A cross-cultural comparative study of Japanese and Western perceptions on media systems assessing the validity, or otherwise, of Western criticisms against the Japanese press club media system, and the potential repercussions of new media in Japan, using the Fukushima nuclear disaster as a case in point.

Submitted by
Glen Stuart Clancy
B.A. B.Comm. B.Journ.

A thesis submitted in total fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

School of Social Sciences and Communications
Humanities and Social Sciences

La Trobe University
Bundoora, Victoria 3086
Australia

October 2014

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 4 – RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

4.2 Journalism ethics

4.3 Media's role in society

4.4 Obtaining essential information from the media

4.5 Press club system: beneficial or disadvantageous?

4.6 Effectiveness of press club systems

4.7 Trust in the media

4.8 Civil disobedience

4.9 Controlling information

4.10 The media's role as watchdog

4.11 New media more effective than mass media?

4.12 Trust in new media

4.13 Blogs

4.14 Online discussions

CHAPTER 5 – DISCUSSION

5.1 Perceptions of journalism values

 5.1.1 Introduction

 5.1.2 Interpretations of journalism principles and socio-cultural factors

5.2 Comparative analyses of satisfaction in media systems

 5.2.1 General satisfaction levels

 5.2.2 Press club system advantageous or disadvantageous?

ABSTRACT

Western academia is often critical of the Japanese media. The criticisms frequently centre on traits such as extreme exclusivity and a culture of relatively less independent investigative journalism, which are argued to dilute Western ideals of a democratic free press. These traits, however, appear to reflect socio-cultural factors such as collectivist notions of conformity, social harmony, and social deference. This pilot study tests the validity of critics through a comparative analysis of Japanese and Western public opinion, focusing on the Japanese and Western press coverage of the Fukushima nuclear power plant disaster in 2011. Perceptions of new media are also examined to investigate how differences in Japanese and Western dispositions are reflected in the development of new media in Japan and any evidence of potential impacts on the Japanese press club system. The study found high levels of Japanese satisfaction and support for their domestic media system. Compared to Western respondents, Japanese respondents expressed greater support for collectivist thought and less skepticism about powerful social institutions, and low levels of support for civil disobedience. The study also found high levels of support for specific media characteristics which reflect collectivist thought. These include a preference on the part of Japanese media consumers for moderate reporting, the regulation and control of information, and relatively less investigative or 'watchdog' journalism. These findings complicate Western criticisms of the Japanese press club media system, since they suggest that the media in Japan — much like their Western counterparts — reflect prevailing cultural customs. The study also reveals higher levels of usage, and more favorable opinions of new media among Western respondents compared to Japanese respondents. This suggests that Japanese society is more resistant to new media. This may be because new media is associated with traits of individualism, evidenced through personalized commentary and opinion, and values of non-conformity through anti-establishment critique.

Signed and dated Statement of Authorship

Master of Arts Thesis – Glen Clancy

Except where reference is made in the text of the thesis, this thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma. No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgment in the main text of the thesis. This thesis has not been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

Signature: **Date: 27/10/2014**

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

On the afternoon of 11 March 2011 at 14:46 JST (Japan Standard Time) a 9.0 magnitude earthquake struck off the north east coast of Japan triggering a tsunami that wiped out large stretches of the Japanese coastline (CBS News 2011). The disaster killed over 15,000 people in 20 prefectures. Nearly 3,000 people are still missing (NHK 2014). The tsunami critically damaged the Fukushima Daichi Nuclear Plant resulting in the meltdown of all three reactors. The government eventually declared a 30-kilometre radius evacuation zone and nearly 400,000 people were displaced from their homes (Hasegawa 2013, p. 15). As of March 2012 over 344,000 people were still living in permanent shelters or had resettled (Hasegawa 2013, p. 15).

The financial cost of the disaster has been estimated at 16.7 trillion yen (AU$303 billion) (Hasegawa 2013, p. 15). On 12 April 2011, Japan's Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency raised the severity of the accident to the highest grading on the International Nuclear Event Scale from five to seven — the same level assigned to the 1986 nuclear disaster in Chernobyl in the Ukraine (CNN Library 2014). Then Prime Minister Naoto Kan said the disaster was "the most severe crisis in the past 65 years since World War II" (BBC 2011). The triple earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear disasters have become known collectively as the 3.11 disaster.

The 3.11 disaster quickly dominated the news both domestic and abroad. Coverage of the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear threat were on a 24-hour news cycle on the major free-to-air TV stations. Japan's national public broadcaster NHK interrupted its coverage of a Diet meeting to announce the earthquake had struck off the coast of North East Japan (Johnston 2011, p. 6). The disaster was also covered on the front pages of major newspapers worldwide (Johnston 2011, p. 12). Foreign correspondents flew in from all over the globe to cover devastation caused by the tsunami and the ongoing nuclear threat (Johnston 2011, p. 14). The crisis also induced a spike in the use of new media (Tachiiri 2011, p. 41), with social networking services providing valuable information and an effective means of communication in areas affected by the quake (Tachiiri 2011, p. 24).

Commentary on the press coverage of the disaster focused on the contrasting reporting styles of the Japanese and Western media. In general, Japanese reporting tended to be generally more 'conservative', while Western reporting was generally more 'sensationalist' (Johnston 2011). Critics of the Japanese reporting style — particularly those hailing from the West — condemned the tight management of information (Fackler 2012). Critics of Western reports claimed that it caused unnecessary panic (Johnston 2011). Many of the criticisms of Japanese reporting of the Fukushima nuclear disaster are part of ongoing debates and criticisms aimed at the Japanese press club media system. The system is claimed to exhibit a number of characteristics that are in tension with, or contrary to, the principles of a democratic free press. Specifically, Japan's powerful press clubs are often criticized by the West as maintaining media traits contrary to liberal principles which underpin Western journalism. These include, extreme exclusivity (Freeman 2000, Brislin 1997); a 'lack' of journalistic independence (O'Dwyer 2005, Otopalik & Schaefer 2008); an over reliance on official sources (Freeman 2000) which results in homogeneous reporting; and close relationships with government and corporations (Gamble and Watanabe 2004), and an accompanying 'lack' of investigative reporting.

The purpose of this thesis is to test the validity of these criticisms. It does so by comparing Japanese and Western public perceptions of the workings of their domestic media systems and their handling of the coverage of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant disaster – an event that was extensively reported on in both Japan and the West and thus enabling a comparable analysis of Japanese and Western reactions to the same media event. These public perceptions were gleaned from questionnaires completed by Japanese media consumers, and Western media consumers living in their home countries and in Japan. The purpose of the questionnaire was to ask both Japanese and Western people to reflect on their perceptions of their respective domestic media performances during the disaster as cross-cultural analysis. This pilot study uses a limited preliminary sample to provide an effective foundation for further comprehensive studies using probability-based samples.

Perceptions of new media were also compared to explore how differences in Japanese and Western dispositions are reflected in the development of new media in Japan and any evidence of potential impacts on the Japanese press club system. 'New media' in this study refers to non-traditional media such as citizen journalism, non-profit public

journalism, and social media where people can access real-time information online at any time. Jeff Jarvis (2008), a prominent journalism professor at the City University of New York, defines new media as encompassing democratizing forces that enables conversations from those in the know to those who don't know, with citizens acting as contributors to the public sphere.

This thesis argues that the Japanese press club system largely reflects the values and desires of the Japanese public. As such, Western criticisms towards the Japanese media subverting the principles of a democratic free press fails to take account of the audience. This thesis also argues that new media, which exhibits traits of individualism such as personalised commentary and opinion, is less desirable in a collectivist Japanese society and is therefore unlikely to breakdown the 'stranglehold' of the Japanese press club system.

1.2 Overview of relevant literature

Japan's media is heavily influenced by the omnipresent and powerful press clubs. The high levels of exclusivity and tight management of information associated with the press clubs is argued by many commentators to stifle democracy (De Lange 1998, Feldman 1993, Freeman 2000, Hirose 1994). In particular, the Japanese media's close relationship with government is underscored by Japanese journalists' active involvement in the public policy process. This collaboration between the media and government has been condemned as being "cartel-like", and is said to restrict the media from functioning as watchdog in society (Freeman 2000). The Japanese press club system (or *kisha* club system) is embodied in the Japan National Press Club, which has hundreds of press club organizations connected to government and business throughout Japan (Japan National Press Club 2014). There are currently about 150 Japanese and international news organizations members (Japan National Press Club 2014).

In contrast, a school of thought exists maintaining that socio-cultural factors, such as the underlying philosophy of collectivism in Japanese society, remains a key force in shaping the Japanese media system. Miyahara (2000) argues,

> Japanese people in general are brought up in a culture that values a
> collectivistic or interdependent self orientation, and 'being' mode of thinking,

rather than individualistic or independent self orientation and doing mode that are prevalent in most Western cultures.

In Japanese society, the self is closely connected to others. Miyahara (2000) argues that maintaining social harmony and "appropriateness in relationships with others serves as a primary regulator of his/her behavior."

Similarly, the Japanese method of business is shaped by the concept of managers and workers sharing common goals (Ito 1989). Ito (1989) argues,

A work place is not just a place to earn money. It is more than that. Harmony, good human relations in the company, mutual trust, and the feeling of 'togetherness' among workers and managers are far more important than interpretations of contracts and laws.

Winfield et al. (2000, p. 343) argue that these socio-cultural factors are demonstrated in the "press system's employment practices, news gathering methods, the ways the press monitors the government and the under-representation of women". Winfield et al. note that the Japanese media operates in line with collectivist notions such as conformity and social harmony, which drives the system towards official sources of information and relatively less investigative journalism compared to Western media systems.

During the onset of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant disaster, there was a general pattern of conservative versus sensationalist reporting in comparisons of Japanese and Western coverage of the Fukushima nuclear crisis. Birmingham and McNeill (2012) point out socio-cultural factors are influential in Japanese media methods. Birmingham and McNeill (2012, p. 101) argue that journalists seldom went into the disaster stricken areas due to strict lines of command and company safety precautions. In addition, investigative reporting is generally limited by the well-established press tradition that discourage individual, autonomous reporting. These methods were opposed by Western observers (Fackler 2012).

Western scholarship (Freeman 2000, Jameson 1997, Fackler 2012) often neglects socio-cultural factors in critical analyses of the Japanese press club system. Specifically, critics often overlook collectivist notions of hierarchy, conformity and social harmony, that are reflected in the Japanese press club media — traits that are

frequently condemned as being detrimental to the values of a democratic free press (Gamble and Watanabe 2004, Otopalik & Schaefer 2008, Freeman 2000). Even media researchers who do recognize the importance of socio-cultural factors in the makeup and functioning of the Japanese press club media, raise questions about the effects of such factors on the quality of journalism that it produces (see O'Dwyer 2005, Brislin 1997).

It may be that the emergence and growth of new media will disrupt the existing system and the connections and values that underlie the press club. Although there has been a significant emergence of new media in Japan, especially since the 3.11 disaster (Tachiiri 2011, p. 8), the spread of new media has not matched the dramatic rates of growth seen in the West. Nevertheless, some media experts have argued that new media may be causing shifts in Japanese collectivistic values and dispositions. For example, Tachiiri (2011, p. 64) argues that social media may affect Japanese inwardness and stimulate Japanese people into becoming more individualistic. Other researchers (Shunya Yoshimi cited in Choo 2011, Fackler 2012) have theorized that new media may even have a significant impact on the Japanese press club media system. Fackler (2012, p. 208), for example, argues that the "anti-liberal" characteristics of the Japanese press club system may lead to a thriving independent non-profit media to fill the perceived gap in the market for Western-style journalism. These researchers welcome the development of new media and argue that it may remedy the 'anti-democratic' characteristics of the press club system such as a heavy reliance on official sources of information and relatively less investigative journalism.

1.3 Overview of cross-cultural research

Despite widespread criticisms of the Japanese press club system in the West, little qualitative research has been published which analyses Japanese public opinion of the Japanese press club media system. This study attempts to go some way to filling that knowledge gap to explore new insights into Japanese public support for the Japanese press club media system. In short, the aim of this thesis is to find out what Japanese consumers of news media think about the press club system — their attitudes towards the social and political role of journalists and journalism more generally — and if these beliefs lend support to the current media system or reflect the kinds of criticisms advanced by Western scholars.

To do so, a comparative analysis of Japanese and Western views of journalism principles was firstly undertaken to test for significant discrepancies. Japanese public satisfaction of the Japanese press club media system was then tested through comparative analyses of Japanese and Western opinions of three factors: general satisfaction levels with domestic media systems, perceptions of the benefits or disadvantages of a press club form of media system, and perceptions of the effectiveness of a press club form of media system.

This study also examined the working assumption that Japanese media discrepancies are strongly influenced by socio-cultural factors by examining Japanese and Western public dispositions towards collectivist thought relevant to media structures. Moreover, Japanese and Western public views about specific media characteristics reflecting collectivist notions were examined. These include: moderate reporting, the regulation and control of information, and relatively less investigative watchdog journalism. The purpose of doing so was, to explore whether Japanese respondents support those media traits that are routinely condemned by Western scholarship as being detrimental to the values of a democratic free press. Finally, the working observation that Japanese society is more resistant to new media was examined to explore the influence of Japanese public dispositions towards new media.

1.4 Overview of methodology

Comparative qualitative analysis was undertaken from questionnaires with 15 open-ended questions distributed to both Japanese and Western members of the general public. There were 32 Japanese respondents from all over Japan, primarily from metropolitan areas, and 31 Western respondents from Australia, USA, Canada, and the UK (England, Wales, and Ireland). Themes in Japanese and Western responses were analysed, and comparisons of Japanese and Western responses were explored to determine whether members of the Japanese public support media characteristics often criticized by Western scholarship, and to investigate discrepancies in Japanese and Western perceptions that may affect the impacts of new media in Japan. The themes that emerged from the data were analysed to indicate Japanese public support or opposition to relevant media system characteristics.

CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview of Japanese media

The origins of the contemporary Japanese press can be traced to the late Meiji (1868–1911) and Taisho (1912–1926) periods. In these periods, the press expanded rapidly and developed a "distinctive editorial and management 'philosophy'" of impartiality and non-partisanship — primarily adopted to reduce critical reporting of the state and thus "avoid the heavy hand of the state" (Freeman 2000, p. 23). With the arrival of Commodore Matthew Perry and the American 'black ships' in the early 1850s, a policy of increasing national prosperity and military power was widely supported. The function of the bureaucracy and the media was seen as uniting Japan under the policy of "making a strong Japan" (Fackler 2012, p. 53). Meiji leaders set out to use

> the young press as an adjunct of government…, [a] channel through which to transmit information about the government's policies and accomplishments, and as an instrument for convincing and persuading the population to accept the new national framework (Altman 1981, p. 866).

The leaders achieved this through financial support, legal and extra-legal means of controlling the press, and exerting shared beliefs and goals of Japan's "public men" (Freeman 2000, p. 26). This led to press clubs being established in official agencies in the 1890s (Freeman 2000, p. 46) and the gradual standardization of newsgathering strengthened relations between the government and the press. The foundation of the press club system was partly molded by authorities. As Freeman notes:

> These developments served to solidify the relationship between the press and the state in profound ways, circumscribed the press's fourth estate agenda-setting functions, and had serious implications for the development of a democratic polity in prewar and postwar Japan (Freeman 2000, p. 23).

Japan's original 1890 Meiji constitution was modeled on the German constitution and supported freedom of expression "within the confines of the law". However, the Terauchi Government began to crack down heavily on press freedom following the reporting of the post World War I Rice Riots of 1918 caused by rising rice prices and economic hardship (Dunscomb 2011, p. 70). The government responded to criticisms

of the government's handling of the unrest by imposing harsh censorship and attempting to shut down the Osaka Asahi newspaper for its dissidence (Dunscomb 2011, p. 71). Reporters held rallies criticizing the Cabinet and the government responded by banning the sales of newspapers publishing an article that denounced the Prime Minister (Kattoulas 2000, p. 95).

Press censorship was relaxed after Prime Minister Masatake Terauchi resigned and was replaced by Takashi Hara in September 1918 (Dunscomb 2011, p. 71). However, military rule in the 1930s once again led to the introduction of repressive press laws to quash legal rights of freedom of speech (Winfield, Mizuno & Beaudoin 2000, p. 328). Laws were passed that resulted in the official number of Japanese publications falling from nearly 12,000 in 1937, to 55 in 1943. Only those media institutions that supported the government and the war effort remained (Kattoulas 2000, p. 94). Even the prominent newspaper, the *Asahi Shimbun*, which was stoutly disapproving of the state's war policies, capitulated and eventually came to support the government before and during the Pacific War (Freeman 2000, p. 46).

After the Japanese surrendered in World War II, the USA set out to democratize the Japanese constitution. A new constitution was drafted, predominantly by US lawyers, which strengthened freedom of expression laws (Winfield, Mizuno & Beaudoin 2000, p. 327). Freedom of the press is now guaranteed in article XXI of the Japanese constitution (Otopalik & Schaefer 2008, p. 274). Article XXI goes even further than most Western constitutions, stating that "No censorship shall be maintained, nor shall the secrecy of any means of communication be violated" (Winfield, Mizuno & Beaudoin 2000, p. 328). The USA laid out the legal groundwork for a more liberal press, encouraging an independent and investigative style of journalism. However, this has not guaranteed an exact replication in Japan of liberal press systems that are found in the United States, and many other Western nations. As Winfield et al. (2000) explain, while the Japanese Constitution codifies freedom of the press, social and cultural norms do not always make this a reality. For example, socio-cultural influences stemming from collectivist thought such as conformity and social harmony are not naturally receptive of Western journalistic ideals of a 'watchdog' press.

The modern mainstream media in Japan is regarded as relatively more diverse than many Western countries when judged in terms of the number of publications and

media outlets. However, five major mass media conglomerates control the lion's share (Akhavan-Majid 1990) – with each of their major commercial newspapers being affiliated with a commercial television network (*Yomiuri Shimbun* with *Nippon News Network*, *Sankei Shimbun* with *Fuji News Network*, *Asahi Shimbun* with *All-Nippon News Network* and *Nihon Keizai Shimbun* with *TV Tokyo Network*). Four of these newspapers are in the top five most circulated newspapers in the world. In 2009, Japan had 110 newspapers (World Press Trends 2009), however the two biggest (defined by circulation) newspapers, *Yomiuri Shimbun* and *Asahi Shimbun*, have nearly double the circulation of their nearest rival, the *Mainichi Shimbun*.

The circulation of newspapers in Japan has been steadily declining since the expansion of new media. However, the decline has been less dramatic than most Western countries with Japan still averaging 0.86 newspaper subscriptions per household in 2013 (see figure 1). Paid circulation of daily newspapers in the US has severely declined from over 55 million copies in 2003 to over 44 million in 2011 (Statista 2014).

Newspaper subscriptions per household in Japan

Year	Total	Type of newspaper		Number of households as of March 31	Subscriptions per household
		General paper	Sports paper		
2013	46,999,468	43,126,352	3,873,116	54,594,744	0.86
2012	47,777,913	43,723,161	4,054,752	54,171,475	0.88
2011	48,345,304	44,091,335	4,253,969	53,549,522	0.9
2010	49,321,840	44,906,720	4,415,120	53,362,801	0.92
2009	50,352,831	45,659,885	4,692,946	52,877,802	0.95
2008	51,491,409	46,563,681	4,927,728	52,324,877	0.98
2007	52,028,671	46,963,136	5,065,535	51,713,048	1.01
2006	52,310,478	47,056,527	5,253,951	51,102,005	1.02
2005	52,568,032	47,189,832	5,378,200	50,382,081	1.04
2004	53,021,564	47,469,987	5,551,577	49,837,731	1.06
2003	52,874,959	47,282,645	5,592,314	49,260,791	1.07

Figure 1: Newspaper circulation in Japan (The Japan newspaper publishers & editors association 2013, circulation and households)

In spite of these declines in circulation, the Japanese media – specifically, the five major media conglomerates, which still reach millions of people daily – holds significant authority in society. Akhavan-Majid (1990, p. 3) argues, "Each media conglomerate in Japan has the potential power to influence extensively, if not make or break, the career of any given member of the bureaucratic/political elite."

On the other hand, the government also maintains some power over the mass media in Japan through appointments of public broadcasting heads, media licensing, and subsidies to media organisations as Harari (1997, p. 30) explains:

> The Board of Governors of NHK, the semi-governmental broadcasting corporation, is appointed by the prime minister, and its budget and the rate of subscription fees, on which it depends for revenue, require the approval of the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications (MPT) and the Diet. The private electronic media are also licensed and regulated by the MPT. The printed press is not regulated, but the major newspapers own or hold controlling shares in electronic media organizations regulated by the MPT. Media organizations of both categories also receive economic benefits in the form of tax breaks and public land at reduced prices, and the printed press profits from reduced postal and rail charges.

There are parallels in the West regarding government's authority over the public service broadcasting media. For example, the Australian Governor-General, acting on the recommendation of the Government (ABC 2014), appoints the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) board of directors. The power of the media in Japan to influence politics and public opinion is embodied in the omnipresent press clubs throughout Japan that makeup the press club system. These are formally known as the Japan National Press Club.

2.2 Japanese press clubs

The Japanese press clubs are the subject of considerable attention in Japanese media studies. Japan's media is heavily influenced, if not shaped, by the press clubs. These are often criticized for behaving in ways that are contrary to Western liberal principles (Gamble and Watanabe 2004, Garon 2003, and Pharr and Krauss 1996). In particular, the Japanese press clubs have been charged with extreme exclusivity through limiting

press club membership, 'lacking' journalistic independence, an overreliance on official sources leading to homogenous reporting, and overly close relationships with government and corporations, which leads to a 'lack' of investigative reporting.

To understand the operation of the press club system in Japan, it is necessary to examine its history in more detail. The establishment of press clubs in official agencies in the 1890s by Meiji leaders intent on urging the fledgling press to unite the people behind a new national framework secured the press club system's central role in Japan's media landscape (Freeman 2000, p. 46). Today, Japan's press clubs are attached to almost all government ministries, political bodies and major business groups (O'Dwyer 2005, p. 6). These clubs are given space in government and industry buildings and quick access to information (Takahara 2007). There are more than 100 press clubs in Tokyo alone, with 700–1000 nation-wide (Freeman 2000, p. 15). There are eight clubs attached to parliament and also one each to the Prime Minister and Cabinet (Hirose 1994).

The press clubs are governed by The Japan Newspaper Publishers & Editors Association, or *Nihon Shimbun Kyokai* (NSK), which was established in 1946. In 1949, the closed nature of the press club system triggered an ultimatum from the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP). The Supreme Commander demanded that the system be democratised or abolished all together which lead to the publication of the "Guidelines on the Kisha clubs" (Freeman 2000, p. 143). These guidelines were again revised recently in 2002 and can be viewed on the NSK website (The Japan newspaper publishers & editors association 2013, Kisha Club Guidelines).

The NSK website explains:

> The kisha club is a 'voluntary institution for news-gathering and news-reporting activities' made up of journalists who regularly collect news from public institutions and other sources. Japan's media industry has a history of applying pressure on public institutions reluctant to disclose information by banding together in the form of the kisha club. The kisha club is an institution and system fostered by Japan's media industry for over a century in pursuit of freedom of speech and freedom of the press. The fundamental purpose of the kisha club system, which has been so closely involved with the general public's "right to know," remains unchanged today.

2.3 Western scholarly criticisms of the Japanese press club media

There has been a wide range of scholarly criticism directed at the role and function of the Japanese media. Gatzen (2001), for example, argues:

> The media in Japan have been ascribed conflicting roles and functions, ranging from 'servants of the state' to being an 'independent critical force on behalf of the public'.

One dominant theme among critics, especially from the West, of Japan's media and the characteristics of the Japanese press club system, is that press clubs undermine freedom of the press and Western journalistic ideals of independence and freedom. According to O'Dwyer, the press in Japan is "regarded by many researchers as anti-democratic" *(*O'Dwyer 2005, p. 2). This is despite NSK's pledge that press clubs function to preserve freedom of speech and journalistic freedom.

Drawing on both qualitative and quantitative evidence, Gamble and Watanabe (2004), Garon (2003), and Pharr and Krauss (1996), have argued that the Japanese press club media falls short in facilitating a robust democratic public discourse. Gamble and Watanabe (2004, p. 35) say the kisha club system is

> an exclusive social mechanism designed to facilitate intimate ties between government and corporate officials on the one hand and the country's major news providers on the other.

Japanese press club exclusivity is borne out of membership being restricted to NSK members and often only being granted to the major newspapers, broadcasters, and wire services. "Seventeen media companies dominate the kisha clubs; the five big national newspapers, four large regional 'block' papers, the two Japanese wire services, and six broadcasting companies" (Freeman 2000, p. 87).

Freeman (2003, p. 273) characterizes the broadcast and newspaper media as having cartel-like ties with officialdom. Access to official sources is limited to major news outlets. She argues that the press clubs are central to this cartelization and that the pervasiveness of the clubs and the strict rules of access and conduct affect the media's reporting (Freeman 2003, p. 237). "[The press clubs] also performed a function in

controlling the flow and interpretation of information at an industry-wide level, the equivalent of which one would be hard-pressed to find elsewhere" (Freeman 1996).

Media ethics scholar Tom Brislin (1997) argues that the closed nature of the press clubs is highlighted by the exclusion of magazine reporters. Magazine, freelance, and foreign journalists are almost always restricted from becoming members, although some foreign companies such as Reuters and Bloomberg have been granted limited access to some clubs after years of foreign pressure (O'Dwyer 2005).

The style of reporting by the press club media is generally conservative. It avoids sensationalist, investigative, independent journalism — unless the magazine reporters have already taken the lead. Each major newspaper in Tokyo also owns a subsidiary news magazine (Brislin 1997). These major media organisations intentionally exclude magazine journalists from press clubs to allow them more freedom to report sensational and controversial news, opinion, and rumour (Brislin 1997). Magazine reporters often obtain information through unofficial channels and connections to the 'inside' (Brislin 1997). Newspaper journalists often leak information to magazines in order to bypass press club rules censoring certain information. This includes press agreements restricting what press club members can report on a particular subject (Brislin 1997). As such, magazines, not the major news organizations, break almost all scandals. This perhaps highlights one of the flaws of the press club system (O'Dwyer 2005). Brislin (1997) argues that the Japanese press club system "effectively strips competitiveness from journalistic practice, reducing both independence of the journalists and the level of truthful disclosure in their reports".

Brislin (1997) continues:

> The *kisha kurabu* structure produces, on its face, journalism solely lacking in independence as well. Although the clubs are organized and governed by the journalists, it is still the government and business agencies who make the decisions of what will be news on a particular day. The press club journalists then act essentially as the agents of the government or business agenda. Although the reports are factual or truthful, they often are not complete as they include only the selected truths or "spin" that the newsmakers want to disseminate. The journalists themselves can also be responsible for adding

their own spin as, for some, their careers rise and fall with the politicians they cover.

Brislin (1997) argues that the fate of the Japanese journalist is often tied to the fate of the politician they are assigned to report on. If the fortunes of a politician wane, so too does the status of the journalist connected to that member of parliament. Brislin (1997) argues this encourages a lack of independent critical reporting on politicians and government policies.

Western researchers often conclude that this lack of journalistic independence results in the Japanese press club media system failing to act as an important counter-weight to government and other powerful institutions. Otopalik and Schaefer (2008, p. 272) point out that the Japanese media is characterized by "a lack of professionalism, objectivity, and general passivity toward the government, especially compared to the United States". They argue that the Japanese media is not independent of government:

> The range of possible descriptions of media coverage lie on a continuum stretching from predominantly autonomous from government to one (as in authoritarian states) greatly controlled by government. Certainly Japan lies somewhere in-between, but generally more towards government control than media autonomy (Otopalik & Schaefer 2008, p. 274).

Feldman (2004, p. 17) argues that the "kisha clubs shapes the relationship between information sources and reporters, [and] affects the content of information provided to reporters from reporters to the general public and the public discourse".

Western journalists have also been critical of the function of the Japanese press club media system. For example, Sam Jameson (1997), a veteran American journalist, argues that the exclusive nature of the press club system breeds uniformity in reporting. Jameson characterises the press club system as beset by "[g]rinding uniformity":

> Japan's 'press clubs' share nothing in common with press clubs in the United States, where reporters eat, drink, talk, and occasionally listen to guest speakers. In Japan, the press clubs at government ministries, business organizations, labor federations, sports teams, and even police stations throughout the country provide an exclusive venue for news to be announced;

20

and they designate the reporters eligible to cover the announcements.

He goes on to argue that the Japanese media does not challenge authorities or conduct enough investigative reporting despite having the power to do so:

> They have honed their skills in fixing blame and pillorying scapegoats. They can topple prime ministers, destroy careers, and make life miserable with invasions of privacy. They can set an outer boundary for permissible action. But somehow they have not yet developed the ability to uncover the facts needed to expose, uproot and correct social ills, corruption and inefficiency (Jameson 1997).

Another American veteran journalist, Jonathan Alter of *Newsweek*, has written critically about the Japanese media's relative passivity and lack of investigative journalism after seeing it first hand. Alter, according to Reid (1993),

> concluded that the Japanese media serve as 'amplifiers of the status quo,' working in a news culture where 'the emphasis is on consensus' and the basic structure of news-gathering 'is almost totally contrary to genuine, digging journalism'.

Martin Fackler, Tokyo bureau chief of the *New York Times*, published a book about Japanese reporting on the 3.11 disaster, *Japanese Newspapers Don't Tell the Truth*, in which he criticizes Japanese journalists for fleeing the disaster stricken areas, including Minami Souma city where he writes, "In Minami Souma where the situation should have been broadcast to the world, all Japanese reporters had fled, there was not a single one left" (Fackler 2012, p. 41). Fackler also laments the Japanese media practice of not naming sources. Fackler (2012, p. 113) argues that there is an overuse of anonymous sources in Japanese newspapers to the extent that anonymity is provided when there is no need. He says US journalists try to avoid the use of anonymous sources; if the use of anonymity is essential, the reasons for it are usually explained in the article. Fackler's (2012, p. 52) criticisms of the Japanese media are largely aimed at the press club system, which he says "probably only a small amount of Japanese accurately know about". He continues, "Even now the only criticism of the government comes from magazines and net media… Why the kisha club in Japan isn't outlined as a problem is a mystery" (Fackler 2012, p. 52).

To summarize, Western scholars and media commentators often criticize the Japanese press club media system for acting as a 'servant of the state' or acting in a way that is self-interested rather than serving the needs of society as a force against other powerful social institutions. Several characteristics of the Japanese press club media are highlighted as being contrary to the ideals of a democratic free press such as the exclusiveness of the press clubs, a 'lack' of journalistic independence, a reliance on official sources, which leads to homogenous reporting, and close relationships with government and corporations, which leads to a 'lack' of investigative reporting.

2.4 Counter-arguments to Western criticisms of the Japanese media

Other media researchers contend that the Japanese media is a powerful force which acts as a check and balance against government and other powerful institutions in society. Reid (1993), for example, argues, "One of the key forces responsible for Japan's political earthquake in 1993 [which saw the long-running Liberal Democratic Party swept from power for the first time in the post-World War II period] was a feisty, freewheeling press corps that attacked and undermined the established 'system' with vigor and persistence". In the 1980s there was an increase in hard-hitting TV journalism, lead by TV Asahi's *Newsstation*. Reid (1993) argues,

> The media, particularly the print press, did an admirable job of digging up hidden stories about corruption in the political world and the business establishment. The targets included not only politicians and corporate presidents but also right-wing nationalist groups and the organized crime syndicates, the yakuza, elements of society that Western critics have routinely described as off-limits to the Japanese press.

Conversely, Krauss and Lambert (2002) offer a more moderate assessment of the Japanese media system, arguing that the function of the Japanese press club system lies somewhere in between the two extremes of 'servant of the state' and 'being an independent critical force'. They conclude that the notion of the Japanese media system as a watchdog press or 'independent critical force', such as proposed by Reid (1993), may have been partly influenced by the extensive and extended rule of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). Krauss and Lambert argue that the critique of the Japanese media as biased against the LDP may have been skewed by the long-term rule by one political party, the absence of effective opposition parties, and the

concerted effort by the LDP to establish an image of the press as "critical mandarins in determined opposition" (Krauss & Lambert 2002, p. 74).

> Had there been more alternation in power, or a more effective opposition party, the press's role as critic may not have been so conspicuous (Krauss & Lambert 2002, p. 74–5).

Other critics argue that the view that the Japanese press clubs result in the press as a servant or lapdog ignores the competitive commercial realities of the media business. Krauss and Lambert (2002, p. 75), for example, argue that there are "significant commercial incentives to perform some guard dog roles and a particular type of lead dog role". They cite commercial pressures in the Japanese media market as requiring a certain level of journalistic independence:

> There is a strong pull to build cozy relationships with government officials to better gather information, but there is also the pull of the market and the need to sell newspapers to earn revenue and profits (Krauss & Lambert 2002, p. 72–3).

Krauss and Lambert's analysis of the prominent Japanese *Asahi* newspaper found that the Japanese media often takes neither the role of a watchdog, nor a servant. They conclude that the newspaper mostly acted as a "guide dog", neutrally reporting on official information and only directing agendas on limited occasions, i.e. acting as "guard dog" through independent analysis and gently influencing elites (Krauss & Lambert 2002, p. 71–2). They found the *Asahi* newspaper acted as "lead dog" only through giving greater attention to one issue over another:

> [The Japanese press] plays the guide dog most of the time, providing a large amount of neutral information about the activities and views of political elites, and the guard dog sometimes, using independent analysis in a minority of articles to nudge elites back on track (Krauss and Lambert 2002, p. 72).

Ito (2006) argues against American Japanologists' claims that Japanese democracy exhibits traits of "backwardness", as the West has a longer experience of democracy. For example, Ito claims that the idea that press clubs do not uncover scandals and that the media content is "identical" can be "exaggerated and misleading" (Ito 2006). "The contents of the Japanese mass media, especially newspaper editorials, are diverse, and

many political leaders have been ousted or even thrown into jail because of scandals revealed or reported by the Japanese mass media," argues Ito (2006).

Ito's arguments are backed by at least one Japanese study of Japanese reporting during the Fukushima nuclear crisis conducted by Kinoshita et al. (2012), which found that the reporting was not homogenous. This study concluded that the Japanese newspapers differed in their critiques of nuclear policy, TEPCO, and the government; the *Asahi Shimbun* newspaper was critical, whereas the *Yomiuri* newspaper took a supportive stance (Kinoshita et al. 2012, p. 65).

Other scholars point out that the Japanese media works alongside the government, rather than against it, but maintains enough independence to act as watchdog when necessary. For example, Winfield et al. (2000) argue some defenders of the Japanese media system claim that journalists are a part of the 'elite circle', but nevertheless maintain a level of integrity in monitoring the government and other powerful institutions.

> Defenders of the press system point out that Japanese journalists impose an effective check on government, although quietly from within. Rather than existing as a separate 'fourth estate' or developing an adversarial relationship as is the model in the West, the press becomes part of the 'power elite group' (Winfield, Mizuno & Beaudoin 2000, p. 345).

2.5 The media as independent watchdog

One of the most important roles the media plays, which is said to be indispensable to a democratic free press, is that of a watchdog on government and/or powerful individuals or groups in society. A key part of this is the news media's capacity to undertake investigative journalism, which can be defined as "inquiring intensively into and seeking to expose malpractice, the miscarriage of justice, or other controversial issues" (Oxford Dictionaries 2014). Fackler (2012, p. 54) argues, for example, that "in America the people had a strong distrust of the central government from its beginning…Americans have a strong belief that journalists have a responsibility as a checking function of authorities".

By contrast, it is argued that there is relatively less investigative journalism in the Japanese media. This was evident during the Fukushima nuclear disaster. Kinoshita et

al. (2012, p. 66) claim that the Japanese media relied on the government and TEPCO (Tokyo Electric Power Company) reports for information, with little in the way of independent investigation or inquiry into possible inconstancies in their statements. This is consistent with Krauss and Lambert's (2002, p. 71–2) analysis of the prominent Japanese *Asahi* newspaper, which found that Japanese media organizations relied heavily on official sources and carry out less investigative reporting as compared with their Western counterparts. They conclude that the Japanese media is a "lead dog" only when "giving greater coverage to one type of issue rather than another" (Krauss and Lambert 2002, p. 72).

The Japanese media acknowledges the responsibility of holding powers to account, whereas Western critics of Japan's media argue investigative reporting is insufficient within the Japanese press club system. For example, Farley (1996) condemns the Japanese media for the 'lack' of investigative reporting and holding politicians and officials to account. Similarly, in *The Enigma of Japanese Power,* van Wolferen (1989) argues that the Japanese media is a "house-broken press" filled with reporters who "never really take on the system".

Other scholars maintain that this 'guard dog' function is borne out of socio-cultural traditions. For example, Winfield et al. (2000, p.344–7) argue that Japanese collectivist values are highly influential in determining the level of investigative journalism:

> A group-oriented mass media system does help journalists avoid public conflicts and does promote peace and cooperation. As Merrill has pointed out, journalists with collective-oriented values 'would want to maximize social harmony, not social friction; group cohesion, not group dissolution'… A watchdog or an investigative press is inconsistent with a society that prizes harmony. Individual journalists in the establishment press are not encouraged to attack the establishment… Journalism in Japan accepts the social responsibility to oversee the wrongdoing of power holders, but the press-government relationship in Japan is less adversarial than that of western democratic nations (Winfield, Mizuno & Beaudoin 2000, p. 344–5).

Freeman (2000, p. 32) acknowledges the influence of socio-cultural factors in the passivity of the Japanese press club media system:

Traditionally, "opposition had been equated with disloyalty and those who formed factions outside the government were thought to be acting in pursuit of selfish ends rather than the public good" (Duus 1976, p. 99 as cited in Freeman 2000, p. 32).

However, Freeman also notes the significant influence of socio-political factors in undermining an investigative press culture. Many of the original newspaper founders were former samurai, and the newspaper reporters shifted between working for the bureaucracy and the press:

> Because they were frequently a part of the ruling elite, early journalists generally had little interest in the more confrontational and adversarial aspects of Western press (Freeman 2000, p. 32).

Freeman (2000) argues that the lack of investigative journalism is detrimental to society. She argues that the Japanese media has a "cartel-like" relation with the state that ultimately serves media institutions' own self-interests and therefore reduces investigative journalism and the media's function as a watchdog. Freeman (2000, p. 32) says that journalists in Japan view the value of the press as an "effective tool to educate the ignorant masses in the interest of the state". Rather than "journalists blindly follow the dictates of state sources", the system has "frequently led them to support state goals" (Freeman 2000, p. 162). Freeman (2000, p. 162) argues that the Japanese media can be described as "collaborators with the state in the management of society".

> The Japanese media is not a 'spectator' or a 'trickster' but a 'co-conspirator' (Freeman 2000, p. 21).

Quarantelli et al. (1993, p. 211) found a similar tendency to collaboration in the Japanese media in their cross-cultural comparative study of Japanese and American reporting of news during disasters. This study revealed a greater sense of cooperation between Japanese media organisations compared to US media organisations. This suggests that "collaboration" exerts stronger normative influence among Japanese media institutions.

The collaboration between Japanese journalists and the government is widely observed in the West as obstructing investigative reporting and hinders the realization

of a democratic free press. Fackler (2012, p. 150) says that he gets "the sense that the journalists have a closer affiliation to the powers rather than a sense of being watchdog over the powers. Instead of standing with the people they stand with the powers and feel that they are trying to direct the country in the right direction".

The collaboration of the media with authorities condemned by Western critics is best exemplified by the media's role in the public policy process. Japan is the only modern democracy in which the mass media are formally involved in public policy making (Harari 1997, p. 17). Journalists in Japan are often officially appointed to public advisory bodies (PABs), which include commissions, councils, and committees. According to Harari (1997, p. 18) PABs facilitate "the participation of special interest groups, scholars, etc., in public policy making, [thereby] help[ing] government to make responsive, innovative, and practical policies" (Harari 1997, p. 18).

The Japanese media report on PABs more frequently and thoroughly than equivalent structures and forums in the West; there is almost daily coverage to "evaluate the formation, activities, or reports and recommendations of at least one PAB" (Harari 1997, p. 18). The media has been involved in PABs since before World War II (Harari 1997, p. 18). In 1992 there were 212 statutory PABs (*shingikai*), and there were 156 journalists listed as official members. However, 73 per cent served on one *shingikai* (Harari 1997, p. 19). A large majority of the journalists who served were from NHK or from one of the big five media conglomerates (Harari 1997, p. 21). It is also common for journalists to serve as advisors to the *shingikai* operations but they are not registered on official publications (Harari 1997, p. 19).

The *Asahi* newspaper commissioned two surveys in 1991 and 1993 on the role of journalists in PABs. Both independent expert panels concluded with both positive and negative findings. The advantages of journalists involved in PABs were listed as follows (Harari 1997, p. 23):

- Journalists' expert knowledge are useful in policy development
- Journalists sense and reflect public sentiment
- Journalists' views are valued because they are shaped by information gathered from a wide range of groups
- Journalists are impartial

- Journalists present their own views and ideas to the government
- Journalists can be critical of bureaucrats when warranted

However, there were two areas of concern outlined in the *Asahi* newspaper study (Harari 1997, p. 23):

- Journalists' involvement and PAB deliberations are not open and their contents not entirely public
- Relations between journalists and bureaucrats can become too intimate, making it difficult for neutrality and the avoidance of collusion

In other words, there were some concerns about the transparency and the independence of journalists involved in PABs. However, these same journalists were also judged to add value to the public policy process and acted without bias.

Critics contend, however, that the appointment of journalists by government officials breeds prejudice. For example, Brislin (1997) argues that the lack of independence in the Japanese media system encourages lower standards of reporting. Specifically, the lack of independence is claimed to reduce the amount of truthful, accurate reporting. However, Harari (1997, p. 23) argues that Western criticism of journalists lacking independence and an active role in PABs are overstated (Harari 1997, p. 23). A 1974 survey found that journalists regard themselves as "free agents" and ranked highly in their impact on improvements of public policies and countering the positions taken by the *shingikai* along with other PAB members (Harari 1997, p. 31). Moreover, conversations with Japanese journalists suggest that, when there are conflicts of interests, journalists "tend to defer" (Harari 1997, p. 24). "When the issue in question is highly conflictual and their media organization is directly affected but internally divided, the media member will abstain, resign, or decline the initial appointment" (Harari 1997, p. 24).

Harari (1997, p. 31) concludes that the Japanese media are generally impartial in their coverage of PABs, with reporting being a product of the newspaper's editorial position of the policy problem rather than their individual involvement in PAB proceedings (Harari 1997, p. 31). It is worth noting in this context that media organizations do not always support the policy recommendations of PABs in which they have been actively involved. Journalists will state their opposition in policy

debates and exert criticisms in faceless editorials, rather than through direct public criticism. "On balance, the way major Japanese media organizations treat PABs — that is, whether and how they report on them — is a function of how they *view* the particular policy problem with which the PAB is concerned" (Harari 1997, p. 31). Generally, Japanese media members don't view participation in PABs while working as professional journalists as a conflict of interest (Harari 1997, p. 27).

Some Western media scholars label the Japanese media as "co-conspirators". An alternative view is that they are less "co-conspirators" and more co-leaders or co-managers. This alternative view is supported by journalists' self-image in their role in PABs aiding government formulate policy, and society's perception of this role evidenced in *Asahi* newspaper studies. Winfield et al. (2000, p. 345) highlight that supporters of the Japanese media system argue that journalists are a part of the elite in society, but remain independent enough to monitor the government and other powerful institutions (Winfield, Mizuno & Beaudoin 2000, p. 345). Winfield et al. (2000, p. 345) continue:

> Akhaven-Majid argues that the Japanese media's integration with power holders exemplifies an alternative press system that American scholarship has failed to recognize. The "power elite group" exercises reverse control on the ruling elite by more direct participation in policy-making and process, even if the mass media are also controlled by the elite.

2.6 Western press clubs

Despite Western criticisms of the Japanese press club system, many of these scholars (Jameson 1997, Fackler 2012, Freeman 2000) do not apply the same standards of critique to Western press clubs in comparative analyses. Western press club systems also share some of the 'anti-democratic' characteristics observed by Western critics of the Japanese media. These include strict membership rules, closeness to sources and "announcement journalism" (hampering independence and investigative journalism through simply regurgitating press release information), and homogeneity of news (O'Dwyer 2005). Herman (1996) supports this assertion noting "professionalism has made journalists oblivious to the compromises with authority they are constantly making". Herman (1996) also cites Even Hallin in arguing, "professional journalism can allow something close to complete government control via sourcing domination."

O'Dwyer (2005, p. 9) argues that "While the overwhelming majority of English language analyses of kisha clubs is negative, critics of the press gallery are met with robust rebuttal, and very few Australian or British analysts go so far as to accuse the system of hampering democracy". O'Dwyer (2005, p. 9) continues:

> The same mechanisms operating in the kisha club system that attract the vehement disapproval of Western writers can be found in both the Australian and British press galleries. The elements that are treated as unique to Japan by many analysts can be found in reviews of the Australian and British press galleries.

O'Dwyer cites the closeness to government, proximity to the source, government control of the media, and a lack of impartiality of the journalist, as examples of stifling democracy.

Nevertheless, despite this tendency to overlook the similarities between the Western and Japanese press clubs, it is true to say that the Japanese press club system exhibits more 'extreme' traits of exclusivity, and an aversion to independent, investigative journalism. These more 'extreme' discrepancies are often criticized by Western scholarship as contrary to the ideals of a democratic free press.

For example, most press conferences in the West are sponsored by the source, whereas in Japan conferences are sponsored by the relevant press clubs themselves (Freeman 2000, p. 143), which sometimes results in the stone-walling of non-member journalists — even if they request access directly to the source, the source is not responsible for arranging briefings. There are also written and unwritten rules within Japanese press clubs that are not present in Western press systems enhancing exclusivity, and reducing journalistic independence. Each Japanese press club has a list of regulations (Freeman 2000, p. 103). So-called 'blackboard agreements' put restrictions on journalists in what they can report on. This reduces the risk of being out scooped by peers (Freeman 2000, p. 104). Members can be expelled if they break these rules. For example, in 1969, four *Asahi Newspaper* journalists were barred from press conferences after they broke an "agreement" to not report on that year's farmer's annuity (De Lange 1998, p. 188).

There are also formal press agreements, usually implemented by the NSK. Most

famously there was an embargo placed on Prince Akihito's search for a bride with the Imperial Household Agency in 1956 (Freeman 2000, p. 106). Sources can also impose sanctions on press club members. The most commonly used sanction is *deirikinshi* (access denied), where journalists can be expelled if the authorities don't like specific reporting (Freeman 2000, p. 134). Moreover, there are unwritten rules that club members share information with other club members in an equitable manner and any information shared with non-members must also be shared with members.

In addition, as previously noted, there are clear differences between Japanese and Western norms and styles of journalism. For example, Winfield et al. (2000) point out that the Japanese media acts as part of the power elite group maintaining an effective check on the government from within. Krauss and Lambert (2002, p. 71–2) illustrate in their study, the Japanese media is more akin to a "guard dog" than the Western liberal press ideal of a "watchdog", having less tendency for investigative reporting. Harari explains that the intimate ties between journalists, government and other powerful social institutions reduces investigative reporting:

> A great deal of communication flows reciprocally and confidentially between bureaucrats, politicians, and other sources, on the one hand, and selected journalists, on the other, as well as among journalists. Ironically, these associations limit what is reported. Intimacy encourages a form of self-censorship in which only a small fraction of what is communicated is printed or broadcast. Reporting is discretionary and, as noted, investigative reporting a rarity (Harari 1997, p. 30).

Moreover, the nature of the Japanese press club media system is argued to produce a homogenous style of news reporting. Although the reliance on official sources in the US, for example, is high, the Japanese media is argued to place an even greater importance on official sources. One study of the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* by Sigal found close to 80 per cent of news stories were sourced from official sources (Freeman 2000, p. 63). In Japan, Toshio Hara argues up to 90 per cent of all Japanese news is sourced from officials (Freeman 2000, p. 63), which results in homogonous news reporting.

Consequently, although Western scholarship often fails to acknowledge similar 'anti-democratic' traits in their own Western press clubs (such as journalists having close

ties to sources, homogenous news reporting, reliance on official sources, and press club exclusivity), the evidence suggests that these are more extreme in the Japanese press club system.

2.7 Socio-cultural factors in media systems

The Japanese media system developed with strong guidance from the US post World War II, with the addition of the guarantee of freedom of speech in the new constitution, and the commercialization of the press (Winfield, Mizuno & Beaudoin 2000, p. 340). Nevertheless, some scholars maintain that socio-cultural factors, such as the philosophy of collectivism in Japanese society, remain an influential force on the Japanese media. Takeichi, for example, argues "[a]s in all countries, Japanese interpersonal and mass mediated communications reflect the cultural values of Japanese society" (as cited in Winfield, Mizuno & Beaudoin 2000, p. 343).

Some of these socio-cultural influences were on display during the onset of the Fukushima nuclear disaster. In particular, journalists seldom went into the disaster-stricken areas due to strict lines of command and company safety precautions. Similarly, investigative reporting was limited by the well-established press tradition of discouraging individual reporting, which is evidenced in the lack of bylines in newspapers (Birmingham & McNeill 2012, p. 101). By contrast, during the Three Mile Island Nuclear Plant disaster, 40 to 50 reporters congregated at the Metropolitan Edison's Observation Center opposite the Three Mile Island Plant within hours of the onset of the disaster (Rubin & Cunningham 1980, p. 112).

Furthermore, media experts pointed out the different reporting styles of Japanese news outlets covering the Fukushima disaster, compared to their Western counterparts. In general, Japanese journalists tended towards a more conservative style of reporting as compared to the more sensationalist approach of Western news outlets. Kinoshita et al. (2012, p. 65) argue that although Japanese newspapers themselves had different evaluations of the government and TEPCO (the operator of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant), foreign newspapers went further and inquired about the collusion between the government and TEPCO.

Further, foreign papers not only reported on the collusion between TEPCO and the government but also pointed out Japanese nuclear power special interest groups.

Japanese newspaper editorials rarely if at all touched on these points (Kinoshita et al. 2012, p. 65). In comparison, the Japanese media depended on government and TEPCO reports, with no self investigation or investigation of inconstancies (Kinoshita et al. 2012, p. 66). Japan Times US-born reporter Eric Johnston published an essay in the *Japan Times News Digest* of how the foreign media reported on the 3.11 disasters. Johnston (2011) surmised that the foreign media was more skeptical of the government and took the view that it was better to warn people of possible dangers than not give any information at all. The Japanese media made efforts to avoid panicking the public.

> The Fukushima reactor crisis also showed that, from the beginning, a lot of influential foreign media were more skeptical about claims regarding the safety of nuclear power than the Japanese media. The way the Japanese government and TEPCO handled the crisis obviously fueled that skepticism. Unlike the foreign media, the Japanese media no doubt felt personally responsible for ensuring their reports did not lead to mass panic. But much foreign media skepticism was there from the beginning of the crisis. It was the result less of the personal views on the part of the foreign reporters or editors (though such views obviously shaped their coverage), or even their experience in covering Fukushima. In many cases, it was the result of the media culture from which they emerged (Johnston 2011, p. 80).

Western studies often fail to consider the socio-cultural factors in their criticisms of the Japanese media and label Japanese press club characteristics such as greater exclusivity, and relatively less journalistic independence and investigative journalism as 'anti-democratic'. Analysis of the Japanese media system often leads to criticisms based on Western ideals of a democratic free press. Some scholars, such as Feldman (2003) and Winfield et al. (2000), have argued that a deeper investigation of other factors, including socio-cultural influences, need to be considered to understand and make sound conclusions about the functioning of the Japanese press club media system.

Winfield et al. (2000, p. 324), for example, argue that mass media theories are often examined from a Western perspective and fail to acknowledge peculiarities in other press systems such as those in Asia, and "slight those societies, their political

foundations and beliefs, as well as their press practices". Winfield et al. (2000, p. 323) argue that studies on comparative press systems have long recognized that media systems are partly dependent on culture, however Western scholarship "tends to disregard the cultures, philosophies and traditions that distinguish Asian mass media" (Winfield et al. 2000, p. 324). Further, Winfield et al. (2000, p. 347) warn, "caution is advised when using western press standards in evaluating Asian journalism. Scholars need to include [Japan (and China)], yet on their own terms".

Developing a more nuanced assessment of the Japanese press system requires a better understanding of such socio-cultural factors — and how they influence how and what is reported. In particular, this means attending to prevailing ideas such as collectivism, social harmony, hierarchy and deference to authority. Winfield et al. (2000, p. 329), for example, argue that there is a strong focus on the collective in Japan that originates mostly from Confucius and Buddhism traditions, whereas Western press practices and the principles that underlie and inform them are based on "the idea of liberty, the importance of the individual vis-à-vis the group". The Merriam-Webster dictionary (2013) defines collectivism as the "emphasis on collective rather than individual action or identity". Gorodnichenko and Roland (2011) define collectivism as emphasizing the "embeddedness of individuals in a larger group. It encourages conformity and discourages individuals from dissenting and standing out".

Chalmers Johnson, an internationally prominent scholar on Japan, similarly argues that Japanese society exhibits fundamental collectivist values: "There is a strong emphasis in Japan on hierarchy, social deference, group orientation, the value of conformity, and dedication to one's group" (as cited in Freeman 2000, p. 85). These cultural traits are present, but not as prominent in Western countries such as USA or Australia. Johnson (1993) suggests that 'cartelization' is common throughout Japanese society in what he claims are 'cartels of the mind', which is also reflected in the group-orientated press clubs and their express rules of operation.

Winfield et al. (2000, p. 330) argue that "Confucius sought to create social harmony by envisioning a strict hierarchical society based upon key family relationships that defined everyone's role and imposed enormous moral pressure on individuals to conform to their roles. The success of this idea depends on respect for authority and reinforcement by the state". Such factors also shape and inform the concept of truth.

The predominant belief system of Confucianism in Japan upholds truth as a collective or hierarchical truth that gives rise to a 'collective freedom'. The basis of truth comes from the top down, and politeness is emphasized over candour (Winfield, Mizuno & Beaudoin 2000, p. 333). Individual expression is regarded as selfish and threatening to social order (Winfield, Mizuno & Beaudoin 2000, p. 331). This way of thinking is also reflected in the Japanese proverb: 'A protruding stake must be driven into the ground' (Winfield, Mizuno & Beaudoin 2000, p. 331). Boling (as cited in Johnson 1995, p. 109) argues, "while both Japan and the West may regard private interests as particular, narrow, and selfish, many Western theorists also see private interest as an essential building block of the public or common good".

The tradition of collectivism is also consistent with, and derives from Buddhism, with its core principles of peace, conformity, gentleness and compassion (Winfield, Mizuno & Beaudoin 2000, p. 331). Benedict (as cited in Winfield, Mizuno & Beaudoin 2000, p. 331) argues that Japanese hierarchy-based collectivism shapes Japanese people's relation with the nation, society, family members and other individuals. Takeichi (as cited in Winfield, Mizuno & Beaudoin 2000, p. 331) elaborates this further, arguing "the logic of the group supersedes that of an individual. For this reason, those who communicate opposition to the group interest have been, throughout Japanese history, ostracized". These socio-cultural factors and historical philosophies, such as collectivism, according to these scholars, influence the interpretation of journalism principles and affect the makeup and function of the Japanese media system.

Against such considerations, studies often fail to acknowledge any significant influence of socio-cultural factors on media systems. For example, Quarantelli et al. (1993) compared the Japanese and US media drawing on a range of qualitative and quantitative techniques. This study, specifically on disaster reporting, found that both Western and Japanese media exhibit similar characteristics. These characteristics were grouped into eight categories, including 'disaster planning', 'major news stories', 'difficulties in early reporting', 'personalised media messages', and 'topical content' (Quarantelli et al. 1993, p. 195–210). They also found a number of differences, grouping them into four categories, such as Japanese news being more homogeneous, more cooperation between Japanese news outlets, the existence of

more US local media outlets, and the legal requirements of the Japanese public broadcaster (NHK) to report on disasters.

However, Quarantelli et al. argue that a greater number of similarities confirmed their expectations that the media as a recently formed social institution is less culturally bound than other institutions in society such as religion. Quarantelli et al. refer to Jacobson and Deutschmann (1962), concluding that media systems have converged, sharing universal features and rising above socio-cultural factors:

> Journalism has idiosyncratic tendencies in various countries but these are more than outweighed by the common usages of the profession.

The convergence of media systems worldwide and "standardization of the content of communication" has been caused "partly because of the history of the professional training in mass media techniques, and partly because of the organization and interrelationships of the great news agencies" (Jacobson and Deutschmann 1962, p. 151–161).

Contrastingly, media scholars such as Winfield et al. (2000) and Feldman (1993) argue that differences such as those found in the Quarantelli et al. study may be a product of socio-cultural factors influencing media structures. Feldman (1993) highlights key socio-cultural factors influencing Japanese media such as linguistic homogeneity, shared basic values, and a shared consciousness. Winfield et al. (2000) highlight deep cultural traditions, largely related to religious tradition, as a key factor in cultural influences on Japanese media structures. They argue that the influence of Confucianism and Buddhism has ingrained the convention of collectivism and the concept of 'collective truth' into Japanese society. The importance of the group over the individual in the "Asian cultural tradition", for want of a better concept, is argued to be a significant factor in the distinctive features of the Japanese media system (Winfield, Mizuno & Beaudoin 2000, p. 324).

Winfield et al. (2000, p. 343) argue that these philosophical and socio-cultural threads can be seen in the "press system's employment practices, news gathering methods, the ways the press monitors the government and the under-representation of women". Winfield et al. note that the Japanese media operates in line with collectivist notions such as conformity and social harmony, which reduces investigative reporting.

Winfield et al. argue that investigative journalism is inconsistent with a society that prizes harmony, citing Reid's (as cited in Winfield, Mizuno & Beaudoin 2000, p. 345–6) observation during the 1995 earthquake in Kobe that the American media emphasized "disaster and confrontation and complaint," while the Japanese coverage looked for "harmony" and "people getting along".

> [Reid] cites an ABC-TV reporter who covered Kobe as observing, "[w]hereas the American camera got right in on the tears, or right in on the blood, the Japanese camera always tried to show the bigger picture." The Japanese news story emphasized the group effort to assist the recovery, not individual suffering (Winfield, Mizuno & Beaudoin 2000, p. 345–6).

Krauss and Lambert (2002) also argue that socio-cultural factors shape the functioning of media organizations, the role of the Japanese journalist, and the style of Japanese reporting. Specifically, they characterize Japanese journalists as 'organization men' owing to the fact that many journalists have jobs for life at the one company. They are therefore more inclined to do 'what is best for the newspaper and to respect the rules of the game with officials. Krauss and Lambert (2002, p. 73–4) continue:

> Reporters have fewer professional incentives to advance their individual careers by achieving scoops or indulging in interpretive and independent reporting. The result is news stories about public affairs that usually convey official sources, activities, and views in a neutral and non-interpretive style.

In contrast to Western newspapers, Krauss and Lambert (2002, p. 73) argue that Japanese newspapers avoid sensationalist reporting to increase sales because "each of these papers has a cross section of readers that does not vary much according to education, income, or political viewpoints, the papers cannot afford to adopt a news presentation style that alienates any segment of readers". Harari (1997, p. 31) argues that the homogenous reporting by the Japanese press club is a product of group-orientation linked to heavy competition. The intense competition pushes news organisations to publish the same information as their rivals in follow-up editions. In some cases this means that journalists from rival news organisations draw on the same information and "jointly evaluate and screen information" (Harari 1997, p. 31).

Brislin (1997) argues that underlying Japanese socio-cultural factors play a role in the functioning of the Japanese media. Brislin highlights Japanese terms of *omote* (the public face) and *ura* (the private face) as being significant in understanding underlying Japanese socio-cultural factors influencing the media:

> Although a surface analysis would present dim prospects for a "full disclosure" and independent style of journalism — and so a fully informed society — journalistic values and practices are not completely limited by the *kisha kurabu*. As Japanese sociologist Takeshi Ishida points out, every *omote*, or formal surface area of a conflict, always has its *ura*, or background, informal area, where resolution is more likely to be found (Brislin 1997).

Although Brislin acknowledges that socio-cultural factors influence reporting styles in Japan, he argues that the resulting journalism is detrimental to democratic free press ideals. Reporters, he argues, have less independence than their colleagues in the West, and Japanese journalists refrain from investigative journalism. Brislin (1997) argues that Western journalism reveals truth through journalists and media organisations competing to "outfact" each other, while the Japanese press clubs diminish competition and thereby restrict journalistic independence. In the West, journalists, for the most part, strive to publish exclusive stories, while in Japan journalists are discouraged from reporting differently to their competitors (Brislin 1997).

Similarly, O'Dwyer (2005) acknowledges the role that socio-cultural factors play in shaping the Japanese press club media system. Nevertheless, O'Dwyer remains critical of media traits such as extreme exclusivity, and relatively less journalistic independence and investigative reporting, being contrary to the values of a democratic free press.

> The Japanese kisha club system operates formally and informally in a similar manner to the Australian and British press club systems, but a combination of cultural characteristics and 50 years of almost uninterrupted rule by one political party have resulted in it developing some unique, and from a liberal perspective, concerning traits (O'Dwyer 2005, p. 1).

Western scholarship often neglects these socio-cultural factors such as collectivist notions of hierarchy, conformity and social harmony in analyses of the Japanese press

club system, preferring to simply condemn the organisation and functioning of the Japanese press as being detrimental to the values of a democratic free press. However, as noted here, some media researchers recognize the importance of socio-cultural factors in the makeup and functioning of the Japanese press club media. Nevertheless, even amongst those researchers who do acknowledge these factors, debate exists over the effects of these factors on the quality of journalism.

2.8 New media in Japan

Dramatic falls in mass media revenues and severe reductions in the circulation of newspapers have accompanied the rise of new media in the West (Statista 2014). While the rise of social media is only part of the reason for this, it no doubt has played a role in the falling circulation, readership and revenue of newspapers and other mainstream media organisations (Kirchhoff 2010). In contrast to the West, the spread and influence of new media in Japan has been comparatively slower with newspaper circulation falling at a much lower rate (The Japan newspaper publishers & editors association 2013, circulation and households). Less favorable tax laws for non-profit organizations in Japan, and the absence of a culture of charitable giving (Fackler 2012, p. 206) compared to some Western societies, most notably the US, have been some factors that are argued to have affected the slower progress of new media or non-profit public media organizations, such as those found in the US. Examples of this kind of media include Pro Public Inc.[1] and Democracy Now![2] in the USA.

Pratt (2000) defines new media as incorporating "what has commonly been known as multimedia: literally, the convergence of text, sounds and images in the same medium." "New media" in this study refers to non-traditional media such as citizen journalism, non-profit public journalism, and social media where people can access and produce real-time news online at any time. One limitation of the term "new media" is its vagueness. For instance, mainstream corporate media sources can also be accessed via new media meaning that new media and the mainstream corporate media are not mutually exclusive. Consequently, opinions on new media analysed in

---

[1] Pro Publica Inc. is an US independent, non-profit news organisation with the objective of producing investigative journalism in the public interest.
[2] Democracy Now! is an independent non-profit media organisation that is funded through audience and foundation contributions and does not accept advertising, corporate or government funds (Democracy Now! 2013, About Democracy Now!).

this study may not only concern citizen journalism, non-profit public journalism, and social media information, but also include mass media reporting, creating a limitation of this study of new media.

More recently there has been a wealth of literature citing the 3.11 disaster for spurring an increase in new media usage in Japan (Tachiiri 2011, Fackler 2012, Endo 2012). For example, Kaoru Endo (2012, p. 138) provides evidence to show the unprecedented use of new media, such as independent video streaming websites Ustream and Niconico from the onset of the disasters. For example, Niconico broadcast two specials for the 3.11 disaster. Audience members could post comments below the feed (Endo 2012, p. 139). During the 3.11 disaster, victims turned to new media when other means of communication were cut (Tachiiri 2011). Other citizens who were dissatisfied with the reporting by the mainstream media switched to new media to access overseas news sources and commentary by freelance journalists (Tachiiri 2011, p. 71). Tachiiri (2011, p. 237) argues that the credibility and trust in new media in Japan is on the rise and is becoming an effective tool for commentary outside of the mass media paradigm. Endo (2012) argues that a new form of journalism was born with the 3.11 disaster. Social Networking Service users gradually started to distrust the Japanese media and people started to look to information from previously heretic antinuclear websites.

Japan's Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication has noted the rise of social media use (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications 2013). Use of social networking services grew amongst all age groups from 2011 to 2012. For example, social networking services usage grew from 22.1 per cent to 28.2 per cent amongst 20–29 year olds, 18.8 per cent to 23.6 per cent amongst 30–39 year olds, and 4.5 per cent to 8.2 per cent amongst 50–59 year olds in Japan (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications 2013).

Endo's (2012, p. 140) research also found that some Japanese people began translating and posting articles from overseas including from the US, France, UK, and Germany. Similarly, Tachiiri's (2011, p. 71) research found that during the Fukushima nuclear crisis Japanese people used foreign media and personal websites to see reports that were restricted on Japanese television.

However, if socio-cultural factors influence the shape and practices of the media in the ways suggested in the above discussion, it is perhaps not surprising that Japanese people are less enthusiastic about embracing new media as compared to their Western counterparts. New media is often associated with traits of individualism and exhibitionism through personalized commentary and opinion, and values of non-conformity through anti-establishment critique. This contrasts the collectivist outlook encouraged within Japanese culture and society.

However, some media scholars have argued that the recent rise in new media is evidence of a shift in Japanese collectivistic values and dispositions. Tachiiri (2011, p. 64) argues that social media may inspire Japanese to be more outspoken and individualistic. Other researchers have argued that new media may threaten the Japanese press club media. Fackler (2012, p. 208), for example, argues that the "anti-liberal" characteristics of the Japanese press club system may lead to a thriving independent non-profit media.

Shunya Yoshimi, a professor of Sociology, Cultural Studies, and Media Studies from the University of Tokyo, believes this change is already occurring. Yoshimi argues that the shift from a mass media completely dominated by the press club system was evident in the coverage of the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disasters:

> The mass media systems such as newspaper and TV want to conceal the reality of the earthquake and the nuclear plant explosion. They want to calm the people down. But I think this has not been so successful. Of course, some people only access mass media in Japan, but we can also access the Internet and other social networks. We need to change the platform of this reality because it's been twenty or thirty years since this kind of mass-media-controlled reality has been constructed. And after all this, it might already be dead (Choo 2011, p. 569).

Whether such dramatic and dire predictions turn out to be true is open to question. As I will argue, important underlying socio-cultural factors will limit any significant shifts in the Japanese media system caused by new media.

2.9 Conclusion

Western media scholarship is, for the most part, highly critical of the Japanese press club media. Critics claim that the Japanese press club system is anti-democratic insofar as it encourages exclusivity, a heavy reliance on official sources and minimal independent, investigative reporting. Although some of these traits also exist in Western press clubs — and are sometimes overlooked by Western media scholars — it is fair to say that the Japanese *kisha* clubs exhibit these characteristics to a greater extent than their Western equivalents. In particular, the Japanese press clubs have stricter rules to protect exclusivity, and have an even greater reliance on official sources in reporting, and relatively less investigative reporting. While there are some studies that focus on the influence of socio-cultural factors such as hierarchical and collectivist thinking in the formation and operation of the Japanese media system, these traits are often condemned as being anti-democratic and contrary to the values of a free press.

Some media researchers (Tachiiri 2011, Fackler 2012) argue that this system is under threat because of the rise of social media. The progress of new media in Japan has been slower than the West but scholars such as Yoshimi (Choo 2011) believe it is already having a significant impact on the Japanese media system.

The following chapters examine the validity of these criticisms through a cross-cultural, comparative analysis of Japanese and Western views of their respective media systems. In particular, this thesis focuses on the coverage of the reporting around the Fukushima disaster. Doing so will enable me to assess whether Japanese support these 'anti-democratic' media traits, or whether they are understood quite differently in the cultural context. This cross-cultural comparative study also explores whether Japanese perceptions mirror the development of new media in Japan and the potential effects on the Japanese press club system. The next chapter outlines the methodology used to explore these issues.

CHAPTER 3 – METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview

For this pilot study, a comparative qualitative analysis was undertaken to examine discrepancies of values and beliefs of media systems between Japanese and Western people. A questionnaire was used to discover the values and beliefs that Japanese people and Westerners — both Westerners living in Japan and those outside Japan — held about the media and the role of journalists. Respondents were specifically asked to reflect on the roles of the media and journalism with respect to the Fukushima nuclear disaster. This was to examine how the Japanese and Westerners perceived the performance of their respective media systems in relation to the reporting on the disaster and, by extension, to find out what normative frames people interpret the media through.

If the Japanese respondents answered positively towards media reporting then this would suggest public support for the current press system and thus call into question criticisms advanced by Western media scholars. However, if Japanese respondents answered negatively then this would suggest a lack of public support for the current press system and support Western criticisms.

Some media scholars (Brislin 1997, Harari 1997) recognize the role of socio-cultural influences on the Japanese press club media system. However, even here Japanese media traits are criticised when they cross the line of Western democratic ideals. As noted in the previous chapter, press club exclusivity, and a 'lack' of independent, investigative, watchdog reporting are often singled out to show the 'failings' of the Japanese press club system. In order to explore the role that socio-cultural factors play in shaping people's expectations of journalism, the role of journalists and the role of new media more generally, this study explores public dispositions to collectivist thought. Doing so provides grounds to interrogate the validity of Western scholarship that is critical of the Japanese media. Western criticisms of Japanese media are also assessed through an analysis of Japanese and Western public views on specific media characteristics. Of particular interest is the extent that these views reflect collectivist notions such as conformity and social harmony. If the Japanese respondents support specific media characteristics reflecting collectivist notions such as conformity and

social harmony then this would suggest socio-cultural factors influence desired media structures and undermine Western criticisms of the Japanese press club system.

Respondents were also asked about their use of new media to explore the potential impact of this media in Japan and the potential repercussions it has for the press club system. This was to explore the claims made by some theorists (Endo 2012, Fackler 2012, Tachiiri 2011), noted in the previous chapter, that new media — particularly its role in reporting the Fukushima disaster — is challenging the dominance of the press club system.

3.2 Research approach

An open-ended questionnaire was distributed to both Japanese and Western members of the general public in an attempt to explore differences not identified in previous quantitative and qualitative research. The qualitative research that has been undertaken on the Japanese media (Otopalik & Schaefer 2008, Quarantelli et al 1993, Harari 1997) has mostly been based on the content of journalism rather than public perceptions of journalism. The approach taken here differs in that it compares Japanese and Western perceptions of domestic media systems. It thereby seeks to explore Japanese public support for the Japanese press club system.

3.3 Research design

Thirty-two Japanese from all over Japan, primarily from metropolitan areas, and 31 Westerners from Australia, USA, Canada, and the UK (England, Wales, and Ireland) were surveyed on their views about their respective media systems. Westerners included 17 Australians, 8 Americans, 5 British (including 3 English, 1 Irish and 1 Welsh), and 1 Canadian. Eleven Westerners were living in metropolitan Japan at the time of the 3.11 disaster. Almost all of the other 20 Westerners had no experience living in Japan. The age of Western respondents ranged from 21 to 67, with an average age of 37.77. There were 14 female and 17 male Western respondents. Japanese respondents ranged from age 20 to 64, with an average age of 40.77. There were 22 female and 10 male Japanese respondents. The author translated the responses from Japanese respondents (see Appendix 2).

Initially, acquaintances of the author were recruited as respondents, and then additional respondents were recruited through snowball sampling. Acquaintances

came from a variety of backgrounds including university colleagues, exchange student colleagues, friends from previous trips to Japan, work colleagues, friends, and friends of friends. Snowball sampling was carried out at friends' places of work. Most of the respondents were connected to a university and were therefore expected to be able to access and understand a range of media. The results were considered to be representative of the educated Japanese and Western populations.

The survey contained 15 open-ended questions. Some questions received fewer responses. One reason for this is that some questions were irrelevant to Westerners living overseas at the time of the 3.11 disaster. It was not possible to ask follow-up questions to some respondents. One of the questions, which addressed whether journalists perform "a reasonable job by simply reporting official information", was discarded as many respondents interpreted the question in different ways and thus skewed the comparative data results. Many respondents seem to have interpreted the question as asking whether journalists should offer opinions rather than the intended question of whether journalists should investigate the claims of official information. As such this question was excluded from the analysis.

The questions were aimed at obtaining information about respondents' general views of their home media system, their views of fundamental characteristics of media systems (using the Fukushima nuclear disaster as a focal point), and opinions on new media (see Appendix 2). For example, respondents were asked questions including:

> What is the media's role in society?

> What do you think was/is the most important ethical principle for journalists who reported on and continue to report on the Fukushima disaster?

> Do the media have the responsibility to report everything? Or should they control information to avoid disorder?

> Do you think new media reporting is more effective than the mass media?

3.4 Methods of data analysis

This study focuses on themes relevant to Japanese perceptions of the media, as this study is an investigation of the *Japanese* media system. The responses are analysed for common themes in the Japanese responses and Western responses. These themes

are then compared to determine if Japanese support exists for media characteristics often criticized by Western scholarship. Also of interest, are the views on new media and their potential impacts on the press club system in Japan.

In addition, a broad range of Japanese media research from online databases (including Sage Publications, Taylor and Francis Online, Academic Information Navigator (CiNii) and Japanese Institutional Repositories Online) in Australian and Japanese university libraries — both in English and from Japanese publications — was scrutinized to inform this study. The focus of this archival research is to examine what conclusions have been drawn about the Japanese media system — including Western criticisms of the Japanese press club media system. Literature on the Japanese media (Brislin 1997, Fackler 2012, Feldman 2004, Freeman 2000, Gamble and Watanabe 2004, O'Dwyer 2005, Winfield, Mizuno & Beaudoin 2000 etc.) is referred to when analyzing the cross-cultural comparative questionnaire data, and in assessing the validity of criticisms of the Japanese press club media system and the potential impacts of new media in Japan.

Themes revealed in the questionnaire responses are analysed to explore Japanese public support or opposition to characteristics of the media system. For example, views expressing criticism of speculation, rumour-spreading, and subjective reporting were judged to indicate support for a 'moderate' style of reporting. Similarly, support for a heavy reliance on official sources and minimal investigative reporting are deemed to indicate support for the existing model of news media in Japan. Indirect conclusions of support for media characteristics are also drawn from the data from general themes and dispositions, such as tendencies towards collectivist philosophies related to media systems. For example, an aversion to civil disobedience is interpreted to indicate support for collectivist values of social harmony and conformity. As such, expressing an aversion to civil disobedience is taken to indicate support for the collectivist approach exhibited by the press club media. Further, the ability or inability to obtain information needed during the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant disaster from the media is interpreted to indicate a certain level of satisfaction with the media's reporting on the crisis.

3.5 Limitations

As with any cross-cultural study, the present study has several limitations. Firstly, this pilot study draws conclusions from a limited preliminary sample and thus does not categorically represent Japanese and Western media audiences. The results are intended to support the development of broader probability-based comparative studies on Japanese and Western perceptions of media systems.

Secondly, literature on the Japanese press club media in English is mostly categorized as Western scholarship. Although it is clear that the literature has been published from Western institutions, this does not necessarily guarantee that the author is Western. Therefore, there is a limitation in this study when referring to "Western criticisms" of the Japanese press club media system. As such, 'Western criticism' should not be taken literally to mean that critics hail from Western cultural backgrounds. Rather, it is used to denote the kinds of criticisms that are typically made about the Japanese media's performance which, implicitly or explicitly, take Western norms of journalism — notions of the Fourth Estate, a watchdog press, press freedom, and investigative reporting as these have evolved in Western cultural contexts — as the standard against which other press are to be judged.

Thirdly, there was a gender imbalance in the participation of Japanese respondents. There were 22 female Japanese respondents compared to 10 male Japanese respondents. This pilot study works with the assumption that opinions of media systems are not affected by gender. This may present a limitation to the study given Japanese society is often perceived as patriarchal with males dominating powerful social institutions.

Fourthly, a minority of Japanese respondents used foreign media sources during the disaster. Similarly Western respondents used Japanese media sources. In response to the question, "What media did you use the most during the Fukushima crisis (English/Japanese, TV/radio etc.)? Please specify" 1 out of the 32 (3.13 per cent) Japanese respondents answered that they used foreign sources of media. Four out of 28 (14.29 per cent) Western respondents said they used some Japanese media sources. This posed a limitation on the analysis of respondents' opinions about home media systems. Moreover, respondents answering questions about domestic mass media systems may have also, inadvertently or otherwise, included thoughts about foreign

media sources. For example, in response to the question, "Do you think new media reporting is more effective than the mass media (press club system)?" it is conceivable that respondents may have included reporting from outside their home media systems in their opinions on the mass media. Therefore, this also limits conclusions drawn about Japanese and Western perceptions of their home media systems.

Finally, the term 'new media' is incredibly broad. Depending on the context and/or the audience, it can encompass everything from mainstream mass media reporting, not only citizen journalism, non-profit public journalism, and social media. Since mainstream mass media news reports can be accessed via new media such as social media or personalized blogs, it is an imprecise term. Analyses of perceptions of new media are limited by the extent to which respondents' new media usage includes information sourced by mainstream mass media reporting. As such any conclusions about the role and future repercussions of new media in Japan are tentative.

CHAPTER 4 – RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results from questionnaires distributed to Japanese and Western participants. A total of 63 questionnaires were completed: 32 Japanese respondents from all over Japan, primarily from metropolitan areas, and 31 Western respondents from metropolitan areas of Australia, USA, Canada, and the UK (England, Wales, and Ireland). The questionnaires distributed to Japanese and Western participants contained 15 questions. From the questionnaire, several themes relating to Western criticisms of the Japanese press club system and the growth of new media in Japan were identified from thematic analysis of the Japanese and Western responses.

Most of the themes in the Japanese and Western responses were unsurprising and were in line with different socio-cultural philosophies, such as hierarchical collectivism in Japanese society. There were, however, surprising results concerning new media, with Japanese responses reflecting many of the Western free press ideals found in Western responses.

There was also a clear difference between Japanese and Western respondents in how forthcoming respondents were in their willingness to offer opinions. In general, Japanese respondents were less willing than Western respondents to offer opinions, particularly on more complicated and politically sensitive issues such as the benefits and effectiveness of the press club system. Western respondents were comparatively more willing to offer their opinions. This overall trend is evidence of well-established socio-cultural philosophies of Japanese society being a collectivist society that prizes conformity and social harmony, in contrast to Western society being an individualist society prone to challenging authority. A similar collectivist pattern of conformity and social harmony was also reflected in responses to specific questions, such as a larger percentage of Japanese respondents (14 out of 32 or 43.75 per cent) favouring the control of information by authorities compared to Western respondents (6 out of 31 or 19.35 per cent).

In terms of media consumption about the Fukushima disaster, all Japanese respondents relied primarily on domestic media sources during the Fukushima crisis.

Similarly, the overwhelming majority of Western respondents (30 out of 31 or 96.77 per cent) primarily relied on domestic media or Western media sources. Only 1 out of 32 (3.13 per cent) Japanese respondents answered that they accessed foreign sources of media. Twenty-one out of 32 (65.63 per cent) Japanese respondents said they predominantly used TV as a source of information during the onset of the Fukushima disaster. Twelve out of 32 (37.50 per cent) named NHK as their preferred choice of media. Eleven of 32 (34.38 per cent) Japanese respondents named online media as a source they used to get information. This included "All newspaper internet homepages". Nine out of 32 (28.13 per cent) Japanese respondents said they used newspapers as a source of news.

In comparison, 4 out of 28 (14.29 per cent) Western respondents said that they used some Japanese media sources. Sixteen out of 28 (57.14 per cent) Western respondents said they used online media — a significantly higher percentage than Japanese respondents. Eleven out of 28 (39.29 per cent) used TV (a lower percentage compared to Japanese respondents), 9 out of 28 (32.14 per cent) used newspapers (a similar percentage compared to Japanese respondents), and 4 out of 28 (14.29 per cent) used radio.

4.2 Journalism ethics

Thirty-one Japanese respondents answered a question about what they believed was the most important principles of ethical journalism. Two Japanese respondents answered 'I don't know'. Thirty Western respondents answered the question about what they believed were the most important principles of ethical journalism. The total number of Japanese and Western responses amounts to more than the total number of respondents respectively as some respondents answered more than one journalism principle. Responses were sorted into themes (see figure 2).

Most important principles of ethical journalism

Themes	Japanese responses	Western responses
Safety and concern for victims	32.26% (10 out of 31)	46.67% (14 out of 30)
Truth and accuracy	25.81% (8 out of 31)	53.33% (16 out of 30)
Avoid rumors and speculation	16.13% (5 out of 31)	0% (0 out of 30)
Don't incite panic or emotion	9.68% (3 out of 31)	6.67% (2 out of 30)
Report objectively	6.45% (2 out of 31)	0% (0 out of 30)
Freedom of the press and right to know	6.45% (2 out of 31)	0% (0 out of 30)
Public interest	6.45% (2 out of 31)	0% (0 out of 30)
Report impartially/fairly/report on positives and negatives	6.45% (2 out of 31)	10% (3 out of 30)
Be considerate in reporting	3.23% (1 out of 31)	0% (0 out of 30)
Refer to specialists	3.23% (1 out of 31)	0% (0 out of 30)
Avoid sensationalism	0% (0 out of 31)	6.67% (2 out of 30)
Report in context	0% (0 out of 31)	3.33% (1 out of 30)
More information about Japan	0% (0 out of 31)	3.33% (1 out of 30)
Transparency	0% (0 out of 31)	3.33% (1 out of 30)

Figure 2: Japanese and Western responses on the most important principles of ethical journalism.

As can be seen, both Japanese and Western respondents share similar views about what constitutes ethical journalism. Both Japanese and Western respondents consider truth and accuracy as one of the most important principles in reporting on the Fukushima disaster, with the welfare of victims being equally significant.

For example, Japanese respondents highlighted reporting "the truth accurately", "prudence of truth and accuracy", being "careful not to harm victims with actions of reporting", and the "safety" of citizens. Western respondents also placed a high priority on truth and accuracy in reporting. For example, one respondent said that the need to be "honest about what was going on, so that the public could prepare and

react safely and properly" was of primary importance during the disaster. Another said that "people's safety is paramount and it was the role of the journalists to make sure people are kept informed of the risk levels without sensationalising the event". One Western respondent noted while public safety was important during the immediate wake of the disaster, the press also had a responsibility to inform the public once the worst was over. Western respondents said that it was important for journalists "to minimise the physical harm to everyone effected", but once the immediate crisis had subsided it was important to "provide a balanced and accurate account of events and… allow the public to make their own informed decision".

One notable difference between Japanese and Western responses was the greater willingness of Japanese respondents to support more moderate reporting. This concern for moderate reporting was expressed in a number of ways and was motivated by a number of reasons. One respondent noted the need for the press to be considerate in reporting and to not "report subjectively". The reasons given in favour of moderate reporting ranged from "protect[ing] victims from rumors" to not "cause panic" and to ward against inciting "citizens' emotions". Western respondents were relatively less concerned with moderate reporting, and more concerned with getting the message out as quickly as possible.

4.3 Media's role in society

The majority of Japanese respondents (18 out of 29 or 62.07 per cent) perceived the media's role as an institution to convey accurate information to the public. For example, Japanese respondents said that the role of the media in society is to "accurately report information", "convey information", and "to tell the truth". Similarly, the majority of Western respondents answered that the media's role is to provide information to the public (20 out of 31 or 64.52 per cent) and to do so accurately and honestly (7 out of 31 or 22.58 per cent). For example, Western respondents said that the role of the media in society is to "provide any and all pertinent information that is of importance to the general public", "provide the public with up to date, accurate information of the current issues at hand", and "relay information to the general public".

Other themes relating to the timely dissemination of information, and objective reporting "in an unbiased and honest fashion" were present in both Japanese and

Western responses. For example, Japanese respondents said that the media's role included reporting "from a neutral stance", "accurate and fast", and "objectively to a wide audience". Western respondents similarly answered that the role of the media included "to give accurate information to the people in the quickest possible fashion", and to "present an unbiased and unprejudiced account of the actions of the world".

Japanese respondents also focused on providing information that was "easy to understand". For example, some Japanese respondents said the media's role was to "convey information thoroughly and [in an] easy to understand [form] in accordance with the times", and "to convey the truth that is easily understandable". However overall, Japanese and Western respondents shared similar views on the media's role in society.

4.4 Obtaining essential information from the media

The overwhelming majority of Japanese and the majority of Western respondents said they could obtain the information they needed from the media about the Fukushima crisis. Twenty-seven out of 31 (87.10 per cent) Japanese respondents said they could obtain the information they needed about the Fukushima crisis. Ten out of those 27 respondents said they *mostly* obtained the information they needed, or received the information *with some reservations*.

For example, one Japanese respondent, a 21-year-old male university student, said:

> Not only concerning the nuclear accident, information I got from the mass media, there are necessary requirements for understanding the events, and I think those requirements were sufficient.

Similarly, a 20-year-old Japanese female university student, said,

> Yes I think so. A short while after the disaster the TV and newspapers starting reporting the negative effects of the radiation.

Another Japanese respondent, a 22-year-old male university student, said,

> I think I got the minimum information that I need.

Another, a 31-year-old Japanese housewife, said,

> I mostly could get what I wanted from the TV.

Eight out of 11 (72.73 per cent) of the Western respondents who were living in Japan at the time of the Fukushima nuclear disaster said they could obtain the information they needed. All of these respondents gleaned all, if not most, of their information from Western media sources. For example, the Canadian respondent, a 22-year-old female university student said,

> I did not find that much trouble in finding information as I had access to Canadian and America media as well.

Similarly, a 22-year-old English male university student said,

> Yes, I think so. I didn't need that much information — just to know that Kyoto was not going to be directly affected.

One Australian respondent, a 30-year-old English teacher, acknowledged that they may have been desperate for more information due to being "very emotional at the time". In hindsight, however, they said that they obtained "mostly" the information needed.

A significant number of Western respondents living in Japan at the time of the 3.11 disaster were critical of the Japanese media system in their responses. For example, the Canadian university student assumed that the Japanese media filtered information disseminated to the public saying:

> I imagine that if I was just looking through Japanese media that information regarding the severity of the nuclear disaster and the safety of the food grown around Fukushima would be difficult to find.

An English respondent, a 27-year-old male teacher, said the Japanese media were controlling information and "primarily trying to 'manage' the public reaction", although the respondent did not offer any proof or examples. This was a theme amongst a few Western respondents who shared a critical view of the Japanese media.

4.5 Press club system: beneficial or disadvantageous?

A majority of both Japanese and Western respondents were not opposed to a press club system, although slightly more Japanese respondents expressly disapproved of a

press club system, 6 out of 31 (19.35 per cent), compared to those that expressly approved of such a system, 4 out of 31 (12.90 per cent). Japanese respondents who were opposed to a press club system did so on the grounds that they regarded it as an anachronism and as an attempt to manage the media in a way that was not conducive to the free-flow of information or disseminating the truth. For example, a 30-year-old Japanese female architect said,

> I don't think it can be called good or bad but I think it is becoming an outdated system. Its not suited to the times.

Similarly, another Japanese respondent, a 60-year-old housewife, said,

> Not good! Even with one's thinking, and thinking it is correct, the press club system ties up the information and the truth is not dispersed.

Japanese respondents in favor of a press club system said that it serves to protect "citizens' right to know", and ensures accuracy — a position many Western critics of the Japanese press club system would contend is the opposite of reality. One Japanese respondent, a 38-year-old self-employed female, implied that it had flaws, but was the best workable system possible.

> This system is valid because it has the function of protecting the citizen's right to know. But from the people's perspective, there is no way to avoid the bias position of information control being carried out to the extent that the club is exclusive.

However, the majority of Japanese respondents said that a press club system is a neutral force (12 out of 31 or 38.71 per cent), i.e. that the press club system is neither advantageous nor disadvantageous, or both advantageous and disadvantageous. For example, Japanese respondents answered that they believed it "can't be said whether [press clubs] are a good or bad thing", or that "there are both good and bad points". A significant number of Japanese respondents (9 out of 31 or 29.03 per cent) said they hadn't thought about the press club and potential alternatives.

One Japanese respondent, a 31-year-old businesswoman, suggested that the press club's only function is to hold press conferences and that this was a positive function:

I'm not in a position to say if it's good or bad. Don't other countries also have press conferences? Can't it be called an efficient way to gather information?

Another 35-year-old Japanese businesswoman, once again, accepted the flaws of the press club system commenting that the press club system has both benefits and disadvantages:

I don't think it is good or bad. Even the information that is exclusive to journalists in the clubs sometimes has little influence. But freelance journalists can't attend and have barriers.

There were also a significant number of Japanese respondents (9 out of 31 or 29.03 per cent) who admitted ignorance of the press club system and its functioning.

The majority of Western respondents, 14 out of 30 (46.67 per cent), said that a press club type system is beneficial or possibly beneficial. Many of their answers highlighted the benefits of press clubs or press conferences "to obtain official information from the government or specialists" and "to have access to these officials and to ask questions".

Ten out of 30 (33.33 per cent) Westerners answered that they thought the Japanese press club was a not a good thing. Some of the respondents cited the closed, clubbish nature of the press club. Respondents emphasized the disadvantages of sources being "limited to a select group of individuals or organizations that have established a clearly-defined set of rules and practices". Others said the close relationships between journalists and officialdom was "detrimental to accurate truthful reporting", while others highlighted a lack of journalistic independence, with reporters possibly fearing being "ostracized" and losing status to "other journalists who so as they are told".

Both Japanese and Western respondents who believed a press club media system is disadvantageous named exclusivity and independence as their two major concerns. For example one Japanese respondent, the 21-year-old male student, said,

It has a bad effect. It's exclusive and isn't it a barrier to impartial reporting.

Another Japanese respondent, a 37-year-old female writer, said

I'm against it. Membership is limited to some media, and also reporters become a mouthpiece of the government, so it's difficult for them to be critical.

Similarly, another Japanese respondent, a 20-year-old female law university student, said

I'm opposed to it. Only a limited number of journalists can get information, which results in the regurgitation of the government line.

One Japanese respondent, a 30-year-old male IT worker, was strongly critical of the press club system on grounds that it was antithetical to a free press. In the words of the respondent, the Press Club was intentionally setup to "steal the freedom of reporting".

Similarly, Western respondents against press clubs highlighted their exclusivity and opposed them being "limited to a select group of individuals or organizations". Others noted the way they limited "the ways in which information is interpreted and distributed". One Australian respondent, a 49-year-old female administration worker, expressed a dislike for the term "selected journalists" and questioned "who is in and who is out?" Others doubted the ability of journalists in a press club system to operate independently saying, "it compromises journalists to 'repeat the mantra' as they become indebted to politicians for ongoing information".

Western respondents also expressed concerns of the press clubs' ability to shape the news and news agenda — and thereby control information saying. As one Australian respondent, a 31-year-old finance worker, put it:

Officials would have the power to omit certain journalists who do not report the information in a manor [sic] that is aligned with the message they want to give the public. This would open up the possibility of controlling the information the public was privy too surrounding reportable events.

Another 30-year-old Australian male English teacher said

If it's only for selected journalists — it'd be interesting to know why. Are they controlling information?

To summarize, the majority of Japanese and Western respondents believe a press club system is beneficial rather than disadvantageous. However, rather than commending the benefits of a press club form of media system, the majority of Japanese respondents believe its effects on society are neutral, or neither "good or bad". A significant number of Japanese respondents (9 out of 31 or 29.03 per cent) also admitted ignorance of press clubs. Although there are a significant number of Western respondents (14 out of 30 or 46.67 per cent) who believe press clubs are beneficial or possibly beneficial to society, Western respondents are much more likely — compared to Japanese respondents — to give a condition for the press club system to function appropriately (without specifically being asked). Western respondents have a clearer idea about how the press club might be reformed. For example, Western respondents argue that the press club system can be beneficial, while noting there "needs to be a process in place that does not favor one over the other". The respondents note there must be journalists from "varied biases that worked for and against the selectors", and that a "balanced variety of journalists should be included to give the public news reports from a variety of viewpoints". Western respondents further emphasized the importance of a balanced range of reporters to ensure "more interpretations or views on what the officials are saying, and a bigger variety of questions would be asked". Other conditions outlined included the "selectors" being "responsible" with "the reporters and journalists they invite"; the need to verify and "check information"; and the need to supplement official reports with "more information from investigative journalism".

4.6 Effectiveness of press club systems

Most of the Japanese respondents thought the Japanese press club media system was ineffective during the Fukushima crisis: 10 out of 32 (31.25 per cent) said it was ineffective compared to 4 out of 32 (12.50 per cent) who said it was effective. The few Japanese respondents who gave reasons for the press club system being ineffective mentioned the spreading of anxiety, exclusivity of the press clubs, and a lack of journalistic independence. Four of the 10 Japanese respondents who were critical of the effectiveness of the press clubs expressed clear discontent, pointing out that the press clubs caused "anxieties" to "spread", and that the public was "stupid" to "believe them".

In particular two respondents were critical of collusion between the government, TEPCO and the media. One Japanese respondent, the 37-year-old writer, said that the clubs encouraged "reporters [to] become a mouthpiece of the government". Similarly, the 21-year-old male student said that the relationship worked for the government and the company to the detriment of the public:

> I don't think it was advantageous to the citizens. I think it worked well for the government and TEPCO.

Japanese respondents who said that the Japanese press club media system was effective mentioned the greater capabilities of the press clubs to spread information, and report quickly. For example, Japanese respondents said that the press clubs had the ability to "report on more than the fixed standard information", and provide information "intermittently about the minute-by-minute changes in the nuclear situation". One Japanese respondent, a 60-year-old housewife, highlighted the power of the government to influence the reporting of beneficial, "good news".

The majority of Japanese respondents (17 out of 32 or 53.13 per cent), however, answered "I don't know" to questions about the effectiveness of the press club, or prefaced their response with "I don't know".

Western responses were evenly split between those who said their domestic media system was effective (4 out of 11 or 36.36 per cent) during the Fukushima disaster and those that said it was ineffective or lacked effectiveness (4 out of 11 or 36.36 per cent). For example, the 27-year-old English male teacher answered:

> At the time I thought that the British press was generally quite open.

Others said that their domestic media systems conducted "more interpretation, analysis and commentary" compared to the Japanese media, and that (in the US) "journalists continue to go after the answer they want, in Japan, more journalists tend to stop with the answer they get".

On the other hand, 2 out of 11 (18.18 per cent) Western respondents said that their domestic media system was ineffective, and another 2 out of 11 (18.18 per cent) said that sensationalist reporting of the disaster hampered the press' effectiveness. For example, an American respondent, a 23-year-old female university student, answered:

The media in my country painted the disaster in neon sensationalism and caused more of a panic at home than [in Japan].

Another American respondent, a 24-year-old male teacher, said:

In America, on the other hand, more mainstream news outlets were going crazy with all kinds of speculation based on the same lack of information. It was unfortunate to see such sensationalism prevail, but there were good news sources nonetheless looking at it a bit more objectively.

The majority of Western respondents (9 out of 11 or 81.82 per cent) criticised the Japanese press club media system's reporting during the Fukushima crisis, with many citing the close ties between journalists and news organisations on the one hand and the government on the other. Respondents said that they believed that information was covered up, and that the Japanese press was guilty of a lack of investigative journalism. For example, the Canadian respondent said that "many things were covered up and the government was able to come up with answers in advance that didn't give the public the truth about the crisis". Another respondent, a 27-year-old English teacher, said, "that with strong links to the government, there were issues being kept secret from the public" while another, a 23-year-old English university student, commented that "there was a huge element of story fixing and information suppression which could have been detrimental to the course of the crisis".

Western respondents were also critical of what they saw as the lack of independent journalism in Japan, with some arguing that information was "only available to Japan's most influential journalists and discouraged them from investigating the source of the information". There was also a common theme of criticisms aimed at the Japanese government, which was seen as controlling information. One English respondent, a 27-year-old male university student, said:

I think it made it easier for the government and authorities to spread an official line and maintain a narrative. We are only now seeing a backlash over the misreporting of the event.

The following comment from the male American teacher exemplifies this critical view of the Japanese media's perceived management of information:

In Japan the response was so muted and held back that it was hard to have an accurate idea of what was going on. There was a clear reluctance to say anything to disturb the balance or to make anyone angry or suggest responsibility. There was a stranglehold on important information.

4.7 Trust in the media

Japanese respondents were more likely than Western respondents to express trust in the mass media. Fifteen out of 32 (46.88 per cent) Japanese respondents expressed no negativity or scepticism towards the mass media. Among Western respondents, only 3 out of 31 (9.68 per cent) expressed no negativity towards the mass media. The Japanese respondents who did express negative views of the media cited concerns about accuracy, problems arising from "exaggeration by media that caused rumours", and a lack of "self-research and investigation".

Western respondents who were critical of the trustworthiness of the mass media mentioned their concern at excessive sensationalist reporting, and a lack of independent reporting. For example, a 23-year-old Irish teacher pointed "to a lot of sensationalism in the media during the crisis, particularly because of CNN's sensational reporting". The American male teacher mentioned the "ridiculous speculation about Fukushima" by their home media.

The 27-year-old English university student expressed skepticism at the media, arguing the media don't simply inform, but operates to actively "shape a narrative and manage public response". Other Western respondents spoke of an innate skepticism towards the media. One Australian respondent, a 30-year-old university student, said

My mild level of disdain for the mass media remains constant.

Another Australian, a 62-year-old male engineer, said

On the basis of being at some distance from the incident I must say my perception is that the mass media were too close to the Government and the power company. It has reinforced my inherent skepticism.

4.8 Civil disobedience

Respondents were also asked their views on civil disobedience to compare Japanese and Western dispositions to social harmony versus democratic expression. Japanese respondents were more likely to oppose the act of protesting than Western respondents. The overwhelming majority of Western respondents were in favor of protesting, with 23 out of 31 (74.19 per cent) supporting the action of peaceful protesting. There was a common theme of protesting being a form of democratic expression amongst Western respondents. For example, Western respondents variously noted protesting as being "a right that people living in a democratic society should exercise", "one essence of freedom of speech", and "one of our rights for living in the US". Others highlighted its importance for being "the only way that people have to assertively disagree with the government". Other Western respondents said that although "it gives people a chance to voice their opinion", it needs "to be done in a peaceful but purposeful way".

Two of four Western respondents who expressed disapproval of protests cited its ineffectiveness, rather than it being detrimental to society, as a reason for their disapproval. As one said, "protesting in [sic] necessary although it is sometimes not executed in an efficient manner". Another Western respondent observed that there are alternative forms of expressing civil disobedience, noting that "petitions might be a better idea".

By contrast, only 11 out of 31 (35.48 per cent) Japanese respondents were in favor of protests. Over half of those respondents (6 out of 11 or 54.55 per cent) said the disaster had changed their view of protesting, insofar as they were more positively disposed to it. For example, some Japanese respondents said that prior to the 3.11 disaster, they had a negative perception of protests as "violent" or "extreme". In the wake of the nuclear disaster and an emergence of anti-nuclear protests, however, they reported that they now viewed protesting as "a good way to quietly strongly persist in conveying a message". The following is a sample of these kinds of responses:

> Until now I saw protests as something that happens overseas and has a violent image, and I was a little against it. (20-year old female university student)

> Before I thought it was a bit extreme. But since the nuclear accident I've come to see it as a way of expressing one's opinions. (31-year-old Japanese housewife)

> Before I didn't have an interest, but recently for me I think I can relate to it more personally. (31-year-old Japanese businesswoman)

There were an equal number of Japanese respondents in favor of (11 out of 31 or 35.48 per cent) and against (11 out of 31 or 35.48 per cent) protesting. Only a small number of Japanese respondents against protesting cited ineffectiveness for their opposition. Importantly, 8 out of those 11 (72.73 per cent) voiced strong discontent with the act of protesting highlighting that protestors mostly favor the individual rather than society. Japanese respondents noted that individuals were "getting paid to protest", were "acting on emotion", "just trying to find themselves", and that protests were just a tool for "expressing personal arguments". One Japanese respondent, a 23-year-old businessman, implied that protestors were often coerced by anti-social groups and were not attempting to effect positive change:

> I don't think protesting is the right way to express your opinions. Because I think that perhaps if someone was to go to a protest and he or she was the only one he would not go through with it. This could be a bias[ed] opinion but I felt that a lot of protests weren't focused on "expressing an opinion", or "trying to change something".

Conversely, only 2 out of 31 (6.45 per cent) Western respondents were critical of the act of protesting, saying that protests are "unsightly" and "further the divide and issues between the parties involved".

4.9 Controlling information

Given the reluctance to endorse protests on grounds that it disrupted social harmony, it is not surprising that a much higher proportion of Japanese respondents were willing to grant the media and authorities the power to control information. Almost half of the Japanese respondents (14 out of 32 or 43.75 per cent) agreed to the control of information during the Fukushima disaster. Respondents cited reasons of avoiding "chaos", and "panic". Others recognized that the control of information "should" be undertaken and said it resulted in "the foreign media prais[ing] us for our calm

63

actions". For example, one Japanese respondent, a 30-year-old male part-time worker, said:

> If the government determines that it will avoid confusion, then there should be regulation to a point.

Only four Japanese respondents (12.50 per cent) cited extreme circumstances as a reasonable condition under which they agreed the media or authorities should be permitted to control information. Seven respondents (21.88 per cent) reported no reluctance allowing the media or authorities to control information. By contrast, more than two thirds of Western respondents (total 31) were against controlling information under any circumstances by the media or authorities. For many Western respondents, the public's right to know is paramount. Western respondents also emphasized the point that "withholding information is harmful and may possibly lead to more problems during the crisis", and that "the media should report everything, especially during a crisis", "regardless of if it causes panic, because we all have the right to know the whole story". Western respondents also expressed concern over the "huge power" the media may wield "over public opinion that they should not have" if they control information. The Australian finance worker said:

> If the media had the power to determine what was reportable and what should be withheld from the public, they would be granted a huge power over public opinion that they should not have. They do however have a responsibility to report that information in such a way that it does no blow the situation and its impact on the wider society out of control and cause hysteria and unnecessary fear to maintain viewers and ratings.

Some Western respondents pointed out the role of the media to report on all information without causing panic, by "managing how the information is conveyed rather than actually withholding information". Others stressed the importance of the responsibility of the individual to make necessary judgments about news reports. For example, one Australian respondent, a 30-year-old male builder, said,

> Report everything, let people decide what to believe.

Similarly, the Australian finance worker said,

The media has a responsibility to report all the facts to the public and not withhold information so that the public can then decide what to do with that information.

The four Western respondents who said the media should control information in extreme circumstances cited the rule of law and protecting citizens when such control may be permissible. Western respondents gave examples of "hostage cris[es], police investigations, [and] military missions" as extreme circumstances when the media should control information. Others stressed that the withholding of information should only be undertaken to "reduce panic and prevent likely injury/damage, then I think it is ok in very limited circumstances". Another Western respondent said:

If it is to protect us, that is one thing, but if it is to be deceptive, that is another matter. So, if we are talking info during a crisis, we don't want everyone to panic, and yet we don't want them hurt either.

4.10 The media's role as watchdog

A much larger proportion of Western respondents compared with Japanese respondents said that the media should have some role as a watchdog. When asked "Do you see media as an adversary or ally of the government? What should it be?" an overwhelming majority of Westerners, 19 out of 25 (76 per cent), said that the media should have at least some role as a watchdog. The common themes in Western responses were that the media should be critical of government, "independent of government", "investigative", and "responsible". For example, one English respondent, the 23-year-old male student, said that the media should be a "constructive critic of the government, which provides a balanced assessment/analysis of politics without the need to make money infringing on the need to report fairly". This was particularly important amongst Western respondents because "power can corrupt", and "the role of the media should be critical evaluation and objective analysis of the facts". Similarly, one American respondent, a 30-year-old business manager, said the media

should not be subservient to the government and should expose inefficiencies and injustices perpetrated by the government to ensure the public can make

objective decisions when voting and hold their politicians accountable to the people.

Only two Western respondents (8 per cent) said that they thought the media should act as an ally of the government.

By contrast, only 6 out of 19 (31.58 per cent) Japanese respondents said the media should play the role of watchdog. The majority of Japanese respondents, 8 out of 19 or 42.11 per cent, said they believed the media should be neither watchdog nor ally of the government. This was a common theme amongst Japanese respondents that the media should take a "neutral stance". For example, Japanese respondents answered that "neutrality is the best", and that "ideally it should be in between the people and the government". Another Japanese respondent, the 20-year-old law student, said

I think the media should be fair and impartial, they should not be an ally or adversary.

Another Japanese respondent, a 30-year-old male real estate worker, said:

I think the Japanese media has a fundamentally neutral stance.

Similarly, the Japanese female writer said:

I don't think they should be an adversary or an ally, I think a neutral stance is good.

Three out of 19 (15.79 per cent) Japanese respondents said that the media should act as both ally and watchdog, while 2 out of 19 (10.53 per cent) said the media should act as an ally of the government.

4.11 New media more effective than mass media?

Western respondents regarded new media as more effective compared to Japanese respondents. Twenty-one out of 28 (75 per cent) Westerners said new media was just as effective (or more effective) than the mass media. Fewer than half — 13 out of 29 (44.83 per cent) — Japanese respondents believed the same.

A key theme amongst Western respondents was new media being effective through its timeliness and ability to deliver information quickly. For example, Western

respondents said new media is "quicker and more accessible", and provides "timely reporting" that "reaches more viewers/readers than traditional mass media outlets". Conversely, Western respondents also said "information reported by the press club system can take a lot more time". Western respondents also stressed the need to be vigilant when collecting information from new media, just as one would when viewing mass media news. For example, one American respondent, a 23-year-old female teacher said:

> The problems inherent in the press club system are also applicable to new media, as well as new problems.

Similarly, a 67-year-old American female teacher said:

> They both have their strengths and audiences... either may be biased and must be CAREFULLY evaluated by the reader.

Japanese respondents who were unconvinced of the effectiveness of new media said that it lacked reliability and enabled reporting of "false information that invited confusion" and "rumours". For example, the 38-year-old self-employed female said:

> There is doubt about the credibility of the new media so I don't know. I don't think that new media itself is such a fantastic thing.

Other Japanese respondents answered, "New media was awash with false information", but there were both positive and negative aspects. For example, the 20-year-old law student said:

> Nikoniko video conversations have a positive effect. But Twitter was full of rumour.

4.12 Trust in new media

A greater proportion of Western respondents compared to Japanese respondents trusted new media (SNS, blogs, online videos, and the like). Seven out of 11 (63.64 per cent) Westerners used and trusted information (including via cross-checking) from new media about the Fukushima nuclear disaster. Western respondents trusted online sources such as Facebook and web comics (published by scientists) but often verified information "against other sources", and verified information by reading

online newspapers. Others emphasized the importance of new media for "obtaining a different perspective from the official one, or the one being portrayed by the mass media".

By contrast, just 12 out of 32 (37.5 per cent) Japanese respondents said that they used and trusted information (including by cross-checking) from new media. Similarly to Western responses, the Japanese respondents mentioned the need to be diligent in verifying information on new media platforms, comparing the "same content from different people and different articles". One Japanese respondent, a 38-year-old businesswoman, for example pointed out that she was cautious "of retweets and shared information" on the grounds that the identity of the "speaker is extremely important".

There was also some evidence of Japanese respondents using new media to obtain information from foreign contacts and media sources. Japanese respondents answered that they obtained valuable information from "overseas friends" via social networking services. For example, one Japanese respondent, a 35-year-old female businesswoman, reported getting information from a "German friend" on Facebook that appeared to be "trustworthy information".

4.13 Blogs

A greater proportion of Western respondents, 16 out of 31 (51.61 per cent), believed bloggers made a positive contribution to society compared to Japanese respondents, with only 9 out of 32 (28.13 per cent) seeing bloggers as valued contributors to the public sphere. Western respondents argued that blogs are "a free platform for the public to voice their opinion publicly", and that "bloggers make a positive contribution to society". According to Western respondents, blogs provide a means for individuals to be heard and a "new avenue for ordinary people to share their opinions… It is empowering." They also said that blogs facilitate a variety of opinions, and enhance free speech providing "different views and angles in order to promote change and give society a louder voice". One Australian respondent, a 27-year-old male sports trader, stressed that blogs provide a range of perspectives in the public sphere, which is imperative in a democracy:

> I think bloggers have a positive contribution on society as it enables more views to be published, which may have never been heard before. This is an important tenet of democracy in my opinion.

Japanese respondents said that the value of blogs depend on the individual blogger. They also noted that blogs can have both good and bad effects saying that untrustworthy information can be "mixed in with beneficial informative blogs". For example, the 30-year-old Japanese part-time worker said:

> It depends on the content. Both effects. To the extent the person is known it will have that effect.

Similarly, the 31-year-old Japanese businesswoman said:

> People are free to manage themselves their own blog with their own opinions. In the end it's an opinion so I think it can have good and bad effect.

Similarly to Western respondents, some Japanese respondents valued the variety of opinions expressed on blogs and the importance of freedom speech, emphasizing that "people can gain a wider perspective from reading various bloggers' opinions", and that blogs have a positive effect from "the perspective of reporting freedom and freedom of speech".

4.14 Online discussions

Consistent with the responses to the questions about new media and blogs, a greater number of Western respondents than Japanese respondents reported having participated in online discussions. Three out of 10 or 30 per cent of Western respondents said they had participated in online discussions about the Fukushima nuclear crisis. The majority of Western respondents said that online discussions were helpful to society for connecting people, providing more accurate on-the-ground information, and offering a range of "different perspectives". For example, the Irish respondent said:

> I think that it is a useful activity as it makes the public aware of the aftermath and the fallout of the Fukushima Dai-ichi Plant. It also highlights the problems faced by thousands of Japanese who are still in temporary housing.

Western respondents also commented that online discussions facilitates solidarity by allowing "people in similar situations to connect and discuss things" and "calms people" in times of crisis. For example, one American respondent, a 21-year-old female university student, said, "I do believe it can be helpful. Knowing you are not alone really calms people and it lets you think about things from different perspectives".

No Japanese respondents (total 31) participated in online discussions about the Fukushima nuclear crisis. However a common theme amongst Japanese responses was that online discussions are helpful to society by offering a variety of opinions, and facilitating public debate and free speech. Japanese respondents also said that online discussions were beneficial for offering a "variety of opinions" that can help inform people, and that "discussion is evidence of freedom".

The results of the questionnaire provided comparative data of Japanese and Western perceptions of media reporting in general and during the 3.11 disaster. Japanese and Western respondents both illustrated high levels of satisfaction of their domestic media systems. The responses also showed that the Japanese respondents tend to favour journalism that adheres to collectivist norms around news reporting. Western respondents were more likely to use and trust new media, however, a significant percentage of Japanese respondents expressed similar views of the benefits of new media. The following chapter will examine the data and provide analyses of Japanese support of the current Japanese press club media system in light of Western criticisms and explore possible correlations between Japanese and Western perceptions and the development of new media in Japan.

CHAPTER 5 – DISCUSSION

5.1 Perceptions of journalism values

5.1.1 Introduction

The journalistic norms of Japan's large news organizations resemble those in the
West (see figure 2). The Japan Newspaper Publishers & Editors Association's (NSK)
principles of journalism is similar to the principles of journalism adhered to in most
Western media organizations. The NSK canon of journalism includes the principles of
freedom and responsibility, accuracy and fairness, independence and tolerance,
respect for human rights, and decency and moderation (The Japan newspaper
publishers & editors association 2013, The canon of journalism). The NSK canon of
journalism states:

> The public's *right to know* is a universal principle that sustains a democratic
> society. That right cannot be ensured without the existence of media, operating
> with the guarantee of *freedom of speech* and expression, while being totally
> committed to a *high moral standard* and fully *independent*. Member
> newspapers resolve to retain their role as the fittest standard-bearers in this
> regard… All newspapermen and women engaged in editing, production,
> advertising and circulation should uphold *freedom of speech* and expression.
> They should also conduct themselves with *honor* and *decency* in such a way as
> to ensure this responsibility is duly fullfilled, and to strengthen readers'
> confidence in newspapers [italics added] (The Japan newspaper publishers &
> editors association 2013, The canon of journalism).

Similarly, TV Tokyo's principles of reporting include, "To serve the public's right-to-
know", "To guarantee objectivity", "Respect for human rights", and "To be conscious
of one's social influence" (TV Tokyo 2013).

The American Society of Newspaper Editors' principles of journalism similarly
include: responsibility, freedom of the press, independence, truth and accuracy,
impartiality, and fair play (American Society of News Editors 2013). Black, Steele
and Barney (1995) found that "truth-telling and independence, along with minimizing
harm, as the triumvirate of professional values in American Journalism as a guiding

force and practical application of the code of ethics of the Society of Professional Journalists". The Australian Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance (2013), similarly, highlights values of responsibility, freedom of expression, independence, truth and honesty, and fairness and respect for others as central to journalism. According to the Code:

> Respect for *truth* and the public's *right to information* are fundamental principles of journalism. Journalists describe society to itself. They convey information, ideas and opinions, a privileged role. They search, disclose, record, question, entertain, suggest and remember. They inform citizens and animate democracy. They give a practical form to *freedom of expression*. Many journalists work in private enterprise, but all have these *public responsibilities*. They scrutinize power, but also exercise it, and should be accountable. Accountability engenders trust. Without trust, journalists do not fulfill their public responsibilities. Alliance members engaged in journalism commit themselves to: *Honesty*, *Fairness*, *Independence*, *Respect for the rights of others* [italics added] (Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance 2013).

Cross-cultural Comparison of Principles of Journalism

American Society of Newspaper Editors	Japan Newspaper Publishers & Editors Association (NSK)
Responsibility	Responsibility
Freedom of the press	Freedom
Independence	Independence
Truth and accuracy	Accuracy
Fair play	Fairness, tolerance, respect for human rights, decency
Impartiality	Moderation

Figure 3: Comparison of Japanese and Western principles of journalism (American Society of News Editors 2013, The Japan newspaper publishers & editors association 2013, The canon of journalism)

On the whole, there is a large degree of overlap between the journalistic principles espoused by both Japanese and Western media organizations. The principle of "moderation", meaning to refrain from subjective, provocative, speculative reporting, and avoiding rumors, listed in the NSK's canon of journalism is one important difference between Japanese and Western media principles of journalism and will be the subject of further discussion below.

As noted in the previous chapter, both Japanese and Western respondents have broadly similar expectations about journalism. Moreover, these broadly reflect the principles of journalism espoused by both Japanese and Western media organizations. Both Japanese and Western respondents cited truth and accuracy as the one of the most important media principles in reporting on the Fukushima disaster. In response to the question, "What was the most important ethical principle for journalists reporting on the disaster?" Western respondents emphasized the importance of "openness and honesty", telling "the truth", and reporting "with factual information obtained by reliable sources". Western respondents also placed equal importance on the welfare of victims. One American respondent, a 60-year-old female assistant professor, observed, "if someone was not safe due to unsafe air, people need to be told so that it doesn't cause them damage". Similarly, Japanese respondents emphasized the importance of reporting "the truth accurately", and the "safety of people's lives", through reporting "information essential for human lives" and being "careful not to harm victims with actions of reporting".

The questionnaire asked respondents about their views on the role of the media in society. The views of both Japanese and Westerners was, again, quite similar. A majority of both Japanese and Western respondents perceived the media's role as an institution that ought to provide accurate information to the public. Other themes of providing information quickly, unbiased and objective reporting were evident in both Japanese and Western responses. For example, Western respondents said that the role of the media was to "provide the public with up to date, accurate information of the current issues at hand", "in an unbiased and honest fashion", and in an "impartial way". Similarly, Japanese respondents said that the role of the media was "to report quickly and correctly convey the truth", and "quickly report from a neutral stance".

One discrepancy between Japanese and Western responses was a greater focus on providing information that was "easy to understand" amongst Japanese respondents. This may represent a higher level of trust in the media by Japanese respondents to simplify or filter information for the general public. This position highlights potential correlations between Japanese public opinion of media systems and Japanese socio-cultural dispositions to collectivist concepts such as respect for hierarchical structures and conformity.

5.1.2 Interpretations of journalism principles and socio-cultural factors

Despite the similarities in the view of the media's role and the fundamental principles that underlie journalism, the Western and Japanese systems of news are quite different in the way they institutionalise these practices. As noted, the Japanese system is more exclusive and relies on official sources to a much greater extent than Western journalists. It is also less independent and there is less investigative reporting in the Japanese press club system. This suggests that these principles are interpreted in quite different ways. A number of commentators have argued that these differences in interpretation derive from differences in socio-cultural context.

As Brislin (1997) notes, interpretations of journalistic principles are influenced by socio-cultural values:

> A survey of journalistic practices in Asia that reflect two fundamental journalism principles of truth-telling and independence shows a wide range of interpretation of the role, status and relationship of the journalist with government, and a structure of journalism, firmly rooted in cultural values. The differences between those roles, relationships and structures and their counterparts in Western, particularly American, styles of journalism are important to note when analyzing press reports from Asian countries that will form the base of press reports to American news consumers. In addition to historic, cultural, political and policy contexts necessary to adequately interpret and report an event from these Asian countries, a knowledge of their journalistic context is necessary in 'reporting on what the local press is reporting on' (Brislin 1997).

Brislin (1997) points out that the principles of truth and independence are different in

74

Japanese society. It "is in the interpretation and application of truth-telling and independence where a richer context can be found for ferreting out meaning to international news reports". Brislin (1997) argues that Japanese adhere to what might be called a "coherence account of truth". On this account, the more cohesive the range of facts, the more likely that something is to be judged as truth: "Japanese newspapers, in fact, are noted for their sameness… Truth as value is effectively measured by the limitation, rather than abundance, of facts."

Brislin notes how important media principles such as truth and independence reflect socio-cultural factors and effect the functioning of the Japanese press club system:

> The kisha kurabu structure emphasizes several underlying fundamental values of Japanese society: subjugation of the individual to the group; and presentation styles (including news and information) that promote harmony, rather than confrontation, criticism or dissent (Brislin 1997).

Winfield et al. (2000, p. 329), for example, argue that the Japanese media is influenced by a strong focus on the collective that originates from the Confucian and Buddhist traditions, whereas Western press theory is based on "the idea of liberty, the importance of the individual vis-à-vis the group". The tradition of collectivism also comes from Buddhism, having core principles of peace, conformity, gentleness and compassion (Winfield, Mizuno & Beaudoin 2000, p. 331). Benedict (as cited in Winfield, Mizuno & Beaudoin 2000, p. 331) argues that Japanese hierarchy-based collectivism shapes their relation with the nation, society, family members and other individuals. Winfield et al. (2000, p. 343) argue that these philosophical and socio-cultural threads can be seen in the "press system's employment practices, news gathering methods, the ways the press monitors the government and the under-representation of women". Winfield et al. note that the Japanese media operates in line with collectivist notions such as conformity and social harmony, reducing investigative reporting:

> In Japan, a watchdog or an investigative press is inconsistent with a society that prizes harmony… T.R. Reid, a former Tokyo correspondent of the *Washington Post*, gives a positive example of harmony-minded journalism. Comparing the American and Japanese media coverage of the 1995 earthquake in Kobe, Reid found that the American media emphasized

"disaster and confrontation and complaint," while the Japanese coverage looked for "harmony" and "people getting along." He cites an ABC-TV reporter who covered Kobe as observing, "[w]hereas the American camera got right in on the tears, or right in on the blood, the Japanese camera always tried to show the bigger picture." The Japanese news story emphasized the group effort to assist the recovery, not individual suffering (Winfield, Mizuno & Beaudoin 2000, p. 345–6)."

As such, the focus on social harmony in Japanese society doesn't necessarily violate the principle of truth telling. It is still perfectly true, but tells the collective's story, rather than the individual story.

Krauss and Lambert (2002, p. 73–4) also argue that employment patterns and workforce culture also shape the functioning of media organizations, the role of the Japanese journalist, and the style of Japanese reporting:

> The lack of labor mobility among journalists and lifetime employment at the same company make Japanese reporters into organization men with incentives to do what is best for the newspaper and to respect the rules of the game with officials. That is to say, reporters have fewer professional incentives to advance their individual careers by achieving scoops or indulging in interpretive and independent reporting. The result is news stories about public affairs that usually convey official sources, activities, and views in a neutral and non-interpretive style.

Other media scholars argue that Western scholarship is guilty of neglecting socio-cultural factors all together in their analysis of the Japanese press club media system. Winfield et al. (2000, p. 324), as reported in the literature review, argue that mass media theories are often examined from a Western perspective and fail to acknowledge peculiarities in other press systems such as those in Asia, and "slight those societies, their political foundations and beliefs, as well as their press practices" (Winfield, Mizuno & Beaudoin 2000, p. 347).

Conversely, even amongst media scholars who do recognize the influence of socio-cultural factors on the Japanese press club system, some maintain that the resulting journalism product is detrimental to the ideals of a democratic free press. Particular

attention is given to the lack of independence as compared with the West, and a lack of investigative journalism. For example, despite recognizing the effects of socio-cultural factors on the Japanese media Brislin (1997) argues that

> While in Western journalistic practice 'exclusives' would result in a reward for the reporter and a point of pride for the newspaper, in Japanese practice it would produce banishment of the reporter and a serious 'loss of face' for the newspaper to be reporting something different than the 'competition'… While Western styles of journalism would see truth emerging from full-disclosure reporting from highly competitive, independent journalists and news agencies trying to 'outfact' each other and be first with exclusive stories, the *kisha kurabu* system effectively strips competitiveness from journalistic practice, reducing both independence of the journalists and the level of truthful disclosure in their reports.

The results of the present study indicate that the way in which journalistic principles are interpreted is a crucial element in the shaping of media systems. The present study revealed evidence that discrepancies in the Japanese media system derive from the different interpretations of journalism principles given Japanese and Western media organizations and public perceptions revealed largely identical journalism values — interpretations that some media researchers (Winfield, Mizuno & Beaudoin 2000, Krauss & Lambert 2002) agree are based on socio-cultural values. Debate exists, however, even amongst scholars that recognize the influence of socio-cultural factors on the Japanese press club system, about the merit of these factors on the functioning of the Japanese press. The resulting Japanese press club system traits such as extreme exclusivity, a heavy reliance on official sources, and a 'lack' of investigative journalism is often argued to be detrimental to a democratic free press.

But is the Japanese press club media system supported by the Japanese public? This is a crucial question, since journalism never exists in a social or cultural vacuum. It is always embedded within social and cultural context, and is, to a significant degree, moderated by that context. As such, attempts to simply apply one set of journalistic and media norms from one context to another will, almost inevitably, lead to criticism of the context that is unfamiliar. What is needed, then, is a more nuanced account that takes in to account an understanding of the context and how this shapes the practices

of journalism. The following section cross-examines Japanese and Western questionnaire responses to determine levels of satisfaction in their respective media systems.

5.2 Comparative analyses of satisfaction in media systems

5.2.1 General satisfaction levels

This study specifically tested media consumer satisfaction in terms of attaining information needed during the 2011 Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant disaster, perceptions of the benefits or disadvantages of a press club form of media system, and perceptions of the effectiveness of a press club form of media system.

The overwhelming majority of Japanese and the majority of Western respondents were satisfied with their own media's competence in providing the information they required about the crisis. Twenty-seven out of 31 (87.10 per cent) Japanese respondents said they could obtain the information they needed about the Fukushima crisis (10 out of 31 or 32.26 per cent, saying they got *mostly* the information they needed, or got the information *with some reservations*) — despite the gravity and controversy surrounding the event. For example, one Japanese respondent, a 21-year-old male university student, said:

> Not only concerning the nuclear accident, information I got from the mass media, there are necessary requirements for understanding the events, and I think those requirements were sufficient.

Similarly, another Japanese respondent, a 20-year old female university student, said:

> Yes I think so. A short while after the disaster the TV and newspapers starting reporting the negative effects of the radiation [sic].

These results are contrary to some literature about the initial reactions of the Japanese public to the media covering the Fukushima nuclear crisis. For example, Kobayashi (2013) argues that the Japanese public's trust in the media decreased following the 3.11 disaster due to a lack of independent investigative reporting and the regurgitation of official press releases:

> When the government and TEPCO gave only partial facts or no facts at all, the resulting reports became inaccurate or simply wrong. The credibility of the press — as well as the authorities — fell sharply.

Kobayashi (2013) provides evidence, according to the Central Research Services, that the Japanese public's level of satisfaction of newspaper reporting on the nuclear disaster was low. However, the overall level of trustworthiness in newspapers remained unchanged from the previous year.

The cross-cultural comparative analysis suggests that if these criticisms of their own media were widespread initially, they have since dissipated. This suggests that criticisms of the press at the time of the crisis may have become more muted and that the press' behavior during the crisis did not undermine faith in the press to a significant degree. This is supported by Kobayashi's research that although the Japanese public were initially unsatisfied with newspaper reporting on the nuclear disaster, their trust in newspapers remained unchanged.

Eight out of 11 (72.73 per cent) Western respondents (who were living in Japan at the time of the Fukushima nuclear disaster) said they could obtain the information they needed. All of these respondents received all, if not most, of their information from Western media sources. Western respondents generally answered that the Western media was competent during the Fukushima nuclear disaster but noted that the Japanese media was guilty of controlling information. For example, one English respondent, 27-year-old male university student, said:

> It was easier using overseas sources, the domestic [Japanese] media were primarily trying to 'manage' the public reaction.

Western criticisms of the Japanese press club system will be discussed further below.

Media analysts identified a general pattern of conservative reporting in Japanese reporting of the Fukushima nuclear disaster, while Western coverage was identified as more provocative and sensationalist. As noted in Chapter Two, Kinoshita et al. (2012, p. 65) argue that although Japanese newspapers themselves had different evaluations of the government and TEPCO, foreign newspapers went further and inquired about the collusion between the government and TEPCO. Japanese newspaper editorials rarely if at all touched on these points (Kinoshita et al. 2012, p. 65). By contrast, the

Japanese media depended on government and TEPCO reports, and carried out no self investigation or investigation of inconstancies (Kinoshita et al. 2012, p. 66).

US-born *Japan Times* reporter Eric Johnston (2011) argues that the foreign media was more skeptical about the government in the aftermath of the Fukushima disaster and took the view that it was better to warn people of possible dangers than not give any information at all. Conversely, the Japanese media made concerted efforts to avoid causing panic (Johnston 2011, p. 34).

> The Fukushima reactor crisis also showed that, from the beginning, a lot of influential foreign media were more skeptical about claims regarding the safety of nuclear power than the Japanese media… But much foreign media skepticism was there from the beginning of the crisis. It was the result less of the personal views on the part of the foreign reporters or editors (though such views obviously shaped their coverage), or even their experience in covering Fukushima. In many cases, it was the result of the media culture from which they emerged (Johnston 2011, p. 80).

Despite, or perhaps because of, these significant differences in Japanese and Western reporting styles during the Fukushima nuclear disaster, the cross-cultural comparative study revealed that Japanese and Western respondents illustrated high levels of satisfaction with their respective domestic media systems. These findings question the validity of Western criticisms of the Japanese press club media system being 'anti-democratic', as the results show that the system broadly reflects Japanese people's wishes and values. As such, the charge that the Japanese press club media system is undemocratic may say more about differing emphases about what a democratic press looks like. For Western media commentators, their view conforms more to the watchdog, whereas the Japanese view is one more akin to an information service that avoids sensationalism in favour of sober reporting. While this may not fit with Western models of *liberal* democracy, to the extent it reflects people's wishes it is not anti-democratic.

5.2.2 Press club system advantageous or disadvantageous?

This study also explored Japanese and Western perceptions of a press club style media system to determine levels of satisfaction in their respective domestic media

systems. The high levels of general satisfaction by Japanese respondents in their domestic media system are reinforced by the widespread support that the Japanese press club system has among Japanese people. Only a small number of Japanese surveyed in this study expressly disapprove of the press club media system. Nevertheless, there is a section of the public that is wary of the practices of the press clubs. For example, in response to the question, "Do you think the press club type system (where officials hold press conferences for selected journalists) is beneficial or disadvantageous to society?" Japanese respondents who were critical of the press club system highlighted its exclusivity and it being "a barrier to impartial reporting". However, Japanese respondents also said the press club system is beneficial (4 out of 31 or 12.90 per cent) as, in the words of a 30-year-old businesswoman, it "has the function of protecting the citizen's right to know".

Western scholars critical of the Japanese press club system would argue that the opposite is true: that the Japanese press club system facilitates censorship of information through an exclusive club mentality and a lack of independent, investigative journalism. Some Japanese respondents acknowledged that the press club system may generate a "bias position" but said there "is no way to avoid" this illustrating a level of acceptance or, alternatively, apathy. Certainly there was little to suggest distrust or a willingness to change the system.

Conversely, the majority of Western respondents also said the press club system ("where officials hold press club conferences for selected journalists") in their home country is beneficial. However, almost all of these respondents added conditions for it to operate efficiently. For example, Western respondents answered that there should be a "balanced variety" of journalists in press clubs, and they should come from "varied backgrounds", have "varied biases", and that press clubs "must be responsible with the reporters and journalists they invite". Other Western respondents emphasized the need for journalists to "check" information and that it "should be rounded out with more information from investigative journalism". Although there was a significant number of skeptical responses towards the press club system, and despite a strong trend of skepticism throughout Western answers towards the media, a majority of Westerners were in support of a press club system — although they qualified this by mentioning certain conditions are met. This suggests that Westerners are satisfied that

appropriate checks and balances are in place in their home media systems to ensure quality journalism is being maintained.

Western responses, however, overlook corresponding "deficiencies", such as a lack of diversity in press clubs, in Western media systems. For example, knowledge of the homogeneity of the executive management of the National Press Club of Australia might disturb Western respondents. The executive management consists of ten men and only three women, and all members are Caucasian (National Press Club of Australia 2014) — certainly not an accurate representation of the Australian populace. As such, the evidence suggests the Western public is quite comfortable with their press club without actually knowing much about it.

Contrastingly, Japanese respondents who weren't against the press club system, which was a large majority (25 out of 31 or 80.65 per cent), overwhelmingly accepted the current state of the media without mentioning the need for certain conditions of operation. This may suggest a tendency towards conformity in Japanese responses to be more willing to instinctively accept the governing system. Only two respondents hinted at imposing conditions or rules that the media or journalists should abide by. For example in response to the question "Do you think the press club type system is beneficial or disadvantageous to society? Please explain." Japanese respondents answered:

> I don't think it's a problem if journalists base their questions on the information they receive at press conferences.

> Own research and announcements are important.

This tendency to accept the existing press club media system is best exemplified by one Japanese respondent, a 39-year-old businesswoman:

> The good things are that it is fast to collect information but this has no relation to the audience reading. It's just that if you're not in the club you can't even get a little information — it can't be helped.

And another, a 33-year-old Japanese salesman, said:

> Difficult question. In terms of speed I think this it has a bad effect, and also you can't say it has a positive effect on fair/impartial points of view but I think

at the moment this is the only way we have. On the contrary I'd like to ask your opinion.

Significantly, the majority of Japanese respondents answered, "I don't know" or believed the press club system was a neutral force. Twelve out of 31 (38.71 per cent) answered that the press club system is neither advantageous nor disadvantageous, or both. Japanese respondents frequently answered that the press club system is neither "good or bad", citing that "press conferences are defined as exhibiting proper sincerity but at times they can also dig holes (make trouble)", and that "even the information that is exclusive to journalists in the clubs sometimes has little influence".

In response to the question, "Do you think the press club type system (where officials hold press conferences for selected journalists) is beneficial or disadvantageous to society?" all Western respondents (30 out of 30, 100 per cent) gave an opinion. Even the two respondents who admitted ignorance of the system gave an opinion. On the other hand, 9 out of 31 (29.03 per cent) Japanese respondents said they lacked knowledge on the subject to comment. A surprising number given the majority of respondents came from university educated backgrounds and might be expected to have some knowledge or opinion of media operations. These results illustrate either a certain level of ignorance or, more likely, given these respondents are highly educated, an unwillingness to express opinions. Either way, the responses indicate a degree of apathy regarding the general functioning of the media. The questionnaire results suggest a general theme of the Japanese public unwilling to challenge the system. Even though some respondents sensed some disadvantages in the system they were reluctant to be critical and accepted the system as "the only way we have".

Overall, Japanese respondents expressed little opposition or dissatisfaction towards the value of the press club system indicating a high level of Japanese public satisfaction in the Japanese press club system. Nevertheless, a portion of the sample expressed some disapproval, illustrating that some skepticism does exist. Western respondents were also approving of a press club form of media system. However, they included certain qualifications that journalists should operate under to ensure proper functioning of the media, highlighting that Japanese respondents were comparatively more willing to conform to the governing media system. Perhaps just as significantly, the majority of Japanese respondents admitted ignorance about the value of the press

club system, suggesting a lack of knowledge of the function of press clubs or a lack of interest.

The low levels of Japanese dissatisfaction with the press club system indicate Western criticisms of the Japanese press club media system are questionable as it largely reflects the desires of the public. The admission of ignorance about the press club system among many Japanese respondents, however, may lend support to Western criticisms, as it may illustrate that Japanese support for the domestic press club system is a product of a lack of information, rather than a considered view of the press club system. In that regard, it may be detrimental to a democratic society. For example, Fackler (2012, p. 52) argues, as noted in Chapter Two, that the shortcomings of the Japanese press club system are perpetuated by "probably only a small amount of Japanese accurately know[ing] about [the system]". Fackler argues that because Japan did not experience a revolution — democracy was imposed post World War II — the Japanese are politically passive and inherently trust the authorities. He argues this apathy and underlying belief system serves in the maintenance of the press club system to the detriment of society.

Nevertheless, taking socio-cultural factors, such as a culture that is strong on collectivism in to account, the level of ignorance or unwillingness to express opinions may simply be a consequence of a Japanese society that "prizes harmony" and therefore doesn't devalue the unique makeup and 'extreme' traits of the Japanese press club system. As Winfield et al. (2000, p. 347) argue, "Caution is advised when using western press standards in evaluating Asian journalism. Scholars need to include [Japan (and China)], yet on their own terms". The Japanese have a right to choose not to participate in public matters or political processes and this choice itself is an expression of democracy. Therefore the claim that it is undemocratic or damaging to democracy is at the very least complicated by these socio-cultural factors. Critics of the Japanese Press Club system need to, at the very least, examine how the press functions within a more complex cultural setting, rather than simply imposing a single model of democracy onto Japan.

5.2.3 Press club system effectiveness

The cross-cultural study also explored levels of satisfaction with the press club system through perceptions of its effectiveness. In regards to the Fukushima crisis, more

Japanese respondents thought the Japanese press club media system was ineffective (10 out of 32 or 31.25 per cent) than effective (4 out of 32 or 12.50 per cent). However, the majority — more than two thirds — did not criticize the effectiveness of the press club system. Seventeen out of 32 or 53.13 per cent answered, "I don't know", or prefaced their comment with "I don't know". One Japanese respondent, a 35-year-old businesswoman, was indifferent to the system saying, "I didn't take notice of the press club system". Significantly more Japanese respondents than Western respondents said they thought their domestic press club system was ineffective during the Fukushima nuclear crisis rather than a press club form of media system being disadvantageous (10 out of 32 or 31.25 per cent of Japanese respondents said the press club system was ineffective versus 6 out of 31 or 19.35 per cent who said a press club system in general is disadvantageous).

While some of the Japanese were critical of the effectiveness of the press club system in relation to its performance during the Fukushima crisis, this does not seem to have translated into a criticism of a press club system overall, or its value. This suggests that a significant number of the Japanese public were disgruntled with the Japanese press club system during the crisis, but did not think that this revealed systemic flaws and believed the press club system should be improved rather than abolished. Moreover, a large number of Japanese respondents said that the press club system was neither beneficial nor disadvantageous. In this sample at least, there is no desire to abolish the press club system and that it is perceived as a neutral force.

More revealing perhaps is the large majority of Japanese respondents who admitted ignorance of the press club system. This suggests a lack of understanding of how the media operates or how it ought to operate — or a lack of interest. A comparison of Japanese and Western responses reveals Western respondents are more willing to give opinions, compared to Japanese respondents who are much more willing to admit ignorance rather than offer an opinion. In response to the question, "Did you think the press club system style in Japan worked effectively during the Fukushima crisis?" all but one of the Western respondents gave an opinion (even though it was concerning a foreign media system), whereas more than half of the Japanese respondents (17 out of 32 or 53.13 per cent) responded with, "I don't know", or prefaced their answer with "I don't know". These results reinforce previous findings of a tendency amongst Japanese respondents to admit ignorance of the Japanese press club system or refrain

from offering an opinion. This suggests a Japanese tendency towards conformity, social harmony, and a reticence to give responses when not in full possession of the facts. Subsequently there are only modest levels of Japanese disapproval of the effectiveness of the Japanese press club system.

5.2.4 Western respondents critical of the Japanese press club system

Western respondents tended to see their domestic press club systems as superior, on the grounds that it operated with greater oversight, was more "democratic" insofar as it was more transparent (less exclusivity), and engaged in greater independent reporting and investigative journalism, compared with the Japanese press club media system. Western respondents commonly answered that the Japanese media is untrustworthy and is heavily influenced, if not controlled, by the government. For example, the 27-year-old English student said:

> I think [the Japanese press club system] made it easier for the government and authorities to spread an official line and maintain a narrative. We are only now seeing a backlash over the misreporting of the event.

Similarly, the Welsh respondent, a 32-year-old female teacher, said:

> Yes in a way [the Japanese press club system] minimized panic – however, as all the information was coming from the government it was difficult for me to have absolute trust in the information.

The ability of the press club system to control — or the perception of such control — was viewed by the 27-year-old English student as detrimental to the interests of the public:

> It was easier using overseas sources, the domestic [Japanese] media were primarily trying to 'manage' the public reaction.

The Canadian respondent, a 22-year-old female university student, went as far as accusing the media of concealing important information from the public:

> Many things were covered up and the government was able to come up with answers in advance that didn't give the public the truth about the crisis. In this instance I believe that this system was very ineffective to the public.

Moreover, Western respondents criticized the Japanese media's ability to disseminate information during the crisis. Western respondents blamed press club exclusivity, and information being "only available to Japan's most influential journalists", which "discouraged them from investigating the source of the information". Another respondent, a 39-year-old American female teacher, said that Japanese reporters are passive in the pursuit of information:

> Whereas in the US journalists continue to go after the answer they want, in Japan, more journalists tend to stop with the answer they get.

There was also evidence of Western respondents simply restating popular prejudices about the Japanese press' management of information. One Western respondent prefacing their opinion with "I imagine…" stating what they thought may be true rather than giving details about the actual performance of the Japanese press:

> I imagine that if I was just looking through Japanese media that information regarding the severity of the nuclear disaster and the safety of the food grown around Fukushima would be difficult to find.

Western respondents, however, were also critical of the sensationalism exhibited in their own media reporting on the Fukushima nuclear crisis. For example, one American respondent, a 23-year-old female teacher, replied:

> On the one hand, there was plenty of information that was not given to the people in Japan, like information about the radiation. People would have benefited from that information. It could've been given in such a fashion to avoid widespread panic. On the other hand, the media in my country [USA] painted the disaster in neon sensationalism and caused more of a panic at home than here.

However, this sensationalist reporting was often rationalized as a necessary flaw in the pursuit of a democratic media system. For example, one American respondent, a 24-year-old male teacher, is both critical of both the Japanese press club system's conservative reporting and Western sensationalism. But, the respondent added that this speculative, sensationalist reporting is indispensable to a democratic free press:

In Japan the response was so muted and held back that it was hard to have an accurate idea of what was going on. There was a clear reluctance to say anything to disturb the balance or to make anyone angry or suggest responsibility. There was a stranglehold on important information. In America, on the other hand, more mainstream news outlets were going crazy with all kinds of speculation based on the same lack of information. It was unfortunate to see such sensationalism prevail, but there were good news sources nonetheless looking at it a bit more objectively.

This study therefore revealed that some Westerners have some blind spots about the quality of their own domestic media as compared to the Japanese media system. Certainly, there is some doubt that Western respondents fully comprehend the intricacies, similarities and discrepancies of both systems. As O'Dwyer notes, there are some similarities of anti-democratic characteristics between Western and Japanese press club media systems, such as journalists' proximity to the government, and an over-reliance on official sources, that many Western critics fail to recognize:

The same mechanisms operating in the kisha club system that attract the vehement disapproval of Western writers can be found in both the Australian and British press galleries. The elements that are treated as unique to Japan by many analysts can be found in reviews of the Australian and British press galleries (O'Dwyer 2005, p. 9).

The responses in this study suggest that Western respondents are quick to identify 'anti-democratic' characteristics of the Japanese media system, while being blind to similar elements that are also present in Western media systems such as a lack of independence, and a dependence on official sources. Despite these similar elements, the research shows evidence of Western respondents approving of what is familiar to them. The evidence suggests that people tend to instinctively believe their media is superior rather than seriously entertaining possible alternatives. The proposition of alternative media systems are rejected and are viewed to be a threat to freedom of the press, which one "could never fully trust".

There are of course, however, key differences between the Japanese and Western press club systems as previously discussed — differences that Western respondents may be alluding to. For example, Western media experts such as Freeman (2000) and

Jameson (1997) argue the Japanese press club system is more exclusive in its membership and access to sources, has strict rules of reporting (including press agreements) that entrench uniformity, and has relatively less independent, investigative journalism acting from within the power elite rather than as a 'watchdog' (Krauss & Lambert 2002, p. 71–2). The findings suggested Western respondents formed their opinions based on hearsay (exemplified by one respondent beginning their comment with "I imagine…"). This suggests that criticisms may reveal more about prejudices towards the Western status quo, while overlooking similar 'flaws' in Western media systems.

The following section explores the extent of socio-cultural influences on the key differences between Japanese and Western reporting.

5.3 Public dispositions to media systems

5.3.1 Introduction

The difference in reporting styles between the Japanese and Western media was evident in coverage of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant disaster. As noted, in general, the Japanese press club media took a more conservative stance, while the Western media was more provocative and willing to challenge authorities. These differences in Japanese and Western reporting styles during the Fukushima nuclear disaster reinforced assumptions by some media scholars of the impact of socio-cultural factors in media systems.

For example, Winfield et al. (2000, p. 345–6), as reported in Chapter Two, argue that collectivist notions such as conformity and social deference have an influence in the composition of the Japanese media, and that renegade, individualist, investigative reporting is inconsistent with a "society that prizes harmony". Winfield et al. (2000, p. 325) compare this unfavourably with the Western press, which is based on "the idea of liberty, [and] the importance of the individual vis-à-vis the group". These socio-cultural factors were reflected in the conservative reporting of the Japanese media and the provocative, sensationalist reporting of the Western media during the Fukushima nuclear disaster. The questionnaire showed that Japanese respondents were more predisposed to collectivist notions relevant to media structures such as high levels of trust in authorities and the denunciation of civil disobedience.

5.3.2 Trust and dissidence

Trust in powerful institutions in society is an indicator of dispositions to collectivist concepts such as respect for hierarchical structures, conformity and social harmony. Higher levels of trust in the mass media may suggest support for media traits personifying these collectivist notions such as the Japanese press club media structure of extreme exclusivity (i.e. trust in the selected privileged few, and an absence of transparency). Membership of Japanese press clubs are limited to NSK members, which is dominated by seventeen major media organizations (Gamble and Watanabe 2004, p. 35). Freeman (2003, p. 273), as noted in Chapter Two, characterizes the Japanese media as having cartel-like ties to large corporations, government and established bodies within civil society, with access to official sources limited to major news outlets. Western media scholars regularly criticize the extreme regulation of membership and information within the Japanese press club system (Gamble and Watanabe 2004, Freeman 2003).

Consistent with these analyses, this study found that Western respondents were more skeptical about the reporting on the Fukushima nuclear disaster as compared to Japanese respondents. Although there were some negative, skeptical answers in Japanese responses, Western respondents were significantly more critical of the media during the nuclear crisis. In response to the question "Has your trust in the mass media (TV, radio, newspapers) altered after the Fukushima crisis?" only 3 out of 31 (9.68 per cent) Western answers were *not* negative of the media. This compares with 15 out of 32 (46.88 per cent) Japanese respondents who expressed no negativity or skepticism, despite the gravity of the disaster.

For example, the 27-year old English student replied:

> I think it highlighted the fact that the mass media isn't just there to inform, but also to shape a narrative and manage public response. I think it has emphasised the need to be skeptical.

Another, a 30-year-old Australian university student, said:

> No. My mild level of disdain for the mass media remains constant.

By contrast, Japanese respondents said that the disaster had done little to change their attitude about the media.

The fact that Westerners tended to be more skeptical about the media supports the view that Japanese conform to collectivist concepts of hierarchy, conformity, and social harmony. This may be evidence of what Johnson (as cited in Freeman 2000, p. 85) calls 'cartels of the mind'. Johnson regards cartelization as a common social construction throughout Japanese society, and extends this to what he claims is the cartelization of the mind. This is seen in the group orientation and exclusiveness of Japanese press clubs. This suggests a less skeptical Japanese public, as compared with Western media audiences, that is more willing to accept or support press club system traits that require faith and confidence in the intentions of media organisations and journalists.

This finding is supported by responses regarding civil disobedience. Views on civil disobedience are an indicator of people's tendency towards collectivism. Hook et al. (2009, p. 824) argue that "Collectivists are closely linked and emphasize their connectedness with other members of their group, and they make many decisions with group harmony as a goal". In other words, the emphasis on conformity and social harmony in collectivist societies discourages civil disobedience. This study revealed that Japanese respondents were more likely to be opposed to the act of protesting than Western respondents — consistent with a general opposition to civil disobedience. Western respondents were mostly in favor of protesting, with 23 out of 31 (74.19 per cent) supporting the action of peaceful protesting. Even amongst the small number of Western respondents who disapproved of protesting, half cited its ineffectiveness, rather than it being detrimental to society, as a reason for their dissatisfaction. For example Western respondents answered:

> I think that protesting in necessary although it is sometimes not executed in an efficient manner.

> I'm not sure that it is really that necessary, petitions might be a better idea.

By contrast, only 11 out of 31 (35.48 per cent) Japanese respondents were in favor of protesting. More than half of those respondents (6 out of 11 or 54.55 per cent) said the disaster had changed their view of protesting for the better. For example when asked

about their views on protesting before and after the Fukushima disaster, Japanese respondents said:

> Until now I saw protests as something that happens overseas and has a violent image, and I was a little against it.

> I had the image that they were violent. But since [the disaster] I think that it is a good way to quietly strongly persist in conveying a message.

An equal number of Japanese were against protesting (11 out of 31 or 35.48 per cent), with only a small number citing ineffectiveness for their opposition. Importantly 8 out of those 11 (72.73 per cent) voiced strong discontent with the act of protesting.

The cross-cultural comparative analysis of dispositions to civil disobedience supports the view that underlying collectivist thought exists in Japanese society. For example, as reported in the literature review, Benedict (as cited in Winfield, Mizuno & Beaudoin 2000, p. 331) argues that Japanese hierarchy-based collectivism shapes their relation with the nation, society, family members and other individuals. Similarly, Takeichi (as cited in Winfield, Mizuno & Beaudoin 2000, p. 331) writes, "The logic of the group supersedes that of an individual. For this reason, those who communicate opposition to the group interest have been, throughout Japanese history, ostracized". The tendency of the Japanese public to criticise expressions of civil disobedience compared to Western respondents indirectly suggests support for press club media traits that reflect collectivist notions.

Western scholars (Freeman 2000, van Wolferen 1989, Feldman 1993) argue press club media traits reflecting conformity and social harmony, such as intimate ties with government and big business, a lack of investigative journalism, and a heavy reliance on official sources, hampers effective democracy. However, do these media characteristics necessarily compromise the free press? Western responses illustrate views of a liberal notion of freedom, where freedom is about individualism. There was a common theme of civil disobedience being a tool for democracy amongst Western responses, where citizens have a right to voice individual agendas. For example in response to the question, "What do you think about people protesting in general? Has your view of people who protest changed since the Fukushima disaster?" one Australian respondent, a 30-year-old male teacher, answered:

Being able to protest is one essence of freedom of speech. All for it.

Similarly, the Irish respondent, a 23-year old teacher, said:

A right that people living in a democratic society should exercise.

In contrast, Japanese responses were more ambivalent, questioning the reasons behind protesting, reflecting a more collectivist notion of freedom, i.e. that freedom and truth is only possible within the framework of the group. Overall, Japanese respondents were much more critical of protesting and its disruptiveness to society. Many respondents questioned the sincerity of individual protesters, commenting that it wasn't their "own voices", they are a "nuisance", they "don't understand the situation", or they are not "serious enough". One Japanese respondent, a 23-year-old businessman, commented that protestors were being manipulated:

I don't think protesting is the right way to express your opinions. Because I think that perhaps if someone was to go to a protest and he or she was the only one he would not go through with it. This could be a bias[ed] opinion but I felt that a lot of protests weren't focused on "expressing an opinion", or "trying to change something".

Japanese respondents were also more likely to question the motives of protestors. "Today people are getting paid to protest so I think it weakens their position. I don't think it's their true voices", said one Japanese respondent, a 30-year-old female architect. "I feel the majority of protestors are just 'trying to find themselves'," said the 39-year-old businesswoman.

Indeed, collectivist notions of freedom also exist in Western tradition. For example, the republican notion of freedom emphasizes the value of the individual contributing to the community through 'civic virtue' and 'political participation' (Lovett 2014). Moreover, John Rawls, American political philosopher in the liberal tradition, argued that political liberalism "addresses the legitimate use of political power in a democracy, aiming to show how enduring unity may be achieved despite the diversity of worldviews that free institutions allow" (Wenar 2012). Examples of liberty being defined in the bounds of the group or community in Western philosophy undermine Western arguments that media systems reflecting a collectivist notion of freedom is

detrimental to democracy. A collectivist notion of freedom is not necessarily a lesser form of freedom, rather a different form of freedom.

The following section explores how these concepts directly relate to media systems by investigating Japanese and Western perceptions of media traits reflective of socio-cultural values.

5.4 Specific media traits reflective of socio-cultural values

5.4.1 Introduction

Some media scholars such as Winfield et al. (2000), Krauss and Lambert (2002), and O'Dwyer (2005) recognize that the Japanese press club media reflects socio-cultural values such as hierarchy-based collectivism. However, even amongst these observers there is skepticism about how it affects the quality of journalism. For example, Brislin (1997) argues that "the kisha kurabu structure emphasizes several underlying fundamental values of Japanese society: subjugation of the individual to the group; and presentation styles (including news and information) that promote harmony, rather than confrontation, criticism or dissent". But Brislin concludes that Japanese socio-cultural factors that inform the press club system are detrimental to the quality of the journalism it produces.

> While Western styles of journalism would see truth emerging from full-disclosure reporting from highly competitive, independent journalists and news agencies trying to "outfact" each other and be first with exclusive stories, the *kisha kurabu* system effectively strips competitiveness from journalistic practice, reducing both independence of the journalists and the level of truthful disclosure in their reports (Brislin 1997).

The questionnaire, however, found general support among Japanese respondents for this style of reporting — namely, 'moderate' reporting, the regulation and control of information, and relatively less investigative watchdog journalism. The prevailing form of journalism in Japan, therefore, seems to be a product of these values. In that regard, and while Western critics may wish it otherwise, it appears to reflect Japanese social values and the audience's wishes.

Japanese respondents illustrated support for moderate reporting, i.e. neutral, non-emotive reporting. In addition, the emphasis on the press as a neutral powerbroker rather than as an adversary of government further supports this moderate form of journalism, which ultimately results in the reduction of investigative reporting often criticized by Western scholars. Perhaps this is a tradeoff Japanese society is willing to accept in order to ensure moderate, dispassionate reporting. Japanese respondents also supported controlling information, suggesting a greater trust in authorities, but also highlighting the importance placed on maintaining social order.

5.4.2 Moderate reporting

This study revealed that Japanese respondents tended to support "moderate" reporting compared to Western respondents. Moderation is an important principle listed in the NSK's guidelines of journalism. Japanese media reporting is commonly regarded as being more docile and conservative than Western journalism. For example, Krauss and Lambert's study of the content of the prominent Japanese *Asahi* newspaper found that Japanese journalists took a moderate, neutral stance, whereas their American counterparts presented opposing arguments:

> We [found] that most [Japanese newspaper] articles [fell] into one category, in this case the "neutral" one with no arguments for or against reform. This is consistent with previous research on Japanese newspaper coverage of United States–Japan relations that found that while American papers tended to achieve a balance by citing arguments for and against an issue, Japanese papers tended to achieve it by providing just facts and no arguments at all (Krauss & Lambert 2002, p. 68–9).

These attributes were on display in Japanese reporting of the Fukushima nuclear disaster. For example, Kinoshita et al. (2012, p65) argue, as noted in Chapter Two, that foreign newspapers were more confrontational and even inquired about the collusion between TEPCO and the government. Endo's (2012, p. 274) research of Japanese and Western media reporting during the Fukushima nuclear crisis found that the Japanese media (especially NHK) had a strong tendency to report generally, whereas the Western media reported on individual stories appealing to the emotions of the audience. Endo argues that the Japanese media avoided specific people and events and avoided judgment of these people and events. By contrast, the Western

media had precise attitudes towards topics, emphasizing the Japanese media's tendency for moderate reporting. Endo (2012, p. 274) asks, "Where does this trend originate from? It goes without saying that objectivity and neutrality is important in reporting. But at the same time if there's too much focus on objectivity and neutrality important facts that should be reported are overlooked. This is a problem. I recommend more research in the future".

This moderate stance makes it difficult for Japanese journalists to challenge authority as directly as Western media outlets do, and often leads to a heavy reliance on official reports. Otopalik and Schaefer (2008, p. 289) argue, "The Japanese media seem to become uncomfortable with their masters and go their own way only after a trial period — making them more akin to a 'lap cat' than a lapdog". The heavy reliance on official sources and passive reporting is often criticized by Western scholars as being anti-democratic for failing to adhere to fundamental journalism principles of impartiality and objectivity. Impartiality and objectivity are often recognized as highly important principles of journalism by Western media institutions. Ward (1999, p. 9) argues that objectivity is vital for media systems in democratic societies and ensures quality journalism:

> Objectivity is a comprehensive ideal that can justify the more specific values of fairness, accuracy and accountability to the public ... Democracy continues to need objective reporters who care about responsible communication ... In a culture that lacks confidence in objectivity, demagogues prosper and the quality of public debate suffers.

Australia's public broadcaster, the ABC (Australian Broadcasting Corporation), states that:

> Impartiality is one of the most fundamental elements of content-making at the ABC (ABC Editorial policies 2013)

The ABC (ABC Editorial policies 2013) presents five key standards of impartiality (and diversity of perspective) including:

- o Gather and present news and information with due impartiality.
- o Present a diversity of perspectives so that, over time, no significant strand of thought or belief within the community is knowingly

excluded or disproportionately represented.

- o Do not misrepresent any perspective.
    - o Do not unduly favour one perspective over another.

The emphasis on diversity of perspective in attaining impartiality is a high priority, although there does remain debate in the West of the correct implementation of impartiality in journalism. The ABC (ABC Editorial policies 2013) states that:

> The requirement for impartiality is testing, precisely because of the fundamental challenge at the heart of the concept — *everyone* regards the world through the prism of their own values, and *no one* is truly able to either make or consume media free of those values. The more important the story, the stronger that tension becomes … Impartiality is therefore an art rather than a science, but like all good art, it rests on skill, practice, experience and the right set of tools.

Nevertheless, there appears to be some consensus in Western media organisations of the need for impartial reporting to include values of non-bias (avoidance of favoritism) and a diversity of perspectives.

Some media scholars such as Brislin (1997) argue that the Japanese media cannot be described as impartial or objective as it too often favors official accounts over other sources of information:

> It is important for the Western observer, including journalists, to note that Japanese political coverage is based on an advocacy, rather than objective, model.

Japanese responses to the questionnaire expressed greater support for "moderate reporting", or in other words "the avoidance of excess or extremes" (see figure 4). For example, in response to the question "What was the most important ethical principle for journalists reporting on the disaster?" Japanese respondents stressed the need to "protect victims from rumors", and avoid "speculation" and "causing panic". One Japanese respondent, a 22-year-old male university student, highlighted the importance of neutral reporting in as much as not "inciting citizen's emotions".

By contrast, Western respondents expressing the need for "avoidance of excess or extremes" were much less common (see figure 4). Those that emphasized this point highlighted the need for accurate information to avoid creating "hysteria", avoiding "sensationalism", and "confront[ation with] the government in a time of crisis".

Although far from conclusive, these findings suggest greater support among Japanese respondents for a moderate style of reporting; a style that entails less speculation, less emotional and subjective reporting, and avoiding information that may cause panic. Japanese respondents place greater emphasis on objectivity understood as the muting of subjective emotive appeals and believe reporting needs to be sober and from respectable sources. Nevertheless, the characteristics of moderate reporting are also consistent with the principles of objectivity. A Japanese press club system lacking in investigative, confrontational reporting does not necessarily equate to an anti-democratic form of objectivity. Ward (2005) argues that objectivity is not a concrete value and is determined by specific historical, cultural, and economic circumstances:

> A history of journalism ethics [including objectivity] therefore must examine how journalism's communicative relationship with the public has evolved and how these changes have prompted the espousal of particular norms. We need to adopt this broad perspective on journalism in order to comprehend how ethical norms such as editorial independence arise and evolve. Such insights require an interdisciplinary approach employing philosophy, ethics, science, economics, and social history. To understand journalism ethics fully, we must plunge into the complex history of western culture (Ward 2005, p. 3–4).

Most Important Ethical Principle for Journalists (Moderate Reporting)

Japanese respondents (11 out of 31)	Western respondents (4 out of 30)
1. Don't report on rumors 2. Report as a disinterested person, as a third party, don't incite panic to the audience 3. Don't speculate 4. Protect victims from rumors 5. Don't cause panic 6. Don't speculate 7. Avoid scandalous reporting and rumors 8. Don't incite citizens' emotions 9. Don't report subjectively 10. Be considerate in reporting 11. Refer to specialist [Cited in no particular order]	1. Inform of risks without sensationalisation 2. Avoid sensationalisation 3. Providing accurate information for those outside of the danger areas as those people create the hysteria. 4. Don't confront government in time of crisis which can cause panic [Cited in no particular order]

Figure 4: Moderate Reporting: Japanese and Western responses to the question, 'What was the most important ethical principle for journalists reporting on the disaster?'

The findings in this study support Ward's argument that objectivity is dependent on socio-cultural factors. Japanese respondents' support for neutral reporting reflects collectivist notions of conformity and social harmony, and is in contrast to Western reporting that is often respected for its confrontational, free style of journalism. The findings illustrate that the Japanese public privileges sources that are regarded as more definitive and official rather than speculation or alternative, unofficial sources of information. These are also part of the norms and values of Western journalism, however, the results in this study suggest there is a higher value placed on these journalistic ideals in Japanese society at the expense of other aspects of objectivity,

such as reporting of both sides of an argument, and investigative, confrontational reporting.

The comparatively higher level of Japanese responses predisposed to moderate styles of reporting suggests that the Japanese press club media is in tune with public preferences. While the heavy reliance on official sources, and a 'lack' of investigative reporting is often criticized by Western scholarship as violating fundamental journalism values of impartiality and objectivity, the responses examined here suggest that this does not necessarily violate the principle of objectivity. Rather, such sources are deemed to be the sources of factual information. This study illustrates that the Japanese public place more importance on neutral reporting aspects of impartiality and objectivity rather than extracting alternative views through combative and investigative journalism, which is equally valued in Western democratic press theory.

Perhaps a lack of investigative journalism is a tradeoff Japanese society is willing to make for moderate reporting. In the same way one Western respondent was prepared to accept a media system saturated by sensationalism — "a free press which is full of crap" — rather than risking a media system they could "never fully trust", Japanese respondents were willing to accept less investigative journalism in return for moderate reporting that serves to maintain a degree of social harmony.

5.4.3 Controlling information

De Lange argues that self-censorship amongst journalism serves to weaken the function of a democratic free press:

> The extremely close relationship with the authorities, the consequent incidents of a socially unacceptable self-censorship, the uniformity of reporting due to the lecture system — all institutionalized and perpetrated in the Japanese press clubs — each in turn help to undermine the principles that are crucial requirements if the press is to be a guardian of democracy (De Lange 1998, p. 194).

These characteristics of the Japanese press club media were on display during the Fukushima nuclear disaster. Johnston, as noted in Chapter Two, concluded in his inquiry that the foreign media was more skeptical of government and chose to publish on possible dangers rather than limiting the flow of information. By contrast, the

Japanese media deliberately avoided information that had the potential to cause panic (Johnston 2011, p. 34).

Comparing Japanese and Western dispositions to the control of information, a much higher proportion of Japanese respondents were willing to grant the media and authorities the power to manage information. The willingness to entrust the media, or authorities, with the power to control information supports the Japanese press club system characteristics of extreme exclusivity and the censorship and tight management of information. Almost half of the Japanese respondents (14 out of 32 or 43.75 per cent) agreed to controlling information (during a disaster), and only four (12.50 per cent) gave the condition of extreme circumstances, with seven (21.88 per cent) illustrating no reluctance in allowing the media or authorities to control information. When asked about whether the press should control information to avoid disorder versus reporting everything, Japanese respondents commonly answered that information "should be regulated", and that the regulation of information was beneficial during the Fukushima crisis. For example, one respondent said that in the "initial confusion stages[,] regulation is important". Another Japanese respondent, a 30-year-old male part-time worker, answered:

> If the government determines that it will avoid confusion, then there should be regulation to a point.

Similarly, another Japanese respondent, a 38-year-old self-employed female, said:

> The foreign media praised us for our calm actions. Perhaps this had something to do with the fact that there was no excessive information released.

This research supports Johnson's (1995, p. 99) assertion of Japan as a passive collectivist society: "Japan has a strong state and a long history of its society passively accepting leadership from the state. By contrast the US has a relatively weak state, except for the military industrial complex, which US political and economic theory considers exceptional". In other words, the Japanese public is much more likely to trust powerful social institutions compared to the US and other Western societies.

By contrast, more than two thirds of Western respondents (31 in total) were against the media or authorities controlling information. The four respondents who did think

it was permissible for the media and authorities to control information, qualified this by citing extreme circumstances. For example, in response to the question "Do the media have the responsibility to report everything? Or should they control information to avoid disorder?" Western respondents emphasized the need "to report everything". One respondent, the 27-year-old English student, said:

> It is possible [to] be truthful without causing a panic, it's about managing how the information is conveyed rather than actually withholding information.

Another respondent, a 30-year-old Australian male builder, stressed that everything should be reported even in a time of crisis:

> In a time of crisis (or any other time) I personally believe the media should be able to report every fact as it comes to them, mainly because I personally take everything with a grain of salt in times of crisis because I understand not everything will be accurate … Report everything, let people decide what to believe.

Western scholars critical of the Japanese press are accurate in their observation of greater censorship and a 'uniformity in reporting'. But is it therefore anti-democratic? The questionnaire responses suggest support for the media functioning as a manager of information. As such, the findings illustrate that the Japanese public support — or do not actively oppose — the current form of media system that allows for information regulation. The evidence suggests that Japanese media consumers regard the free reporting of information a threat to social order. Rather than being anti-democratic, an unrestrained free press is considered to be a risk to democracy. As noted in the previous section, freedom is not an absolute value, and a collectivist notion of freedom, in fact, can also be found in the Western tradition. Japanese public support for a more collectivist notion of freedom of the press in the form of information management is not necessarily detrimental to democratic society, but can be argued to strengthen liberty within the framework of the group or community, as it is seen as ensuring a higher degree of protection for social order.

5.4.4 Media as ally or adversary

Given the prominence of Western scholarly criticism of the Japanese media's "collaboration" with authorities and lack of investigative reporting, cross-cultural

analysis of Japanese public opinion on these features of the Japanese media was undertaken. The questionnaire found that the Japanese public's view was largely in line with the behavior of the Japanese press club media system. Rather than an adversary or watchdog of government, the press is regarded as — and acts as — a powerbroker.

In response to the question, "Do you see media as an adversary or ally of the government? What should it be?" the overwhelming majority of Westerners (19 out of 25 or 76 per cent) said that the media should have at least some watchdog role. Only two (8 per cent) regarded the media as an ally of the government. Western respondents said that the media "should not be subservient to the government and should expose inefficiencies and injustices perpetrated by the government", and should be a "constructive critic of the government which provides a balanced assessment/analysis of politics" and "critical evaluation and objective analysis of the facts". The emphasis on the role of the media as a "natural adversary of the government" was argued to "keep the government as pure and honest as possible". "Investigative and responsible" journalism was also highlighted as important values to ensure "accountability" and as a means to monitor the government, "as power can corrupt".

The majority of Japanese respondents, 8 out of 19 (42.11 per cent), said that they believed the media should be neither watchdog nor ally of the government. Instead, Japanese respondents highlighted press neutrality. Japanese respondents stressed the need for the media to take a "neutral stance" and that it "should be fair and impartial, they should not be an ally or adversary". Only 6 out of 19 (31.58 per cent) Japanese respondents said the media should play a role of watchdog.

Japanese respondents also emphasized the importance of journalists maintaining a degree of independence. These views are mirrored by Japanese media experts' concerns over transparency and closeness to the source of journalists involved in PABs (Harari 1997, p. 23). But journalists' contribution to PABs is seen as beneficial to the public policy process and journalists are judged to largely maintain their neutrality (Harari 1997, p. 23). These results suggest that, compared to Western public opinion, Japanese media consumers support the media's role in the political system as 'co-leader' with the government. This is consistent with the Japanese view

that neutral reporting is more important than a watchdog press committed to investigative journalism.

The following section explores whether socio-cultural values are reflected in the development of new media in Japan and Western media systems, or, if indeed, new media is contributing to a shift in Japanese socio-cultural values. The hypothesis that new media, which has individualistic characteristics of personalised content and an anti-establishment flavour, may have the potential to break the 'stranglehold' of the press club system is also tested.

5.5 New media

The emergence of new media (non-traditional media such as citizen journalism, non-profit public journalism, and social media) has had a significant impact on media systems worldwide. In Japan the progress of new media has been slower compared to the West; however its usage has been steadily increasing in the past decade. Social media usage rose 20 per cent after the 3.11 disaster (Tachiiri 2011, p. 8). Tachiiri argues that the credibility and trust in new media is increasing in Japan. During the 3.11 disaster social networking services were useful for people to connect in real time when other means of communication failed such as mobile phones and landlines (Tachiiri 2011, p. 24). Other people affected by the disaster used new media to complement information obtained from the mass media (Tachiiri 2011, p. 237). Tachiiri also points out that people were able to access foreign media sources that were restricted on Japanese television (Tachiiri 2011, p. 71), and that people disgruntled with mass media reporting turned to new media for unrestricted commentary by freelance or citizen journalists (Tachiiri 2011, p. 138).

Japanese and Western perceptions of the Fukushima disaster coverage were compared to investigate if these reflect the development of new media in Japan and explore themes that may show signs of future impacts of new media on the Japanese press club system. A collectivist society such as Japan might be expected to be more resistant to new media, since broadcasting personalised commentary and opinions is an expression of individualism. Social media, at least in the Western popular imagination, is associated with values of non-conformity and anti-establishment critique. Jarvis (2008) argues that it is a tool for average citizens to contribute to the

public sphere. Subsequently, favorable Japanese perceptions of new media, which is a relatively recent phenomenon, may indicate that new media is becoming accepted in Japanese society and is having significant impacts on the current press club system. At the extreme, new media may be breaking down the well-defined structures of information access and delivery.

While new media is becoming more popular in Japan, its rise has been comparatively slower than in the West (Fackler 2012, p. 186) where its growth, at least in the United States and Australia, has accompanied the dramatic fall in the circulation of newspapers (Statista 2014). Newspaper circulation in Japan has decreased at a much slower rate (The Japan newspaper publishers & editors association 2013, circulation and households). Less favorable tax laws for non-profit organisations in Japan, and the absence of a donating culture (Fackler 2012, p. 206) compared to Western societies have been some factors attributed to the slower progress of new media or non-profit public media organisations, such as Democracy Now! and ProPublica Inc. in the USA. Democracy Now! for example, is a non-profit organisation funded entirely through donations and is tax-exempt (Democracy Now! 2013, Ways to donate).

This study revealed that a greater proportion of Western respondents used online media sources during the Fukushima crisis. In response to the question, "What media did you use the most during the Fukushima crisis (English/Japanese, TV/radio etc.)? Please specify" 16 out of 28 (57.14 per cent) Western respondents said they used online media. By comparison, only 11 out of 32 (34.38 per cent) Japanese respondents named online media as a source they used to acquire information. A greater proportion of Western respondents also trusted new media compared to Japanese respondents. In response to the question, "Did you use new media (SNS, blogs, online videos etc.) to get information about the Fukushima crisis? Did you trust the information?" 7 out of 11 (63.64 per cent) Westerners used and trusted information (including via cross-checking) from new media about the Fukushima nuclear disaster. For example, Western respondents used social networking services and "also watched videos on Youtube". The Irish respondent said he trusted some information on new media, "but not all of the information on Facebook. I always verified it by reading online newspapers". These findings lend support to the working assumption that a collectivist Japanese society is more likely to be more resistant to

new media, which exhibits traits of individualism through personalised commentary and opinion, and values of non-conformity through anti-establishment critique.

This working assumption is further supported by evidence of Western respondents acknowledging new media as a more effective medium than Japanese respondents in communicating information. Twenty-one out of 28 (75 per cent) Westerners believed new media was just as effective (or more effective) than the mass media. Only 13 out of 29 (44.83 per cent) Japanese respondents believed the same. For example, when considering the effectiveness of new media reporting compared with the mass media, Western respondents pointed out the fast delivery of information as a key factor in the effectiveness of new media. Western respondents recognised new media's effectiveness of "providing timely reporting", and "real time reporting that reaches more viewers/readers than traditional mass media outlets". On the other hand, Japanese respondents were more likely to question the effectiveness of new media and preferred to access information from the establishment press system.

Respondents were also asked their opinions on blogging. A blog is defined by the Oxford Dictionary (2014) as a "personal website or webpage on which an individual records opinions, links to other sites, etc. on a regular basis". The results show that significantly more Western respondents (16 out of 31 or 51.61 per cent) thought that bloggers made a positive contribution to society compared to Japanese respondents (9 out of 32 or 28.13 per cent). This perhaps suggests that as a collectivist society, Japanese are more likely to reject blogs, which has content that is personalised and often representative of an individual outlook. There was a common theme amongst Western respondents of blogs being a positive medium that enables "ordinary people to share their opinions", and gives "society a louder voice". Western respondents also emphasized the value of blogs to provide alternative views and challenge official information by giving individuals a "voice and … a perspective that might not fit in with the larger narrative being portrayed. It is empowering".

This trend for a greater affinity to new media amongst Western respondents was also reflected in the questionnaire results regarding participation in online discussions. Three out of 10 (30 per cent) Westerners participated in online discussions about the Fukushima nuclear crisis, whereas none of the Japanese respondents said that they participated in online discussions about the Fukushima nuclear crisis.

However, despite the lower levels of usage and trust compared with their Western counterparts, and perceptions of the relative ineffectiveness of new media revealed in Japanese responses, some media scholars believe that new media use is catching up to Western levels of use in Japan in recent years and is having a significant impact on the Japanese media system. Indeed, the use of social media has been rising in the last few years in Japan. The use of social networking services grew amongst all age groups from 2011 to 2012 (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications 2013). Endo (2012, p. 138), as reported in Chapter Two, gives evidence of unprecedented use of new media, such as independent video streaming websites Ustream and Niconico, from the onset of the disasters. Similarly, Tachiiri's (2011, p. 71) research found that during the Fukushima nuclear crisis Japanese people used foreign media and personal websites to see reports that were restricted on Japanese television.

There is evidence in the cross-cultural comparative analysis of some use of foreign sources of information via new media, supporting these theories of a shift in the dynamics of the reception of information in Japanese society — a shift away from the tight structured press club media dissemination of information. For example, some Japanese respondents reported using information from friends overseas. "Basically overseas news was useful", said the 39-year-old businesswoman. Another 35-year-old businesswoman reported getting information from a German friend on Facebook. They said that at first they thought news of the disaster was exaggerated, since the same news had not been reported in Japan. This suggests a shift away from the press club dominated media system where information disseminated is tightly managed.

Other scholars believe this shift is already occurring. As Shunya Yoshimi (Choo 2011) has noted, this transformation was evident in the coverage of the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disasters. He argues that the "mass-media-controlled reality" may in fact already be "dead" (Choo 2011). Other researchers argue that the most recent growth of new media in Japan and the increasing access to foreign sources of information may result in the breakdown of the rigid and exclusive Japanese press club system. For example, Fackler (2012, p. 208) argues that "anti-liberal" characteristics in the Japanese press club system may prompt the establishment of non-profit new media organisations. However, this appears to be unlikely without changes to tax laws related to NPOs. Qualifying for favourable tax treatment as an NPO in Japan is extremely difficult, whereas it is almost guaranteed in the West (The

Economist 2011). Fackler argues that social media may effect change in Japanese inwardness, and foster more individualism. Similarly, Tachiiri (2011, p. 64) argues that social media may stimulate Japanese people into becoming more individualistic. Then again, although the media may shape people's expectations and behavior, there are also other determining factors such as the material conditions of their lives.

The comparative cross-cultural comparative analysis, however, did reveal some evidence suggesting there may be a shift in Japanese public perceptions aligning more towards Western ideals of a 'more extreme' liberal media system. For example, both Japanese and Western respondents valued the variety of opinions in public discourse and the importance of "freedom of speech". Asked about the value or otherwise of bloggers, some Japanese respondents highlighted the benefits of having a "wider perspective from reading various bloggers' opinions". Similarly, Western respondents emphasised the value of voicing one's "opinions freely", and providing "different views and angles". For example, one Australian respondent, a 27-year-old sports trader, stressed that the ability of individuals to be heard in society is an "important tenet of democracy in my opinion".

These similarities may be evidence of an anomaly of aligning Japanese and Western ideals of a liberal new media system as hypothesized by some media scholars (Tachiiri 2011, Fackler 2012). Could there be a more Western individualist or Western style democratic new media system developing in Japan? On the face of it there is some evidence here that appears to support Fackler, Tachiiri, and Yoshimi's arguments. Japanese respondents expressed a need for a variety of opinions and freedom of speech. The evidence illustrates that there may be a shift in Japanese public perceptions towards stricter Western ideals of a free press possibly partly due from the rise of new media — albeit less pronounced than in the West — and the import of foreign media sources and information through new media.

However, evidence in previous chapters of Japanese public support for collectivist notions relevant to media systems and strong resistance to 'more extreme' Western (new) media ideals suggest underlying socio-cultural forces may limit any significant shift towards stricter Western media ideals such as enhanced independent, investigative journalism. The questionnaire found that although similar journalistic principles are expressly valued in Japanese and Western societies, there remain

varying interpretations and discrepancies in the weight of importance placed on each journalism value. For example, Japanese respondents placed greater importance on neutral reporting in the interpretation of impartiality and objectivity, whereas Western respondents placed equal importance on assertive, investigative reporting in satisfying objective and impartial journalism. Social media is not known for its neutral reporting, which suggests social media and blogging may not develop in the same way as they have in the West.

Similarly, this study also found evidence of differing Japanese and Western interpretations of "variety of opinions" and "freedom of expression". For example, even though Japanese respondents valued a "variety of opinions" there was a heavy importance placed on official sources when using new media, whereas more Western respondents commented on the value of independent information and perspectives contrary to the official view. When asked about whether they trusted new media or thought it was effective, Japanese respondents stressed the importance of respectable sources and were suspicious of information from individuals. One Japanese respondent, a 23-year-old businesswoman, said:

> Although the trustworthiness of official accounts such as NHK were high, comments from people that were retweeted I couldn't really trust.

Another Japanese respondent, a 37-year-old female writer, was skeptical about the press club system, but said the information reported by the press clubs was more trustworthy as it was from a group of people, as opposed to information coming from individuals reporting on new media:

> I don't trust the press club system but information from the mass media is scrutinized and confirmed by a large number of staff so at least information coming from them is credible. Blog information is mostly written by one person, with low objectivity and it tends to become driven by self-importance.

There was also a common theme amongst Japanese respondents questioning the trustworthiness of new media with some saying they "saw a lot of false information that invited confusion so I felt that it didn't really help", and "there was also a lot of rumours spread on twitter, therefore as a rule it can't be trusted". One Japanese

respondent, a 38-year-old businesswoman, believed "most of the information on new media is based on mass media information, and the rest relies on speculation".

By contrast, Western respondents highlighted the benefit of new media providing a broad range of alternative viewpoints – even viewpoints from non-experts. For example, the 27-year-old English student, said:

> New media has been important for obtaining a different perspective from the official one, or the one being portrayed by the mass media. It's not so much an issue of trust, but having access to a wider range of narratives.

One American respondent, the 24-year-old male teacher, pointed to the value of obtaining "all the independent radiation level measurements", including new media. Western respondents also highlighted the benefits of blogs providing perspectives contrary to official information, by circumventing "all official organs that might digest the information a little before passing it [on]", they can be "more reliable" than the mass media, and are "important for obtaining a different perspective from the official one, or the one being portrayed by the mass media".

Although both Japanese and Western respondents placed high importance on a variety of opinions, there was a theme in Japanese responses of a 'variety of opinions' coming from authoritative, official sources. On the other hand, there was a theme in Western responses of a 'variety of opinions' extending to individual voices and opinions contrary to the official line. This is perhaps best typified in the Japanese response of a higher trust in information coming from an authorities group, rather than from individuals in society. Diverse narratives, even if diametrically opposed, are valued by Westerners. Japanese respondents want some consensus on the 'right' narrative. Officialdom has the capacity to present what looks like a coherent narrative and is therefore more trusted. Subsequently, whether new media have shifted the underlying Japanese socio-cultural values is open to question and is an area of research that needs further attention. The findings suggest that claims about the transformative role of new media are overstated, confined to relatively small pockets of society, or reflect the aspirations of media critics. The evidence here is that the Japanese public supports collectivist traits and characteristics in the media, which offers cultural resistance to the new media and support — whether implicit or explicit — for the press club system.

Western respondents were more likely to use new media and be more favourably disposed to its contents. These results reflect the greater saturation of new media in the West, and suggest public dispositions, possibly influenced by socio-cultural factors, play a role in shaping new media systems. Nevertheless, there has been a significant increase in the use of new media in Japan in recent years, which was bolstered by the 3.11 disaster. Some media scholars (Tachiiri 2011, Fackler 2012) have argued that the recent rise in the usage of new media in Japan illustrates a shift in Japanese social attitudes questioning official accounts and supporting more Western free press ideals. This study revealed similar themes of Western liberal press theory amongst Japanese and Western respondents such as placing an importance on a 'variety of opinions' and 'freedom of expression'. However, there was also evidence that the interpretations of these principles differed between Japanese and Western respondents. For example, Japanese respondents emphasized a variety of opinions deriving from credible — namely official — sources, whereas Western respondents tended to support a variety of opinions from independent sources. Despite the recent rise of the use of new media in Japan, these findings suggest that important underlying discrepancies in socio-cultural values undercut scholarly assertions that new media is effecting significant changes in the Japanese press club system.

5.6 Conclusion

The Japanese and Western media are often noted for their different styles of reporting. The Japanese press club media system has greater exclusivity, relies more heavily on official sources, and is less prone to conduct investigative journalism. The Western media is commonly regarded as being more independent and performs a role as a watchdog press. This contrast was illustrated in Japanese and Western reporting of the 3.11 disaster. Japanese reporting was claimed to be "conservative" compared to a more 'sensationalist' Western style of reporting (Johnston 2011). These discrepancies in Japanese media reporting are often condemned by Western critics as being contrary to Western ideals of a democratic free press (Freeman 2000, Brislin 1997, O'Dwyer 2005, Otopalik & Schaefer 2008, Gamble and Watanabe 2004). However, many of the discrepancies in the Japanese media, as argued by some media scholars (Winfield et al. 2000, Krauss & Lambert 2002), reflect socio-cultural factors such as collectivist

notions of "hierarchy, social deference, group orientation, the value of conformity, and dedication's to one's group" (Johnson 1995, p. 9).

To test the validity of Western criticisms of the Japanese press club system, Japanese and Western general satisfaction levels of respective media systems were firstly analysed. Secondly, Japanese and Western dispositions to collectivist notions were examined to explore the influence of socio-cultural factors. Dispositions to specific media characteristics reflecting collectivist notions were then examined to determine Japanese support for these traits in the face of Western criticisms. And finally, the correlation between socio-cultural values and new media was investigated.

Both Japanese and Western respondents were generally satisfied with how their domestic media systems performed when it came to obtaining information they needed during the Fukushima nuclear crisis. There were also high levels of support in Japanese and Western responses in the value and effectiveness of a press club media system. However, there was a comparatively stronger trend in Western responses to include preconditions for the system operating efficiently, perhaps illustrating a more collectivist trend of conformity in Japanese responses. The high level of satisfaction in the press club system reported by Japanese respondents calls into question the validity of Western criticisms of the Japanese press club media system being "anti-democratic". If the audience the system serves is happy with it, and reflects their values, but otherwise operates freely, then it is unclear why it is undemocratic. In this sense, democracy isn't an absolute value, but one, which, by definition, reflects the values and concerns of the people it serves.

There were also a significant number of Japanese respondents who admitted ignorance of press club systems and an unwillingness to offer opinions. This finding can be interpreted in a number of ways. The lack of knowledge in Japanese responses may indicate a lack of support for the system. Or, alternatively, it might suggest that the Japanese press club system is simply a reflection of a collectivist Japanese society willing to conform. In that case, this does not necessarily mean the media system is flawed, but an expression of Japanese cultural mores, which are different to Western media ideals.

This study tested two collectivist notions relevant to media systems: high levels of trust in the media, and aversion to civil disobedience. Firstly, Japanese respondents

indicated less skepticism towards the media illustrating a higher level of trust in powerful institutions in society and a disposition to collectivist principles of hierarchical structures, conformity and social harmony. Secondly, Japanese respondents were much more critical of protesting than Western respondents. Once again, this affirms a collectivist tendency relevant to media systems, namely a willingness to conform and avoiding the disturbance of social harmony. Western critics (Freeman 2000, van Wolferen 1989, Feldman 1993) often argue that Japanese press club traits reflecting collectivist principles such as intimate ties to government, a lack of investigative reporting, and a heavy reliance on official sources, are detrimental to a democratic free press. However, this study found that the Japanese public subscribe to a collectivist notion of freedom — a concept of freedom that, in fact, also exists in Western theories such as the republican notion of freedom. As such, the collectivist notion of freedom is not necessarily a lesser form of liberty, rather a different form of liberty that values truth as representative of the group, not the individual.

Cross-cultural comparative analysis was also undertaken on specific media characteristics reflective of collectivist notions with similar results. Firstly, moderate reporting was more highly valued by Japanese respondents as a journalism ethic compared to Western respondents suggesting Japanese public support for Japanese press club media traits of a heavy reliance on official sources of information and minimal investigative journalism. Western critics (O'Dwyer 2005, Otopalik & Schaefer 2008, Freeman 2000, Gamble and Watanabe 2004) have argued that this moderate form of journalism hampers democracy through the reduction of confrontational, investigative reporting. However, the prominent features of moderate reporting — avoiding "rumours", "speculation", "causing panic", and "inciting citizen's emotions" — are all consistent with objectivity. The findings illustrate that the Japanese public values a different form of objectivity, and perhaps a reduction in investigative journalism is a trade-off for sober, non-disruptive reporting.

Secondly, Japanese respondents were much more likely than Western respondents to support granting the media the power to control information, a function that is consistent with collectivist notions of respect for hierarchical structures and trust in authorities. Similarly to the findings on moderate reporting, Japanese respondents' disposition to entrust authorities with the power to manage information illustrates a

Japanese public desiring neutral reporting and subsequently the maintenance of social order. Rather than being anti-democratic, the evidence suggests the Japanese public perceives the control of information as fundamental to securing democratic society.

Finally, significantly more Western respondents than Japanese respondents regarded the role of the media to be an adversary of government. Japanese respondents said the media should play a neutral role. The attitude of Westerners on the media's role is consistent with the notion of the media as a "watchdog". It attaches importance to investigative reporting. By contrast, the Japanese respondents were more inclined to support the existing Japanese press club media role as co-leader with the government and neutral powerbroker. Once again, these results illustrate a Japanese public valuing neutral, sober, non-confrontational reporting above 'excessive' investigative journalism.

One counter-argument by Western media scholars may be that despite the press club media being influenced by socio-cultural factors and supported by Japanese society media traits against Western liberal media ideals remain detrimental to democratic society and therefore citizen well being. However, is the Western ideal of a democratic free press the only means for a correctly functioning media? And who or what determines what system is 'correct'? Certainly, Japanese public support for the Japanese press club system serving as co-leader alongside government, despite the "anti-democratic" characteristics coupled with this role, and the conclusion that journalists largely act impartially in this role, indicates there may be more than one "correct" set of media ideals in a democratic society. This study suggests that the Japanese press club media system broadly reflects people's values and wishes. It is a reflection of what people want. In this regard, democracy does not — and cannot — prescribe a single model for news media systems.

Japanese and Western responses were also analysed to test whether socio-cultural values reflected the development of new media, or, if indeed, new media is contributing to a shift in Japanese socio-cultural values. Western respondents used online media more than Japanese respondents, reported higher levels of trust in new media and believed it to be more effective, at least in relation to quickly disseminating information, than Japanese respondents. Moreover, Western respondents were much more likely to believe bloggers made a positive contribution to society and were

comparatively more actively involved in new media interaction. This suggests that the Japanese are more reluctant to rely on new media information rather than the well-established mainstream media outlets embedded within the Japanese press club system. Factors such as a lack of donating culture and less favourable tax laws for non-profit organisations may also contribute to the slow progress of new media in Japan compared to the West but these results illustrate that public dispositions may also be a factor. The less favourable perceptions of new media among Japanese respondents are in line with socio-cultural values of conformity and social harmony.

On the other hand, some media scholars (Tachiiri 2011, Fackler 2012) have argued that the most recent spike in the usage of new media in Japan illustrates a shift in Japanese social attitudes — questioning official accounts and supporting more Western free press ideals — and will ultimately lead to a transformation of the Japanese press club system. This study revealed similar themes of Western liberal press theory amongst Japanese and Western responses such as a 'variety of opinions' and 'freedom of expression'. However, there was also evidence of discrepancies in the interpretation of these principles. For example, Japanese respondents emphasized a variety of opinions deriving from credible, official sources, whereas Western respondents tended to support a variety of opinions from multiple sources, whether official or not. These results suggest that despite the recent spike in new media usage in Japan, underlying socio-cultural values will remain resilient and continue to act as a barrier to significant changes in the Japanese press club system.

CONCLUSION

Evaluating foreign press systems is always hazardous. There is a tendency to take what is familiar and use this as a universal yardstick. Western researchers have developed a critique of the Japanese press club media system which takes the Western ideal as the model and finds the Japanese press wanting. The Japanese press club media system is criticized by Western media researchers for exhibiting traits contrary to Western ideals of a democratic free press — traits such as the exclusiveness of the press clubs, a 'lack' of journalistic independence, a reliance on official sources, which leads to homogonous reporting, and close relationships with government and corporations, which leads to a 'lack' of investigative reporting. This pilot study, based on a limited preliminary sample, contends that these traits are consistent with the Japanese values and desires. As such, the charge that the Japanese press club system is undemocratic fails to take account of the audience. Foreign media analysts should be wary of judgments shaped by familiar systems and recognise that the imposition of Western journalistic norms is not necessarily what the public will accept.

The Japanese and Western media have different styles of reporting. These discrepancies were on display in the aftermath of the 3.11 disaster in Japan. Japanese reporting was claimed to be "conservative" compared to a more "sensationalist" Western style of reporting (Johnston 2011). This pilot study found that the Japanese and Western media systems operate under similar guiding tenets and that the audiences they serve have similar expectations. The differences are more ones of interpretations as to how these principles ought to be realised in practice and operationalized. The notion that there is a yawning gulf between Western and Japanese audiences in what they expect of journalists and news media is not supported by the principles of many of the news organizations in Japan and the West.

The questionnaire illustrated that the majority of both Japanese and Western respondents are satisfied with their domestic media systems. Most respondents said that they were able to get the information they needed during the Fukushima nuclear crisis. Similarly, a majority of both Japanese and Western respondents were not critical of the value of a press club system. A majority of Japanese respondents said they did not know much about press club systems or said that they have a neutral view of it. In other words, the system is viewed as neither beneficial nor

disadvantageous. In addition, the majority of Japanese respondents did not criticize the effectiveness of the press club system during the Fukushima crisis despite the gravity of the event. These findings illustrate high levels of satisfaction and support for the Japanese press club media system and question the argument frequently made by Western critics of the Japanese press club media system being 'anti-democratic'.

It may be argued that high levels of ignorance or apathy threaten Western ideals of a democratic free press. For example, Freeman (2000, p. 101) argues that the apathy present among Japanese media consumers justifies Western criticisms of the Japanese press system: "The lack of external challenge to the [press club] system does not mean that it is without harm or that it should not be changed". However, this study found that the news media largely reflected the audience's wishes.

Of course, the shape of the media in Japan may be the result of people's complacency or apathy. But, once again, that is their right within a democracy. In the absence of evidence of mass propaganda campaigns or attempts at brainwashing to ensure that people are kept apathetic or strict rules on media censorship — of which there is none in Japan — the media the Japanese people have is one that they have largely consented to. While Western critics and some Japanese critics may wish that this were otherwise, it does not seem to violate democratic principle. Therefore, the claim that it is undemocratic or damaging to democracy is unfounded.

A Japanese public unsatisfied with the current form of media product may create an opportunity for a savvy entrepreneur to establish a Western style publication. Yet, this has failed to materialize. It is often the Japanese magazine publications that fulfill the role of a more provocative, sensational, investigative press. And despite Western critics' claims that this is the more democratic form of media, magazine journalists in Japan remain 'second class' to mainstream newspaper journalists beholden to the press club system.

The argument that Japan's media system accords with socio-cultural factors was further explored by examining Japanese and Western public dispositions towards collectivist thought relevant to media structures. Dispositions to specific media characteristics reflecting collectivist notions were then examined to determine Japanese support for these traits in the face of Western criticisms.

The cross-cultural comparative analysis of Japanese and Western public dispositions to collectivist thought relative to media attributes — namely, low levels of skepticism towards powerful social institutions, and low levels of support for civil disobedience — revealed broad Japanese support for collectivist notions about the press. These findings indicate indirect public support for the characteristics of the Japanese press club system, such as extreme exclusivity, journalistic independence, and minimal investigative journalism. The evidence suggests that socio-cultural factors play a part in shaping media systems, meaning that the attempt to simply impose one set of standards in one culture onto another is a fraught business — and unrealistic.

Western media scholars may argue that despite socio-cultural factors influencing the Japanese press club system the resulting journalism product remains detrimental to a democratic free press. Accordingly, Japanese and Western perceptions of specific media characteristics reflecting Japanese socio-cultural values were examined to explore the validity of this argument.

Japanese and Western perceptions of three specific media characteristics (moderate reporting, the regulation and control of information, and relatively less investigative watchdog journalism) reflecting Japanese socio-cultural values were analysed. This study found that Japanese respondents were comparatively more supportive of all three characteristics. The evidence of Japanese public support for these Japanese press club media characteristics places doubt on Western criticisms of passive reporting, a lack of independent and investigative journalism, and collusion with government and other powerful institutions. Moreover, high levels of Japanese public support for media characteristics that reflect socio-cultural values of respect for hierarchical structures, conformity, and social harmony, suggests other journalism traits influenced by socio-cultural factors may also be justified. Further research on the Japanese public's support for these other traits such as extreme exclusivity would be needed to explore these in detail.

In addition, an important theme amongst Japanese respondents is the value they place on objective, impartial journalism. This includes avoiding emotive reporting and obtaining information from definitive, well-regarded sources. Although these aspects of objective, impartial reporting are also valued in the West, the results suggest that they take precedence in Japanese society over confrontational and investigate

reporting. The evidence from this study indicates that the non-combative, "non-investigative" style of reporting of the Japanese press club media system is a reflection of Japanese cultural values. As such, Western criticisms of a "lack" of independent, investigative journalism in Japan are misguided.

It may be argued that even despite Japanese public support for specific media characteristics — for example, of close ties to government, and a "lack" of independent journalism — the effects are still damaging to democratic society. However, at the very core of democracy is the right to self-determination and the ability to decide on the fundamental structures of society. In this regard, the Japanese press club media system largely reflects the audience's wishes and desires. The findings of the cross-cultural comparative suggest that Western ideals of a free press are not the only blueprint for a democratically functioning media system.

Japanese and Western perceptions about new media were also analysed to explore whether they reflect the development of new media in Japan and to investigate their potential impacts on the Japanese press club media system. As noted, the progress of new media in Japan has been relatively slower compared to the West. The cross-cultural comparative analysis of Japanese and Western perceptions of new media revealed higher levels of usage, and more favorable opinions of new media from Western respondents. These results lend support to the working assumption that a collectivist Japanese society is more resistant to new media, which exhibits traits of individualism through personalised commentary and opinion, and values of non-conformity through anti-establishment critique. This study, however, also revealed prominent themes of liberal press theory amongst Japanese respondents, such as placing an importance on a "variety of opinions" and "freedom of expression". These findings hint at supporting published claims of a shift in Japanese public thought aligning with Western free press ideals. However, evidence of varying interpretations of these principles between Japanese and Western respondents suggests socio-cultural factors may undercut assertions about the new media revolutionising Japanese attitudes and the Japanese press club media system.

Perhaps Chang summarized it best more than 30 years ago:

> No one is going to go beneath the surface and disturb the apparent harmony…
> Considering the basic nature of Japan, it is doubtful that many boats will be

rocked. And in that sense, the media are a true reflection of Japanese society (Chang 1981, p. 191).

The conclusions drawn from this pilot study indicate further comprehensive studies into Japanese and Western perceptions of the media systems will produce generalizable results. This thesis recommends the development of probability-based sampling that incorporates an effective tool for assessing Japanese and Western cross-cultural media preferences.

Reference List

ABC 2014, About the ABC, viewed 10 January 2014, <http://about.abc.net.au/who-we-are/the-abc-board/>

ABC Editorial policies 2013, 'Guidance note: impartiality', viewed 5 May 2013, <http://about.abc.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/GNImpartialityINS.pdf>

Akhavan-Majod, R 1990, 'The Press as an Elite Power Group in Japan', Mass Communication Faculty Publications, Paper 3.

Altman, AA 1981, 'The Press and Social Cohesion during a Period of Change: The Case of Early Meiji Japan', Modern Asian Studies, Vol. 15, No. 4 (1981), pp. 865-876.

American Society of News Editors 2013, Statement of principles, viewed 5 May 2013, <http://asne.org/content.asp?pl=24&sl=171&contentid=171>

BBC 2011, 'Japan quake: Worst crisis since WWII, says PM', 14 March, viewed 20 December 2013, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-12726297>

Benedict, R 1946, The chrysanthemum and the sword: patterns of Japanese culture, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co.

Birmingham, L, McNeill, D 2012, Strong in the rain, Palgrave Macmillan, New York City.

Black, J, Steele, B and Barney, R 1995, 'Doing Ethics in journalism: A Handbook With Case Studies', Allyn and Bacon, Boston.

"Blog" 2014, Oxford Dictionaries, Oxford University Press, viewed 1 November 2013, <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/blog>

Brislin, T 1997, 'An Update on Journalism Ethics in Asia: Values and Practices as Context for Meaning in Japan, China and Korea', presented to the Association for Practical and Professional Ethics Annual Meeting, Washington, D.C., 6-8 March.

CBS News 2011, 'Japan upgrades killer quake's magnitude', 13 March, viewed 20 December 2013 <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/japan-upgrades-killer-quakes-magnitude/>

Chang, WH 1981, 'Vertical integration of mass media in Japan', International Communication Gazette, No. 27, pp. 181-92.

Choo, K 2011, Yoshimi Shunya Interviewed by Kukhee Choo, Tulane University, Television & New Media, No. 12, pp. 560-72.

CNN Library 2014, 'Japan earthquake – Tsunami fast facts', CNN, 20 February, viewed 20 December 2013, <http://edition.cnn.com/2013/07/17/world/asia/japan-earthquake---tsunami-fast-facts/>

"Collectivism" 2013, Merriam-Webster dictionary, viewed 15 May 2013, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/collectivism>

De Lange, W 1998, A History of Japanese Journalism Japan Library, Curzon Press, Richmond, Surry, UK.

Democracy Now! 2013, About Democracy Now!, viewed 30 June 2013, <http://www.democracynow.org/about>

Democracy Now! 2013, Ways to donate, viewed 20 December 2013, <http://www.democracynow.org/ways_to_donate>

Dunscomb, PE 2011, Japan's Siberian Intervention: A great disobedience against the people, Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.

Duus, P 1976, The rise of modern Japan, Houghton Mifflin, Boston.

Endo, K 2012, ['How Did the Media Report the Great Earthquake and Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant Disaster?'] Tokyo Denki University press. (In Japanese)

Fackler, M 2012, [Credibility lost: The crisis in Japanese newspaper journalism after Fukushima] Futabasha Publishers Ltd., Japan. (In Japanese)

Farley, M 1996, 'Japan's press and the politics of scandal', in Pharr, SJ, & Krauss, ES, eds., Media and politics in Japan, University of Hawaii press, Honolulu.

Feldman, O 1993, Politics and the News Media in Japan, University of Michigan Press, Anne Arbor.

Feldman, O 2004, Talking Politics in Japan, Sussex Academic Press, Portland, OR.

Freeman, L 1996, Japan's press clubs as information cartels, Japan Policy Research Institute, JPRI working paper No. 18, viewed 11 June 2013, <http://www.jpri.org/publications/workingpapers/wp18.html>

Freeman, L 2000, Closing the Shop: Information Cartels and Japan's Mass Media, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ.

Freeman, L 2003, Mobilizing and Demobilizing the Japanese Public Sphere: Mass Media and the Internet in Japan, Cambridge University Press, New York.

Gamble, A, Watanabe, T 2004, A Public Betrayed: An Inside Look at Japanese Media Atrocities and Their Warnings to the West, Regnery Publishing, Washington, DC.

Garon, S 2003 From Meiji to Heisei: The State and Civil Society in Japan, Cambridge University Press, New York.

Gatzen, B 2001, 'Media and Communication in Japan: Current Issues and Future Research', The Asianization of Asia, German National Research Council, Research Editor - Media Studies, electronic journal of contemporary Japanese studies, Volume 1, Issue 1.

Gorodnichenko, Y, Roland, G 2011, 'Understanding the Individualism-Collectivism Cleavage and its Effects: Lessons from Cultural Psychology', invited paper at the XVIth Congress of the International Economic Association 2011.

Hall, IP 1997, Cartels of the Minds: Japan's Intellectual Closed Shop, W. W. Norton & Company.

Harari, E 1997, 'The government—media connection in Japan: The case of public advisory bodies', Japan Forum, Volume 9, Issue 1, pp. 17-38.

Hasegawa, R 2013, 'Disaster evacuation from Japan's 2011 tsunami disaster and the Fukushima nuclear accident', The Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations, No. 5, May.

Herman ES 1996, 'The propaganda model revisited', Monthly Review, Vol. 48, No. 3.

Hirose, H 1994, 'The press club system in Japan: Its past, present and future', Keio Communication Review, no. 16, pp 63-75.

Hook, JN, Worthington Jr, EL, Utsey, SO 2009, 'Collectivism, Forgiveness, and Social Harmony', The Counseling Psychologist, No. 37, pp. 821-47.

"Impartiality" 2013, Merriam-Webster dictionary, viewed 30 May 2013, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/thesaurus/impartiality>

Ito, Y 1989, 'Socio-cultural backgrounds of Japanese interpersonal communication style, Civilizations', Vol. 39, pp. 101-128.

Ito, Y 2006, 'A Review of: Media and Politics in Pacific Asia, by Duncan McCargo', Political Communication, Volume 23, Issue 4, pp. 467-70.

Jacobson, E, Deutshmann, P 1962, 'Introduction', International Social Science Journal, No. 14, pp. 151-161.

Jameson, S 1997, 'A Veteran American Journalist Looks at the Japanese Media', Japan Policy Research Institute, JPRI working paper No. 40, viewed 11 June 2013, <http://www.jpri.org/publications/workingpapers/wp40.html>

Japan National Press Club 2014, Outline, viewed 10 January 2014, <http://www.jnpc.or.jp/outline/english/jnpc-e/>

Jarvis, J 2008, foreword, Beckett, C. Supermedia: Saving journalism so it can save the world, Blackwell.

Johnson, C 1993, 'Artificial Cartels of the Mind Justify Distrust of Japan', The New York Times, 16 June, viewed 15 December 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/1993/06/16/opinion/16iht-edjohn.html>

Johnson, C 1995, Japan, who Governs?: The Rise of the Developmental State, New York Norton.

Johnston, E 2011, The Japan Times news digest: The Tohoku earthquake and tsunami, the Fukushima nuclear reactor, and how the world's media reported them, The Japan Times.

Kattoulas, V 2000, 'Japan's media: A closed shop', Far Eastern Economic Review, Volume 163, Issue 51, pp. 94-5.

Kinoshita, K, Mao , C, Xu , C, Wang , H, Bruno, T 2012, ['How the world reported on Fukushima'] The journal of applied sociology, Rikkyo University, pp. 57-75. (In Japanese)

Kirchhoff, SM 2000, 'The U.S. Newspaper Industry in Transition', Congressional Research Service, 9 September, viewed 5 February 2014, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R40700.pdf>

Kobayashi, G 2013, 'In Japan, A Wave of Media Distrust Post-Tsunami', PBS Mediashift 15 April, viewed 10 October 2013, <http://www.pbs.org/mediashift/2013/04/in-japan-a-wave-of-media-distrust-post-tsunami105/>

Krauss, E, Lambert, P 2002, 'The Press and Reform in Japan, The Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics', Winter issue, No.7, pp. 57-78.

Lovett, F 2014, 'Republicanism', Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, viewed 10 February 2014, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/republicanism/#RepFreHumGoo>

Media, entertainment & arts alliance 2013, 'Media Entertainment & Arts Alliance - Journalists' Code of Ethics', viewed 13 August 2013, <http://www.alliance.org.au/code-of-ethics.html>

Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications 2013, 'Communications Usage Trend Survey in 2012 Compiled', press release, viewed 15 December 2013, <http://www.soumu.go.jp/johotsusintokei/statistics/statistics05.html>

Miyahara, A 2000, 'Toward Theorizing Japanese Communication Competence from a Non-Western Perspective', American Communication Journal. Volume 3, Issue 3.

National Press Club of Australia 2014, Directors and Management, viewed 20 February 2014, <http://www.npc.org.au/club/directors.html>

"New media" 2013, Cambridge dictionary, viewed 10 May 2013, <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/british/new-media>

NHK 2014, Disaster overview, Great East Japan Earthquake, viewed 26 January 2014, <http://www.nhk.or.jp/japan311/311-disaster2.html>

O'Dwyer, J 2005, 'Japanese Kisha clubs and the Canberra Press Gallery: Siblings or strangers', Asia Pacific Media Educator, Volume 1, Issue 16, pp. 1-16.

"Objective" 2013, Merriam-Webster dictionary, viewed 30 May 2013, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/objective>

Otopalik, C, Schaefer, T 2008, 'Are the lapdogs starting to bark? Japanese newspaper coverage of the SDF mission to Iraq', Media, War & Conflict, Volume 1, No. 3, pp. 271-91.

Oxford Dictionaries 2014, "investigative", viewed 15 February 2014, <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/investigative>

Pharr, SJ, Kraus, E 1996, Media and Politics in Japan, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu.

Pratt, AC 2000, 'New media, the new economy and new spaces', Geoforum, 31 (4). pp. 425-436.

Quarantelli, EL, Wenger, DE, Mikami, S, Hiroi, O 1993, 'The Reporting Of News In Disaster: A Comparative Study Of Japanese And American Communities', Disaster Research Center, University of Delaware.

Reid, TR 1993, 'Japan's feisty new press', Nieman reports, Fall issue.

Rubin, DM and Cunningham, A 1980, Report of the Public's Right to Information Task Force, President's Commission on the Accident at Three Mile Island, Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office.

Statista 2014, Total paid circulation of daily newspapers in the United States from 1985 to 2011 (in 1,000), viewed 15 February 2014, <http://www.statista.com/statistics/183422/paid-circulation-of-us-daily-newspapers-since-1975/>

Tachiiri, K 2011, [Tsunami and social media revolution] Discover, Japan. (In Japanese)

Takahara, K 2007, 'Press clubs: Exclusive access to, pipelines for info', The Japan Times, viewed 4 February 2014, <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2007/01/30/reference/press-clubs-exclusive-access-to-pipelines-for-info/#.U5vEXYV62Uc>

The Economist 2011, 'Non-profit organisations in Japan: Japan, long hostile to non-profit groups, is easing up', 7 July, viewed 20 February 2014, <http://www.economist.com/node/18929259>

The Japan newspaper publishers & editors association 2013, Circulation and Households (Set paper counted as one copy), NSK Annual Survey, viewed 25 September 2013, <http://www.pressnet.or.jp/english/data/circulation/circulation01.php>

The Japan newspaper publishers & editors association 2013, Kisha Club Guidelines, viewed 25 September 2013, <http://www.pressnet.or.jp/english/about/guideline/>

The Japan newspaper publishers & editors association 2013, The canon of journalism, viewed 25 September 2013, <http://www.pressnet.or.jp/english/about/canon/>

TV Tokyo 2013, Reporting ethics, viewed 1 September 2013, <http://www.tv-tokyo.co.jp/main/yoriyoi/rinri.html>

Van Wolferen, K 1989, The enigma of Japanese power, Macmillan London Limited.

Ward, S 1999, 'Pragmatic news objectivity: Objectivity with a human face', The Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Discussion Paper D-37, May.

Ward, SJA 2005, Invention of Journalism Ethics: The Path to Objectivity and Beyond, McGill-Queen's University Press.

Wenar, L 2012, 'John Rawls', Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, viewed 10 February 2014, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/rawls/>

Winfield, BH, Mizuno, T, Beaudoin, CE 2000, 'Confucianism, Collectivism and Constitutions: Press Systems in China and Japan', Communication Law and Policy, Volume 5, Issue 3, pp. 323-47.

World Press Trends 2009, Newspaper circulation and penetration rate by country, viewed 20 February 2014, <http://adweb.nikkei.co.jp/english/newspapers_in_japan/>

Appendix 1

List of tables

Figure 1:

"Newspaper subscriptions per household in Japan"

(The Japan newspaper publishers & editors association 2013, circulation and households)

Figure 2:

"Most important principles of ethical journalism"

(Original data)

Figure 3:

"Cross-cultural Comparison of Principles of Journalism"

(American Society of News Editors 2013, The Japan newspaper publishers & editors association 2013, The canon of journalism)

Figure 4:

"Most Important Ethical Principle for Journalists (Moderate Reporting)"

(Original data)

Appendix 2

Questionnaire data

Answers from questionnaires distributed to both Japanese and Western members of the general public.

<u>Japanese responses:</u>

Q1 What is the media's role in society?

Japanese respondent 1: Fair viewpoint, easy to understand

Japanese respondent 2: Truth

Japanese respondent 3: Convey a lot of information, from many angles, gather from sources.

Japanese respondent 4: Simple and accurate

Japanese respondent 5: Ideally accurate and fast.

Japanese respondent 6: Report for the nation, for the citizens. They have the power to incite citizens' emotions over small politician wrongdoings. This may result in harming the public interest.

Japanese respondent 7: Release various reports, easy to understand.

Japanese respondent 8: To report quickly and correctly convey the truth.

Japanese respondent 9: Convey information thoroughly and easy to understand in accordance with the times.

Japanese respondent 10: Convey objectively to a wide audience.

Japanese respondent 11: Convey reliable information accurately to the public.

Japanese respondent 12: Accurately report information.

Japanese respondent 13: Quickly report from a neutral stance.

Japanese respondent 14: To convey information.

Japanese respondent 15: Convey information truthfully and accurately. Information shouldn't be controlled. Individuals should be the judge of information. This will only be effective when cultural standards are high.

Japanese respondent 16: Accurately convey world events accurately and from various angles.

Japanese respondent 17: Convey the truth with morals and consideration. Collect pure/true information. There is a danger that dishonest information will have an influence. But sometimes there is a danger that information on the truth will cause improper chaos in society.

Japanese respondent 18: The media should restrain the three branches of government (admin of justice, legislator, the government) at times when they act independently.

Japanese respondent 19: To provide information with the best judgment in order for people to pursue safety and happiness.

Japanese respondent 20: To tell the truth.

Japanese respondent 21: To convey information.

Japanese respondent 22: Convey Truth and accuracy.

Japanese respondent 23: Information and enlightenment

Japanese respondent 24: Self research. Don't just write what the government and industry says, it is important to research themselves.

Japanese respondent 25: Convey Truth and accuracy/fast.

Japanese respondent 26: To accurately report things happening in society.

Japanese respondent 27: To convey/report information accurately

Japanese respondent 28: To convey the truth that is easily understandable. Because the information I wanted was believable information.

Japanese respondent 29: At first there was an announcement on TV saying there was something strange at the Fukushima plant. Then once the gravity of the situation was realized there was a steady flow of reports.

Q2 After the disaster, did your view change of the media's role? Why?

Japanese respondent 1: It became clear since disaster that media was not fair.

Japanese respondent 2: Fukushima caused confusion in what to believe, gap in foreign media, felt citizens were being manipulated by media.

Japanese respondent 3: Felt the Fukushima reporting was vague.

Japanese respondent 4: Changed. It was the media's fault of spreading rumours so sales in the Fukushima area were affected.

Japanese respondent 5: View of NHK changed, confirmed to me first class media. Gave warnings, and conveyed the seriousness of the disaster.

Japanese respondent 6: Not changed. Those who said there was a gap in overseas and Japanese media reporting lacked media literacy.

Japanese respondent 7: Not changed.

Japanese respondent 9: Came in contact with more media after disaster, but there was no sense of consistency so it was hard to know who to believe.

Japanese respondent 10: Not changed.

Japanese respondent 11: Not changed.

Japanese respondent 12: Big change. Problems arose from exaggeration by media that caused rumours.

Japanese respondent 13: Changed.

Japanese respondent 14: My view didn't really change.

Japanese respondent 15: Unchanged. Before and after the disaster I felt that the media should not hide information.

Japanese respondent 16: Not changed.

Japanese respondent 17: Not changed.

Japanese respondent 18: Unchanged. But I think the checks on the powers have weakened.

Japanese respondent 19: Changed. I feel I can't trust NHK any longer. They should have given us more detailed information about the health dangers directly after the Fukushima accident.

Japanese respondent 20: Hasn't changed. The media wasn't accurate before.

Japanese respondent 21: Compared to the 1995 hanshin earthquake, this disaster was mostly reported in real time. Because the victims become the reporters by mobiles, computers etc. Now any citizen can become a reporter on society.

Japanese respondent 22: Hasn't changed a lot. Its become difficult because the information load has increased (internet etc.).

Japanese respondent 25: Hasn't changed.

Japanese respondent 26: Hasn't changed.

Japanese respondent 27: since the nuclear disaster I thought that the information was not necessarily prefect.

Japanese respondent 30: Gap in FB foreign news, felt we were being deceived by media, we should take in more foreign reports in future.

Japanese respondent 31:   Unchanged. I've never relied on the media. A lot of it is true but there are also distortions.

Japanese respondent 32: Hasn't really changed.

Q3 Do the media have the responsibility to report everything? Or should they control information to avoid disorder?

Japanese respondent 1: They should not regulate, should convey information truthfully.

Japanese respondent 2: No, they should report the truth as is.

Japanese respondent 3: I think it should be regulated.

Japanese respondent 4: Yes, they should.

Japanese respondent 5: To a certain extent, yes.

Japanese respondent 6: Yes if it was for the purpose of securing safety in a disaster area.

Japanese respondent 7: I don't know.

Japanese respondent 8: No. It is important for people to judge for themselves and not panic.

Japanese respondent 9: No

Japanese respondent 10: Difficult question, but if it was to avoid chaos then yes.

Japanese respondent 11: If the government determines that it will avoid confusion, then there should be regulation to a point.

Japanese respondent 12: Difficult question but I think there should be information regulation and control.

Japanese respondent 13: There is no longer a reason to regulate. Should report truthfully. People should classify information for themselves.

Japanese respondent 14: If it's for personal safety - I want them to tell the truth.

Japanese respondent 15: I can't say its good, but there are times when it is the right thing to do.

Japanese respondent 16: No

Japanese respondent 17: The foreign media praised us for our calm actions. Perhaps this had something to do with the fact that there was no excessive information released.

Japanese respondent 18: No. At any rate, it will be leaked domestically anyway, if not friends outside Japan will inform us.

Japanese respondent 19: No.

Japanese respondent 20: I don't think so. If the communicator and the person responsible is clear.

Japanese respondent 21: No.

Japanese respondent 22: Initial confusion stages regulation is important.

Japanese respondent 23: Yes.

Japanese respondent 24: In present day Japan I can't believe there is regulation of information.

Japanese respondent 25: It's important to a certain extent.

Japanese respondent 26: I don't think so.

Japanese respondent 27: I don't think so. Because if there is regulation of information it will have the opposite effect of causing anxiety and distrust. But it's important that the receivers of information do so with the strength of calm judgement.

Japanese respondent 28: I don't think so.

Japanese respondent 29: To a certain extent, it may be necessary, but the danger is they should report accurately.

Japanese respondent 30: They should. They should reveal everything about radiation but not broadcast dead bodies. But I wanted them to report about the unaffected places too. The media reported that Ishinomaki city was destroyed, where my grandma lives, but it was only one part of the city.

Japanese respondent 31: It's important to a certain extent, to avoid panic. The question is to what extent?

Japanese respondent 32: Can't say either – Want more accurate things.

Q4 What was the most important ethical principle for journalists reporting on the disaster?

Japanese respondent 1: To report fairly from both TEPCO and the average citizens stance.

Japanese respondent 2: Don't report subjectively, in instances where specialist knowledge is necessary base the reports on specialist thinking.

Japanese respondent 4: I don't know.

Japanese respondent 5: Without inciting citizen's emotions to agree or disagree, report the correct information.

Japanese respondent 6: Should be trying to avoid reporting too much scandalous reports and spreading wild rumours.

Japanese respondent 7: Even if it's impossible to report everything using consideration, they should show an attitude of consideration. (i.e. polite).

Japanese respondent 8: Report the truth accurately.

Japanese respondent 9: Don't speculate, report as it is, truthfully.

Japanese respondent 10: News surrounding human lives.

Japanese respondent 11: Be careful not to harm victims with actions of reporting.

Japanese respondent 12: Report on the current conditions accurately and clearly.

Japanese respondent 13: Prudence of truth and accuracy, press freedom, and fair and impartial newsgathering.

Japanese respondent 14: To not let rumors occur.

Japanese respondent 15: Sincerity.

Japanese respondent 16: Life, i.e safety.

Japanese respondent 17: Don't speculate.

Japanese respondent 18: Defend people rather than businesses.

Japanese respondent 19: Report on the risks of radiation.

Japanese respondent 20: To protect the victims. From actual things and rumors.

Japanese respondent 21: The truth.

Japanese respondent 22: Safety of people's lives.

Japanese respondent 23: I don't know.

Japanese respondent 24: People have the right to know.

Japanese respondent 25: For the public good

Japanese respondent 26: Don't cause panic, accurate information.

Japanese respondent 27: To reliably report information essential for human lives.

Japanese respondent 28: Not just report on individual conditions and necessities but also what country and regional things we have to do as well.

Japanese respondent 29: Different from national matters they should report on human lives. There was too much concern of nation, government and national citizens/the nation.

Japanese respondent 30: Don't just report from transcripts but to go behind the scenes and report on the actual people in the disaster areas' opinions and what they saw.

Japanese respondent 31: Report as a disinterested person, as a third party, don't incite panic to the audience.

Japanese respondent 32: No lies.

Q5 Do you think the press club type system (where officials hold press conferences for selected journalists) is beneficial or disadvantageous to society? Please explain.

Japanese respondent 1: I'm opposed to it. Only a limited number of journalists can get information, which results in the regurgitation of the government line.

Japanese respondent 2: I don't know.

Japanese respondent 4: I don't think it is good or bad. Press conferences are defined as exhibiting proper sincerity but at times they can also dig holes (make trouble).

Japanese respondent 5: It gives considerable power of information regulation but it can't be said whether this is a good or bad thing.

Japanese respondent 6: It has a bad effect. Its exclusive and isn't it a barrier to impartial reporting.

Japanese respondent 7: I don't know.

Japanese respondent 8: I'm not really sure, but I don't think it is good if information is being manipulated.

Japanese respondent 9: I don't think it can be called good or bad but I think it is becoming an outdated system. Its not suited to the times.

Japanese respondent 10: I'm not in a position to say if it's good or bad. Don't other countries also have press conferences? Can't it be called an efficient way to gather information?

Japanese respondent 11: I don't think it's a problem if journalists base their questions on the information they receive at press conferences.

Japanese respondent 12: I recognise that the Japanese reporters club was made to steal the freedom of reporting. There is no meaning for the existence of such an organisation.

Japanese respondent 13: Difficult question. In terms of speed I think this it has a bad effect, and also you can't say it has a positive effect on fair/impartial points of view but I think at the moment this is the only way we have. On the contrary I'd like to ask your opinion.

Japanese respondent 14: I don't know about the press club system.

Japanese respondent 15: This system is valid because it has the function of protecting the citizen's right to know. But from the people's perspective, there is no way to avoid the bias position of information control being carried out to the extent that the club is exclusive.

Japanese respondent 16: I don't know.

Japanese respondent 17: I don't think it is good or bad.

Japanese respondent 18: I don't think it is good or bad. Even the information that is exclusive to journalists in the clubs sometimes has little influence. But freelance journalists can't attend and have barriers.

Japanese respondent 19: I'm against it. Membership is limited to some media, and also reporters become a mouthpiece of the government, so it's difficult for them to be critical.

Japanese respondent 20: I don't know.

Japanese respondent 21: It can be both good and bad for the sensibilities of journalists and officials.

Japanese respondent 22: At my own work place we use press clubs but rather than uniformity conveying accuracy is an important point.

Japanese respondent 23: I think its good.

Japanese respondent 24: Own research and announcements are important

Japanese respondent 25: Can't say. There are both good and bad points.

Japanese respondent 26: I don't know.

Japanese respondent 27: I can't say either

Japanese respondent 28: Not good! Even with one's thinking, and thinking it is correct, the press club system ties up the information and the truth is not dispersed.

Japanese respondent 29: I don't really know.

Japanese respondent 30: Maybe good? I don't know really know but the accuracy of the information aside, its good to be made clear about the opinions of those officials. But its wrong if those journalists were to cover-up information.

Japanese respondent 31: The good things are that it is fast to collect information but this has no relation to the audience reading. It's just that if you're not in the club you cant even get a little information - it can't be helped.

Japanese respondent 32: Can't say either.

Q6 Did you think the press club system style in Japan worked effectively during the Fukushima crisis? (How do you think it compared to your home country's system?)

Japanese respondent 1: No I don't think so.

Japanese respondent 2: I don't know.

Japanese respondent 3: I don't know.

Japanese respondent 4: I don't think it worked well. Because of this I think people's complaints and anxieties spread.

Japanese respondent 5: I don't know.

Japanese respondent 6: I don't think it was advantageous to the citizens. I think it worked well for the government and TEPCO.

Japanese respondent 7: I think it helped to report on more than the fixed standard information.

Japanese respondent 8: At any rate, the reports themselves were confusing so I don't know how to make a judgement on this.

Japanese respondent 9: Umm, I haven't thought about this so I don't know but if they are making biased reports based on convenience it was complicit in the disaster.

Japanese respondent 10: I don't know.

Japanese respondent 11: I don't know the structure of the media but if there is misconduct then it should be improved.

Japanese respondent 12: I don't think it worked effectively.

Japanese respondent 13: Thinking about the press club alone I don't think it was effective, but that system became a topic of debate so from that perspective I think the was an effect.

Japanese respondent 14: I don't know about the press club system.

Japanese respondent 15:   Thanks to the press club information was announced intermittently about the minute by minute changes in the nuclear situation so I think it was effective.

Japanese respondent 16: I don't know.

Japanese respondent 17: I don't know. On the other hand, I was surprised that there was information sourced from foreign newspaper reports about the disaster on Japan's twitter. I was surprised that different information from the real situation in Japan was being reported overseas, not just about the nuclear accident. I felt that the foreign media's gathering of information in regards to the disaster was sloppy.

Japanese respondent 18: I didn't take notice of the press club system.

Japanese respondent 19: Membership is limited to some media, and also reporters become a mouthpiece of the government, so it's difficult for them to be critical.

Japanese respondent 20: I don't think so.

Japanese respondent 21: To the extent that the information on the nuclear accident was true, in hindsight, whether it was effective or not I can't say for sure.

Japanese respondent 22: I can understand how it worked from those circumstances.

Japanese respondent 23: I don't know.

Japanese respondent 24: I don't know but if we look back in hindsight it won't have any effect.

Japanese respondent 25: I don't think it worked effectively.

Japanese respondent 26: I don't know.

Japanese respondent 27: I don't think it was effective.

Japanese respondent 28: I don't know. Maybe the government has an inclination for good news in the city using its power, so I came to understand an important thing.

Japanese respondent 29: I don't really know.

Japanese respondent 30: Sorry, I don't know about the press club system.

Japanese respondent 31: No. But people are stupid to the extent that they believe them.

Japanese respondent 32: Same as above.

Q7 What do you think about people protesting in general? Has your view of people who protest changed since the Fukushima disaster?

Japanese respondent 1: I think its good. But I don't think it is possible to abolish nuclear power immediately, they should also think of other energy ways.

Japanese respondent 2: Before the disaster I didn't have a very positive view of protests. But because the nuclear protestors conveyed a memory/experience from hardship, because they were able to express this I think this was an influential method.

Japanese respondent 4: I don't know.

Japanese respondent 5: I've participated in an anti-nuclear protest. But after experiencing it, I felt that it only had a minimal effect on society. Especially anti-nuclear protests, which are multifaceted, I felt they had no effect.

Japanese respondent 6: My views didn't really change. I felt that a lot of protestors were acting on emotion.

Japanese respondent 7: I couldn't understand the protestors. I don't think protesting is the right way to express your opinions. Because I think that perhaps if someone was to go to a protest and he or she was the only one he would not go through with it. This could be a bias opinion but I felt that a lot of protests weren't focused on "expressing an opinion", or "trying to change something".

Japanese respondent 8: Before I thought it was a bit extreme. But since the nuclear accident I've come to see it as a way of expressing one's opinions.

Japanese respondent 9: For me, I don't think protesting changes anything. Today people are getting paid to protest so I think it weakens their position. I don't think it's their true voices.

Japanese respondent 10: Before I didn't have an interest, but recently for me I think I can relate to it more personally.

Japanese respondent 11: I think protesting is a good thing but I think politicians taking political advantage of it is unforgivable. My view that "Its effective but it comes with big risks" hasn't changed.

Japanese respondent 12: I had a lot of doubts. My view hasn't changed…Sometimes I think its important to oppose nuclear power but don't do it out of emotion, its important to act a little more calmly.

Japanese respondent 13: Before and after the disaster I thought it was mostly good to protest. But after the nuclear disaster it became clear that they should voice their opinions from a variety of perspectives and also interweaving the behind the scenes conditions.

Japanese respondent 14: It depends on the subject of the demonstration, but I don't agree with zero nuclear energy so I don't know if it has any significance.

Japanese respondent 15: No change. In general, I can't see the value. I'm not against it, it's hard to see a protest's technique of expression being a technique that can achieve something.

Japanese respondent 16: There were a lot of protestors but unfortunately they weren't received.

Japanese respondent 17: I remember feeling various discomforts about the thousands of protestors outside the Prime Minister's residence after the disaster. I don't agree with nuclear power but all of Japanese lives depend on it. So I remember feeling uncomfortable that suddenly one day there was a back flip and criticism that it was a bad thing.

Japanese respondent 18: I thought that you could not participate casually. When the protest in front of the Prime Minister's official residence became popular I felt that it became casual, when I went it was casual as I suspected so (it was like the left wing protests of the past) I didn't participate.

Japanese respondent 19: I always thought that Japan should demonstrate more and the citizens should express their views. So I think it was good that after the nuclear accident young people actively participated.

Japanese respondent 20: When it came to demonstrations, I had the image that they were violent. But since then I think that it is a good way to quietly strongly persist in conveying a message.

Japanese respondent 21: Not changed.

Japanese respondent 22: There were more protests 40 years ago. It is a method for expressing personal arguments but not good for organizations.

Japanese respondent 23: Hasn't changed.

Japanese respondent 24: To the contrary before they were respectful. Since the disaster…

Japanese respondent 25: Most people don't understand Japans current situation. If the nuclear stations are abolished, they will respond with a price hike in electricity.

Japanese respondent 26: I felt the accident was scary so I wondered if I would protest. Since the accident my views have changed but I'm still doubtful about what to do about energy.

Japanese respondent 27: In a society, demonstrations should be approved/accepted as a tool for people who have to express their opinions.

Japanese respondent 28: Yes it changed.

Japanese respondent 29: Hasn't really changed.

Japanese respondent 30: Until now I saw protests as something that happens overseas and has a violent image, and I was a little against it. After the disaster it became everyone's problem so it may be a good tool for recovery.

Japanese respondent 31: Protesting won't change anything. I wished they would choose another method. They block the roads and are a nuisance for workers. I feel the majority of protestors are just "trying to find themselves".

Japanese respondent 32: Changed.

Q8 Do you read blogs? Do bloggers make a positive contribution or negative contribution to society?

Japanese respondent 1: It depends on the blogger.

Japanese respondent 2: I don't think they have a big influence. There's not many single blogs you can believe because there are so many information networks on Facebook and twitter. Ah, this information exists, is about the extent of blogs influence I think. It depends on the blog whether it has a good or bad influence.

Japanese respondent 3: I don't think its bad because people can gain a wider perspective from reading various bloggers' opinions.

Japanese respondent 4: I think they have a good influence. People can share their concerns and you can learn about different peoples thoughts.

Japanese respondent 5: It depends on the contents of the blog. There is information that can't be trusted mixed in with beneficial informative blogs.

Japanese respondent 6: People with influence can stir up/incite ignorant people and this is a bad influence, but within this is freedom of speech so in the end it comes down to individual media literacy.

Japanese respondent 7: I see a blog as a public diary. A subjective diary that is open to the public and as a tool for voicing opinions I think it has a big effect on today's society. But doing it anonymously, showing off ones opinion, criticising others is not meaningful/worth it/significant.

Japanese respondent 8: Its okay as an individual expression. But writing things that are false or have no basis is not good. So when you look at it you should only go far as to trust that it is just someone's opinion.

Japanese respondent 9: I don't really know. Its alright if those people are there but people can be taken advantage of. However I don't think this has an effect on society.

Japanese respondent 10: People are free to manage themselves their own blog with their own opinions. In the end it's an opinion so I think it can have good and bad effect.

Japanese respondent 11: It depends on the content. Both effects. To the extent the person is known it will have that effect.

Japanese respondent 12: If each individual can connect with someone they trust I think it's probably a good thing. I don't really think it can have a bad effect.

Japanese respondent 13: From the perspective of reporting freedom and freedom of speech I think it has a positive effect. At the present time people who aren't good at selecting information there are cases where it has a bad effect. But this is an opportunity for Japan to take the next step.

Japanese respondent 14: I only read social related blogs so I don't know if that has an effect on society. It has a good effect on me.

Japanese respondent 15: Depends on the content.

Japanese respondent 16: Both. But it's a persons right to express their opinions.

Japanese respondent 17: Depends on what it's about, but I think in general the result is not a good influence.

Japanese respondent 18: I don't think it's the problem of the writer but the problem of the readers' literacy. Because its not always the case that the background information is published.

Japanese respondent 19: Blogs are not a bad thing. Its just I think that inaccurate information has become wide spread. I've been sent links about foods that protect you against radiation but to what extent these have credibility is difficult to judge. I don't think the reason is blogs but because there a so many things on the Internet. (For example everyone believes everything on Wikipedia).

Japanese respondent 20: I don't think its good or bad. But if people can express their feelings I think this is significant.

Japanese respondent 21: I'm not interested in blogs.

Japanese respondent 22: In regards to inciting individuals or violence, and Systematic planned intentions, they are mostly dangerous. If those can be overcome and social power is properly used and morals are upheld then it is useful.

Japanese respondent 23: Bad influence. (They do it for their own motivations).

Japanese respondent 24: Can't say either way.

Japanese respondent 25: I think bloggers have a bad influence.

Japanese respondent 26: I don't look at blogs so I don't know.

Japanese respondent 27: Both good and bad.

Japanese respondent 28: I think it's a very difficult question. I don't know what's the best thing to do.

Japanese respondent 29: I can't say either.

Japanese respondent 30: I think its good. It's good to get a lot of opinions and judge for yourself rather than relying on news information.

Japanese respondent 31: There are a lot of people who mistake people's opinions for attacks. It's good when people contribute their opinions jointly.

Japanese respondent 32: I think its good to have a lot of opinions.

Q9 Could you get the information you needed from the media about the Fukushima crisis?

Japanese respondent 1: No. I think that TEPCO and the government have responsibility for this.

Japanese respondent 2: Media was the only way for me to get information. But I don't know if it was important information.

Japanese respondent 3: Broadly speaking yes.

Japanese respondent 4: Yes. But I don't know if it was the correct information.

Japanese respondent 5: I think I got the minimum information that I need.

Japanese respondent 6: Not only concerning the nuclear accident, information I got from the mass media, there are necessary requirements for understanding the events, and I think those requirements were sufficient.

Japanese respondent 7: No I didn't. I don't think that most of the information wasn't clear on theme or conclusion. One reason is because I didn't get enough information but no matter how much I watched the news I couldn't get the information I wanted.

Japanese respondent 8: I mostly could get what I wanted from the TV.

Japanese respondent 9: Depending on what you mean by the media, I got some information, I still haven't got some, and other information I don't trust. The radiation pollution problem etc. no one has experienced so no one knows.

Japanese respondent 10: Regardless of the media medium, I got information from various mediums.

Japanese respondent 11: Yes I think so.

Japanese respondent 12: Somehow or other I got information. But I don't remember if it was clear/precise or not.

Japanese respondent 13: I gathered information from a substantial variety of sources, from my own past experiences, I created a hypothesis and obtained the really important information, therefore the media alone was not enough.

Japanese respondent 14: Mostly. Because the information I needed I couldn't understand by myself.

Japanese respondent 15: I can't say that it was information that I needed, but I got a lot of pieces of information that I wanted.

Japanese respondent 16: To a certain extent, yes.

Japanese respondent 17: Perhaps, mostly no. The media is now focused on other news. They don't report on what we're concerned with, I feel that partly they report on things that make us interested.

Japanese respondent 18: I think I'm a special case but because around me there were reporters, Peace Corps and TEPCO workers, things I heard in the bars were more real.

Japanese respondent 19: To a certain extent I got the necessary information.

Japanese respondent 20: I was not worried about my personal space, so it was enough for me to watch TV and newspapers.

Japanese respondent 21: A part of it.

Japanese respondent 23: Yes I think so.

Japanese respondent 24: To a certain extent.

Japanese respondent 25: There are still things that we don't know, but at the moment I could only get about 50% of the information.

Japanese respondent 26: To a certain extent I did.

Japanese respondent 27: Yes (but not 100%)

Japanese respondent 28: I understood the situation at that time.

Japanese respondent 29: To a certain extent.

Japanese respondent 30: Yes I think so. A short while after the disaster the TV and newspapers starting reporting the negative effects of the radiation.

Japanese respondent 31: I cant say the media as a whole but the TV, internet and newspapers were useful during the disaster, but in terms of the ongoing nuclear reports my own knowledge from work and foreign net news were useful.

Japanese respondent 32: It's hard to judge if it was necessary information. There is no way to confirm whether it is the truth.

Q10 What media did you use the most during the Fukushima crisis (English/Japanese, TV/radio etc.)? Please specify.

Japanese respondent 1: NHK, foreign TV and articles (ABC, BBC etc), BBC.

Japanese respondent 2: NHK.

Japanese respondent 3: NHK TV.

Japanese respondent 4: Twitter.

Japanese respondent 5: NHK.

Japanese respondent 6: Internet. There was a lot of extreme things but unexpectedly was also a lot of well-informed people.

Japanese respondent 7: TV News (any channel).

Japanese respondent 8: NHK on TV, and Internet news.

Japanese respondent 9: Internet, magazines, books. Besides the TV I read a wide variety.

Japanese respondent 10: NHK TV, and Twitter.

Japanese respondent 11: The TV

Japanese respondent 12: At the time I had the radio on.

Japanese respondent 13: TV and Twitter for breaking news. And newspapers and net articles for more thought out information.

Japanese respondent 14: TV – NHK, Commercial.

Japanese respondent 15: Sources known as trustworthy (eg. University professors and experts) from Twitter and blogs.

Japanese respondent 16: Asahi Newspaper.

Japanese respondent 17: TV, Twitter, Internet news.

Japanese respondent 18: Because of the above reasons I didn't use the media but listened to stories from people who worked in the media, Peace Corps and TEPCO, that was useful to my actual life.

Japanese respondent 19: NHK, Asahi newspaper, Twitter.

Japanese respondent 20: All TV station news, Asahi Newspaper.

Japanese respondent 21: TV (All channels).

Japanese respondent 22: All newspaper Internet homepages.

Japanese respondent 23: NHK TV.

Japanese respondent 24: TV, all channels.

Japanese respondent 25: NHK, Commercial TV, Yomiuri Newspaper.

Japanese respondent 26: NHK TV, Newspapers.

Japanese respondent 27: TV, Internet.

Japanese respondent 28: NHK, Commercial TV, Yomiuri newspaper

Japanese respondent 29: At first TBS TV reported on the accident.

Japanese respondent 30: Sankei Newspaper, TBS News, Fuji TV News, Nippon Terebi News.

Japanese respondent 31: Internet.

Japanese respondent 32: TV, Newspapers.

Q11 Has your trust in the mass media (TV, radio, newspapers) altered after the Fukushima crisis?

Japanese respondent 1: Yes, it changed.

Japanese respondent 2: I felt as if my trust in the mainstream media decreased.

Japanese respondent 3: Didn't change.

Japanese respondent 4: Not changed. Correct and wrong information is always mixed together.

Japanese respondent 5: My trust in NHK increased.

Japanese respondent 6: It wasn't high from the start. Didn't change notably.

Japanese respondent 7: Not changed.

Japanese respondent 8: I felt I couldn't really trust the media. I thought I had to investigate and judge for myself not just take in the information as it was presented.

Japanese respondent 9: I didn't trust before or after. The quality hasn't changed since WW2?

Japanese respondent 10: Didn't change a lot, but I renewed my thinking that in the important times people focus on mass media information.

Japanese respondent 11: Didn't change notably.

Japanese respondent 12: Big change. Problems arose from exaggeration by media that caused rumours.

Japanese respondent 13: My trust substantially decreased. I recognized that I had to collect my own information.

Japanese respondent 14: Hasn't changed.

Japanese respondent 15: Not changed. Originally low. But started to recognise that I had to judge the information by myself.

Japanese respondent 16: It decreased a little.

Japanese respondent 17: Didn't change notably.

Japanese respondent 18: Not changed.

Japanese respondent 19: I think it decreased.

Japanese respondent 20: Didn't change

Japanese respondent 21: It changed.

Japanese respondent 22: All media expressions were different therefore it's important to compare. But my trust hasn't changed.

Japanese respondent 23: Hasn't really changed

Japanese respondent 24: They should do my self-research and investigation.

Japanese respondent 25: Not changed.

Japanese respondent 26: Not really changed.

Japanese respondent 27: I didn't trust them 100% from the beginning so it hasn't changed.

Japanese respondent 28: Not changed.

Japanese respondent 29: It changed.

Japanese respondent 30: Yes, it decreased.

Japanese respondent 31: Didn't change notably. I didn't really trust it originally. But it probably made me more stupid.

Japanese respondent 32: Not really changed.

Q12 Did you use new media (SNS, blogs, online videos etc.) to get information about the Fukushima crisis? Did you trust the information?

Japanese respondent 1: No. I don't know which new media is accurate so I can't trust it.

Japanese respondent 2: No.

Japanese respondent 3: I watched the TV. It was news programs so I thought it was okay to trust.

Japanese respondent 4: Yes. But although the trustworthiness of official accounts such as NHK were high, comments from people that were retweeted I couldn't really trust.

Japanese respondent 5: Because I trolled twitter I was able to get information. But I couldn't trust it. Although I heard examples of twitter information helping people's lives, there was also a lot of rumours spread on twitter, therefore as a rule it can't be trusted.

Japanese respondent 6: Yes. There were things I could and couldn't trust.

Japanese respondent 7: I don't really trust SNS.

Japanese respondent 8: I participated.

Japanese respondent 9: It wasn't clear if personal information was trustworthy so information I was interested in I searched and read academic papers/articles, I compared the same content from different people and different articles, and searched for suitable content for myself.

Japanese respondent 10: I don't trust it because SNS is based on peoples opinions and is biased and not objective, but I did get some information.

Japanese respondent 11: At the time of the accident I didn't really use it so I didn't get information from SNS. There was a lot of rumours and gossip/false/inaccurate information so I couldn't really trust it.

Japanese respondent 12: I didn't get any information through SNS about the nuclear accident. The information is too complicated, and I feel that the so-called world of new media lacks credibility. But its not limited to establishing real connections through Facebook etc. At the time of the nuclear accident I didn't use SNS so if I had of used it my thinking may have changed.

Japanese respondent 13: Yes I got information. A lot of information I could and couldn't trust. I decided on what to trust from my own experience and hypotheses.

Japanese respondent 14: I didn't obtain any info from SNS.

Japanese respondent 15: I trusted things from reliable sources as information. Who was the speaker is extremely important, and I was cautious of retweets and shared information etc.

 Japanese respondent 16: No I didn't.

Japanese respondent 17: At any rate, during the disaster I wanted information, so I obtained a lot of information. Information that came out about specific dangerous situations was comparatively easy to trust.

Japanese respondent 18: In the end the information I got from a German friend on Facebook looks like it was trustworthy information. At first it wasn't reported in Japan so I thought it was an "exaggeration".

Japanese respondent 19: As written before, I read things that I was interested in on blog links from twitter and SNS. But I didn't trust them.

Japanese respondent 20: I didn't obtain

Japanese respondent 21: Basically, I trust the Japanese media. I think of the new media as a supplement.

Japanese respondent 22: Only rumors.

Japanese respondent 23: Didn't obtain.

Japanese respondent 24: Don't use.

Japanese respondent 25: Don't obtain.

Japanese respondent 26: Didn't obtain.

Japanese respondent 27: Yes I obtained, I could trust.

Japanese respondent 28: I thought new media info was very quick. I obtained to a certain extent.

Japanese respondent 29: There was some information I could trust.

Japanese respondent 30: I didn't trust the information I got.

Japanese respondent 31: SNS was useful for information from overseas friends. Basically overseas news was useful.

Japanese respondent 32: Don't obtain.

Q13 Do you think new media reporting is more effective than the mass media (press club system)?

Japanese respondent 1: No. New media was awash with false information. But it depends on which new media. For example, Nikoniko website video conversations have a positive effect. But Twitter was full of rumour.

Japanese respondent 2: I don't know.

Japanese respondent 4: When refugees were returning home it was extremely useful.

Japanese respondent 5: I don't know.

Japanese respondent 6: Depends.

Japanese respondent 7: I don't think so.

Japanese respondent 8: I don't think so.

Japanese respondent 9: Yes.

Japanese respondent 10: I don't think so. The main source of my information was the mass media, and this was supplemented by new media.

Japanese respondent 11: On the contrary, I saw a lot of false information that invited confusion so I felt that it didn't really help.

Japanese respondent 12: I think the new media reports were more useful than the mass media. But I don't remember clearly if it was.

Japanese respondent 13: Speed, and no guarding of power were useful points.

Japanese respondent 14: I don't know.

Japanese respondent 15: I can't say because most of the information on new media is based on mass media information, and the rest relies on speculation.

Japanese respondent 16: I don't think so.

Japanese respondent 17: There is doubt about the credibility of the new media so I don't know. I don't think that new media itself is such a fantastic thing.

Japanese respondent 18: I can't say. At the level of our actual lives Twitter was the most useful. In terms of the nuclear accident, I didn't actually actively seek out information myself.

Japanese respondent 19: I don't think so. I don't trust the press club system but information from the mass media is scrutinized and confirmed by a large number of staff so at least information coming from them is credible. Blog information is mostly written by one person, with low objectivity and it tends to become driven by self-importance.

Japanese respondent 20: I don't think so.

Japanese respondent 21: The mass media and the world is not ignoring the existence of new media so its not a matter of which is the problem but I hope that while they pay attention to each other and do their job.

Japanese respondent 23: I don't think so.

Japanese respondent 24: I don't think so.

Japanese respondent 26: I don't know.

Japanese respondent 27: I think there were many useful things about it.

Japanese respondent 28: I think so (new media was more useful).

Japanese respondent 29: Maybe but usually I watch the TV.

Japanese respondent 30: I got the majority of my information from mass media but to know about the condition of the hospital my grandma was in I contacted a volunteer in that hospital individually by Twitter. It was useful.

Japanese respondent 31: Definitely. But as a comparison it was useful to see how much Japanese reports were controlled/regulated.

Japanese respondent 32: I haven't ever used new media so I can't compare.

Q14 Did you read or join any discussion online about the Fukushima crisis? Do you think this type of activity is helpful for society?

Japanese respondent 1: I didn't participate. I think it has a positive effect. Listening to a variety of opinions can influence your own.

Japanese respondent 2: No I didn't. I just think that to persistently debate personally and subjectively has an effect on companies and that's it.

Japanese respondent 3: No I didn't. But I think it has a positive effect on society.

Japanese respondent 4: I didn't participate.

Japanese respondent 5: I didn't participate. I don't think online conversation has any political effect yet because in the end the government makes decisions. Therefore it is insignificant.

Japanese respondent 6: No. I don't think it's a bad thing that citizens are thinking serious about the problem.

Japanese respondent 7: The conversation unfortunately becomes an exchange of criticism with opinions expressed while hiding your face and name, and abandoning manners. I think that this discussion is a bad influence on society.

Japanese respondent 8: I didn't participate.

Japanese respondent 9: No I didn't. I think its good for people to debate. But for this topic I don't think there is any meaning to discuss it, in other words there are so many unclear points that it won't become a discussion.

Japanese respondent 10: I didn't participate. I think the increase in discussion opportunities is a positive effect.

Japanese respondent 11: I didn't participate but I think people should have a lot of discussion.

Japanese respondent 12: I didn't participate. I don't think it really has any bad effect.

Japanese respondent 13: Just speaking with acquaintances so no I didn't.

Japanese respondent 14: I didn't participate.

Japanese respondent 15: I didn't participate. I don't think it has a good or bad influence. I think its good in that it's good to be sincere and face problems, so it's a good thing to have active discussions. But the result is unwanted development of action groups that agitate things with bias opinions.

 Japanese respondent 16: I didn't participate but I think it has a good influence.

Japanese respondent 17: I didn't participate. Again, this type of activity causes increased anger and complaining only so in the end I haven't seen any good come of this. I wonder why demonstrations do not change the world?

Japanese respondent 18: I didn't participate. I don't know.

Japanese respondent 19: I have never participated. I didn't know there was such a thing. But I think it is a good thing for people to discuss things they are concerned about.

Japanese respondent 20: I didn't participate. I don't know.

Japanese respondent 21: I didn't participate. Discussion is evidence of freedom.

Japanese respondent 23: I didn't participate. I don't really know.

Japanese respondent 24: I didn't participate – so I can't say either way.

Japanese respondent 25: Don't participate.

Japanese respondent 26: I didn't participate.

Japanese respondent 27: I didn't participate but I think it has a good influence.

Japanese respondent 28: Didn't participate – I think its good to have a lot of discussion.

Japanese respondent 29: I didn't participate – I don't know.

Japanese respondent 30: I didn't. I think it has a positive effect.

Japanese respondent 31: I didn't participate. There were a lot of people that were excessively influenced when making there own judgements.

Japanese respondent 32: I think it's important to listen to a lot of opinions. I don't know if it has an influence.

Q15 Do you see media as an adversary or ally of the government? What should it be?

Japanese respondent 1 - I think an ally. As far as there is a press club, the media is used and information controlled by the government. I think the media should be fair and impartial, they should not be an ally or adversary. The right decisions that the government makes come from the citizens.

Japanese respondent 2: I think it's an ally. I think the government should use the media to communicate with the public. IT seems like the media reports in line with the government's intentions.

Japanese respondent 3 - I think journalism was meant to be unbiased. I think it depends on the government. In Japan I think it should be an adversary to the government   In china I think it should be an ally to the government. Well because Japanese politic system is a democracy one while China one is a socialism. I heard

159

from my Chinese friends that Chinese government has to restrict media for controlling massive of Chinese. Especially they have to control media for showing their power otherwise citizens make demo happen and be crazy. So I guess... Political system and massive population effect on the relationship between media and politician.

Japanese respondent 5: I don't think the medias role is that of ally or adversary. The media's role is to report on government possessed or announced information the media has made transparent.   But an important point is that the way in which the information is reported can be for or against the government. In Japanese the Asahi newspaper group is left wing, and the Nikkei Newspaper group are right wing. A simple ideological difference.

Japanese respondent 6: It's mostly an adversary isn't it? I think it should be an adversary.

Japanese respondent 7: I think the media is an adversary to the Liberal Democratic Party, especially Prime Minister Abe. Especially the Asahi newspaper. This may be difficult but if you read the book, "The day of promise" by Shinzo Abe, you may understand the inner workings of the government and media. I think neutrality is the best. If being an ally is the case then I don't think this is good… But it is ridiculous that the NHK is supporting China, and Fuji TV and TBS is supporting Korea.

Japanese respondent 8: I think the media is an adversary of the government. Today's media will report on even the smallest matter in the newspaper, magazines, or on TV. For example, one magazine corporation wrote articles insulting the Osaka mayor's family to sell more magazines. The mayor naturally vehemently opposed the criticisms. There was also another time where the commentators on a Japanese TV news program strongly opposed government official comments.

Japanese respondent 9: I think the media is the government's ally. It still criticizes the government but in the end it seems like the government is controlling the media. Ideally it should be in between the people and the government. It shouldn't be an ally of the government.

Japanese respondent 10: I don't think they take either stance. Because if they don't they can report freely.

Japanese respondent 11: I think the Japanese media has a fundamentally neutral stance, I feel as if with today's LDP government, the media is an ally. The media's is too influential so if they aren't neutral they will be controlled.

Japanese respondent 12: I think both. I think public broadcasters and commercial networks are not impartial, they are influenced by powerful politicians and organizations, religion, and big corporate sponsors. All of a sudden, there are a lot of unsettled incidents and events that haven't been reported on.

Japanese respondent 14: Both. Maybe they should be an adversary.

Japanese respondent 18: The media is not the government's adversary isn't it. If there are reports against the government then they are an adversary but it seems as if the government is manipulating information considerably, especially about the nuclear problem. It's a difficult question but sometimes the media acts as adversary, but I think the media should report accurate information.

Japanese respondent 19: Probably an ally. You hear that the government mediates the media and controls the information. I don't think they should be an adversary or an ally, I think a neutral stance is good.

Japanese respondent 20: I don't think the media should be convenient for the government. If I had to choose Id say it should be an adversary. The media today has very low support. But the media's responsibility is to report information to the audience. However, it is unacceptable for the media to report inaccurate or haphazard news reports. As I said previously.

Japanese respondent 25: In America and China there is information regulation so they are clearly an ally. In Japan, I think depending on the case, they can be both adversary and ally.

Japanese respondent 26: I see them as allies. I haven't really thought about it before though.

Japanese respondent 27: Both an adversary or ally is fine but I would like them to share information with each other and report accurate information to the public.

Japanese respondent 31: They should play role as the government ombudsman. Commercial networks are answerable to sponsors. NHK is on the side of the government. If it was just that it would be okay, but there are especially no clever anchors in Japan, they simply regurgitate the information. The same information that came from the government.

Western responses:

Q1 What is the media's role in society?

WESTERN RESPONDENTS LIVING IN JAPAN

Western respondent 1: To provide the public with up to date, accurate information of the current issues at hand.

Western respondent 2: The role of the media in society is to disseminate information to and entertain the populace.

Western respondent 3: Defining the role of media in society is pretty difficult to do in a couple of sentences. Frankly, I'm not entirely sure – its role is ostensibly to inform people, but, state broadcasters aside, the media is a business which exists to sell itself for profit, hence the fixation on sensationalist stuff that people will spend money on. My views on the media have not changed since Fukushima.

Western respondent 4: I think that media in society is a source of both information and communication that has a strong influence over the public.

Western respondent 5: The role of the media is to provide any and all pertinent information that is of importance to the general public.

Western respondent 6: The media is supposed to inform society of important events happening around the world that have an effect on society, or humanity in general

Western respondent 7: Media made the information accessible. I remember when the accident happened, I was traveling in Nagasaki and had no idea what had happened. The first thing I noticed was that there were newspapers being handed out (although not to me because I'm white) and as a matter of fact, my mother called me on my mobile asking if I was all right. I wasn't really sure what was happening so I honestly

162

told her that I was tired from taking the night bus. Then she explained what had happened with the earthquake and the tsunami. It was only the day after that I used the Internet and I realised the scale of what had happened. Without media, my friends and family wouldn't have known anything about what had happened which could have been worrying if I was in Tohoku.

Western respondent 8: To keep people informed. However, I think the disaster showed that the media can often by used by authorities to maintain or manage levels of fear and dictate the 'narrative'.

Western respondent 9: For me, the role of the media is to give accurate information to the people in the quickest possible fashion. Less on the speculation side - more on the factual side. Still the same view.

Western respondent 10: To objectively inform people about news and information.

Western respondent 11: The role of media is to inform the public of current news as well as to bring transparency to the forefront.

WESTERN RESPONDENTS LIVING OVERSEAS

Western respondent 12: To keep us informed with what is going on at home and abroad. Help us learn.

Western respondent 13: To inform people

Western respondent 14: To relay information to the general public in an unbiased and honest fashion.

Western respondent 15: To provide the public access to information about events and trends relevant to the community

Western respondent 16: The media is responsible for reporting and informing the public of news and events that may potentially impact the public in either a positive or negative manor in an impartial way.

Western respondent 17: The role of media should be to present an unbiased and unprejudiced account of the actions of the world. Though I don't believe this actually happens.

Western respondent 18: To keep people informed about a broad range of issues and matters.

Western respondent 19: To accurately inform the public about events in the world.

Western respondent 20: Influences peoples' choice in how they look and act, what they purchase and tries to set a norm of what is expected by people as a society.

Western respondent 21: To keep us informed of events which occur – even better if detail is added how people are working to improve the situation if it is something adverse. Also to raise issues which need to be dealt with.

Western respondent 22: To report on events and happenings that occur.

Western respondent 23: To keep us informed of what's happening around us. Important things like traffic reports, transport issues, etc.

Western respondent 24: To report current events.

Western respondent 25: To inform society of what is going on n the world. It should be truthful, and not biased.

Western respondent 26: To inform/misinform the general public.

Western respondent 27: To report what is happening in the world.

Western respondent 28: The role is to reflect, to challenge, to report and to inform.

Western respondent 29: The role is to report the facts about stories in the public interest.

Western respondent 30: Provision of informative & balanced facts and views.

Western respondent 31: To inform people about breaking news, educate, and advertise products.

Q2 After the disaster, did your view change of the media's role? Why?

<u>WESTERN RESPONDENTS LIVING IN JAPAN</u>

Western respondent 1: My view hasn't changed since the disaster, but I have come to put more importance on the accuracy of the news and the information that the media is conveying to the public.

Western respondent 2: It's mostly unchanged.

Western respondent 3: My views on the media have not changed since Fukushima.

Western respondent 4: Yes, it has. At the time, there was a lot the sensational reporting by western media. This led me to question how much of the information reported by major news television channels is factual.

Western respondent 5: My view of this has not changed since Fukushima. I have only been disappointed in mass media in general because of poor and inaccurate coverage.

Western respondent 6: I feel that the role of the media in society is the same, and will always be the same, although some mediums have strayed from this purpose.

Western respondent 9: Still the same view.

Western respondent 10: No – before the Fukushima disaster I also believed the Japanese media should be more investigative – many publications rely on the press club for information and generally print similar stories without independently investigating or clarifying the story themselves.

Western respondent 11: It has changed. The Japanese media downplayed the severity of the radiation leaks initially which is not surprising considering the government didn't even know what was happening at TEPCO, but later sensationalist reporting instilled tremendous fear in the minds of both Japanese and expats leading to panic and mass exodus.

Q3 Do the media have the responsibility to report everything? Or should they control information to avoid disorder?

WESTERN RESPONDENTS LIVING IN JAPAN

Western respondent 1: No, I don't think so. I think that the media should word things differently when delivering distressing information during a crisis, but that withholding information is harmful and may possibly lead to more problems during the crisis.

Western respondent 2: I think that what details should be released to the populace should be carefully weighed on a case-by-case basis. Also, not all information needs to be disseminated to everybody, merely to those it directly affects.

Western respondent 3: I'm reluctant to say a definite "yes", but depending on the situation and the type of information, I think it can be justified.

Western respondent 4: The media should report everything, especially during a crisis. However, the information should be factual and informative in order to reduce panic.

Western respondent 5: This question is hard to answer without specifics. For example, in a purely utilitarian approach there may be situations where releasing the full spectrum of information could actually compromise the integrity of an entire system, but ultimately that depends on the nature of the risks and consequences as well as the nature of the crisis itself. In the case of Fukushima, though, all information should have been made available, and the media's job should have been to provide a clear and coherent context to that information to prevent it from being blown out of proportion (or downplayed to the point of risking lives).

Western respondent 6: I believe that the media has a responsibility to report things that have an effect on society, regardless of if it causes panic, because we all have the right to know the whole story of things, and be aware of all that is going on in reported situations

Western respondent 7: As a rational person you would like the media to present a balanced range of views and opinion and then for the public to digest it properly. However, the public are often too busy to consider all the options and papers are under pressure to release breaking stories fast to sell the information and make money. The media knows this and therefore I would suggest that they already do withhold information to prolong their increased sales. During a crisis though there is so much more information moving about that perhaps it would be best for the newspapers to assess their stories and withhold them until they can be verified.

Western respondent 8: The media has a responsibility to make sure people are kept informed, as well as manage the way in which the information is conveyed. If there was no danger, the media should convey that feeling. I think it is possible be truthful

without causing a panic, it's about managing how the information is conveyed rather than actually withholding information.

Western respondent 9: This is a tough question. I don't know the answer. It's a bit of a catch 22. But there should be a clear plan for survival - presented with the information.

Western respondent 10: They have a responsibility to inform people – however, in doing so it is necessary to ensure mass panic doesn't occur. Therefore, should this be a possibility - it is also necessary for the media to provide advice or precautionary steps for people to take - from official channels to minimize risk and panic.

Western respondent 11: The media should withhold information in certain situations when disclosing information could do more harm than good (i.e. hostage crisis, police investigations, military missions).

WESTERN RESPONDENTS LIVING OVERSEAS

Western respondent 12: Should tell us the information that must be told and we need to know and also report the truth.

Western respondent 13: Everyone has a right to the truth, good or bad.

Western respondent 14: The media should definitely report everything but in a non-sensationalist way.

Western respondent 15: The media should report everything in an unbiased way when it has confirmed the information

Western respondent 16: The media has a responsibility to report all the facts to the public and not withhold information so that the public can then decide what to do with that information. If the media had the power to determine what was reportable and what should be withheld from the public, they would be granted a huge power over public opinion that they should not have. They do however have a responsibility to report that information in such a way that it does no blow the situation and its impact on the wider society out of control and cause hysteria and unnecessary fear to maintain viewers and ratings.

Western respondent 17: Ideally, only factual reports would be made, but in a time of crisis (or any other time) I personally believe the media should be able to report every fact as it comes to them, mainly because I personally take everything with a grain of salt in times of crisis because I understand not everything will be accurate. But at least those that turn out to be true, we knew of early. Like the saying, 'Better to call an ambulance and it be a false alarm, than not call one and it be an emergency". Report everything, let people decide what to believe.

Western respondent 18: I think the media should do what is in the best interests of the general population. If this means withholding information to reduce panic and prevent likely injury/damage then I think it is ok in very limited circumstances.

Western respondent 19: It is the responsibility of reporters to provide the public with accurate information pertaining to the subject. If the media withholds information, the report would not be accurate.

Western respondent 20: Like anything in life I think full factual (big Picture) information should be given to anyone directly involved or influenced by the crisis or incident. I think we need to respect peoples' rights and responsibility of confidentially but at the same time respect people and tell them the facts not what we interpret.

Western respondent 21: Media coverage should be factual and these facts can be provided in a way to incite panic or to reduce it. Media coverage viewing can increase if written in a way to incite panic but is more beneficial if written to reduce it.

Western respondent 22: I don't think it is the media's responsibility to censor the news however I think they should adhere to any censorship the government, police and the like require.

Western respondent 23: I think the media's responsibility lies in the area of making sure that relevant information is given out concerning any need to evacuate the relevant are, e.g. because of a siege, fire or other dangerous thing requiring evacuation. i.e. like in the First Aid action plan, check for Danger first when something happens.

Western respondent 24: Unsure – but probably report everything.

Western respondent 25: No I think that they should work with Emergency Services in cross checking what information should be exposed to the general public.

Western respondent 26: Interesting point. Certain information is vital, but the very graphic images are not necessary.

Western respondent 27: I don't think we are told everything so already things are withheld from us. Withholding info is not problematic to me. If fact, I think sometimes that we are told things that we don't need to be told, but really it depends on what that information is. If it is to protect us, that is one thing, but if it is to be deceptive, that is another matter. So, if we are talking info during a crisis, we don't want everyone to panic, and yet we don't want them hurt either.

Western respondent 28: It has a responsibility to report everything.

Western respondent 29: It has a responsibility to report everything in a crisis.

Western respondent 30: No – accountability and conscience is of key here

Western respondent 31: Hopefully the media will use discretion by giving as much information as possible without creating situations that will escalate public unrest and unsafe conditions.

Q4 What was the most important ethical principle for journalists reporting on the disaster?

WESTERN RESPONDENTS LIVING IN JAPAN

Western respondent 1: To make the public aware of the severity of the crisis and to be honest about what was going on, so that the public could prepare and react safely and properly.

Western respondent 2: I believe their job should have been/should be to report the facts to the people, but in such a way as to not place them in direct confrontation with the government until the crisis has passed. To do so only creates problems, confusion, inaction, and/or panic among the masses.

Western respondent 3: Accuracy. I'm not sure this principle was fully adhered to, though.

Western respondent 4: I believe that verifying information was and is the most important ethical principal for journalists reporting on the Fukushima disaster.

Western respondent 5: The biggest ethical issue was with providing that previously mentioned clear and coherent context. There were different obligations that were not met at every level of the process, but for the reporters both in Japan and abroad the focus should have been on accurate information to minimize risk.

Western respondent 6: I think the most important principle for journalists that have/are reporting about the disaster is to only report pertinent information, and to leave the lives of individuals involved private, unless the individual requests their story to be reported, or if the individuals story holds important information of society to know, whether it be good or bad.

Western respondent 7: Providing accurate information for those outside of the danger areas. As those people aren't directly affected they are the ones who create the hysteria.

Western respondent 8: People's safety is paramount and it was the role of the journalists to make sure people are kept informed of the risk levels without sensationalising the event.

Western respondent 9: Accuracy.

Western respondent 10: How to report the devastation and remain respectful of those who had suffered – e.g. what visual footage was appropriate or ethical.

Western respondent 11: From an ethical standpoint, they should continually revisit the stories of the victims they initially reported on until the afflicted areas are well on their way to recovery and the government is actively assisting the victims.

WESTERN RESPONDENTS LIVING OVERSEAS

Western respondent 12: I don't know about this enough really. But should always be the truth and the facts.

Western respondent 13: Explain things clearly, i.e. are low doses of radiation that bad?

Western respondent 14: Without knowing too much about the politics of the disaster, I would say openness and honesty. (If they count as ethics.)

Western respondent 15: To provide the information in context to the whole story and not get caught in sensationalizing specific incidents.

Western respondent 16: The most important ethical principle is the safety and long term viability of nuclear energy as a power source for future generations. The disaster brought home the worst case scenario that everyone feared when nuclear energy was invented, which is what happens in the event of a disaster, and is it really safe. The affects of the Fukushima disaster was caused by a naturally occurring event in the form of an earthquake, but the impact of this on communities in Japan could be felt for many years to come due to the exposure to nuclear waste as a result of it.

Western respondent 17: I guess to not just report on how it effects the west (travelers, tourists etc) which is all I seem to see. I'd like to see more about Japan, and not the devastation, but what been going well since the disaster.

Western respondent 18: In the early stages of the disaster the most important ethical principle for journalists was to minimise the physical harm to everyone effected. Later on it is to provide a balanced and accurate account of events and what caused them to allow the public to make their own informed decision.

Western respondent 19: The most ethical way to report on the disaster is to report with factual information obtained by reliable sources.

Western respondent 20: Respect that what they say or show is a visual and auditory port for society to get the facts and that they are dealing with peoples' family, friends who may be affected.

Western respondent 21: To help those effected by the disaster and hopefully reveal/prevent it from happening again

Western respondent 22: No doubt the health of people living in that area and surrounds is something that should be reported on for years to come.

Western respondent 24: Full transparency with regard to human safety.

Western respondent 25: Respect for Privacy.

Western respondent 26: integrity

Western respondent 27: I guess it would be reporting about the damage done to the area due to the environment due to radiation leaks. If someone was not safe due to unsafe air, people need to be told so that it doesn't cause them damage.

Western respondent 28: The most ethical principle is to tell the truth.

Western respondent 29: The most ethical principle is to tell the truth and report all the facts and to expose any cover ups.

Western respondent 30: Report what is being done to remedy or help the situation first (Positives) and then respectfully highlight the tragedy with facts and impacts.

Western respondent 31: To be factual with many sources for accuracy

Q5 Do you think the press club type system (where officials hold press conferences for selected journalists) is beneficial or disadvantageous to society? Please explain.

WESTERN RESPONDENTS LIVING IN JAPAN

Western respondent 1: I think that it could be beneficial to have access to these officials and to ask questions, however I think that if only select journalists are permitted to attend these events, that the kind of information provided by all journalists will differ greatly, and will just confuse and distress the public more in a time of crisis.

Western respondent 2: I think it is beneficial, so long as it's done responsibly. With the current state of the media, with newspapers, blogs, and journalists innumerable, it's only practical to have small, controlled conferences and meetings. However, they must be responsible with the reporters and journalists they invite.

Western respondent 3: It's a bit of both. In Japan, you can see that it's disadvantageous because the stories are essentially decided by all the major papers – the news is fixed and there is no individual investigative journalism. However, it can also be pretty useful – the Daily Mail in the UK does a wonderful job of horrifically misrepresenting everything that the government does, and so if government news

were limited to newspapers which don't have racist agendas, society would be much better informed.

Western respondent 4: I think that it is disadvantageous to society because contact with official sources is limited to a select group of individuals or organizations that have established a clearly defined set of rules and practices.

Western respondent 5: Information should be free and it is at it's freest in the hands of as many people as possible. Press clubs serve only to editorialize and limit the ways in which information is interpreted and distributed. Those who do the most with the information at hand are those who will be the most trusted anyway. I have a very libertarian approach to this sort of thing.

Western respondent 6: I think that this system could be beneficial, if the selected journalists were from varied backgrounds/ have varied biases that worked for and against the selectors. This way we could get more interpretations or views on what the officials are saying, and a bigger variety of questions would be asked.

Western respondent 7: I think it is disadvantageous. When I choose to watch the news, I have already decided which channel I will watch and which newspaper I will buy, or more to the point which channel/newspaper I won't choose. I don't want to watch sensationalist news that aims to hype up the public to sell more stories. If only the tabloids had a story to publish, there would be mass panicking from the most minor of issues. Therefore if only certain journalists were allowed in some news conferences I would question whether I am getting accurate information or simply sensationalized news.

Western respondent 8: It is disadvantageous because it forces the media to portray an 'official line', and any journalist who dares to break ranks is ostracised and places in a disadvantageous position relative to other journalists who so as they are told.

Western respondent 9: I'm not so sure of the actual system o be honest. But I like the idea of holding officials responsible - and them answering questions live. If it's only for selected journalists - it'd be interesting to know why. Are they controlling information?

Western respondent 10: It can be beneficial to obtain official information from the government or specialists. However, it is also necessary to check this information as well.

Western respondent 11: It's better than not having any access at all, but far from ideal. Officials can choose to answer questions that they consider to be "safe" from journalists they feel aligned with.

<u>WESTERN RESPONDENTS LIVING OVERSEAS</u>

Western respondent 12: Beneficial. Best to have some contact rather than no contact at all.

Western respondent 13: People that hold Press Clubs have something to say to the public, so it is a good things.

Western respondent 14: No. The selected journalists have clearly been selected because they ask the questions that the officials are prepared to answer. This system promotes cronyism and doesn't benefit society in the slightest.

Western respondent 15: Depends on the situation. When the topic requires technical knowledge to understand what is being said, then it can be beneficial. When the topic is politically or otherwise sensitive, then it is disadvantageous to limit the audience to those that will report on it favorably to the officials.

Western respondent 16: I think that this would be disadvantageous to society if officials were given the power to select journalists to report the information. Officials would have the power to omit certain journalists who do not report the information in a manor that is aligned with the message they want to give the public. This would open up the possibility of controlling the information the public was privy too surrounding reportable events.

Western respondent 17: These styles of information giving isn't disadvantageous, but are by no means beneficial. (Assuming I care about the topic) I don't generally believe everything they say, I more listen to the answers and with that coupled with what I find on the Internet, try to decide what I believe what is actually going on.

Western respondent 18: I don't have a strong opinion on this question, I think it is neither particularly beneficial or disadvantageous.

Western respondent 19: The press conferences are beneficial because they are effective in providing the public with information; however, I am unfamiliar with the process in choosing the "selected journalists" and feel this is an important element as to how information is relayed to the public. Media outlets tend to lean either liberal or conservative so there needs to be a process in place that does not favor one over the other to ensure there is not a disadvantage or prejudice with the interpretation.

Western respondent 20: I think it depends on the situation but as a whole everyone should be made accountable and if they select the journalists then that's when corruption and/or distortion of the truth can be present.

Western respondent 21: I think they are beneficial for society to learn the official message and to have some questions asked but should be rounded out with more information from investigative journalism.

Western respondent 22: I would say a disadvantage officials would be inviting journalist friends, or this could even lead to a little bit of bribery on the officials behalf.

Western respondent 23: It can I guess be a bit biased 'cos not all journalists are invited due to it being selected ones and might provide a lopsided picture of the subject under consideration.

Western respondent 24: I've watched quite a lot of meet the press etc. So all in all l think it's beneficial and informing.

Western respondent 26: Don't like the term 'selected journalists' - who is in and who is out?

Western respondent 27: I don't really know much about this. I am guessing it is good though in that many are there and they all hear info at the same time and they can ask questions.

Western respondent 28: The press club type system is disadvantageous to society as 'selected' people may form a 'relationship' detrimental to accurate truthful reporting.

Western respondent 29: The press club type system is definitely disadvantageous to society because it compromises Journalists to 'repeat the mantra' as they become indebted to Politicians for ongoing information.

Western respondent 30: Yes. Briefings of this nature breeds trust and responsibility.

Western respondent 31: It is probably a necessary way to present information, but a balanced variety of journalists should be included to give the public NEWS reports from a variety of viewpoints.

Q6 Did you think the press club system style in Japan worked effectively during the Fukushima crisis? (How do you think it compared to your home country's system?)

WESTERN RESPONDENTS LIVING IN JAPAN

Western respondent 1: No, I think that because of this system many things were covered up and the government was able to come up with answers in advance that didn't give the public the truth about the crisis. In this instance I believe that this system was very ineffective to the public.

Western respondent 2: On the one hand, there was plenty of information that was not given to the people in Japan, like information about the radiation. People would have benefited from that information. It could've been given in such a fashion to avoid widespread panic. On the other hand, the media in my country painted the disaster in neon sensationalism and caused more of a panic at home than here.

Western respondent 3: No, there was a huge element of story fixing and information suppression which could have been detrimental to the course of the crisis. I can't tell whether it genuinely was detrimental to the course of the crisis – the UK's media was guilty of the opposite, whipping up the disaster into Definite Chernobyl x 10 Nuclear Holocaust stories, which meant that people in the UK were much more concerned and panicked than the situation merited. My sense is that the severity of the Fukushima crisis was somewhere about halfway between the accounts in the Japanese media ("something's gone a bit wrong but it's okay") and the UK media ("Japan is doomed and everything will be affected").

Western respondent 4: I do not think that it was very effective. Although a lot of information that was released during the press-club system at the time was accurate, it was only available to Japan's most influential journalists and discouraged them from investigating the source of the information.

There is a lot more interpretation, analysis and commentary in the Irish system, particularly in newspapers. Unlike the Japanese press-club system where a selected group are given information, information is a lot more freely available to journalists and NGOs in Ireland.

Western respondent 5: In Japan the response was so muted and held back that it was hard to have an accurate idea of what was going on. There was a clear reluctance to say anything to disturb the balance or to make anyone angry or suggest responsibility. There was a stranglehold on important information. In America, on the other hand, more mainstream news outlets were going crazy with all kinds of speculation based on the same lack of information. It was unfortunate to see such sensationalism prevail, but there were good news sources nonetheless looking at it a bit more objectively.

Western respondent 6: I feel that it was effective for Japan because people knew what was going on without unnecessary information being released. They focused on the disaster as a whole rather than individual people's personal problems, which in my opinion allowed for better disaster relief responses. America has the tendency to report the most negative information before the most important. They would have focused on the death and destruction, rather than what was still going on, or the fact that there are people who are still alive that need help. During the Katrina disaster for instance, the news showed people being rescued from the roofs of their homes but didn't show where these people were being taken to and what we could do to help, or the conditions of the places these people who lost their homes were now staying. Also, I feel it was stupid to broadcast these people being rescued; they should of stopped filming and helped if they had a helicopter there. The news tended to be about what wasn't done to prevent the disaster, or what was not being done by the government rather than what could be done by society to help.

Western respondent 7: I didn't sense it too much. However, I could feel that with strong links to the government, there were issues being kept secret from the public. At the time I thought that the British press was generally quite open. However, since then

issues such as the Levison Inquiry have rocked the media in Britain and there are strong calls for a lot more openness here.

Western respondent 8: I think it made it easier for the government and authorities to spread an official line and maintain a narrative. We are only now seeing a backlash over the misreporting of the event.

Western respondent 9: I've never really seen a crisis back home. And I didn't follow the Fukushima crisis on a daily basis.

Western respondent 10: Yes in a way as it minimized panic – however, as all the information was coming from the government it was difficult for me to have absolute trust in the information. Therefore, I also looked at foreign media and other Japanese news sources from you tube (which were independent of the government).

Western respondent 11: Whereas in the US journalists continue to go after the answer they want, in Japan, more journalists tend to stop with the answer they get.

Q7 What do you think about people protesting in general? Has your view of people who protest changed since the Fukushima disaster?

WESTERN RESPONDENTS LIVING IN JAPAN

Western respondent 1: I think that in some instances it is necessary when the government is not providing sufficient protection or care for the public. I was actually very impressed when I heard of protesting in Japan, since it is so different from the way I have perceived the Japanese society in the past. In this case I think that it was a very smart, necessary move.

Western respondent 2: I don't really see what purpose it serves. Protests are too easily ignored. I understand that people want their opinions heard, but most protests just appear to further the divide and issues between the parties involved.

Western respondent 3: At university, other students would protest at the drop of a hat about anything and everything. I believe that organised protests don't work (we had millions in London protesting against the decision to invade Iraq, but they went ahead and invaded anyway), and can even be counter-productive – there's always one dickhead who smashes something, thereby taking the news away from the cause of

the protest onto protester violence, and there's always a huge number of people who go just for the fun of it, which devalues the reasons for the protest. I have felt this way for a long time; the Fukushima protests have not changed my views.

Western respondent 4: I believe that protesting is a right that people living in a democratic society should exercise. I have become a lot more supportive for anti-nuclear protesters since the Fukushima disaster.

Western respondent 5: I think protesting is a good thing in general as long as it has a clear, unambiguous purpose and is of actual social significance. This has not changed since Fukushima.

Western respondent 6: I think that protesting in necessary although it is sometimes not executed in an efficient manner. No.

Western respondent 7: I think protesting is good as it raises awareness of an issue. However, when people protest about things I'm against (for example in UK pro-fox hunters protested) I think that just because you are protesting doesn't mean you have a louder voice. Has it changed since Fukushima – No.

Western respondent 8: People actually have very little power in the current political system; protests are the only way that people have to assertively disagree with the government.

Western respondent 9: Being able to protest is one essence of freedom of speech. All for it.

Western respondent 10: Everyone has a right to protest (however, it should not turn to violence). No.

Western respondent 11: Protest is a necessary precursor for any significant change to occur. It was refreshing to see Japanese people unite and take to the streets to stand up for their principles and challenge the government's authority. Japanese protesters are more peaceful in their activities than protestors in other countries.

WESTERN RESPONDENTS LIVING OVERSEAS

Western respondent 12: It's ok if it is for a good cause. Should always remain non-violent and not impact drastically on others though.

Western respondent 13: Pre 1990's – Honest, passionate and fighting for good   Post
1990's – Lazy, angry, ignorant.

Western respondent 14: Although I find them to be tiresome and annoying, I think they are a good thing. There is nothing more dangerous than a blindly obedient society.

Western respondent 15: I think that it is an import tool for society to be able to leverage, but that it is overused in modern society.

Western respondent 16: I think it can be a fantastic method to make the public aware of issues that are impacting certain pockets of the community and to gain public awareness. I disagree with protests being used as a platform for violence and riots. This is always a possibility when protests occur and the London riots was a perfect example of a protest with a valid purpose that turned into riots and violence that came at a great cost to society and the economy.

Western respondent 17: People can protest all they want, but I lose my shit when people block streets and disrupt my 'normal' life to get their point across. I didn't ask for your opinion, so don't force it on me. They are completely entitled to offer me a pamphlet as I walk past, but they can't get upset if I don't want to take it.

Western respondent 18: I don't have a problem with protesting in general and think it is an important function of society that has led to important changes in public policy such as the end of the Vietnam war. I do have an issue with some protesters who use whatever they are complaining about as an excuse to cause civil disobedience and break laws - i.e. some of those involved in the Occupy Melbourne protest last year.

Western respondent 19: Protesting has often been an effective way to create positive change. Those participating in these events have pioneered change; however, it is my opinion that protesting with violence is unacceptable. Peaceful protests, in my opinion, make a stronger statement in order to get a point across. Of course, I do not necessarily agree with all of the causes so in these cases I would not favor protests but I do respect a group's right to demand change providing it is a just cause.

Western respondent 20: I think in society everyone has the right to protest. It gives people a chance to voice their opinion but I think it needs to be done in a peaceful but purposeful way.

Western respondent 21: I support protest for people to express their views and support things that are very important to them and protest things which would destroy or endanger those things

Western respondent 22: I am not sure huge protests that shut down cities gain much public sympathy for their cause, yet I suppose the protest everyone worldwide would remember the most is the lone man near Tiananmen Square, that didn't work out so well for him but did make the world aware of young peoples plight in China. I don't think much changed though.

Western respondent 23: I'm not sure that it is really that necessary, petitions might be a better idea.

Western respondent 24: Unsightly.

Western respondent 25: I think that people have a right to protest, I just don't agree when it becomes violent or destructive.

Western respondent 26: They have the right to do so, some protests seem genuine others ridiculous.

Western respondent 27: I am totally for people protesting. That is one of our rights for living in the US.

Western respondent 28: Protesting in general is ok within 'reason'.

Western respondent 29: I think if done peacefully then it is perfectly legitimate. I recall in the sixties western culture experienced a philosophy that ' the end justifies the means' – perhaps in some cases I would support this approach.

Western respondent 30: It's a right but there are many other ways of getting a point across effectively.

Western respondent 31: It is a way of expressing opinions and raising public awareness, but should be done in a safe and non-violent manner

Q8 Do you read blogs? Q4 Do bloggers make a positive contribution or negative contribution to society?

WESTERN RESPONDENTS LIVING IN JAPAN

Western respondent 1: I think that they are very beneficial to society. Society needs people to be there to question things and provide different views and angles in order to promote change and give society a louder voice.

Western respondent 2: Not really. If done responsibly, with proper research and informed opinions, they can be helpful to society. They can further discussion and inspire careful consideration of the issues at hand. However, when Joe Schmoe Everyday Man makes a blog and goes off into either extreme with little to no logical justification of his opinions and thoughts, a lot of times he can cause more harm than good. Discussion stops in favor of extremity and fearmongering.

Western respondent 3: Depends. Very, very few are genuinely beneficial. The vast majority are inane and fairly pointless, but people can do whatever they like with their time. Either way, blogs are far less prominent than traditional media or the online version of traditional media (newspaper websites, etc.), so whether beneficial or a hindrance, I don't think that bloggers have that much influence. In some ways, blogger is a dirty word – well, not exactly a dirty word, but people take journalists seriously, they don't take bloggers seriously, even though the only real difference is where their work is published.

Western respondent 4: I read them occasionally. I believe that the bloggers make a positive contribution to society as it is a free platform for the public to voice their opinion publicly.

Western respondent 5: The problem with bloggers is the lack of accountability and the fact that people will generally search out the information that is most agreeable to them rather than the information that is most agreeable to reality. Blogs exacerbate this problem. At the end of the day, though, this anarchy will be what does lead to the few nuggets of important information even if you have to wade through an ocean of informational excrement to get there. If a person chooses to follow a poor news source, that is their prerogative.

Western respondent 6: Not often. Depends on the individual blogger.

Western respondent 7: I think bloggers are great. As a blogger myself I focus on a niche area. If people like it they can continue reading it, if they don't they never have to come back to see what I write.

Western respondent 8: It is a new avenue for ordinary people to share their opinions. In the past, this was largely impossible and information was dominated by the media. Now, the ordinary person can have a voice and give a perspective that might not fit in with the larger narrative being portrayed. It is empowering.

Western respondent 9: Both. Depending on the blogger! Credibility is important when reporting about a national crisis. Information is so powerful.

Western respondent 10: Occasionally. It depends on the person blogging. If the blogger has specialist knowledge on a topic and is independent of the government or any official body - it can be positive. However, it is also necessary to read other blogs or get information from other sources as well.

Western respondent 11: Not regularly. Whether contributions are deemed positive or negative is based on the subjective feelings of the reader. As a whole, I believe bloggers make a positive contribution.

WESTERN RESPONDENTS LIVING OVERSEAS

Western respondent 12: No. Can't comment.

Western respondent 13: A select few. Positive.

Western respondent 14: Very rarely. Its hard to know if their contribution is positive or not, but the fact that they have an outlet to voice their opinion freely is definitely a positive.

Western respondent 15: Occasionally, but normally just related to sports. They generally make a positive contribution because it enables individuals with various perspectives to voice their opinions. They can be negative when used to disseminate hate speech or present blatant lies as factual events.

Western respondent 16: yes, but mainly sporting blogs rather than political and sports blogs. An overall positive contribution, as they are normal people broadcasting what they see and think without the censorship and control policies that the media broadcasters operate under. So it can help to build the wider picture to the public.

Western respondent 17: No. I did a couple once, but it was silly opinionated hipsters. Positive I guess. I'm sure there are people who care what other people have to say, but I don't. I do find it quite amazing that bloggers get such following and how powerful they can be.

Western respondent 18: Yes I read some blogs, mainly reporting on sport. I also read some blogs about a variety of issues that are published on the media I usually read such as the Age. I think bloggers have a positive contribution on society as it enables more views to be published which may have never been heard before. This is an important tenet of democracy in my opinion.

Western respondent 19: No. Bloggers are not always knowledgeable on the subject they are writing about so oftentimes, they are a negative contribution. A blog is not always a reliable source for information and I feel that frequently the public in general takes this type of information as factual without verifying sources.

Western respondent 20: Sometimes. I think it really depends on the situation but as a whole It's someone's interpretation/reflection.

Western respondent 21: Yes. The blog I read makes a positive contribution to society offering ideas to help others.

Western respondent 22: Not very often   . Both, they are just unpa
without the credentials. I don't believe they are dangerous I believe the ease of access is dangerous.

Western respondent 23: No, I don't follow blogs, but I might see a thing or two out of there. I think that depends on how they blog about things.

Western respondent 24: What's a blog?

Western respondent 25: Yes , love them. the ones that I follow are mainly art , craft, so they are always very positive and informative.

Western respondent 26: no. Have no idea.

Western respondent 27: No. I don't read them so I don't really know, but I am guessing that they make both a positive and negative contribution. There are folks who gossip or write things that don't contribute to the common good so that is not good.

Western respondent 28: No. Unable to say.

Western respondent 29: Rarely. Unless bloggers use appropriately credentialed (such as peer reviewed) references/ sources then their work needs to be treated with skepticism.

Western respondent 30: Yes, but its not my preference and its too impersonal. My preference is for direct personal and verbal dialogue. It is a positive BUT!!! Blogging unfortunately is over used (saturation in some instances) which effects its effectiveness and reach – a turn off.

Western respondent 31: A few. They can be positive and educate the reader, as well as give information that may be missed by a larger source. They can be negative by expressing very narrow (and perhaps cruel/harmful/bigoted) opinions.

Q9 Could you get the information you needed from the media about the Fukushima crisis?

WESTERN RESPONDENTS LIVING IN JAPAN

Western respondent 1: I did not find that much trouble in finding information as I had access to Canadian and America media as well, but I imagine that if I was just looking through Japanese media that information regarding the severity of the nuclear disaster and the safety of the food grown around Fukushima would be difficult to find.

Western respondent 2: A lot of information was withheld from the people. However, much of that information, had it been given to the people, probably would've been misinterpreted and/or exaggerated and could have led to a much greater panic. Therefore, I will say that the information I was given was fine for my purposes.

Western respondent 3: Yes, I think so. I didn't need that much information – just to know that Kyoto was not going to be directly affected. Everything on top of that was

interest, rather than need. To be honest, almost everything I read in the media is out of interest rather than need.

Western respondent 4: Initially, I felt that the Japanese media focused a lot more on the effects of the Tsunami that devastated the Tokuho region, where as the Western media focused a lot more on the Fukushima crisis. However, I thought that the Japanese media widely covered the Fukushima crisis from the 13th onwards, notably on TV and in newspapers. I also thought that the information in Japanese newspapers and on Japanese TV about the reactors and nuclear power plants was much more informative and less sensational than most western media.

Western respondent 5: I was reading about 20 different news sources online constantly throughout the crisis (until I was sent home anyway), so I like to think that I got the fullest picture available. No single source covered everything, though; it took real effort to stay on top of it. This is based on what information was made available by Tepco, anyway, not whether Tepco was right or wrong or said too little.

Western respondent 6: From various sources yes.

Western respondent 7: I don't think so. I kept hearing conflicting stories from British and Japanese media. My mum also would skype me to ask if things she heard were true.

Western respondent 8: It was easier using overseas sources, the domestic media were primarily trying to 'manage' the public reaction.

Western respondent 9: Mostly I think. But I suppose I was very emotional at the time and just wanted clearer answers. I wanted percentages of the chance of another quake - and I wanted to know exactly the chance of my baby getting sick from eating such and such vegetable. But I suppose the information takes time to collate and verify.

Western respondent 10: Yes

Western respondent 11: Yes and No. Information about the Tsunami and the afflicted regions appeared to be covered thoroughly, but information about the nuclear power plants was limited, repetitive and not very helpful.

Q10 What media did you use the most during the Fukushima crisis (English/Japanese, TV/radio etc.)? Please specify.

<u>WESTERN RESPONDENTS LIVING IN JAPAN</u>

Western respondent 1: I used mostly English television to get my information.

Western respondent 2: English, BBC.com, the US Department of State website

Western respondent 3: bbc.co.uk

Western respondent 4: I used both English and Japanese media. I mainly read reliable online newspapers in English such as www.bbc.com/news. I also read Japanese newspapers such as The Asahi Shinbun, and watched press conferences on Japanese TV in which Chief Cabinet Secretary, Yukio Edano, made daily reports on the situation at the Fukushima Dai-ichi Power Plant.

Western respondent 5: As mentioned, I used dozens of online news outlets.

Western respondent 6: I watched BBC news in English both in Japan and America

Western respondent 7: Mainly BBC online, but I also watched Japanese TV with my limited Japanese.

Western respondent 8: Internet

Western respondent 9: Mainly the age - sometimes English newspapers in Japan – japantimes

Western respondent 10: I used the Internet: newspapers and you tube, as well as Japanese TV. In addition, I checked the British Embassy Facebook page, which provided consular advice for British nationals in Japan.

Western respondent 11: NHK/FUJI Japanese TV and CNN/NBC English TV

<u>WESTERN RESPONDENTS LIVING OVERSEAS</u>

Western respondent 12: The Age.

Western respondent 14: The Age sometimes, but mostly the Internet.

Western respondent 15: Internet websites (dailybeast, cnn, yahoo)

Western respondent 17: I use TV news and Internet news.

Western respondent 19: Internet newspapers and occasional TV news are my main sources of media.

Western respondent 20: See above. Herald Sun, TV, News, Internet and social media such as facebook.

Western respondent 21: Commercial TV News and the Christian Science Monitor and a regular user of facebook – reading links that others add

Western respondent 22: The Herald Sun and TV News.

Western respondent 23: On iphone, can get news through the fairfax news app, listen to radio & tv and might look at the age off the internet.

Western respondent 24: The Herald Sun, Commercial TV News. Mass Media as it has more infrastructure.

Western respondent 25: Internet, TV. No I don't, as they don't have to take any responsibility for what they say as they are somewhat faceless and not accountable.

Western respondent 26: Not much at all. Talk-back radio in the car. Some TV but not much.

Western respondent 27: As I said, I listen to the radio. I often watch the 10:00 news on TV to learn about local news. I do not get any papers presently. I wish I did but it just got too costly. We would read two local papers – one from Winona, MN and one from Eau Claire, WI. I wanted to learn about these two areas. I worked in one (Eau Claire) and I used to live in the other. I felt it kept me in the loop on local news, but again, it got too costly with the economy the way it is. Again, I prefer National Public Radio. My state has a wonderful station – Wisconsin Public Radio. I listen every day to it and it is where I learn most of my news. I also hear the BBC each morning.

Western respondent 28: The Age and ABC (Public) radio and TV.

Western respondent 29: Public (independent) radio and TV.

Western respondent 30: Free to air TV, AFR newspaper – e versions sometimes, Herald Sun / Age: Newspaper and e Versions, Business magazines – BRW, Industry

Sector and professional network media: www; online services; emails and prompts (property; engineering; environmental; general and project management and Business leadership), Industry Groups online services (Property Council Australia, CoreNet Global, Facilities Mgt Association, Institute of Engineers Aust, Linked In, Sales Executive Council).

Western respondent 31: TV news, local and national newspapers (print and internet) Facebook,, emails, magazines, digital camera. iphone, ipad.

Q11 Has your trust in the mass media (TV, radio, newspapers) altered after the Fukushima crisis?

WESTERN RESPONDENTS LIVING IN JAPAN

Western respondent 1: My trust in the Canadian media hasn't changed, however I saw very much exaggeration in the American media about the nuclear crisis (such as when a news anchor unnecessarily yelled out "BOOM!" when explaining what would happen if the crisis got any worse), as well as the Japanese media who were heavily criticized for trying to sugar-coat and cover up information to keep the public at an artificial ease.

Western respondent 2: Not really.

Western respondent 3: No, my trust has stayed the same. I was disappointed by the UK media reaction to the Fukushima crisis, but that hasn't affected my trust (and lack thereof) in it.

Western respondent 4: Yes, it has. This is due to a lot of sensationalism in the media during the crisis, particularly because of CNN's sensational reporting.

Western respondent 5: I lost some faith in mainstream news outlets after seeing their ridiculous speculation about Fukushima.

Western respondent 6: Yes, what was being shown on Japanese news was different than what was on American news.

Western respondent 7: I don't believe it has altered my trust, but I still question a lot of what I hear from the media and I will continue to do so.

Western respondent 8: I think it highlighted the fact that the mass media isn't just there to inform, but also to shape a narrative and manage public response. I think it has emphasised the need to be skeptical.

Western respondent 9: Not really.

Western respondent 10: No – I have always perceived the media in this way.

Western respondent 11: No, I think they did their job to the best of their ability considering their limited access to the afflicted regions and inability to get accurate information from TEPCO.

WESTERN RESPONDENTS LIVING OVERSEAS

Western respondent 12: I don't know enough about it really.

Western respondent 13: No.

Western respondent 14: No. My mild level of disdain for the mass media remains constant.

Western respondent 15: My trust in the media has declined in general in modern times because of the focus on mass consumption vs. providing factual, unbiased reports

Western respondent 16: No, I don't think the reporting has altered my trust in the mass media.

Western respondent 17: I would say altered no, but generally as I'm quite skeptical of what come out in media, especially from somewhere like Japan. It might just be me, but I see Japan (and its people) as being a country that it quite concerned with its image, so I would fully understand if the whole truth didn't come out, or things were hidden etc.

Western respondent 18: No.

Western respondent 19: Because many media outlets have a hidden agenda, it is difficult to fully trust reports, however, I look to mass media for information regarding events before ever looking for factual information from reports from bloggers or social media.

Western respondent 20: Yes

Western respondent 21: No I had a level of distrust before the crisis

Western respondent 22: No, cover-ups have been going on for years and I haven't read enough about this one.

Western respondent 23: Not really, but I do know that things do get reported inaccurately.

Western respondent 24: No it was low and it's still low.

Western respondent 25: No, perhaps it was a cultural thing.

Western respondent 26: I don't trust media full stop.

Western respondent 27: No.

Western respondent 28: Unable to say.

Western respondent 29: On the basis of being at some distance from the incident I must say my perception is that the mass media were too close to the Government and the power company. It has reinforced my inherent skepticism.

Western respondent 30: No.

Western respondent 31: I cannot comment on how this was covered in the US media…compared to Japanese internal coverage. I think US coverage stressed the humanitarian and economic aspects…and cautionary information about the radiation.

Q12 Did you use new media (SNS, blogs, online videos etc.) to get information about the Fukushima crisis? Did you trust the information?

<u>WESTERN RESPONDENTS LIVING IN JAPAN</u>

Western respondent 1: No, I continued to use online new articles, particularly from the BBC, as well as television new broadcasts.

Western respondent 2: No. I probably wouldn't have trusted the information too much, because anything important that could be officially verified would come through on the BBC. Other unofficial sources like blogs and personal videos may

contain improper information, exaggeration, and/or outright lies, as they have few to answer to for spreading misinformation.

Western respondent 3: The first thing I read about the earthquake/tsunami was on facebook. I did use various new media to get information, and to compare the contrasting information I got from each source. All information had to be taken with a pinch of salt, but the source I probably trusted the most was xkcd's take on it. I know that this is a webcomic, rather than a reputable news source, but the author of xkcd is a scientist and had no agenda (not even the agenda to sell his own cartoons, since they're all free and online) about Fukushima, so I was happy to accept his views.

Western respondent 4: Yes, I did use SNS such as Facebook. I also watched videos on Youtube. I trusted some, but not all of the information on Facebook. I always verified it by reading online newspapers.

Western respondent 5: I did use new media to an extent, but really with this particular case it was only really useful for coverage of the earthquake and tsunami. You didn't have people tweeting from inside the power plant, for example. It was interesting seeing all the independent radiation level measurements, though. In general I don't think anyone can really dispute that new media is fundamentally changing the way news is made and reported.

Western respondent 6: No

Western respondent 7: I saw a few blogs about it and saw stories that I think were potentially myths. I certainly used BBC online for videos of what happened as well.

Western respondent 8: New media has been important for obtaining a different perspective from the official one, or the one being portrayed by the mass media. It's not so much an issue of trust, but having access to a wider range of narratives.

Western respondent 9: Yeah Good question. I relied I suppose in Facebook. And friends posting links to things they'd found online. But f course - as I didn't have the time to put into researching updated information daily I really struggled to know who to believe. Everyone was saying different things.

Western respondent 10: Yes. I trusted some of the information but also checked it against other media sources.

Western respondent 11: Not actively. I did not use new media except to check the facebook/twitter links for Rikkyo University to find out when the semester would begin and some random person's facebook page to check daily radiation levels in Tokyo.

Q13 Do you think new media reporting is more effective than the mass media (press club system)?

WESTERN RESPONDENTS LIVING IN JAPAN

Western respondent 1: I think that they provide different information, both can be valuable, especially when used together when one can acquire a greater, more critical understanding/view on the situation.

Western respondent 2: Not really. The problems inherent in the press club system are also applicable to new media, as well as new problems. The same problems of what information to disseminate and in what fashion to do it are still applicable to new media. You also have to look at the spin factor--especially in the US, the traditional media is already pretty good at spinning news stories and facts along the overarching political party lines. New media only exacerbates this problem. You also have to look at how credible your source is in either case.

I think more and more people are turning to new media if for no other reason than it's becoming much more convenient than traditional media. It's also easier to find someone you can identify with who may share the same strong opinions that you may have. In an instance, a person may be more inclined to tune into new media. In that way, it's more effective at getting information and messages across. But I feel that it's much easier to push people to the extremes of opinions and thoughts if one removes the press club system, which (generally) stays closer to the median.

Western respondent 3: In some ways, yes. It's quicker to get breaking news and updates via twitter than bbc.co.uk these days, so it's certainly effective in that sense; however, bbc.co.uk content has been checked and guaranteed, whereas the reputability of twitter reports is often suspect at best, so it's definitely not more effective in that sense.

Western respondent 4: I think that new media is more effective because the information can propagate very quickly to the masses, whereas information reported by the press club system can take a lot more time and is often limited to selected journalists.

Western respondent 5: It is valuable because it bypasses all official organs that might digest the information a little before passing it.

Western respondent 6: I think it can be less effective, the reporters using those mediums are less bound by massive amounts of viewers to give correct information (for instance if a big news channel gave wrong information it would be caught faster and made a bigger deal than if a blogger or amateur news reporter on Youtube gave false information)

Western respondent 7: Yes and no. It really depends on the type of information you are looking for. But I do know that some blogs are very well put together and can be much more reliable than the mass media.

Western respondent 8: New media has been important for obtaining a different perspective from the official one, or the one being portrayed by the mass media. It's not so much an issue of trust, but having access to a wider range of narratives.

Western respondent 10: It can be. After the earthquake/nuclear disaster – SNS was particularly effective to share information, as it was instantaneously accessible for most on their smart phones. However, after things settled down – some people's word choice on sites such as Facebook were occasionally not helpful. I found that some people who no longer lived in Japan (actually 1 person in particular) had the tendency to dramatize their comments on status updates. In such cases, it is necessary to remember that we are reading/listening to people subjective ideas/interpretation of the news. Therefore, it is necessary to obtain information from a variety of sources.

Western respondent 11: Yes, I think it is real time reporting that reaches more viewers/readers than traditional mass media outlets.

WESTERN RESPONDENTS LIVING OVERSEAS

Western respondent 12: New media is quicker and more accessible. But both can be effective in different ways.

Western respondent 13: No.

Western respondent 14: I think it is definitely quicker, but it shares the same problems.

Western respondent 15: I think it is more effective in providing timely reporting

Western respondent 16: Yes.

Western respondent 17: I would say more effective as you do get a 'real' sense of what's going on, rather than what we're 'fed' from mass media.

Western respondent 18: Yes.

Western respondent 19: Mass media is more effective because it typically comes from more credible sources, press conferences, etc.

Western respondent 20: Depends on the situation but yes as a whole I hope it is more factual and the journalists are accountable.

Western respondent 21: It may reach a larger audience and provide an interactive means for people to discuss it but it may also produce a lower quality of journalism – to sift through opinion some of which may have little journalistic skill in creating it or work done to verify the information

Western respondent 22: New media is not reliable but is easily accessible and may bring something to your attention that you can investigate which otherwise may have escaped your notice. Mass media is in your face every 10 minutes if you watch telly so I suppose they are both effective depending on your lifestyle.

Western respondent 24: No.

Western respondent 25: Yes I do

Western respondent 27: It depends on how you define more effective. Young folks now are hearing the news from people who are not necessarily journalists. There are talk show hosts who spin the news in certain ways and it is not always the best way to hear the news. I don't mind these perspectives, but if this is the only way to hear the news, it isn't always the best. Most folks are biased. I wish people would listen to

National Public Radio to hear multiple perspectives on things. It is one of the best places to hear news.

Western respondent 28: I do not think so.

Western respondent 29: Not able to be conclusive at this stage. There is still too much noise in the new media and I need to gain confidence in particular sites.

Western respondent 30: My assumption is that 'New Media' is the World Wide Web / FaceBook/ LinkedIn etc. Yes and NO. Speed to market and reach benefits are negated by imbalance of opinion and saturation.

Western respondent 31: They both have their strengths and audiences... either may be biased and must be CAREFULLY evaluated by the reader.

Q14 Did you read or join any discussion online about the Fukushima crisis? Do you think this type of activity is helpful for society?

WESTERN RESPONDENTS LIVING IN JAPAN

Western respondent 1: I did not, and I think that while this can be helpful to hear different opinions, there is rarely any regulation of these discussions, and can cause people to stress about false information they are reading.

Western respondent 2: I did not. I think it could be helpful for those involved, not necessarily for society at large, and only if done properly. Discussions online, if not properly mediated, easily break down into exaggeration and/or panic, especially among those who are easily swayed by outside opinion.

Western respondent 3: No, I didn't. Sometimes online discussion is helpful for society – it was useful for me when applying to university, and I find that reading through various comments pages on an issue helps me to refine my own views – however, many online discussion participants merely post their views and reiterate them without reading any others, which is not a discussion, and definitely not helpful.

Western respondent 4: I have read online discussions about the crisis on newspaper opinion articles in the www.japantimes.co.jp and www.japantoday.com, but have never joined any. I think that it is a useful activity as it makes the public aware of the

aftermath and the fallout of the Fukushima Dai-ichi Plant. It also highlights the problems faced by thousands of Japanese who are still in temporary housing.

Western respondent 5: Only a little, mostly trying to tell people to calm down and not trust the sensationalist speculation they were seeing on certain news outlets.

Western respondent 6: No. I do think this can be helpful, but it can also have a negative effect because people can get very defensive over their opinions, and if someone doesn't have all the correct information it can cause confusion and hostility. Western respondent 7: No I didn't. I would question how useful it is though. People may exaggerate their position for dramatic effect.

Western respondent 8: I didn't, although I think this kind of thing can be useful for obtaining an 'on the ground' response from people actually affected by the disaster.

Western respondent 9: Yes. It's always good to know how other people feel. It helps prepare us or calm ourselves.

Western respondent 10: I did not personally. However, it could be helpful – particularly if you cannot access all the media you'd like to (e.g. unable to understand Japanese) – it could be a useful way to access this information.

Western respondent 11: No, I did not, but I do believe it can be helpful. It allows people in similar situations to connect and discuss things. Knowing you are not alone really calms people and it lets you think about things from different perspectives.

Q15 Do you see media as an adversary or ally of the government? What should it be?

WESTERN RESPONDENTS LIVING IN JAPAN

Western respondent 1: Hmm, I see it as an ally to the government. I think in countries where the media is limited/suppressed the people aren't given fair view of the current issues and aren't encouraged to develop their own thoughts and opinions about whether the government is doing a good job. I think that media allows people to question and challenge the government, which is really important in order to have a balanced society. I think the media should be taking the role of providing all the facts of a current issue to the public and sparking questions in the public that will allow

them to develop their own personal opinions and encourage them to get involved in the issue if they feel particularly strongly about it.

Western respondent 3: It depends on who's directing media policy. Over the last twenty years, I feel that the media has been, if not the government's adversary, then certainly not their friend. A lot of the media was definitely Gordon Brown's adversary; he refused to play Murdoch's games, so all Murdoch's papers wrote shit about him for years. Massive headlines would accuse him of something awful - the tiniest sentence the next day on page 34 would say "we got that wrong". Guess which bit people remembered?
Everything the government does will be criticised - sometimes this is fair, and criticism of government is necessary. However, the media will never congratulate the government on anything. My mum remembers newspaper reports and editorials in the 1960s and 1970s which would praise a good decision/legislation/reaction/etc. and say exactly why it was good. Compare that with the recent coverage of the same-sex marriage vote - it was overwhelmingly in favour of same-sex marriage, and most people say that this is a good thing, but the media reports focused on the negative reactions. Even the liberal newspapers went out of their way to report criticism of the decision. I believe that this constant criticism of government is mostly financially motivated - taking a swipe at a politician will sell more newspapers than a balanced assessment, and as free news on the internet becomes ever more established, I believe that newspapers will become ever more belligerent and confrontational in tone. This is harmful, because it results in voters feeling dissatisfied with the government without any good reason; we are uninformed of the important issues (which tend to be the most boring, e.g. tax rates for financial institutions, which won't sell papers, and therefore won't be reported as much), but feel angry at the government because of the way the media presents them.
To summarise what role the media should take: constructive critic of the government, which provides a balanced assessment/analysis of politics without the need to make money infringing on the need to report fairly.

Western respondent 4: I see the media as an adversary in Ireland because newspapers often criticize controversial laws and decisions made by the Irish Government.
I think that the media should be an adversary to the government in order to avoid biased reporting.

Western respondent 5: I'm not really sure how to answer that because I don't see how the media can firmly be with or against the government. The media can be the government's ally in a sense when pursuing public good, but the media can also be an adversary when uncovering corruption or any other kind of hidden information. By being firmly one or the other we force a certain paradigm wherein media is either an established friend of government (and therefore rendered suspect because of a potential lack of true criticism) or where the media is an adversary (and therefore suspect because of a certain agenda). If I have to boil it down I would say that the media should an ally to the idea of government but not to individual governments. That is the media should serve the purpose of helping to keep the government as pure and honest as possible, which may make it adversarial to individuals but an ally to the ideals behind governance in general.

Western respondent 6: I think the media, when trying to aid the people as a whole, can be an ally to the government. For example, disseminating information about disasters and changes. On the other hand, when the media is looking out only for itself--for example. trying to increase viewers via sensationalism--then it is an adversary to the government because at the very least it's helping create division between the populace along political lines.
What role should they take? I think the media should focus on conveying applicable information to the people, rather than looking out for only itself.
In general? I think the media should work as an ally to the government. Look at the current state of the US and for example, gun control. The sensationalism in the media is only making the issue worse and causing further division among the citizens. I feel the media should say, "Hey, this is the state of things, this is what the government is currently saying. Heads up." Instead everywhere you look it's, "Obama's trying to take away our guns! The murders and criminals that make up the entire rest of the US population will surely kill us all within the week!" or "Owning a gun makes you 429% more likely to shoot the spider in the corner, miss, and kill the little blond girl down the street! Guns are evil!" Nobody really knows what's going on because everyone is busy screaming at the extremes.

Western respondent 8: I think the mainstream media cooperates with the government and political parties in order to achieve shared agendas.

This is visible in the UK where The Sun newspaper is aligned with the Conservative Party, the Daily Mirror with the Labour Party etc. Very few mainstream UK newspapers are unaffiliated with a political party. The Sun newspaper is quite explicit in claiming the credit for the victory of the Conservatives in the 1992 election after having a scaremongering front page on election day, and various smear campaigns in the run-up. The Sun switched their allegiance to the Labour Party in 1997, then back to the Conservatives in 2010, after meetings with the respective party leaders and securing guarantees that certain laws and regulations that might affect News Corporation would be dropped.

This has an affect on the adoption of policy. For example, a press regulation body that was recommended last year after the phonehacking scandal was watered down by the Conservative Party despite a recommendation from the independent commission. The principle of the freedom of the press makes any form of press regulation difficult, but there should be a separation of the state and the press in the same way that we have a separation of the church and the state.

Western respondent 9: I hope it's neither. You know, just separate but not completely for or against the government. What is the relationship in reality?

Western respondent 10: Both – depends on the country/media publication. It should be independent of the government – investigative and responsible.

Western respondent 11: It depends on which media outlet you consider. For example, I consider Fox News an adversary of the Obama administration or any left-leaning liberal thinking organization for that matter. On the other hand, MSNBC appears to be more of an ally of the Obama administration and runs more positive stories than negative ones. The network also has the reputation of taking a left of center stance on the big issues. I think the role of the media should be critical evaluation and objective analysis of the facts. Unfortunately, "the facts" are often distorted depending on the media outlet's agenda.

WESTERN RESPONDENTS LIVING OVERSEAS

Western respondent 12: Gonna sound like a fence sitter here. They are both depending on the issue and which media outlet we are talking about vs. which government is in charge. Ideally I think they should be impartial and have no bias. They must keep the

government honest though but that doesn't mean they have a right to sensationalise topics.

Western respondent 13: The Westminster system provides for the opposition as a checks and balance to the government. The media works in much the same way, bad policy gets a bad media response as it should and usually the policy is dropped… Look at our current Labour government and how many disgraceful policies have been shelved because of media scrutiny.

Western respondent 15: I see the media as both. Unfortunately in the US, too many medias outlets are biased toward one of the parties, so their credibility is impacted as they are viewed as pandering to their self selected audience. Ideally the media should be available to the government to disseminate important information to its citizens quickly, but it should not be subservient to the government and should expose inefficiencies and injustices perpetrated by the government to ensure the public can make objective decisions when voting and hold their politicians accountable to the people.

Western respondent 16: The media has a role to inform the public of what the government and individuals within Government or doing in both a positive or negative manor at the same time. The media has a responsibility to be neutral and to report both the positive and the negative impact Government has through its policies and the actions of individuals within it.

Western respondent 20: I think it can be seen as both as money talks and influence talks so I think at times the Government utilize the media in their favour and at other times not so much.

Western respondent 21: Depends on the relationship between the government and the media. It can be either. Often seen it supporting one government party and rubbishing the other.

Western respondent 22: I probably see them as an adversary to the government and an ally to the public, but I don't think the media opposes the government I think it gets the truth out there. Some media can be allies to the government, they can be obvious where there vote lies, but on the whole I think media gives a good representation of what is actually going on without bias.

Western respondent 23: Not sure, but from what I heard, it sounded a bit like that the government was more or less trying to treat media as an adversary because of attempting to restrict the media or something.

Western respondent 24: Adversary

Western respondent 25: In my opinion the media is biased towards the Liberal Government.

Western respondent 26: ally

Western respondent 27: It could be both depending on the perspective of those reporting.

Western respondent 28: I see the media as an adversary of the government.

Western respondent 29: This depends on how the Government behaves. The media can accordingly play either role. However as 'power can corrupt' I see the media as a natural adversary of the government.

Western respondent 30: Both - balance is the key.

Western respondent 31: Both