Ashkenazi and Jacobs 2000: 93), which elevates a person to a sphere of culinary experts and allows him the usage of the title *sensei* 先生 (master), implies a high degree of power and authority[12]. Professional cooks are usually men (Holden 2005: 48)[13], and women seem to enter their cookery world only as mother-nurturers, through a strong nostalgic connotation with the ideas of *katei ryōri* 家庭料理 (home cooking) and *okāsan no aji* お母さんの味 (mother's cooking), or as consumers tasting food and appraising chefs' skill. *Iron Chef*, especially the episodes featuring battles between a female contestant and one of the show's resident Iron Chefs, seems to glorify manly cooking performance and to reinforce the assumption that women are only irreplaceable when it comes to cooking for family sustenance.
 'I loved watching grown men with their "I won't lose" look on their faces', admitted Itō Masahiro in the book published by Fuji TV as a part of publicity for the show (*Iron Chef: The Official Book* 2000: 141). Undoubtedly, *Iron Chef* was created as a masculine performance with the narrative of a TV serial more than a cooking series. At the beginning of each episode, three and, later in the series, four Iron Chefs emerged from the ceiling on platforms, surrounded by puffs of mist and ominous orchestral tones, and wearing outrageous costumes, to face the challenger

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[11] It is also important to mention that *Iron Chef*'s most impressing ratings reached 23%, whereas for *Today's Cooking* the average audience comprises around 2% of all households, mainly women over 50 and men over 60. (Ratings source: 2008, obtained directly from NHK Educational producers).
[12] More about chefs' profession may be found in Ashkenazi and Jacobs, in the chapter on sushi (2000: 200-211) and in Cwiertka 2006.
[13] As Sandra Buckley reveals (1996: 443), in Japanese private household cooking was traditionally women's role. However, pictorial and written historical records indicate that cooking in public spaces, such as inns and restaurants, was commonly performed by men, due to various reasons, among them: pollution taboos related to women and conventional beliefs that public interaction with customers is inappropriate for respectable women.

waiting modestly below them. The hierarchical and over-dramatised manner in which they were brought on stage creates an association with supernatural golems or ancient gladiators' combats. Producers' memoires reveal that the first idea for the show's title was *The Iron Chef of Ovens* (*Iron Chef: The Official Book* 2000: 94). However, due possibly to the fact that the associations of the oven were not so masculine, the title was shortened to its final version, *Iron Chef.*

As Andrew Chan points out, *Iron Chef* represents 'a kind of mythological fight between Good and Evil, a carefully constructed spectacle of excess' (2003: 52). Every week, two chefs, one of whom was to be appraised and the second humiliated[14], meet in the special cooking arena called the Kitchen Stadium, which, with all its burning ovens, high-tech utilities and expensive ingredients, in no way resembles a real home kitchen. It also serves as a food locus, where exquisite dishes are created, consumed and judged – all in front of an exhorting public and with the atmosphere of a sport event, heightened by the presence of at least five cameras zooming in for sensational close-ups of culinary mastery or cooking lapses.

Iron Chef's culinary competition had strict rules. Each battle could not last more than sixty minutes[15], during which time chefs had to prepare a full-course dinner. There was also an additional 'catch', as every programme introduced a food theme or an ingredient that had to be used in food creation. Ingredients varied from sophisticated and expensive[16] foodstuffs like lobster or *foie gras* to bizarre and challenging ones, with *nattō* (Japanese fermented soy beans), terrapin or *umeboshi* (pickled plums) being just an example of the show's culinary extravagance. Moments of frenetic food preparation were interspersed with observations from the jury panel and commentators[17], as well as battlefield reports performed by two stage-reporters, whose role was mostly to explain the meanders of dish-

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[14] In the interviews for *Iron Chef: The Official Book* (2000: 54, 124-130, 151-158, 198-204), many chefs admitted being terrified by the prospect of defeat, due mainly to the shame that it would bring on their families (some of their children are believed to have been bullied at school afterwards) and the restaurants that they worked for.

[15] During the first episodes, the scheme of a 90-minute battle was tested, but this idea was later dropped, and producers proceeded with the 60-minute competition.

[16] Some of the ingredients were so expensive that the show was accused of advocating an overtly consumer-oriented lifestyle. One of the most memorable cases was when one of the challengers used over US$ 1000 worth of lobster (which was later disposed of) just to flavour the asparagus. *Iron Chef: The Official Book* claims that during the six years of production the 'grocery bill' for the show reached more than ¥843,354,407 – about US$ 8,000,000 (*Iron Chef: The Official Book* 2000: XIV).

[17] The show's regular commentators were: a sports journalist, Fukui Kenji, and the chief of Hattori School of Nutrition and principal of the Japanese Culinary Academy (*Nihon no Ryōri Akademi*), Hattori Yukio.

creating and the chefs' imaginations. Interestingly, at the beginning of the show jury panel consisted of three judges. However, in 1995 the rules were altered and one more person complemented the culinary board, providing equal gender representation – two men and two women of differing age. Some of the jury members were professional food critiques; the others, usually younger ones, were all kinds of celebrities (*tarento* タレント). As an extension of the gendered conventions of the show, young female judges tended to be delicate and modest, emphasising their femininity with in-depth food appreciation, small and subtle food bites, and concentration on each meal's aesthetics. They appraised the food quality, while indulging in positive 'small talk' such as: 'It was a very pleasant experience, 'I cannot cook myself, but this is a very beautiful dish', or 'Oh, I want to get to know the taste of professional cooking' (*puro no aji* プロの味) [18]. By contrast, men seemed more extrovert and playful, their comments frequently being jokes or self-mockery about their own inability to judge or cook a good dish.

Structurally, *Iron Chef* is based on the simple, binary opposition between two professional chefs and two differing cuisines in which they specialise. However, sometimes – as in the case of the battles with foreign chefs or women challengers – this dual confrontation seems to border more on the notions of gender and nation/race than on those of culinary skill and technique. In the 'Little-Neck Clams Battle' episode, in which female chef Takemasa Yoshiko challenges Iron Chef Chinese Chin, it is mostly gender that delineates the combat's rules. From the very beginning, Takemasa is presented as a woman in the men's world. The extravagant presenter, Kaga, announces at the beginning of the episode that 'In Japan there are still very few female chefs stepping into this male-dominated arena. It is nearly impossible for a woman to have a chance of being noticed.'[19] In a short presentation about the challenger, we see Takemasa fighting her way through restaurants' hierarchy, talking about working hard, even harder than men do. 'I knew I was a girl and it didn't ease my path, so I had to get up earlier to go to the market and learn more about fish', she says humbly, yet quite bravely, about her experience.

In her every move in the Kitchen Stadium, Takemasa attempts to transgress her own gender boundaries; she does not behave in a feminine way, nor does she look particularly womanly, with a bandana over her short hair, a sumo-style work caftan and her muscular figure. At one point, she is also shown perforating a large fish with a sharp knife, which – in Japan and

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[18] All quotations are my own translations.
[19] Episode 94, on air in Japan – 25th August 1995.

elsewhere – has usually been considered to be a male task[20]. Apparently, in order to embrace masculine public cooking, she has had to renegotiate her associations with femininity, playing the *role* of a man. 'I stopped being a woman, I had to become a man', she admits. However, the jury panel seems unable to overlook Takemasa's biologically ascribed gender, often dismissing her actions with patronising remarks[21]. Gender-loaded back-stage dialogues reveal that 'Chin has always been soft on ladies [laugh]' (*josei ni amai* 女性に甘い), and 'I hope she [Takemasa] didn't forget about the theme, she is doing so much talking with her assistants'. Takemasa herself appears to struggle with her own gender boundaries, acting in a feminine way while addressing the Iron Chef, saying that 'I hope to make some mistakes, so that I could learn from him', and summarising her culinary results with the words 'I am not entirely happy with my dishes'. This sense of inferiority pervades her whole performance – she humbly congratulates Chin after his victory, bowing before him in a manner that I have not noticed among any of the male contestants[22].

Given the strong ideological tones of idealised masculinity and femininity in Japan (the latter being strongly affected by romanticised motherly values), it seems that even when a woman enters the testosterone-heavy, male-dominated world of restaurant kitchens (Bourdain 2004: 59), she is simply rejected as an imposter. Alternatively, she may also be classified within a domestic 'fantasy scenario' (Hollows 2003b: 194) as a comforting mother-nurturer, as happened in *Iron Chef*'s Battle Potato, where the

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[20] An interesting study on the use of the knife (*hōchō*) may be found in: Tanaka Tsuneo, *Hōchō Nyumon,* (Introduction to the Cooking Knife, 1993), and in: Usui Masao, *Hōchō: Japanese Knives* (1979). Also, Ashkenazi and Jacob (2000: 211) elaborate on the men's preoccupation with knives in the section on sushi preparation. They say that 'Knives are boys' toys. (…) the whole cult of blade is historically more a male occupation (…) than a female one', apparently making allusions to the martial arts, i.e. swordsmanship. Morimoto Masaharu, the second Iron Chef Japanese admits, '[In *Iron Chef*] until I held my knife, I was always tense. Once we [chefs] are holding our knives, we know where to begin' (*Iron Chef: The Official Book* 2000: 186).

[21] A similar situation arose when the first female challenger on *Iron Chef* (and also the youngest – 26 years old at her first appearance on the show), Kagata Kyōko, who won over Chin in the Battle Scallop (episode 21), reappeared on the screen. After her first victory, Kagata got married and quit her hotel job, but then divorced and returned to cooking. Her divorce and new life choices (she decided to open a small family restaurant instead of working in a large hotel) were brought up several times during the show's back-stage discussions. Most common commentaries were: 'She is ready to start afresh, as a woman, and as a chef', 'Now she uses her feminine ideas to please people in her restaurant', 'She is a free woman'. She herself admitted, with a modest head bow, 'I was too arrogant at that time'. Altogether, this is an interesting example of a shifting in the cooking show's narrative towards gendered arrangements.

[22] Possibly, her gestures and language (calling Iron Chef *sensei,* for example) are as much linked with the fact that Chin is older as with the fact that he is a man.

famous 'cooking housewife', Kobayashi Katsuyo, defeated Iron Chef Chin[23].

Kobayashi, author of more than 150 cookbooks and a long-time patron of the NHK's *Today's Cooking,* has been credited with making home food fun, efficient and tasty. Japanese people, even the younger generation, still think of her with fondness, 'She is so positive; every time I see her on the screen, it's like I am watching my mother' (Katayama Kana, cookbook author from Nagoya, personal communication). So much has been said about Japanese nostalgic reference to the maternal figure that Kobayashi's success on *Iron Chef* does not seem to be of any surprise, her culinary talents notwithstanding. However, it is interesting to observe how, again, fixed ideological discourse has permeated the show's 'communication architecture' (Holden 2005: 40).

At the introductory sequence of the battle, we discover that Kobayashi is an 'icon of home cooking' (*katei ryōri no kamisama* 家庭料理の神様), TV personality and food expert, worshipped by almost all housewives in the country'[24]. She is portrayed in the context of everyday life, with family pictures and stories of her feeding others flashing on the screen. Kobayashi's biography reveals that she entered the world of cooking accidentally when, after getting married at the age of 21, she got a proposal to appear on one of the Japanese TV shows to perform as an 'ordinary housewife'. Since then, she has been active in her culinary practice, creating original and practical recipes – over 1,000 a year, as the TV voice-over mentions. When she finally enters the stage, smiling and bubbly, the host welcomes her with words, 'Kobayashi-san, with all the housewives in Japan supporting you now, entertain us with your ultimate home-cooking'. The significance of this emphasis on the home and feminine values is the extent to which it differs from the accounts of the meanings that men – in this case, 'unassailable Iron Chefs' – have brought to cooking, playing mainly on the tones of rivalry and showing off. Kobayashi, however, presents herself in a simple, unpretentious manner – she just admits to loving cooking for people, and says that she has never hated any dish she made.

In every aspect of her performance, and, I believe, to a certain degree subconsciously, Kobayashi exploits the most powerful ideological discourse – that which employs woman's pleasure in feeding others, and

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[23] It was Iron Chef Chin's second battle with a female contestant, which was even more important given that he had lost the first one – 26-year-old Kagata Kyōko impressed the jury and audience with her braveness and skill (1993).

[24] Episode 43 – known as the Battle of the Potato – was aired in Japan on 26 August 1994.

which can also translate into caring for them (DeVault 1991: 39-55). For Japanese, such maternal values allow a merging of tradition with nostalgia, and provoke comforting memories (Allison 1996a, 1996b; Rosenberg 1996; Orpett-Long 1996). Kobayashi seems to embrace her maternal femininity and nurturance – she cooks vigorously, often trying her own dishes and announcing with a robust smile that she likes them (*oishii* おいしい). Via such a self-affirmative acceptance of her own vocation (she calls it her 'profession'), Kobayashi seems to trespass the spatial, temporal and ideological boundaries that *Iron Chef*'s organisation has created – she does not fight with time like other chefs but, as she says, uses it effectively. Moreover, she manages to transform the non-domestic arena of Kitchen Stadium into her own, domesticated one, carefully choosing dishes, bossing around in a feminine way, and even checking on Iron Chef's actions in order to give him some motherly advice.

Interestingly, just before the battle starts, Kaga asks her, 'How do you like our kitchen, isn't it too big?', probably making allusions to it being much grander than home kitchens can ever be. She doesn't hesitate to say, 'It's just perfect. Running around will be good exercise'. Obviously, for Kobayashi cooking *means* pleasure and fun, yet she still remembers that food is also to be consumed not only prepared. 'My family just loves potatoes!', she says, without breaking off from her cooking. With Iron Chef announcing that he also plans to cook a 'family-style meal', the contest ceases being a skill or even a gender battle, and enters the realm of ideology. Refusing the gender-specificity of home cooking (reserved for women only), Chin attempts to adjust his own 'flamboyant exteriority' (Strange 1998: 305) and to enter a woman's kitchen. However, it seems that Kobayashi's maternal power – a cultural prerogative of women – cannot be imitated. Through this gender legacy (Johnson 1997: 4), Iron Chef is decertified as a *real* domestic cook, while still being accepted as a truly innovative chef.

However manifestly filled with patriarchal cooking ideologies, *Iron Chef* seems to be the antithesis of one of the dominant stereotypes of the late twentieth century's Japan – the urban, white-collar and middle-class salaryman. This powerful embodiment of Japanese masculinity [25] has mainly been reproduced in the context of modern Japanese corporations. Yet, salaryman, although often still considered the quintessential model of a 'typical Japanese man', tends to be absent from food-related televisual discourse (Holden 2005: 42). Interestingly, both Iron Chef and salaryman's

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[25] For more on different Japanese representations of masculinity, see: Darling-Wolf 2003; Dasgupta 2004 and 2000; Holden 1995; Karlin 2002; Kondo 1997; Robertson, Suzuki 2003.

identities assume a significant amount of power and authority aligned with their visual armour. Dorinne Kondo (1997: 158-174) traces the social meaning of Western-style business suits in 'fabricating' of Japanese masculinity. A suit – salaryman's everyday costume – equates men with progress through associations with the West, as opposed to Japanese women, who were aligned with domestic tradition. Hence, it conformed to the onetime ideology of modernising the nation-state. Similarly, Iron Chefs' mediated identity was designed to operate within strands of nationalism, although it referred to old rather than new cultural values. Chefs in empowering costumes – playing with blades and flames, and wrestling live octopuses – all objectify pre-modern, samurai-like manliness. Through this alternative masculinity[26], mediated in the guise of a live cooking programme, *Iron Chef* seems to rework the hitherto widespread representation of masculinity, the overworked salaryman. Yet, although dressed up like gladiators, Iron Chefs can be humanised and tangible – they run, sweat, get terrified and even weep discretely when emotions are high.

Female 'Taste of Necessity' (Bourdieu 1984: 6) – the 'Perfect' Woman

In *Yamato Nadeshiko Shichi Henge* (*Perfect Japanese Girl Evolution*, hereafter referred to as *Perfect Girl*), a manga published in 2000 and in 2006 transformed into TV series, the heroine is pressured by four boys to become a 'perfect woman'.[27] Sanako, who has forsworn her femininity after an unhappy infatuation, tries to be as unwomanly as possible – she wears Gothic clothes, hates 'bright' people, and chooses to live in solitude with her only friend, a skeleton doll. Although desperately trying to be unfeminine, in reality she is a beautiful girl, who excels at housework, especially cooking, and is good at sports and studying. In one of the scenes, the boys realise to their surprise that when Sanako is cooking she actually looks like a woman, and that her cuisine is very good. In this way, it is

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[26] Many authors refuse to believe in a singular masculinity model, claiming that, rather than being fixed, this is fluid and permeable (Julier and Lindenfeld 2005: 8), and forms a 'complexity of the multiple currents of representation competing on (…) [Japanese] scene' (Darling-Wolf 2003: 83).

[27] *Yamato Nadeshiko,* originally the name of a flower, is a Japanese aesthetic concept drawing on classical poetry and defining the attributes of a perfect woman. The most popular traditional virtues include: beauty, loyalty, domestic ability, wisdom and humility. In 2011, the concept of *Yamato Nadeshiko* was given a whole new meaning by the Japanese women's soccer team Nadeshiko Japan who won the FIFA World Cup in Germany. Since then, it has been associated with sporty, athletic women rather than with delicate flowers.

suggested that feminine activities can transform a genderless 'geek' into a lady[28].

This story provides an interesting illustration of how even the seemingly alternative worlds of Japanese popular culture tend towards reproducing traditional values of femininity. A modern woman in Japan, just like Sanako, may have a great deal of social freedom in choosing her life paths, yet is still expected to be *perfect* in any endeavour she undertakes, especially if it pertains to her 'domesticated' womanhood. Not surprisingly, this rhetoric operates also within far more conservative cultural texts, and its subtle, but still highly persuasive, exemplification can be found in a world of woman's perfect accomplishments, namely, in televisual kitchens of 'domestic instructional cooking programs' (Ketchum 2005: 223).

Today's Cooking, the prominent cookery production of Japanese public broadcaster NHK (channel 2, Educational[29]), is undoubtedly one of the longest-running cooking programs in Japan; in 2008 it celebrated its fifty-first anniversary[30]. Every episode of the show features a different culinary theme, taking into consideration the appropriate season and seasonal ingredients, dietary and nutritional requirements, cultural events (i.e. festivals), and the basics of Japanese cuisine (for example, by promoting the making of Japanese lunch-boxes, known as *obentō*, or sushi). This stylistically conservative and static cooking programme runs five days a week, two or three times a day, and is hosted by a rotating group of mostly female cooks. I employ the word 'cook' rather than 'chef' here[31], as the majority of women cooking on the programme are introduced as *shūfu* 主婦 (housewives), and *ryōri kenkyūka* 料理研究家 (food researchers), but never as 'real' chefs. On the whole, the over-representation of feminised domestic rhetoric in *Today's Cooking* is juxtaposed with the under-representation of male culinary performance on the programme.

From the outset, the stylistic register of *Today's Cooking* is that of domestic intimacy and comfort. In the episodes starring famous Japanese female

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[28] More information on the storyline and *Perfect Girl*'s characters may be found on the official webpage; visited on 28 August 2008, http://www.tv-tokyo.co.jp/anime/yamanade/
[29] Currently *E-Tere*.
[30] From NHK resources, obtained through conversations with the program's chief producer, Yukawa Hidetoshi in August 2008.
[31] An historical explanation for this duality may be the following: given that cooking is most often seen within domestic labour frameworks, when socially prestigious cuisine appeared it had to be differentiated from everyday food preparation (Cooper 1998: 86). Hence, women became inseparably linked with feeding, and were ascribed the title 'domestic cook', while men moved into the more high-ranking, professional sphere of cooking, where they were acclaimed as 'chefs'. This simplistic distinction seems to be also reproduced in the Japanese cooking programmes.

cook Kurihara Harumi, we get our first information on the series'[32] content through its title, *Kurihara Harumi no Kazoku no Ichioshi* 栗原はるみの家族のいちおし (The Most Recommended [dishes] of Harumi Kurihara's Family), and the sub-titles: *Goshujin no Ichioshi*, and *Kodomo no Ichioshi* ('Husband and Children's Favourites', respectively). Kurihara Harumi could be called a perfect Japanese woman: she is an independent and active businesswoman who runs her own expanding cookery, publishing and interior design empire (she is famous for designing fancy aprons and kitchen linen), and in 2004 was awarded 'The Gourmand World Cookbook Award'. She also, more importantly, prides herself in being a 'happy housewife', and has long promoted a healthy family life. Japanese media appraise her as 'an empress of domesticity' (*katei no kamigami* 家庭の神々) and 'a charismatic home-maker' (*karisuma shufu* カリスマ主婦).[33]

As stated at the beginning of the first episode, the recipes that Kurihara agrees to share with *Today's Cooking*'s audience are her family's favourites. So it is her husband and children, with their tastes and preferences, who shape the construction of a programme. While giving explanations for her cookery choices, Kurihara mentions that she has always liked to adapt fancy restaurant meals to the requirements of home cooking. She contextualises every recipe with comments on how she learned to prepare the meals, and what was the original inspiration behind them. There is also an important temporal dimension to the programme: each meal has a well-defined time-frame, enforced either by the cook herself, or through the clock on the screen that measures the real time of cooking activities.

For example, we watch Kurihara making pasta with tomatoes, a really simple, 10-minute dish, while she talks about the time she first ate the *real* Italian spaghetti during a romantic dinner with her husband. We enter a register of domestic intimacy, not only by listening to her life story,

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[32] The series I am referring to is a compilation, *Best of Today's Cooking*, with Kurihara Harumi, which consists of seven short episodes involving her cooking a variety of dishes. These were aired on different dates in 2004.

[33] Both the Japanese and international media tend to emphasise the fact that Kurihara is a 'hyperactive' media personality – multitasking and undertaking versatile activities such as cooking, designing, starring in TV shows, writing books, and being a perfect home-maker. In one of the articles ("Kotoshi ni! Shigoto mo Seikatsu mo Tanoshiku. Ryōrika Kurihara Harumi", *Asahi Shinbun*, 12 January 2007), she is said to have started learning English, on top of all her duties, in order to 'be able to learn to cook for some future foreign friends'. Some interesting rhetoric may also be found in: 'Martha Stewart of Japan', Wanda A. Adams, *Honolulu Advertiser,* 26 April 2006; 'Empress of Domesticity Drops In', Julia Moskin, *New York Times,* 19 April 2006. And, in Japanese: "Furonto Rannā. Washoku no Denshō to Iezukuri ga Watashino Shigoto", *Asahi Shimbun*, 21 January 2006; "Sutekina Kurashi, Reshipino Kamigami Sengyō Shufu", *Asahi Shimbun*, 26 May 1997.

interspersed with flashbacks to her past (via a collage of wedding and family pictures), but also through a very close observation of her moves. When she finishes, a small and subtle portion of pasta fills the screen by the zooming-in of the camera. The whole *mise-en-scène* seems to serve as an extension of Kurihara's personality. In her bright, comforting and well-equipped kitchen, she is shown as the perfect Japanese woman – well-bred, modest, smiling and very precise with her actions. It is as if her televisual construct has conflated with this safe and pleasant interior.

Importantly, frugality and pragmatism seem to be of much value for a Japanese 'domestic' woman. It is virtue that helps her organise home life and manage her household's purse strings, which, in Japan, has long been classified as a woman's prerogative (Lebra 1984; Iwao 1993). While *Iron Chef* indulges in spending US$8,000 on a piece of veal, housewives appearing on *Today's Cooking* never allow themselves to advertise any spending spree. 'We can use the whole mushroom – there is no part I will throw away, it's such a waste!' (*Watashitachi wa zentai no kinoko o shiyō suru koto ga dekimasu. Suteru tokoro ga nai, mottai nai*),[34] says one female cook in *Today's Cooking*'s pre-Christmas edition. The pragmatic approach in the programme's televised kitchen is also expressed in all the simplifying tips (*otasuke pointo* お助けポイント) that cooking housewives offer. They encourage Japanese women to use up ingredients left from a previous day (*nokorimono* 残り物), or to save time by preparing some of the dishes in advance and freezing them. 'It is especially important before the holidays [Christmas/New Years], when we are busy juggling all the other house chores', reminds one of them. It is as if all these housewives were indirectly communicating sympathetic messages to the female audience. Also, Harumi Kurihara seems to advertise all advanced means of facilitating a homemaker's life[35] – she is a keen user of microwaves, and mentions that one doesn't need to have a fully-stocked refrigerator to be able to prepare a tasty dinner for one's husband. 'It's very simple, you only need one slice of ham or a small amount of bacon to cook

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[34] Again, all the translations of *Today's Cooking* dialogues are my own.
[35] Stephanie Assmann (2003) notices similarly contradictory tendencies in contemporary women's magazines in Japan – while the majority of them seem to suggest almost unlimited freedom of individual choice and fulfilment, they also stress the importance of conformity with socially acceptable practices and values, such as modesty, frugality, etc. With Kurihara, the situation tends to be diametric – she is portrayed as a 'traditional housewife' and a 'modern woman' at the same time. However, even with more and more women using frozen/premade meals in Japan, there is still a high level of criticism of such behaviour (Kana Katayama – cookbook author, personal communication.

this dish. It can, of course be any left-over meat you have – it's not going to affect the quantity and taste!', she says with a reassuring smile.

As Elisabeth B. Silva argues, many women's gender identity is still located through household tasks, whether these are imposed upon, or accepted by women (2000: 613). In Japan, specifically, a relationship between female food labour and affirmation of nature[36] seems to be closely bound, and it is mainly women who are responsible for maintaining this status. In *Today's Cooking*, menu is designed in harmony with actual season, natural flavour and texture of the ingredients, and the final presentation of a dish. Not a single sequence is omitted when it comes to dish creation – it always starts with measuring and cutting, then comes cooking, seasoning, portioning, decorating and presenting. 'It looks beautiful, so it's going to bring happiness into the house', says one cook. Aesthetics notwithstanding, Japanese women seem also to pay close attention to using the foodstuffs associated with the proper season. 'It is still cold, so today I will show you how to cook a warming *onabe* (one-pot soupy dish)*', one can hear in winter; whereas spring will most probably welcome the taste of bamboo shoots, and autumn all kinds of mushrooms and fish. By preparing each food as it comes in season, apparently, Japanese women serve not only as warriors of food tradition, but also sustainers of balance in life. They advise and reassure from the screen: 'This dish is going to be good also for children and elderly', says one cook, 'Soba is life' (*Soba wa inochi* そばは命), or, 'We have to eat vegetables, it helps to maintain balance in life'. Hence, female cooks on *Today's Cooking* seem to teach not only how to cook economically and pragmatically, but also how to live in health and harmony. Hence, this is women's ultimate relation to the sphere of nature (Ortner 1974), in a live contrast to men's reproduction of a *fantasy* (Ketchum 2005) – culture.

In *Today's Cooking*, the idea of 'female interiority versus male exteriority', introduced by Niki Strange in her analysis of British TV cooking shows (1998: 310), may be accompanied by Pierre Bourdieu's (1984) distinction between economic foodstuffs and cookery related to leisure or luxury (*Iron Chef* being a perfect example of the latter). Interestingly, such 'domestic' female/male dualism in Japan seems to also operate on a linguistic level. Lidia Tanaka (2004: 27) introduces the idea of Japanese 'genderlects', saying that many lexical items that are for exclusive use by women are the terms used in the household domain. For example, the adjective 'delicious' is *oishii* for women (female judges on *Iron Chef* and cooks on *Today's*

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[36] For more on the subject of food symbolics, see: Pemberton 2000; Ohnuki-Tierney 1990 and 1993; Serper 2003; Allison 1991, Noguchi 1994 and Richie 1993.

Cooking seem to use it a lot) and *umai* for men. Women say *gohan* (cooked rice) and men say *meshi*. Additionally, women add the prefix *o/go* to some nouns (chopsticks – *ohashi*), whereas men use the plain form. Tanaka explains that, generally, women are expected to be more polite than men, mainly because 'their main role (…) is that of housewife, [who] needs to have good communication skills with her family, with neighbours, and with community' (2004: 102).

Given that the majority of female cooks play on notions of family happiness, healthy diet, balanced lifestyle and frugality, their televised characters tend to be an extension of the programme's gendered narrative – selling the 'perfect womanhood' in the comfortable zone of a homely kitchen. However, this does not mean that men are entirely absent from the show. Yet they seem to enter the domesticated zone of *Today's Cooking* as either professional chefs, who are there to teach women how to prepare more sophisticated dishes, or as feminised 'transgender' men (Holden 1995: 55-56), who do not embody any real representation of masculinity with which the Japanese audience would feel that they can compare themselves.

In the episode entitled *Puro no Aji* ('Professionals' Taste'), there are only men, both restaurant chefs, invited to share their knowledge about food. Both of them wear highly formalised kitchen gear (white, starched apron and *toque*[37]), and are announced as expert chefs from restaurants, as well as experienced culinary teachers. They seem to embody the association of men with foreign, more sophisticated cuisine; both of them choose to prepare Western-style dishes, namely, hamburger-steak, French fries and omelette. Although they stay within *Today's Cooking* format by talking about the 'easy and healthy' dishes and giving straightforward cookery instructions, their emphasis on the pragmatic aspects of cooking and food aesthetics seems to be less visible than their emphasis on their own culinary mastery and skill. 'I usually chop an onion in five seconds, but today – for the sake of our viewers – I will do it slower', mentions one of the chefs, holding a large knife. The other ostentatiously instructs the assistant how to flip an omelette like a professional. 'Oh, if only I hadn't

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[37] Many words describing things culinary, especially parts of cooking outfits such as *toque*, are of French origin. Interestingly, Anne Cooper (1998: 28) mentions that, in the French language, the word c*hef* means 'head' or 'chief' and is a masculine (in terms of grammatical gender) term that is specific to men only (but it now used also by women). The closest to a purely 'feminine' equivalent is *cuisinière*, which refers to a woman who prepares and cooks food. It does not, of course, attract the same respect and prestige as does the male term. Maybe then, to a certain extent, Japanese absorption of Western culinary ideas and terms brought also a gender bias?

played truant from cooking, I would now be able to do it', the confused adjunct admits, only confirming the chef's professional superiority.

By juxtaposing men and women on different executive functions, Japanese cooking shows tend to construct a hierarchy of inferior and superior gender. However, there are cases when biologically assigned gender is ostensibly refused, and new meaning created. In *Today's Cooking*'s episode entitled 'Maron and Naomi's Happy Kitchen' (*Maron to Naomi no Kichin wa Tanoshii* マロンとなおみキッチンは楽しい) one can observe another way of redirecting gender associations into new form. The programme features Maron, a controversial 'domestic cook' (*ryōrika* 料理家) and self-ascribed 'food stylist' (*fūdo sutairisuto* フウドスタイリスト), who is loved by Japanese housewives for his unusual food concepts. Featured on a variety of Japanese talk-shows and culinary programmes, he is particularly famous for his choice of colourful (*hade* 派手) shirts and a feminised way of speaking (*onē kotoba* オネエ言葉), characteristic of many Japanese homosexual men.

As stated at the beginning of the episode, he 'can make any dish fancy' (*oshare* おしゃれ), especially by 'applying a very special "Maron magic"'. During the course of the twenty minutes, Maron prepares three simple dishes, all of which do not seem to represent the *food* as a means of satisfying nutrient or social purposes, but as a specific 'culinary lifestyle'. For example, he cooks a 'French toast with fruits' and a 'cabbage stew', which can be eaten 'for breakfast or even reheated for lunch'. It is evident that the menu proposed by Maron does not represent the 'caring for others' attitude of female cooks, as he makes it clear that these are just one-person portions. *Ā, oishisō!* ああ、おいしそう！ ('Delicious!'), exclaims Maron as if he couldn't wait to eat the dish. There seems to be something ostensibly selfish and hedonistic in his culinary practice; and that would, in fact, locate it closer to cooking as a pleasure in itself, manifested widely by men on *Iron Chef* programme, than cooking as a part of reproductive homemaking that *Today's Cooking's* women portray. This way, Maron's gender performance, expressed by his rakish apron, high-tone of voice and constant giggling, is a transgression of not only his biological masculinity, but also of the program's feminine boundaries.

Noteworthy, Maron may be just one example of the whole constellation of gender ambiguous men performing on Japanese television, who – as may be argued – challenge hegemonic and dichotomous gender reality in Japan. It is as if he was saying: 'I can be feminine and campy, dress up like a girl and cook pretentious dishes, and that is fine'.

A similar way of incorporating male performance into 'feminised space' can be observed in the programme when Kurihara Harumi is joined by a male assistant. He provides kitchen labour (mostly small, physical activities like salting a dish or holding a spoon), and reaffirms her statements about the pleasures of cooking and economical choices through a constant choice of *aizuchi* 相槌 (nodding).[38] Here, subversively, she is a chef and he is an assistant. However, it only seems possible given that his masculinity is blurred by a 'feminine' performance – he is wearing a colourful apron, acting clumsily, moulding animal-shape dumplings, and getting excited about the new ways of preparing *domigurasu* sauce: 'Oh, it's so much fun!' (*Tanoshiku ni tsukurimashō* 楽しくに作りましょう). In this way, he transgresses the 'exterior' masculinity and becomes a part of home-cooking, while Kurihara stays within the safe borders of ideal femininity, taking pleasure and pride from her domesticity.

Altogether, the highly feminised space of *Today's Cooking* seems to be occupied mostly by the 'perfect housewives', who tend to reproduce traditional values of femininity, indulging in cooking as nurturing and care for others. Male participation in such womanly activities tends to be defined, again, around culinary expertness and connoisseurship, so that the men could participate in cooking 'without stigmatisation or threat to their "manliness"' (Montemurro 2005). However, feminisation of male domestic cooking seems to be accepted if it is performed in the guise of an 'alternative masculinity'.

Conclusions

Professional cookery in Japan has often been perceived as the logical arena for a masculine culinary practice. Attaching masculinity to showy play and 'taste of liberty or luxury' (Bourdieu 1984: 6), *Iron Chef*, with its gourmet ingredients and grandiose narrative, obviously disavows any attachments to domestic reproduction and utility. Chefs' 'manly' representations, projected through the costumes, class allusions and patriarchal ideology permeating the show, may be seen as aiming to reinforce a belief in the superiority of masculine culinary activities (as linked with the 'culture') over domestic female cookery, which is inevitably interrelated with reproducing the 'nature' (Ortner 1974; see also Buckley 1996; Holden 1995; Neuhaus 2003; Julier, Lindenfeld 2005). Similarly, the unifacial domestic narrative permeating the *Today's Cooking* programme allows for the assertion that, though not far from full liberation, women's relation to

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[38] According to Sugito (1987; see also: Tanaka 2004: 140), *aizuchi* is 'any utterance sent by the listener that does not actively seek for information'.

cooking is still most commonly conceived in terms of family nurturance and housewifery. It could be said that, because the Japanese domestic space is still heavily invested with cultural meanings, large-scale and flamboyant cooking is reserved for men and family nurturance for women, with certain ideologies proving persistent. For example, as discussed earlier, transferring the very feminine Kobayashi Katsuyo to *Iron Chef*'s manly world changed the show from a culinary skill battle into a nostalgic paean, feting the ideal of 'Mother's cooking'.

Here we are, at the beginning of the 21st century – over a decade since *Iron Chef* was last aired on national television, and many more years since Japanese women began their battle for liberation – and the creation of a gender-equal society in Japan seems to be still in progress. Although gender roles have changed significantly over the years, and the idea of domestic space has shifted from that of an ideological place for the nation's reproduction to a sphere for women's potential liberation, Japanese women still tend to master cooking at home, and men cook when the process involves display and high-class or leisurely connotations. What may make a social change more difficult is the fact that diverse worlds of popular culture keep on reproducing old normative roles and beliefs, which are nothing more than reflections of certain ideal gender formations. We could attempt to call these gender ideals myths – the 'series of continually re-worked narrations which reflect and reinforce the values of constantly changing societies' (Martinez 1998: 2). Such 'gender displays', as Erving Goffman (1976) called these idealised feminine and masculine behaviours, tend mostly to be reproduced on television, a media form that in Japan still tends to hold on to a conservative view of life (Harvey 1998: 133). Andrew A. Painter, who conducted research into Japanese TV drama at the end of the 1980s, noticed that 'many telerepresentations of gender on Japanese television can be criticised as ideological forms that legitimise, naturalise, and eternalise the subjugation of women in that society' (1996: 69).

Evidence suggests that Japanese food-related programmes portray a very homogenous vision of society, which pictures charismatic housewives and manly chefs, all performing in contexts corresponding with their identity: women in kitchens that appear to be their own, and men on grand cooking stages. It could be argued, though, that the Japanese TV cookery scene is not so transparent, and that in the kaleidoscope of cooking/consuming performers, one may also find young female celebrities who openly confirm their lack of skill and interest in cooking[39], or feminised 'new

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[39] One of the examples of such a show can be *Ai no Ēpuron 3* ('The Love of Three Aprons'), in which three young female celebrities are assigned the task of preparing a dish without the prior

men' (Darling-Wolf 2003) – boys from BISTRO SMAP, the homosexual self-ascribed 'food stylist' Maron, or the gender-'odourless'[40] (Iwabuchi 2002) male assistant from *Today's Cooking*. However, I find that rather than creating any uniform and anti-hegemonic gender representations, these 'alternative' cooking personalities tend, first of all, to form a significant minority, and, secondly, to be just diverse 'free agents' playing within a 'disjuncture between the televisual and real worlds' (Holden 1995: 57).

Interestingly, what cannot be found on Japanese culinary TV, may as well be called the 'under-representation' of flesh-and-blood characters – cooking salarymen, husbands, single mothers and fathers, or businesswomen. Cookery programmes in Japan seem also devoid of any tangible 'personality cooks' challenging the hegemonic gender ideologies, along the lines of Britain's Jamie Oliver, who combines the imagery of a trendy, *petit-bourgeoisie* 'new lad' (Hollows 2003a) and a feminised but still somehow virile chef, or of the BBC's star, Nigella Lawson, whose negotiated feminine and 'postfeminist' (Hollows 2003b) identity allows both men and women believe that you can be sexy when performing food labour.

As Sarah Thornton argues, 'Distinctions are never just assertions of equal difference, they usually entail some claim to authority and presume the inferiority of *other*' (1995: 10; original emphasis). However, it would be blatant to infer that in Japan social choices between workplace/family and higher/lower-class affinity are simply those between femininity and masculinity. In many cases – and this is a starting point for further investigation – these 'constructions of cultural distinctions' (Hollows 2003b: 198) are constantly reformed and renegotiated, just like popular culture itself, in which 'tradition, the present, the future, a Japanese identity, gendered identity and class/status identities are all reflected, reinforced, fragmented and re-created or created anew' (Martinez 1998: 14).

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knowledge of a recipe. The result is – very often – a cause for mockery on girls' abilities. As Todd Holden notices, the program's website explains that, 'women must make the dishes for these men with love' (2005: 52).

[40] Iwabuchi Koichi (2002) asserts that 'culturally odourless' Japanese products, such as video games or Pokemons, disavow the specificities of their region of origin in order to maximise global commercial potential; in other words, that they are 'odourless' for interpretation. In the case of gender, it can be observed that certain modes of behaviour are employed to try to blur or disguise one's own characteristics, in order to be able to co-exist in a particular mediated gender reality – i.e. the male assistant in *Today's Cooking* tries to disguise his masculinity in order to be able to assist a woman with small-scale food labour in the kitchen.

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Paulina Warchoł

The Mass Media and Political Communication: How Democratic are the Media and Electioneering in Japan?

When speaking about the history of the media in Japan it is important to recognize the various significant changes which have taken place along with the political reforms of the 1990s – an impulse that noticeably implicated the mass media format. I particularly have in mind the reform of the electoral system, which was made after thirty-nine years of almost undisturbed dominance of one political party. Eighteen years have passed since that new electoral system was introduced in Japan. In 1994 the new, mixed-member system[1] replaced the multimember system with the rule of a single non-transferable vote (SNTV), which had been adopted in 1925 and was present in elections to the House of Representatives (*Shūgiin*, 衆議院)[2] in Japan for decades. This far-reaching political reform was one of the most significant turning points in Japan's politics and was followed by a new environment for policy-making and the media. Although the overall power of the electoral system change was considered to be exaggerated (Curtis 1999: 139), it undoubtedly relaxed some rigid political frameworks which had existed in Japan even in the pre-war period. From the patterns of intra-party competition to the public financing of legal changes, all subsequent major political system reforms were preceded by the change of the electoral system in 1994. Simultaneously, mass media popularity (especially the television and the Internet) was dramatically increasing and new changes in broadcasting formats were to influence many areas, especially those of Japanese politics. But it soon became clear that the world of politics would need to reconcile new media communication with old laws and traditions regulating its performance. This in particular pertains to Japan's Public Office Election Law (POEL, *Kōshoku senkyohō*, 公職選挙法) and the Broadcasting Law (*hōsōhō*, 放送法). Paradoxically, on top of the political progress made during those eighteen years, the POEL, although revised and tightened many times, seems to be clinging to the same political practices that were present at the moment of its enactment in 1950, or even those in the pre-war period, especially with

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[1] In the election of members to the House of Representatives, voters cast ballots in 300 single-seat constituencies and in 11 regional, proportional representation constituencies where 180 seats are distributed among the districts depending on their population size (Jichitai, 2007: 11).

[2] In the whole study I refer only to the elections to the House of Representatives, i.e. the lower house of Japan's Diet.

regard to individual candidates. The aim of this study is to understand the mass media in contemporary Japan, i.e. how they get along with the dynamics of the Japanese political scene – particularly electioneering and campaigning – and what their role is in embracing a full-fledged participatory democracy. In the first section of the paper I will attempt to give insight into the political campaigning and to describe how the POEL's regulations have an influence on the opportunities which are given by the development of the mass media. In the second part of the paper I will focus on the accusations which have risen since the mass media have introduced new ways of political discourse – this mainly pertains to the conflict between the traditional laws regulating the media and democratic civil rights. Finally, I will discuss if the allegations towards Japan's interpretation of the role of the mass media in a participatory democracy and in the pluralistic political debate are entirely justified and I will suggest some issues for further discussion on the way to understanding this topic.
The Public Office Election Law versus media development.

The main law which describes the desired model of political activity in Japan is the POEL. This is a document which details the overall regulations with regard to national and local elections. If we wish to take a look at the background of the political campaigning in Japan we need to move back to the end of the nineteenth century when Japan, still with a rural economy, took its first steps in the field of electoral practices. Back then political activity was radically different from what we can observe today. At the beginning of the nineteenth century Japanese electoral law imposed hardly any restrictions on campaigning practices (*senkyo undō*, 選挙運動). There was also no limitation as to the amount of political funds spent on campaigning. Most of the more severe restrictions were imposed in 1925 and extended in further revisions during the pre-war period (Curtis 2009: 211). The POEL, which was adopted in 1950, incorporated many of those pre-war limitations which, consequently, exist until today. Since then Japan has experienced high economic and technological growth followed by rapid urbanization, and it has gone through a period of transition to a full democracy. Yet the model of modern campaigning seems to be built on practices first introduced over a hundred years ago, in which politicians still tend to base their mobilization methods on traditional vote (Curtis 2009: XV). In the 1990s political campaigning still focused on a candidate's image – which was a natural consequence of an electoral system that was based on multimember constituencies with SNTV – where competition among candidates within the same party was nothing unusual.

In this kind of electoral system challengers from the same party were forced to fight for voters in the same constituency. Thus it was important for them to foster their own reliable local networks and to build stable support groups. In 1994, when the new electoral system was introduced, it was expected that politics would move towards the two-party system to create a more competitive political system and, finally, to make electoral campaigning focused more on policy issues and the party program than on an individual and his or her local constituency affiliations (Idem 1999: 138). Although some of the expectations mentioned by the observers turned out to be premature, I would like to discuss the changes in electoral environment.

In recent years we can definitely notice some changes in the electoral campaigning and in the candidates' strategies. This is consistent with the general notion described in the vast body of literature which states that the evolution of the media has strongly influenced politics and the society in advanced industrial democracies (Pharr 1996: 4). This is particularly visible in connections between election laws and campaigning practices as well as political communication in Japan. The election law restrictions have been maintained in Japan since the Pacific War (Matsui: 15) and, generally speaking, politicians are banned from most creative polling activities, as they might be violating the law. Yet for decades candidates have been struggling to find new ways of campaigning and trying to get around the POEL's regulations. This creative tension has stimulated the introduction of various modifications in political campaigning. The prospect of so many changes have even led to a public debate on the so-called Americanization, i.e. the globalization of political communications (Köllner 2007: 8), which has also become a reality in Japan's campaigning model. In other words, observers have come to notice the tight connection between the media, politics and electioneering – features that are typical of American politics (Altman 1996: 177). Not only has the campaigning changed, but a huge revolution has also taken place in the circumstances around the campaigns, inter alia, with respect to the mass media. Köllner suggests that television in particular has had a major impact on political communication since as early as the 1980s (2007: 14). While the debate on the existence of Americanization in Japan's media still continues and has not been brought to a clear-cut conclusion, one can admit that the campaigning style in Japan has evolved in many ways. Yet, in order to recognize its form it is first of all important to highlight the old format of campaigning and to outline the list of "dos and don'ts" that are

traditionally prevailed during the political campaign. Secondly, it would be vital to compare them with the new practices being used by the candidates. According to the POEL, an election campaign cannot be conducted unless it is started from the day of the candidate's registration and continues to the day preceding the election[3]. In practice, this gives a candidate twelve days to conduct the political campaign (pre-registration campaigning is not allowed). During this period the candidate cannot practice door-to-door canvassing[4] or collect signatures from the voters[5], offer food and drink to his or her supporters (except for tea and a modest treat)[6], chant one's name repeatedly unless this is done between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. at public facilities, during sidewalk speeches or from campaigning vans[7]. On the other hand, a candidate is allowed to form private assemblies in public facilities (up to sixty private speeches during the campaign)[8], perform in front of people commuting to work or gathered in platform stations, drive in a campaign van[9] (its size and exterior is specified by the law), and hand out a limited number of printed postcards and handbills (up to 35,000 postcards and 70,000 handbills) in a fixed format[10]. The most familiar activities during the campaigning period are definitely sidewalk speeches, during which candidates present their speeches in front of passers-by. This type of performance usually consists of short messages in which the name of the candidate, his or her party affiliation and request for ballots is chanted repeatedly. One can deliver more specific speeches in the "joint speech meetings" (*tachi'ai enzetsukai*, 立会演説会), where one presentation can last up to thirty minutes, or at the private speeches mentioned earlier.

Let us then take a look at what has changed in the campaigning behavior of the candidates (although the POEL is still criticized as being "out-of-touch with reality" (Wilson 2010: 15), and "restrictive" (Köllner 2007: 11). Firstly, until the electoral system reform of 1994, political campaigning was characterized by localism, i.e. a situation in which a candidate's networks and his or her constituency affiliations were more important than his or her political program, by the strong influence of personal support organizations (*kōenkai*, 講演会) and by connections in the government

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[3] Public Office Election Law, art.129.
[4] Ibidem, art. 138.
[5] Ibidem, art. 138-2.
[6] Ibidem, art. 139.
[7] Ibidem, art. 140-2.
[8] Ibidem, art. 161-2.
[9] Ibidem, art. 141.
[10] Ibidem, art. 142, 142-2.

which allowed to use the "pork-barreling" strategy[11] (Ibidem). Although the new electoral system was enacted, no significant changes in the political campaigning methods were noticed in the following years. Nevertheless, one fact worth mentioning is that since the 1980s the increasing influence of the media has started shaping the campaigning style and it has become a valuable political communication instrument (Ibidem: 13-14). It was not until 2003 that significant changes in the campaigning style were first noticed, for instance, at that time politicians discovered the magical power of a practice called a "manifesto" (マニフェスト)[12]. The first party that gained most from adding manifestos to its campaigning practices was the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ, *Minshutō*, 民主党). It is rather doubtful that the manifesto strategy on its own guaranteed the DPJ more votes, yet it surely contributed to the party's success in the polls – in the 2003 Lower House Elections the DPJ managed to attract more voters than expected – gaining 177 out of 480 seats. This allowed them to reduce the majority of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP, *Jimintō*, 自民党). Nowadays, parties still issue their manifestos, nevertheless, such a tool has become highly predictable; hence it takes more than preparing a manifesto to draw the public's attention. Still, it is clear that political campaigning relies on the media more than ever and that politics are becoming more issue oriented.

The elections to the Lower House held in 2005 were a vivid example of a media-oriented political campaign where the main actor was the prime minister, Koizumi Jun'ichirō (2001– 2006). Since television's popularity as a platform of political communication skyrocketed, it became clear that each politician needs to be more concerned with the available political marketing tools and the politician's image presented to the public. Koizumi was well aware of the image-building advantages of broadcasting. His battle for the post was definitely based on the merits of political communication, his popular appeal and a strong PR background. His PLD public relations teams focused on particular party candidates and their backgrounds, thus quickly giving politicians the positions of celebrities. Soon the election was called "Koizumi's drama" (*Koizumi gekijo*, 小泉劇所) and although this term might sound sarcastic, Koizumi's strategy worked extremely well in the polls (the turnout was historically high: 67.5%) (Ibidem: 16-17).

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[11] Promises to deliver government projects or money to a candidate's constituency.
[12] A declaration which lists the goals, intentions, sources of funding, etc.

The circumstances which contributed to changes in the above-mentioned campaigning strategy can be linked not only to media development, but also to the political reforms of 1994. The candidate's image built on the local level has become less important (or harder to build) as he or she can campaign in single-member or proportional representation constituencies without being forced to compete with colleagues from his or her own party, as was customary in the multi-member districts until 1994. This also means that the value of the personal support groups gathering the votes might be less significant, which is visible if we compare the numbers of voters who declared to belong to *kōenkai* in the 1990s (18%) and in 2005 (1.9%) (Ibidem: 19). While the *kōenkai* is still a useful tool for many politicians, the thesis that even after the electoral system reform the *kōenkai* would remain a crucial component of a campaign (Christensen 2000: 195) can no longer be supported – local connections are more relaxed than they were during the LDP's dominance. Christensen predicted that the campaigning would be more focused on party presidents and less on individual candidates in the local constituencies (2000: 195). This thesis might be confirmed, e.g. by the ongoing debate on "presidentalization" [13] of the elections in Japan which, I believe, was triggered by the tendency to lean towards the party leader's image. One good example might be prime minister Koizumi's political career, especially in the aforementioned 2005 elections.

New Media and New Accusations
Public participation in Japan's electoral campaigns is highly limited, especially when compared to other democracies, such as in the U.S. or Great Britain. Political communication is vital in order to protect a participatory democracy, and it should be the basis of every political campaign. It is a medium between the goals of the candidate and the expectations of the voters (Trent et al. 2000: 14). Although prime minister Koizumi's teams understood the meaning of "communication strategy" (they were even called *komyunikeeshon senryaku chiimu,* コミュニケーション戦略チーム), the political discourse in Japan is still in its initial stages. The channels of communication are significantly limited by the POEL, for instance, as candidates are not allowed to buy time in television or space in the newspapers. Only supervised, government-sponsored advertisements on television or in newspapers are permitted – a candidate

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[13] A phenomenon describing the rising importance of the president's and prime minister's image. According to Mughan, this is a state when the party leader becomes an independent political force (Mughan 2000:7).

can use up to four television broadcasts lasting five-and-a-half minutes each and up to five advertisements in any chosen newspaper[14] (Curtis 2009: 217-218). This system was designed to keep the campaigns at a low cost and to guarantee that the candidates had just elections, during which no one would gain profits from his or her political status. Surprisingly, according to Curtis, these restrictions did not make campaigning less expensive, and what is worse, the candidates started keeping the campaigning costs hidden from the Election Management Committee, which regulates election expenditures (2009: 218-219). Additionally, even if those regulations were meant to provide a level playing field for all contestants, are they fair to the politicians who are starting their career and whose face does not pop up on television or in the newspapers on many different occasions before the campaigning period? Surely the incumbents have less to lose than the challengers.

The mass media play a significant role in shaping politics in most industrialized and democratic countries. From various interpretations described in the literature, Pharr extracted three general roles of the media in society: media as a spectator, where it only conveys the information and has a marginal impact on the politics; media as a watchdog, where the media offer a critique of the government; and media which serve the state and are regulated by the state (1996: 19-21). In Japan, the concept of media as a spectator might be supported by the argument that the media are constrained by the election law during the campaigns, hence their part in forming public opinion is limited (Pharr 1996: 22). The second interpretation – the media as a watchdog – has its supporters as well: for decades the media were a substitute for the opposition, which until the 1990s was overpowered by LDP's regime and consequently had little influence on politics[15] (Ibidem: 22-23). The role of the media as a servant is also being widely discussed – bearing in mind the filtered information flow generated by the *kisha* club system (which will be referred to later), it might also be supported. Each of these interpretations has been discussed and represented in the literature and, as this is an ongoing debate, at this point in time all these aspects of media are currently present in different degrees in the Japanese political scene.

In general, in terms of politics and elections, the media are valued for enhancing voters' political awareness; and some researchers also add the media's power to boost an electorate's involvement in politics (Flanagan

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[14] This right is not available to candidates in local elections; only politicians running in the general elections can enjoy this privilege (Akuto 1996: 317).
[15] To find out more on the opposition in Japan see Scheiner, 2006.

1996: 278). Flanagan finds that the more informed voters are, the more interested and involved they become. This, according to Flanagan, is the core of a participatory democracy; a situation in which the electorate is able to define its voting preferences (1996: 277). Taking into consideration the media in the U.S. and Japan, it is noticeable that although researchers have discussed Americanization of the campaigns in Japan (presumably we can also consider Americanization of the mass media in general), there is still a large gap between both countries when it comes to the role represented by the media and the shape of the electioneering. Television and the newspapers are currently the only media platforms and the main source of information during the campaigning period in Japan. The Internet, even though its popularity has dramatically risen in the last several years, is totally excluded from the political communication platforms during the official campaigning period. In the U.S., for instance, the media have become so influential that they have triggered the opposite effect – the mass media have even started being blamed for weakening and lowering the quality of political participation (Ibidem: 279). On the contrary, in Japan, the possibility of raising political awareness seems to be highly limited, not only by the strict election law, but also by several other regulations, such as the broadcasting law.

Until 1993 the ruling party, the LDP, criticized journalists and the media for having too much influence on shaping the electorate's behavior (obviously they meant an influence which was negative to their own party) (Gatzen: 2001). This stood out especially after the general election in 1993, when TV Asahi was blamed for the LDP's defeat. This even led to the so-called "Tsubaki Affair" (*Tsubaki jiken*, 椿事件) which involved Tsubaki Sadayoshi – the then news director who was accused of negative reporting towards LDP's long-lasting domination. To some observers Tsubaki did not follow the rule of political neutrality (demanded by the Broadcasting Law) in his declarations against the LDP; for others the incident was the beginning of more government-independent television reporting (Altman 1996: 166). Since the 1990s television has been a prominent tool used by politicians in Japan and consequently it attracted more attention and criticism than before. NHK, the main national broadcaster in Japan, has dominated television news for most of the postwar era, and – as the station's budget depends on the decisions of the parliament – NHK news, in line with broadcast laws, needs to maintain "impartiality". This has been criticized for preventing critical views of the government and avoiding controversial topics in the news (Gatzen: 2001).

As was discussed previously, political campaigning tactics have changed in recent years and this also refers to the shape of political discourse as broadcast by television. Since the early 1960s the most watched political program broadcast on Japanese television has been the NHK's 7 p.m. news (today called "NHK News7"). Most of the information presented on the program are topics concerning the government, bureaucracy, political parties and their leaders, etc. As Krauss noticed, the way of presenting the information is rather neutral – the reporters do not comment, do not interpret the facts and do not add any personal touch to the story (2000: 26). Krauss provides the following explanation: when the NHK was about to start broadcasting the 7 p.m. news, it needed to apply some new structure to the reporting. The only model which could be followed at that time was newspaper reporting. All of the reporters who were involved in creating the NHK's news originated from the newspaper environment and the information was gathered from the press sources (2000: 54-55). Not only did the information sections in the news program resemble the newspaper sections, but also soon the way of reporting and the values of the news became similar to those of press conventions (Ibidem). The type of reporting which emerged along with the NHK's evening news is hardly considered to be an opinion-making platform. Again, this leads us to the question of pluralistic debate and political communication, both of which were apparently hardly visible in NHK's news broadcasts. Following Pharr's aforesaid classification of the roles of the media in society, NHK's news were no more than a spectator with no influence on politics.

The turning point for Japan's television was the year 1985, when TV Asahi started to broadcast the *News Station* program. This was the first attempt to actually make the audience understand the presented news – the hosts, led by Kume Hiroshi, used everyday language, graphics, images and other visual materials to make the news as clear and approachable as possible (Altman 1996: 170-171). The program significantly raised the audience's political awareness and was soon criticized and put under pressure of those politicians who felt uncomfortable with the new style of reporting. Some of them even tried to boycott the program, but the *News Station* was so popular that it got through this criticism (Ibidem: 171).

The first instances of an actual confrontation on the air with politicians were introduced in the late 1980s, when TV Asahi presented their new format of reporting in the *Sunday Project* program. Its format was based on the Sunday morning chat shows that have been so popular in the U.S. since the beginning of television. The *Sunday Project* was the first TV show in Japan that was based on political debates without any scripts (Ibidem: 173).

The show officially marked the start of the "debate programs" era in Japan (*tōron bangumi*, 討論番組). Nowadays, each TV station has its own debate programs, e.g. *Nichiyō Tōron* (日曜討論) at NHK, which usually invites politicians and bureaucrats, or *Asa made Namaterebi* (朝まで生テレビ) on Asahi TV, with the participation of journalists, politicians, researchers and celebrities. These kinds of debates have opened up a new way of communication between politicians and the electorate, and have given rise to a new form of direct political participation. Various research findings give us real insight into the factors which have made *tōron bangumi* so successful. Although, to the best of my knowledge, none of them focus particularly on the Japanese case, the nature of such debate programs was closely studied based on the case of the United States broadcasts. The results appear to be quite applicable to the Japanese *tōron bangumi*. Televised political debates in the U.S. became popular almost twenty years before they came into existence in Japan and they were broadcast during each election. Observers suggest that the political debates (especially presidential debates) in the U.S. were considered to be an event which involved millions of citizens and allowed them to participate collectively in it (Cho and Ha 2012: 187). As Cho and Ha suggest, this kind of political participation integrates and motivates the public to "gain more insight and share their impression" of the debate (Ibidem). They also provide stimuli for citizen participation: firstly, negative emotions (usually consequential to political debates) and secondly, the uncertainty fueled by the disagreement of the candidates (Ibidem). According to the authors, the above-mentioned factors significantly encourage citizens to communicate and to seek further information in order to consult their own impressions or to clear up their doubts concerning the debate (Ibidem). I am not absolutely concerned if these kinds of debates, including presidential debates, can be deemed "participation" as Cho and Ha suggests – guests (usually two candidates) are simply interviewed and the direct partisan citizenship is hardly visible. Nevertheless, according to what has been concluded by authors, one could assume that the political debates are so successful because they allow the viewers to become engaged in politics and to become emotionally involved in the discussion between the candidates. If so, no wonder that since 1993 the talk-show format with politicians has turned out to be one of the most popular image-building tools in Japan.

The Japanese press is quite a different matter when it comes to media communication. Along with the appearance of the first press in Japan, the main organizations which exercised power over the information flow were the so-called *kisha clubs* (記者クラブ), i.e. exclusive associations of

reporters who do not allow any out-of-the-mainstream journalists to attend press conferences, briefings, etc. (Shih: 2003). In Japan most major organizations and bureaucratic agencies have their own *kisha* clubs which collect information that is then transferred to the media. It is no wonder that news about the state occupies so much space in the broadcasting of, for example, NHK news (Krauss 1996: 110-111) [16] . Until 2003 membership restriction also included foreign journalists, but after the intervention of the EU foreigners can now have access to the information if they have a Foreign Press Card (*Gaimusho*, 外務書) (Nwadike: 2010). Still, the *kisha* clubs keep the journalists' environment very tight and, as Krauss and Nyblade notice, this develops conformity of information and "reliance on official sources" (2005: 359). In other words, the reporting is compliant with the interpretation provided rather by the source than by the journalist.

Online Political Activity Turmoil

As was mentioned previously, the Internet is excluded from political communication during the electoral campaigns. In the official campaigning period politicians are not allowed to maintain any online activity, including updating home pages, blogs, other communication platforms and social network websites (Caryl 2008). This becomes even more intriguing if we take into consideration the fact that Japan is a highly industrialized, democratic country in which 80% of the population (i.e. over a hundred million people) use the Internet[17]. What is more, the same statistics showed that the number of Internet users has almost doubled in comparison with the year 2000. As the POEL was created long before the "computer age", it is natural that the word "Internet" is mentioned nowhere in the law. However, the law was interpreted against the online campaigning activities. As they are considered to be virtual texts and materials, the "printed documents" restriction is applicable here also. The online campaigning issue has given rise to several discussions and debates. It also had its effect on the amount of literature on the topic of online electioneering in Japan. Wilson writes: "(...) Japan needs to promptly embrace the Internet age and revise its electoral laws" (2010: 3). Apparently, for Japanese lawmakers this need does not seem to be that urgent. Admittedly, there have been some proposals of reforms relaxing the limitations, such as those in 2010 when the DPJ and two opposition parties: LDP and New Komeitō, and

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[16] According to Krauss, three-fifths of total time during the evening news in NHK was connected with politics and government (1996: 97-98).
[17] According to http://www.internetworldstats.com/top20.htm as of December 31, 2011.

agreed to lift the prohibition against online campaigning. Still, the idea did not succeed and, after all, no amendments were made in the POEL.

Online campaigning has become an important issue since the Internet became one of the main communication. It is said that until 1993, when the LDP's dominance was ended, this kind of debate could not have happened. Firstly, because the Internet was not so popular back then, and secondly because LDP politicians have continuously refused to reform the election law which has kept them in power for 38 years. After the electoral system reform and a party-shift in the government, the topic of online campaigning could finally be raised. Although attempts to reform the POEL were unsuccessful, small steps towards relaxing online campaigning rules have become visible. One example is the online activity of politicians, e.g. the former Prime Minister Hatoyama Yukio (2009-2010), who started blogging on one of the famous online platforms and gained over 690,000 supporters (Williams 2010), and the 565 actively blogging politicians on the http://politter.com website. Nevertheless, many politicians seem to fear introducing the Internet as a campaigning tool. It has been mentioned that Internet-based campaigns will be unfair because some politicians might have an advantage over others. Also, they fear the rising campaigning costs, incidents of harassment or fraud (Wilson 2010: 15), and although online campaigning implicates certain risk (according to Wilson the concerns are overblown (Ibid.: 37), the counterarguments of e-electioneering supporters are currently prevailing. They will be discussed further on in this paper.

Media Against Democracy?

Along with the wave of world democratization, which was particularly visible in the second half of the twentieth century, many countries started facing new issues related to the democratic transition. Japan's path to democracy was paved with democratic institutions and a new constitution drafted during the American Occupation period. Herzog highlights that Japan had not had strong democratic traditions, and although some democratic values were recognized in Japanese society, they were never the core of policymaking and were hardly similar to the western-style democracies (1993: 9). The democratic transition, Herzog adds, could not have been smooth in a society which was unfamiliar with the ideologies and values represented by the new constitution as promulgated in 1946 (Ibidem: 10). Under those circumstances the media started being a tool used by the Occupation authorities for stimulating the democratization process in Japan (Pharr 1996: 359). Given this background, it is not surprising that from that time onward Japan has struggled to reconcile

western-style democratic visions with its own traditions that have been valued for centuries (e.g. the authority of the Emperor – the descendant of the gods).

In light of what has been said about the mass media and electoral campaigning in Japan, we need to consider whether the laws regulating mass media platforms (or the lack of such laws as in the case of the Internet) that have been used during the campaigning and the campaigning itself are in line with democratic rules. As stipulated in the preamble of the Japanese Constitution (*Nihonkoku Kempō*, 日本国憲法), "Government is a sacred trust of the people, the authority for which is derived from the people, the powers of which are exercised by the representatives of the people, and the benefits of which are enjoyed by the people", which Herzog claims is proof that the Constitution was built upon Abraham Lincoln's vision of democracy that the "government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth" (Herzog 1993: 11). Whereas the Constitution of Japan is not the subject of this study[18], various research questions the democracy of the mass media as a campaigning axis. Article 21 of the Constitution of Japan states: "Freedom of assembly and association as well as speech, press and all other forms of expression are guaranteed". This article is most often cited as being violated when it comes to the debate on the democracy of general broadcasting rules and, what follows, the broadcasting regulations during the official campaigning period. As broadcasting on TV and the radio is strictly regulated by the broadcasting law, observers claim that those limits violate the concept of freedom of expression and thought guaranteed by the Constitution (Wilson 2010: 3-4). Altman, in her paper, compares Japan's Broadcasting Law to the Fairness Doctrine that was exercised in the U.S. until 1987 (1996: 182). The Fairness Doctrine was the policy of the Federal Communications Commission, a government agency which controlled broadcasting in the U.S. in s similar way that the Broadcasting Law controls the media in Japan. In 1987 the doctrine was eliminated, mostly because it violated the freedom of speech and thought. Twenty-five years have passed since the U.S. abolished the Fairness Doctrine. However, its equivalent is still present in Japanese law, a fact that seems quite interesting when we consider that – while early media platforms, especially television, were based on the American-style TV stations and incorporated many of its features and rules - Japan follows its own interpretation of freedom of speech.

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[18] For a discussion on whether Japan's Constitution conforms to democratic principles or not see Herzog, 1993.

The same example may refer to the press. Reporting in Japan is based on official statements, and it is not easy for journalists to dig for their own information, especially considering the limitations of access to public documents. As was mentioned previously, the *kisha* clubs still control the journalists and the information flow[19], which was widely criticized by the EU a few years ago. Some observers clearly pointed out that the *kisha* club system does not conform to the democratic character of Japan's constitution. The issue became international after September 17, 2002, when Prime Minister Koizumi paid a historical visit to North Korea and none of the European Union's foreign correspondents were selected to accompany him (The Japan Times, Nov. 7, 2002). One month later the European Commission released a report entitled "EU Priority Proposals for Regulatory Reform in Japan", in which it criticized the *kisha* clubs for limiting the "free trade of information" and called for their abolition (The Japan Times, Nov. 7, 2002). The issue was also to be forwarded to the World Trade Organization (WTO)[20], and the following year the European Commission urged that changes be introduced in the *kisha* club system once again. The Japanese Newspaper Association (JNA, *Nihon Shimbun Kyōkai*, 日本新聞協会), which regulates reporting rules, opposed each accusation by claiming that they are based on "misunderstanding and cultural biases" (The Japan Times, December 12, 2003). The Delegation of European Commission, however, strongly rejected the JNA's explanation and finally, in 2004, the JNA gave in and agreed to make some concessions for foreign reporters. Still, the *kisha* clubs are criticized for preventing information transparency by keeping Japanese freelance reporters away from information. It is even said that now it is easier for foreign correspondents than for Japanese freelancers to obtain information (Japan Media Review, August 18, 2006). The second problem which raises further criticism along with the *kisha* clubs discussion is the aspect of too close relationships between the reporters and those who are the subjects of the reporting, so that politicians can influence media coverage to their own benefit and reliable critique of the government are threatened (Seward 2005: 25). Again, this raises the question of transparency of information, its quality and pluralism.

Whereas the *kisha* clubs issue was eased after JNA's promise to allow foreign press journalists to gain information, the problem of online

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[19] *Kisha* clubs are less influential on TV because since the beginning of live television it has been difficult to control aired information due to the broadcast format.

[20] An organization established in 1994 which regulates trade between the member countries. Japan has been a WTO member since January 1, 1995.

campaigning seems to have grown stronger. There are plenty of accusations towards the POEL with regard to online activities during the official campaigning period. Unarguably, there has been a conflict between the voters' and politicians' individual rights and legal regulations, which has been debated in the world-wide media. The POEL's interpretation of online campaigning activities seemed to be even more disturbing in comparison with other democratic countries, e.g. the U.S. or Great Britain, where online campaigning is not only allowed, but has also become a highly influential method of political activity. This reminds us particularly of Barack Obama's historical 2008 presidential campaign, where his major communication platform was the Internet. Some reporters even claim that Obama became president thanks to the Internet (Cain Miller 2008). The fact is that the campaign was extremely effective – Obama raised record sums of money *via* the Internet and finally won the elections. Obviously, there is no equivalent for a nationwide presidential election in Japan, also the electoral setting is different and, therefore, the comparison between U.S. presidential campaigning and Japan's general election might be far-fetched. Nevertheless, after drawing conclusions from Obama's campaign, the use of Internet tools during the official campaigning period seems to be worth considering in any democratic election.

Several serious accusations have been brought forth against POEL's restrictions regarding online campaigning. First and foremost, again, just as in the case of the Broadcasting Law when it comes to television and the *kisha* clubs and press, it is claimed that the online campaigning ban undermines freedom of expression as guaranteed in Art. 21 of the Constitution. As Wilson points out, it also violates the voters' rights to participate in the political process. He even goes as far as to state that not only are the constitutional provisions being ignored, but also Art. 19 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights [21] , which guarantees freedom of expression, is omitted (Wilson 2010: 2-3). It is difficult to determine if those allegations are overly harsh or not. It is true that the same provisions of freedom of expression constitute one of the most important human rights recognized in most international declarations, e.g. in the United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which details the right in Art. 19, or the Inter-American Court of Human Rights which highlights that: "Freedom of expression is a cornerstone upon which the very existence of democratic society rests." Nevertheless, if we look closer at the interpretation of the freedom of

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[21] The Declaration was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948; Japan joined the United Nations in 1956.

speech, it will be clear that certain limitations and controlled elements are present in most democratic countries[22], as Wilson also points out (Ibidem: 25, Krauss 1996: 358). The European Convention on Human Rights, for instance, gives a more precise definition of freedom of expression and attempts to impose its limitations. Art. 10 stipulates: "Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers. This Article shall not prevent States from requiring the licensing of broadcasting, television or cinema enterprises". The second subparagraph also adds: "The exercise of these freedoms, since it carries with it duties and responsibilities, may be subject to such formalities, conditions, restrictions or penalties as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society, in the interests of national security, territorial integrity or public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, for the protection of the reputation or rights of others, for preventing the disclosure of information received in confidence, or for maintaining the authority and impartiality of the judiciary". This article highlights that the freedom of speech is not unlimited. It mentions the basic limitations that might be applied to the right and, apparently, these are only the "key areas" of those limitations (Sturges 2006: 5). Any further interpretation and application of what has been stipulated in Art. 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights is a more complex issue. Japan's governmental institutions, based on the wide scope of limitations which can be exercised with respect to the right of freedom of expression, usually claim that the restrictions on online campaigning and other campaigning activities are to protect public welfare and fairness of election. To confirm

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[22] If we discuss the regulations imposed on Japanese media we cannot avoid parallels with the supervised mass media in Europe. A classical example could be the Italian media which has been monopolized by Mediaset – a mass-media company and the most influential private broadcaster founded by the former prime minister, Silvio Berlusconi. Needless to say that under Mediaset's control the freedom of the media in Italy remains threatened (BBC News, May 23, 2001) – the role of the mass media as a watchdog is marginalized.

In Poland the media are supervised by the National Radio and Television Broadcasting Council (NBC, Krajowa Rada Radiofonii i Telewizji), whose actions have been criticized several times for their lack of political neutrality, e.g. in 2007 the Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE) stated that NBC's performance was highly partisan. As OSCE claimed in their report dated October 4-5 – Polish public broadcasting suffers from "unbalanced coverage of the election campaign" and "the amount of time allocated to the governing (...) party to date was extraordinarily higher than that allocated to other parties contesting the elections." (OSCE 2007: 5). According to the final report dated October 21, NBC "was unable properly to discharge its constitutional responsibility to 'safeguard the public interest' regarding radio broadcasting and television" (OSCE 2007: 17).

this, the first article of the POEL stipulates: "The purpose of this law is to ensure healthy development of democratic government". Additionally, such issues as candidate harassment or negative campaigning are also mentioned among the concerns regarding online activities during the official campaigning period. I assume that those explanations might also fit the "national security" and "public safety" points mentioned in Art. 10, and at some level they are also coherent with what is stipulated in Art. 13 of the Constitution. The "public welfare" mentioned in the Constitution is a rather ambiguous concept and it is not absolutely clear what it actually means (Wilson 2010: 26). Taking this into consideration, on the one hand, and with the wide scope of allowed limitations to the freedom of speech described in various declarations and, on the other hand, the debate on whether or not the online campaigning ban in Japan violates any human rights or democratic concepts shall remain open.

Speaking of the Japanese press, as was mentioned previously, the international discussion on the *kisha* clubs and EU pressures on the Japanese JNA have brought a compromise which made the press clubs in Japan a less burning problem. The JNA did not yield entirely to EU demands and the *kisha* clubs still manage the information flow. How will the situation develop in the case of POEL and EU pressure? The effects are already visible, as proposals have come from policymakers to introduce some relaxations in the online campaigning ban. Nevertheless, a complete reform of the POEL might take longer, especially if we consider the reluctance to give journalists free access to information.

The "freedom of speech" or the "public welfare" concepts are not the only issues which give scholars interpretative difficulties. What we should actually begin with is the definition of "democracy" itself. Democracy is a highly complex concept which is hard to standardize, although numerous attempts have been made throughout the centuries (Bosin 2009: 7-8). One of the most cited definitions is based on Abraham Lincoln's vision of a democracy. Yet, as is discussed by Bosin, "the government of the people, by the people and for the people" gives us a rather ambiguous interpretation of a democracy, thus it needs to be broadened to some other factors which would also describe the quality of the democracy (Ibidem: 8). The definition itself needs to include many more variables, such as competitiveness of the system, political participation, popular sovereignty, political and civil rights, liberties and freedoms, political competitiveness and many more. The problem of defining what a democracy actually is preceded by difficulties related to measuring the elements listed above. Various researchers have struggled with handling the variables, each of

them choosing those which they believe are the most influential on a democracy (Ibidem). But is it even possible to measure the level of democracy in a given country? It turns out that in comparative political science there are various democracy indices or scales which are used to measure how democratic a country is. Democratic indices are particularly popular among Anglo-Saxon researchers (and underused in Polish political science), still, no consensus has been reached on how the indices should be interpreted and how a democracy should be measured – inaccuracy and errors (or perhaps cultural interpretation and application) seem to be unavoidable in this kind of research (Ibidem: 11). Despite the above-mentioned difficulties in data interpretation, some challenging academic projects have been conducted in order to measure worldwide democracy. One of them is the "Polity IV" project which focuses on a comparative analysis of the global conditions of democratic countries. Democratic indices are measured on a 21-point numerical scale (–10 to –6 for an autocratic political system, –5 to +5 for an anocratic political system, and +6 to +10 for a democratic political system). Points are distributed according to such factors as, e.g. regulations, competitiveness and quality of political participation, or openness and competitiveness of recruitment of executives (Lonardo 2010). According to research conducted in 2011 by the "Policy IV" project, Japan scored a maximum of +10 points, which makes it a full democracy (along with the U.S., Canada, Costa Rica, Haiti, Chile, Uruguay, most Western-European countries except for France and Belgium, Australia, New Zealand and Mongolia. Surprisingly, Italy, with its Mediaset empire as mentioned briefly above, also scores +10 points)[23]. The results might be, however, confusing – is it possible that Japan, a country which faces harsh criticism for limiting freedom of speech, receives the highest score possible on the scale of democracy? The answer to this question can be found in the variables used by the "Policy IV" project to measure democracy. It turns out that the scale does not include such factors as human rights and civil liberties (Ibidem). I believe that a democracy cannot be measured if we ignore, e.g. freedom of speech, freedom of expression or freedom of assemblies, which are its central values.

The second influential project which gives insight into the democracy level of particular countries is "The Democracy Index" presented by Economist Intelligence Unit – an independent organization which offers worldwide analysis on various fields. According to the latest report from 2011 Japan ranks 21. place out of 167 countries which makes it a "full democracy"

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[23] For more details see: http://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/polity4.htm.

(2011: 5). The research is based on five categories such as: electoral process and pluralism, functioning of government, political participation, political culture and civil liberties. Japan scored the least points for political participation (6.11 out of 10) and unexpectedly, the most for civil liberties (9.45 out of 10). The overall score was 8.8 out of 10, which is the same as in 2010 (Economist Intelligence Unit 2011: 4). Since the index was first published we can observe a small but gradual tendency of improvement of the Japanese democracy – in 2006 Japan scored 8.15 out of 10 points, and even though the score gave it the 20th position, the level of democracy was lower than in 2011 (Idem 2006: 3). Whereas if we look at the score for political participation, we will see that Japan also made a small step up from 5.56 in 2006 to 6.11 in 2011 (Idem). Again, the research shows that Japan is a full democracy, nevertheless, one could assume that scoring 21st place out of 25 full democracies does not seem to be praiseworthy – especially because the difference among the countries is of the order of a few hundredths of one per cent.

Does It Really Matter?
Different allegations have been made against media platforms in Japan in the context of electoral campaigning: the *kisha* clubs controlling the information flow in the press and on television, politicians cutting out the Internet during the official campaigning period, violations of the freedom of speech and, inter alia, democracy itself, etc. However, are those debates justified or are they just the proverbial storm in a teacup?

The *kisha* clubs are not only a Japanese phenomenon. They exist in other democracies, although they are not so exclusive (and controversial) as in Japan. The "lobby" journalists in Great Britain are one such example[24]. The relations between reporters and politicians in Great Britain are very tight – political journalists have their own offices in Westminster and keep close contacts with the members of parliament. As journalists cooperate with their sources, they have immediate and direct access to information (they often have a great influence on the politics) (Davis 2009: 206). Unsurprisingly, such a system does not avoid criticism – it was blamed for being a "barrier to openness" and "creating an impression of a privileged inner circle of reporters" (The Guardian, January 26, 2009). The case of lobby journalism in Great Britain only proves what has been emphasized by Krauss: an absolutely unrestricted media system does not exist, neither in Japan, in Great Britain nor any other country (1996: 358).

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[24] The phenomenon of "lobby journalism" in Great Britain is well reflected in the work of Davis, 2009.

Although the EU considered the problem of *kisha* clubs policy in Japan to be disturbing, some journalists do not feel excluded from the press society because of the clubs. As Howard French, a New York Times reporter, admitted, "most good journalism doesn't get done in *kisha* clubs" (Japan Media Review, August 18, 2006). The "outsiders" make their own efforts in finding their own information sources, hence they are less dependent on the official nets. As Farley points out, there is no place for any "scoop" in the reporter's clubs – journalists in the *kisha* clubs often make an agreement as to how the story should be presented to the public (1996: 136-137). It is not that non-mainstream journalism does not exist in Japan at all due to the reporters' clubs system. As a matter of fact, except for the five major national newspapers (*Yomiuri Shimbun*, *Asahi Shimbun*, *Mainichi Shimbun*, *Nikkei Shimbun*, *Sankei Shimbun*), there is also alternative reporting being done in regional or local newspapers, e.g. *Chūnichi Shimbun* or *Tōkyō Shimbun*, and in party newspapers, e.g. *Shimbun Akahata* – issued by the Communist Party of Japan (*Nihon Kyōsantō*, 日本共産党), which provide a certain diversity in Japan's journalism and critical views on politics (Krauss 1996: 358).

It is also worth mentioning that the press and television, in their present shape, maintain great authority and enjoy the trust of the Japanese citizens. A survey conducted in 2009 by the *Shimbun Tsūshin Chōsakai*, a newspaper research organization, showed that 62.1 percent of respondents found newspaper information trustworthy, and 71.1 percent agreed that they trusted the information broadcast by the NHK. To compare, according to a poll conducted in 2010 among U.S. citizens, only 25 percent of respondents trusted newspapers "quite a lot", and 22 percent trusted television (Morales 2010). This means that Japan's NHK is considered to be the most reliable source of information; it also significantly outdistanced other institutions, such as courts, the police, government or political parties. In turn, in the case of U.S. media, it is visible that their prestige is much lower than in Japan.

If we refer to the role which the Internet plays in overall politics, also outside the official campaigning period, it becomes clear that it is similar to any other modern democracy. Politicians in Japan have become very active on the Internet: they have their home pages, blogs, they use social media platforms, they share videos, etc. Their political activity (*seiji undō*, 政治運動) outside the campaigning period is almost unrestricted by the POEL, and because the concepts of "political activity" and "campaigning activity" are quite vague, there are some loopholes used by the politicians to communicate with the electorate even during the official campaign (The

Japan Times, April 23, 2010); for instance, as stated by the Internal Affairs and Communication Ministry, updating the politicians' websites during the campaign is allowed as long as it is within the range of usual political activity (Yomiuri Shimbun, July 1, 2010). We can admit that this statement does not provide a clear concept of what kind of updates are allowed. Therefore, generally speaking, the information flow outside the campaigning period is unrestricted.

Also, the issue of the interaction between the Internet and democracy itself is far more complex than might be expected. Lately, particularly among Western observers, there has been a notion that the Internet might put democracy in jeopardy. Sey and Castells call the Internet "the technology of freedom" which can fix defects of the participation process (2004: 363). Yet, in the same research they highlight that the fear of an electronic democracy is not unjustified – some politicians believe that the Internet might even put the mechanisms of a representative democracy out of tune (Ibidem: 366). This fear might be explained by the fact that along with the media revolution, the traditional methods of political discourse in modern democratic systems have faced a progressive destabilization (Dahlgren 2006: 150). Among a number of factors which have contributed to this destabilization, Blumler and Gurevitch list, e.g. multi-channel communication, where genres combine with one another and the definition of journalism is disintegrated which, in turn, undermines the credibility of information; too many narrators and mediators and less politically engaged recipients are involved in the politics and there is no arbitration of political discourse, which often changes from a debate to a monologue (2001: 2-3, Dahlgren 2006: 150). To some extent, the Internet strengthens those factors and causes an even more visible destabilization of political communication. Obviously, the necessity for the existence of a free media in every democracy is undeniable – clearly they stimulate a pluralistic debate, allow direct communication between the politician and his or her constituents, and deliver information to the citizens – yet, the above-mentioned concerns prove that at the same time new media can destabilize a democracy and can create degeneration of political communication, which has hotly been debated – at least for those particular countries. Based on the conclusions drawn on Western media, Japan's fear of allowing an unlimited political debate during the campaigning period seems to be more reasonable (although, as described briefly in the first part of the paper, it is also determined by numerous other factors).

In order to evaluate the level of democracy of Japanese elections, it would be reasonable to compare their features with elections in some other

democratic countries. In most industrialized democracies the official campaigning period and all benefits given by the media platforms are used to the bitter end, particularly if we refer to the American presidential elections which are conducted with all their pomp. Politicians in most democratic countries use every possible occasion to reach their electorate and, what is more important, they do not hesitate in using technological innovations, e.g. social platforms. Still, this electioneering does not lack the limitations resembling those imposed in Japan. For instance, in many European democracies (Italy, France, Spain, Poland, etc.) during every general or presidential election we can witness a phenomenon called the "election silence" period, when any political agitations or debates are banned. This period includes the last day or days before the election day and lasts no more than 48 hours. The issue of election silence is particularly interesting in the case of Italy, where it officially lasts from midnight on the day preceding the elections, and additionally no one is allowed to spread any kind of political propaganda 30 days before the election. This includes manifestations, printed brochures, posted images and any other political agitation forms[25]. A similar election silence period is also practiced in Spain, where it is called "the day of reflection" (*jornada de reflexión*) and, additionally on top of the silence period, five days before the election it is prohibited to publish any electoral polls through any media (Art. 91.4 of the General Election Law[26]). Those election silence restrictions are very much similar to some of those imposed in Japan during the official campaigning period. And I believe that if we are speaking about freedom of speech in Italy, the quoted example is just the tip of the iceberg[27]. The election silence period is absolutely not recognized in the "Anglosphere", not without reason – it would be simply against the First Amendment of the United States Constitution, which guarantees the freedom of speech, press and assembly (Zawadzki 2011). It is interesting to observe that election silence is accepted in many EU countries, and Japanese-style campaigning is being criticized by EU organizations as described above. On this occasion I would also like to highlight that although the EU has still much to do when it comes to freedom of speech in its own backyard, I do not wish to diminish the importance of fundamental democratic rights in any country. What I intend to emphasize is that respect for democratic rights and all

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[25] Art. 6 of the Act of 4 April 1956, No. 212 (Legge 4 aprile 1956, n. 212 - Norme per la disciplina della campagna elettorale).
[26] La Ley Orgánica 5/1985, de 19 de junio, del Régimen Electoral General.
[27] For more research see Brevini, 2010.

democratic values is not an isolated case in Japan – it rather seems to be a general tendency. In the 1990s it became noticeable that the democratic models started suffering from destabilization – generally speaking, democracy in itself might have slowly fallen into a state of decay[28]. Therefore, as a matter to consider in further research, I would suggest a comparative analysis of the quality of the Japanese democracy and its assessment based on a comparison with a complete ideal model of a representative democracy (obviously, I would assume that it is unlikely to find this model among any real world democracies).

Getting back to the subject of democracy, there is one more issue worth recalling. Although numerous scholars have attempted to measure the democracy level in given democracies and to make comparative analyses to improve the understanding of this issue, the methodology of the research is still ambiguous (Szewczak 2011: 100). One of the reasons which presents questions to the research are the already mentioned difficulties with defining what a democracy actually is – the manifold definitions are usually similar or complementary, but it also turns out that the concepts are different or even opposite (Ibidem). Yet, whether or not it is methodologically complicated, measuring the democracy level is considered to be a useful tool in comparative politics – it allows to specify the quality and dynamics of democratic consolidation and to predict where the democracy is heading. Considering that the Japanese way of democracy faces strong criticism, this kind of comparative analysis might give new insight into the matter, whereas the results of the research might serve as a tool in diagnosing the condition of Japanese democracy and in improving its character (provided that we use the same evaluation instrument in all cases).

Finally, there comes the question whether campaigning in Japan even matters and, if so, is the Internet making any contribution to that. Many scholars have been wondering what the significance of campaigning itself is[29]. Although research on this subject still needs to be conducted and applied to each country in a different way, as Schmitt-Beck agrees, campaigning (in favorable circumstances) does make a difference (2005). But does it make a difference in Japan? Research shows that many voters tend to remain undecided even until the day of the elections, and it is during the campaigning period that they decide who they will vote on

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[28] Full analysis of this tendency see Economist Intelligence Unit's Index of Democracy, 2007, 2008, 2010 and 2011.
[29] For more on this subject see Farrell and Schmitt-Beck 2002, Hillygus and Jackmann 2003, Holbruck 2006.

(McAllister 2002: 22-40). From this point of view it is clear that the official campaigning period is important. However, as Flanagan discovers, campaigns are only effective on those who have already decided to vote, but still are hesitating about the candidate. They might also be useful to those who have not yet specified their political opinion yet: for example, young people who have just started to vote (1996: 278-279). Still, voters who have already made up their minds about their candidate do not tend to change their mind because they were influenced by the political campaign[30]. As regards the Internet, Dahlgren suggests that it might occur that there is little evidence that the Internet has improved the functioning of the democratic process – despite the active online political communication between politicians and citizens, no evident political change has occurred (2006: 154). Political participation and the policymaking process were unaffected by the Internet (Dahlgren 2006: 154). Both conclusions were drawn from the Western societies' electoral behavior and online political activity, and it is still hard to apply them to Japanese society without carrying out a large-scale cross-sectional study. Although some of the hypotheses might be universal for each democratic election, the subject is still understudied in the case of Japan, where traditional social networks are the core of the politics[31]. This issue should be addressed in further research.

Conclusion
The development of the mass media is constantly changing the political scene in Japan. Along with new political communication possibilities created by the media, new debate issues have emerged. Observers fear that the new media might threaten the representative democracy – all the more that recently democracies in general are facing destabilization. In the last two decades the Japanese political scene has been full of dynamism – the electoral system reform in 1994 and its effects reshaped some rigid political mechanisms. Consequently, the mass media, particularly television and the Internet, began to enjoy new opportunities for transmitting information and shaping the political discourse. Along with the emergence of the new media in Japan, observers have begun paying attention to new issues derived from the conflict between the rapid change of the media and the traditional patterns of political communication

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[30] See Farhi 2012.
[31] Social networks still exist in Japan; however, the new electoral system, in which the candidate's image in the constituency is less important, has weakened them significantly, e.g. the role of *kōenkai* has diminished, as described on p. 4.

regulated by the law. In consequence, Japan was criticized for imposing limitations on electioneering, free information flow and violations of civil rights as guaranteed by the Japanese constitution. These kinds of debates also stimulated a discussion on the quality of Japanese democratic mechanisms, especially in the media and political performance, e.g. during the official campaigning period. Most new political initiatives, either by the politicians or the citizens themselves, are facing the rigid limitations imposed by Japanese election law, which is not adapted to the current environment and the growth of new technologies. The POEL also limits the political participation of the electorate and the information flow during the campaign, which has stimulated a heated debate on the lack of respect for fundamental human rights of freedom of speech in the mass media – although Japan is a mature democracy, this kind of tension between modern media and traditional laws has created new concerns about respecting democratic principles. The impact of the new media, such as the Internet, on the quality of a participatory democracy is still incompletely defined – they definitely have the potential to strengthen the pluralistic debate and political information flow but, at the same time, scholars are starting to fear a slightly opposite effect – a further destabilization of democracy. Although to date Japan has been deeply skeptical about entirely unlimited media, it is probably a matter of time when the pressure to protect fundamental democratic rights, as put on Japan by foreign and domestic spectators, finds its relief, particularly with regard to the online campaigning issue. For political science this might be an opportunity to verify the state of art about the clash between the new media and a conservative democracy; for Japan it might be another opportunity to accelerate the pursuit of a full-fledged more complete participatory democracy.

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STRESZCZENIA / SUMMARIES / 要約

Aleksandra Kaniewska

Gender in Japanese Television Cooking Shows – Comparative Content Analysis of Contemporary Broadcast Media

In most cultures, gender is the principal line of demarcation for the distribution of power, and it usually is in the kitchen where the distinctions between the male and female areas of influence are classified and cemented. In Japan, food discourses emerging from the ubiquitous TV culinary shows are but one example of how gender is expressed and reinforced through cultural practice. The article attempts to look at women and men's roles in the 'televised kitchen', and, more specifically, at two popular Japanese cooking shows: *Iron Chef* (*Ryōri no Tetsujin*, Fuji TV) and *Today's Cooking* (*Kyō no Ryōri*, NHK Educational).
Keywords: gender roles, cooking shows, domestic space, femininity, masculinity

Paulina Warchoł

The Mass Media and Political Communication: How Democratic are the Media and Electioneering in Japan?

The aim of this paper is to understand the mass media in contemporary Japan, i.e. how they get along with the dynamics of the Japanese political scene – particularly electioneering and campaigning – and what their role is in embracing a full-fledged participatory democracy. In the first section of the paper the author attempts to describe the political campaigning and analyze the influence of the Public Office Election Law's regulations on the opportunities created by the development of the mass media. In the second part of the paper the author focuses on the accusations against the mass media, which introduced new ways of political discourse – this mainly pertains to the conflict between the traditional laws regulating the media and democratic civil rights. Finally, the author discusses the question whether the allegations towards Japan's interpretation of the role of the mass media in participatory democracy and in the pluralistic

political debate are justified and suggests some issues for further discussions in order to understand this topic better.

アレクサンドラ・カニェフスカ

日本テレビの料理番組におけるジェンダー現代放送の比較分析

多くの文化において、ジェンダーは、権力を分割する主要な境界線を成しているが、その一方で、台所は男女の影響区域が分類・結合されている場所である。日本の料理番組に登場する食物に関する言説は、ジェンダーがどのように表現されているか、そしてそれが文化上の実践を通してどのように定着しているかを示す一つの例である。本論では、特に二つの料理番組（フジテレビ製作『料理の鉄人』と NHK の e テレ製作『今日の料理』）といういわゆる「テレビ化」した台所での男女のロールを分析する。
キーワード：ジェンダーロール、料理番組、家庭空間、女らしさ（女性性）、男らしさ（男性性）

パウリナ・ヴァルホウ

日本におけるマスメディアと政治コミュニケーション──日本のメディアと選挙運動は民主的であるのか

本論文は現代日本のマスメディア──インターネット・テレビ・新聞－－の理解を目的にしている。すなわち、メディアと政界動向の相互作用（特に、選挙と選挙運動）、本格的な直接参加民主主義確立におけるそれらの役割について論じている。論文冒頭では、選挙運動の特徴とマスメディアを利用した選挙運動の方法に影響を与える公職選挙法の規制について詳細に記述している。次章では、マスメディアによって新たに出現した政治コミュニケーションの重要な問題を論じている。すなわち伝統的な選挙法と普遍的な公民権の摩擦に関しても明らかにしている。最終章では、日本において直接参加民主主義と多原理的政治論争を築く上でマスメディアが果たす役割の解釈に対する非難には正当性があるか否かを論じ、その問題を理解する上での更なる論点を提示している。

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2006年にワルシャワ大学を卒業し、ポーランドの日刊紙「*Dziennik Polska Europa Świat* ポーランド日報——ヨーロッパ・世界」の社会文化部に就職し、2007年に当社の海外通信員としてイギリスに派遣された。2008年9月にオクスフォード大学の現代日本学修士課程を卒業。その後にも主に日本を対象にした政治分析に従事。特に日本のメディアにおけるジェンダー問題や日本・アジア地政に関する論説を執筆している。

パウリナ・ヴァルホウ

2011 年 9 月にアダム・ミツキェヴィッチ大学東洋文化研究所日本学科卒業。研究テーマ：日本のマスメディア、政治コミュニケーション、公民権、政治マーケティング。

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